

Implementing the Ocean Sustainable Development Goal in the Wider Caribbean: state of play and possible ways forward

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Context of the report

In 2015, the international community adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including a dedicated Ocean SDG (SDG14). Recognizing the transboundary nature of the marine environment, it is expected that the implementation of SDG14 will be limited without effective coordination at the regional level. IASS, IDDRI and TMG (as a contribution to the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance, PROG) are examining the role of regional cooperation and coordination in the implementation of the SDG14. This report presents the findings of a scoping study on the potential role of adopting a regional approach to ocean governance in the implementation of SDG14 in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR).

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Acronyms

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
AMLC	Association of Marine Laboratories
CaMPAM	Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CARISEC	Caribbean Community Secretariat
CARPHA	Caribbean Public Health Agency
CATHALAC	Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y El Caribe
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Causal Chain Analysis
CCAD	Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo
CCCCV	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
CCI	Caribbean Challenge Initiative
CDCC	Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
CERMES	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
CI	Conservation International
CIMH	Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology
CLME	Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem
CLME+	Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem and North Brazil Shelf LME
CMBP	Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program
CNFO	Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations
COCATRAM	La Comisión Centroamericana de Transporte Marítimo
CONFEPESCA	Confederación de Pescadores Artesanales de Centroamérica

CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CSC	Caribbean Sea Commission
CSI	Caribbean Sea Initiative
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organization
EA	Ecosystem Approach
EBM	Ecosystem-based Management
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IAC	Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IEAG-SDG	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IEAG-SDG)
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
IOCARIBE	Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LBS	Land Based Sources
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
LMR	Living Marine Resources
LOSC	Law of the Sea Convention
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NBC	North Brazil Current
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIC	National Inter-ministerial/Inter-sectoral Committee
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (United States)
OECA	Organización de Empresarios Centroamericanos Acuicultura y Pesca
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OLDEPESCA	Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development
OSP	Oil Spill Protocol (Cartegena Convention)
OSPESCA	Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano
REMP	Regional Environmental Monitoring Programme
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SICA	Central American Integration System
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TWAP	Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	Unión de Naciones Suramericanas
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNMSDF	United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WIDECAS	Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Network
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Executive summary

The Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) extends from the northeast coast of Brazil to Cape Hatteras and includes all coastal States between. Its countries, some 28 continental and small island developing States (SIDS), and a further 16 territories of metropolitan States, are geopolitically diverse. The key issues affecting the marine ecosystems of the wider Caribbean can be grouped under three headings: fisheries overexploitation, marine and land-based pollution, and biodiversity and habitat loss. Assessments of the root causes of the declining quality of these regionally-shared ecosystem benefits have pointed to weak and/or ineffective transboundary governance. Other factors include: limited human and financial resources; inadequate knowledge; inadequate public awareness and participation; inadequate consideration of the value of ecosystem goods and services; population and cultural pressures; and trade and external dependency.

Legal and Institutional Frameworks for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Caribbean Sea

Countries in the WCR increasingly understand the interconnectedness of Caribbean Sea ecosystems, the transboundary nature of most issues affecting the marine resources in the region, and the need for collaborative management of their shared resources. This is evidenced by their significant commitment to participate in key global and regional multi-lateral environmental agreements relating to marine ecosystem-based management (EBM). However, there is considerable variation in capacity to effectively implement and monitor.

Regional organizations play a crucial role in implementing these agreements, and there are over 26 regional organizations in the WCR whose activities are relevant to the SDG14 targets. Twelve are indigenous intergovernmental organizations, five are regional bodies of United Nations agencies, one is an independent Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) and eight are regional non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Some organizations have country membership that is entirely within the WCR (e.g. the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and associated agencies), while others have broader geographical mandates that overlap the WCR (e.g. the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development – OLDEPESCA). Some organizations also have responsibility for the Pacific Ocean areas of their member countries. At the overarching level, there are four regional political integration organizations in the WCR (CARICOM, OECS, the Central American Integration System (SICA), and the Association of Caribbean States - ACS). In 2007 the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) of the ACS was established to promote and oversee the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea in accordance with a UNGA Resolution. However, it has been hampered by a lack of funds and a full-time staff. In 2015, activity increased with the appointment of a Program Coordinator.

The five regional bodies of UN agencies with specific mandates for SDG14 related activities in the WCR are:

- ✓ The UN Environment-Caribbean Environmental Programme Regional Coordinating Unit which is the secretariat for the Cartagena Convention and its protocols;
- ✓ The FAO Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission, constituted under Article VI of the FAO Constitution;
- ✓ The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Sub regional Headquarters for the Caribbean;
- ✓ The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE) which implements IOC's mandate in the WCR;
- ✓ The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has a Regional presence office that covers mainly CARICOM countries.

There are few indigenous regional NGOs in the WCR. The most prominent of these are:

- ✓ The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), which focuses on community involvement in management and has a coastal and marine programme;
- ✓ The Confederation of Artisanal Fishers of Central America (CONFEPESCA); and
- ✓ The Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CFNO).

The latter two promote representation of fishers in regional fisheries matters in Central America and CARICOM.

Two other regional NGOs contribute to research and information sharing:

- ✓ The Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean (AMLC) which provides a forum for exchange of information among laboratories, and
- ✓ The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute which hosts an annual, well-attended conference and is one of the primary sources of fisheries information in the region.

Most other NGOs operating in the WCR are regional arms of larger NGOs, for example, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and Conservation International (CI) all of which have programs related to SDG14 targets.

There are many marine laboratories and research institutes in the WCR. AMLC membership is 33 and several laboratories are not members. These research institutes are associated with government ministries, Caribbean universities and overseas universities and institutions. There are also numerous national level universities and colleges. However, the majority of these are concentrated in a few countries: namely the USA, Mexico and Colombia.

There are several regional or sub-regional projects that are relevant to SDG14 implementation and monitoring. There are also many national and multilateral projects funded by a wide range of donors. The following are considered to be among the significant regional ones:

- ✓ The Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI) which is oriented to conserving 20% of the region's marine and coastal resources by 2020.
- ✓ The Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program (CBMP) which aims to reduce threats to marine and coastal biodiversity in high biodiversity ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass;
- ✓ Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystem Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (GEF IWeco) which aims to implement an integrated approach to water, land and ecosystems services management, supported by policy, institutional and legislative reforms;
- ✓ The GEF Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) Project which is focused on an Ecosystem Approach to transboundary living marine resources in the WCR through a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for improved ocean governance 2015-2025.

The institutional complexity in the WCR underscores the need for regional cooperation and coordination. The need for an overarching coordinating mechanism for ocean governance in the WCR has frequently been noted. Promoting coordinated ocean governance at the regional level is a primary aim of the CLME+ Project SAP which has been endorsed by all regional organizations and 25 countries. The CLME+ Project is establishing an Interim Coordinating Mechanism (ICM) to play this role while the most appropriate form for the permanent mechanism is explored. The fact that coordination efforts are contained within a regional project of finite duration presents a risk that efforts will not be sustained after the Project. Given its broad membership, the CSC has often been seen as an ideal body to undertake the overarching coordinating role for ocean governance. There have been several challenges to having the CSC take up this role.

Current Activities of Caribbean States and Other Key Stakeholders

There are some key regional level activities linked to SDG14:

- ✓ The United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework defines how the UN will jointly achieve development results in partnership with 18 SIDS and their associated regional level organizations;
- ✓ A growing number of Caribbean States have expressed their desire to explore policies for a 'blue economy' in the region;
- ✓ The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, which under the auspices of ECLAC is the regional mechanism to follow-up and review implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

- ✓ The Regional Consultation and Training to Develop a Set of Core Indicators for Monitoring Implementation of SDGs which is an initiative of CARICOM Secretariat and the ECLAC regional office to support Caribbean SIDS with SDG indicators.

In addition to reviewing the literature, a survey was sent to 13 intergovernmental organizations, 5 regional NGOs, 1 regional university, 17 countries and two regional projects. All organizations that responded to the questionnaire had a clear view of how the countries of the region are seeking to move forward at the regional level through a coordinated approach. This common view of the way forward can be attributed in part to their engagement with the work of the CLME+ Project. The numerous activities relating to SDG14 targets carried out by regional organizations are reviewed below in relation to each SDG14 target.

- ✓ Target 14.1 is the primary responsibility of UNEP-CEP, CARPHA and CCAD. However, all organizations with a mandate for marine EBM have an interest in this target;
- ✓ Target 14.2 appears to be the most broadly subscribed among regional organizations; probably because it is overarching and is interpreted as being mainly about reefs and associated systems;
- ✓ Few activities address Target 14.3 although all organizations recognize that ocean acidification could have huge impacts on marine ecosystems in the WCR, especially reefs;
- ✓ Target 14.4 is the primary responsibility of the three major fisheries organizations, WECAFC, CRFM and OSPESCA, which have extensive activities covering all aspects of fisheries development and conservation;
- ✓ Target 14.5 is a subset of Target 14.2 and is covered by the same range of organizations and is supported by a wide range of capacity building activities;
- ✓ Target 14.6 is closely allied to Target 14.4 and is the mandate of the same three fisheries organizations; however, given that most fisheries are small-scale, removal of subsidies has not been a high priority in the region;
- ✓ As the WCR has more SIDS than any other region of the world, all regional organizations identify with Target 14.7. Many fisheries activities that contribute to this target are already covered under targets 14.4 and 14.6; however, one area not previously mentioned in which there is some activity is a focus on value added fishery products and better understanding of the value chain;
- ✓ Whereas Target 14a is the specific mandate of IOCARIBE, most organizations claim to have some orientation towards this target;
- ✓ Considering that most fisheries in the WCR are small-scale, Target 14.b is a prominent target for all fisheries organizations, and many of the activities referred to under Target 14.4 are oriented towards this target, e.g. access to resources by small-scale fishers includes safety at seas, shore-based facilities, access to loans, and may even include appropriately targeted subsidies;

- ✓ Target 14.c is a major focus of the CLME+ project and its partner organizations,¹ all of which serve on the CLME+ Project Executive Group and most of which (the IGOs) serve on the Interim Coordinating Mechanism for the CLME+ SAP, which is building a Regional Ocean Governance Framework through a learning-by-doing process.

Many countries, especially small ones, struggle to participate effectively in regional and global processes. Therefore, an effective regional approach needs effective interfaces between countries and regional organizations. GEF International Waters projects require participating countries to have or establish national level cross-sectoral coordinating mechanisms (termed Interministerial Committees (IMCs) or National Intersectoral Coordinating Mechanisms (NICs)). There is considerable scope for strengthening NICs in the WCR. Few countries, despite being clearly conscious of the 2030 agenda, reported having a clearly established intersectoral coordinating mechanism for SDG14, or for all SDGs. Most countries reported that there were ongoing discussions regarding setting up such a mechanism.

Needs and Priorities

The geopolitical diversity of the Wider Caribbean Region presents a wide range of opportunities to support SDG14 implementation at the regional level or through programs led by regional organizations that support implementation at the national level. The key needs relate to in-country financial and human capacity, governance and political will, technical requirements for monitoring data collection and analysis, institutional issues, and socio-economic and cultural realities. Recognizing that most of these challenges cannot be addressed at the national level, the need to adopt a regional approach has been endorsed by most countries in the form of the CLME+ SAP.

While regional organizations recognize the importance of having ocean issues brought together under the SDG14 targets, these organizations and their member countries have been addressing these issues on an ongoing basis for decades, and are continuing to do so. Consequently, when asked what is needed to support SDG14 implementation, their response is: “more support for what we have been doing and must continue doing”. Organizations and countries are only just beginning to translate their previous activities into an SDG14 frame of reference. Assistance with this translation is an area of opportunity that would facilitate the development of an SDG14 perspective and monitoring progress towards targets.

There is also growing awareness that ocean and coastal issues need a holistic, integrated, ecosystem approach at both national and regional levels. At the national level, despite the requirement of a NIC by the CLME+ SAP, and an oceans committee by IOCARIBE, countries

¹ UNEP-CEP, CRFM, OSPESCA, WECAFC, IOCARIBE, OECS, CARICOM, CANARI and UWI (CERMES).

have been slow to establish and strengthen these bodies, which could also serve to coordinate SDG14 implementation. Programmatic support for national level integration mechanisms for SDG14 is therefore an area of opportunity.

At the regional level the need for a coordination mechanism for oceans, as a critical component of the emerging regional ocean governance framework, has been emphasized throughout this report. Such a mechanism can play a key role in putting oceans on the agendas of the regional multipurpose organizations, and also in promoting uptake at the national level, in the way that is being accomplished in the OECS Sub region. The mechanism could also coordinate SDG14 implementation and collaborate with ECLAC in ensuring that progress towards targets is monitored and reported upon.

At the regional level, support is needed for a range of regional ocean governance framework building activities such as developing the lateral interactions among organizations that share responsibility for critical issues. Collaboration among fisheries organizations is a prime example. Despite the progress with information sharing made through the Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism established under the CLME+ SAP, alignment of programs and collaborative activities have been slow in getting started. Furthermore, there is the need to determine how this initiative will be sustained after the CLME+ Project. However, the need for interaction goes far beyond fisheries to include environment, tourism and shipping.

Even taking a regional approach, there is considerable variation among the countries comprising the various sub regions in the WCR. Consequently opportunities vary among sub regions. Strengthening sub regional initiatives is an opportunity for supporting SDG14 implementation.

Overall, it is recommended that efforts to support implementation and monitoring of SDG14 targets be aligned with CLME+ SAP activities and foster sustainability of this initiative. There are numerous areas identified in the SAP that could not be funded with the GEF funding available. These provide an opportunity for support of SDG14 implementation in the WCR that build sustainable capacity.

While there are substantial challenges to be overcome in the implementation of SDG14 within the WCR, the opportunities for overcoming them by taking a harmonized regional approach are substantial. For almost two decades, the countries of the WCR have been making a concerted effort to understand and ultimately address the consequences arising from the legacy of fragmented regional governance arrangements for living marine resources. Engagement of these organizations in CLME+ SAP implementation in the WCR offers considerable potential for integration of ocean affairs into regional sustainable development policy.

1 Introduction

In September 2015, the international community adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including a dedicated Ocean SDG: “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” (SDG14)². The implementation of this SDG and related targets is first and foremost the responsibility of the national authorities. States must transpose these commitments into standards and policies, establish monitoring mechanisms and provide regular reporting on actions undertaken. In light of the transboundary nature of the marine environment and interdependencies between the Agenda’s targets and goals, the implementation of the Ocean SDG will fall short of the transformative ambition of the Agenda 2030 without effective coordination at the regional level. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1 recognizes “the importance of the regional and sub regional dimensions (...) in sustainable development” and draws attention to the regional level with regard to the follow-up and review process. In the different marine regions, stakeholders should therefore build and strengthen cooperation for the implementation of the Ocean SDG.

In ‘Horizons 2030: Equality at the Centre of Sustainable Development’ (ECLAC 2016a) which ECLAC presented at its thirty-sixth session (Mexico City, May 2016), the Commission focused on implementing the vision outlined in the document in Latin America and the Caribbean. The resulting discussions led to the identification of implementation challenges and opportunities, along with key policy recommendations and tools to achieve the 2030 Agenda and set the pattern for sustainable and inclusive development in the region. At the same session, the member countries³ adopted resolution 700 (XXXVI) establishing the Forum of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, as a regional mechanism to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its means of implementation, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (ECLAC 2016b).

The benefits to be derived from regional partnerships in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and specifically SDG14, have been increasingly recognized, both within the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) and globally. Some of these benefits are highlighted in IASS Policy Brief 1/2017 in the following statement:

“Over the last four decades regional organizations and mechanisms have proved to be effective in fostering marine conservation and sustainable ocean management. They are a cornerstone of marine ecosystem-based management, the best-known practice to facilitate long-term sustainability, and have frequently succeeded in

² United Nations General Assembly. 2015. A/RES/70/1 - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available online at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

³ See <http://www.cepal.org/en/estados-miembros> for a list of the 45 member States of ECLAC.

securing greater commitments by States and stakeholders than global instruments. Their inclusive nature facilitates cooperation among national and local stakeholders, fosters peer-to-peer learning, and invites the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes, allowing for the ecological, economic, political, and cultural characteristics of marine regions to inform policy and practice” (IASS, 2017).

This report presents the findings of a scoping report on the potential contribution of regional ocean governance towards the implementation of SDG14 in the Wider Caribbean Region. Section 2 presents an overview of the Wider Caribbean Region in terms of its geopolitical context and the major ocean-related issues confronting the region. Section 3 highlights the existing legal and institutional frameworks for the conservation and sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea, including regional conventions and organizations, main projects, and stakeholders within and across the wider Caribbean. Section 4 provides a preliminary assessment of the positions and current activities of the Caribbean States and other key stakeholders within the region on the implementation of SDG14. Section 5 focuses on priorities, needs, possible options, approaches and steps towards a regionally harmonized implementation of SDG14. Section 6 discusses possible opportunities for advancing good practice relevant for SDG14 implementation at the regional level.

2 Overview of the Wider Caribbean Region

2.1 Geopolitical background

The WCR, as defined in the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (UNEP 1983) and subsequently adopted by several regional initiatives, extends from the northeast coast of Brazil to Cape Hatteras and includes all coastal States in between (Figure 1). It is one of the most geopolitically complex regions in the world, comprised of both independent countries and overseas territories of metropolitan States (Mahon et al. 2010, UNEP/CEP 2012). Its countries, some 28 continental and small island developing States (SIDS), and a further 16 territories of metropolitan States, range from among the largest to the smallest, the richest to the poorest and the most developed to the least developed (Fanning et al. 2009) (Appendix 1). There is a complex colonial legacy from European countries, including five official languages in the region (English, Spanish, French, Dutch and Portuguese) as well as indigenous cultural elements (Trouillot 1992).

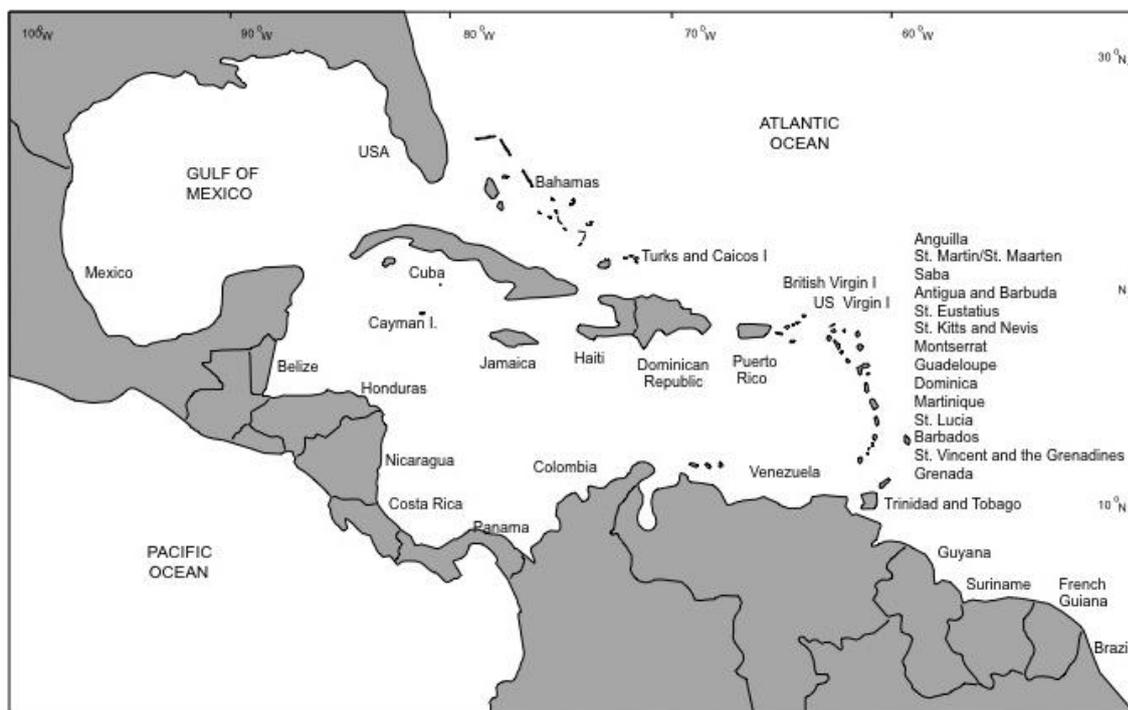


Figure 1: The Wider Caribbean Region (source: authors)

Numerous studies and assessments specific to the sustainability of the marine ecosystem goods and services in the WCR have been undertaken over the past two decades (for example Agard et al. 2007, Bueno et al. 2008, Chakalall et al. 1998, Chakalall et al. 2007, Dunn et al. 2010, Fanning et al. 2013, Mahon and Escobar 2009, Mahon and Fanning 2016, Mahon and McConney 2004, Mahon et al. 2009, Singh and Mee 2008, UNEP 2012). Efforts targeted at assessing the root causes underlying the declining quality of these regionally-

shared ecosystem benefits and its consequences on the people in the WCR have pointed to weak and/or ineffective governance at the transboundary level. Other factors identified in the causal chain analysis included: limited human and financial resources; inadequate knowledge; inadequate public awareness and participation; inadequate consideration of the value of ecosystem goods and services; population and cultural pressures; and trade and external dependency (CLME 2011; CLME 2013; Mahon et al. 2011, 2014; Mahon and Fanning 2016).

2.2 Key issues in the WCR

As with other coastal regions around the world, many living marine resources in the WCR are in crisis (CLME 2011; Mahon et al. 2014). In addition to the growing concern over declining fish stocks for employment and food, pressures from the tourism industry, an economic mainstay for many countries in the region, have increased demand for both seafood and increased coastal development (Mahon et al. 2009). Offshore pelagic fishes, reef fishes, lobster, conch, shrimps, continental shelf demersal fishes, deep slope and bank fishes and coastal pelagic fishes are among the most important in the WCR. These types of fisheries vary widely in level of exploitation, vessel and gear used, and approach to their development and management. It has been noted that most coastal resources are considered to have been overexploited for several decades (FAO 1997; Mahon and McConney 2004). Likewise, the loss of biodiversity and degrading coral reefs from both natural and human activities have led to a diminished capacity to protect against climate induced impacts such as sea level rise and increasing frequency and intensity of storms (Burke et al. 2004).

Marine-based tourism is a major contributor to the economy in many Caribbean countries. Analysis by the World Travel and Tourism Council for the region in 2016 showed total contribution of travel and tourism in terms of economic impact (direct, indirect and induced) to be 14.9% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with many of the island States having a much greater dependence than reflected in the average for the region. For example, analysis indicated the contribution to be 30.3 % to GDP for Jamaica, Barbados, 39.9 %, The Bahamas 44.8 %, Antigua & Barbuda, 60.4 % of GDP and Aruba, a staggering 88.4 % of GDP (WTTC, 2017). In addition to the linkage to seafood for the industry, healthy marine ecosystems are critical for tourism (Barker 2002; Christie et al. 2015; Gopal et al. 2015; Debels et al. 2016). As noted by Barker (2002):

“The hallmarks of Caribbean tourism – living coral reefs, brightly-colored fish, clear water and clean sandy beaches – are components of healthy marine ecosystems that are easily damaged or destroyed by the ‘tourism development’ activities that depend on them. These marine ecosystems extend to and include seagrass beds, muddy estuaries and mangrove forests, which often experience ‘collateral damage’ from tourist-oriented residential and commercial development along prime beaches as they are cleared for use or polluted by untreated municipal wastes”.

However, there has been limited engagement of the tourism industry in marine ecosystem management apart from the establishment of adjacent marine protected areas (MPAs) at some hotel sites. The latter are primarily those established and managed by Sandals in Jamaica with the dual aims of supporting adjacent fisheries and providing good snorkeling conditions for hotel guests. The generally poor involvement by the tourism sector is thought to reflect a lack of awareness and priority given to the connections between marine ecosystems and the services they provide to tourism (Mahon et al. 2014).

Both chronic and acute contamination and the potential for significant accidents are major sources of concern for the marine ecosystems of the region given the amount of oil and gas exploration, extraction and transportation along the north coast of South America (primarily from Venezuela, the third largest producer of oil and gas in the western hemisphere, and Trinidad & Tobago) and in the Gulf of Mexico where Mexico and the US rank as the fourth and second largest oil and gas producer in the western hemisphere (CIA, 2017). Production from the Gulf of Mexico accounts for 17 % of the US total crude oil production, 45 % of its petroleum refining capacity and 51 % of its natural gas processing plant capacity (USEIA 2017). Additionally, with its many major ports and the access through the Panama Canal, the area is one of the most heavily used for trans-shipment of cargo and by cruise vessels. Thus there is considerable concern about the impacts of ship-generated waste on marine ecosystems of the region. Given the strong currents and narrow passages between islands, there is also concern about the risk of contamination from shipping accidents, especially from vessels transporting petroleum products and nuclear waste.

The consequences of these and other anthropogenic drivers on the ongoing provision of marine ecosystem goods and services, essential to achieving the sustainable development aspirations of the WCR, have been the topic of much discussion within the region at the technical, political and wider societal level (Fanning et al. 2011; Mahon et al. 2014; Debels et al. 2016; Patil et al. 2016). The importance of ocean resources to the region's well-being and development is widely acknowledged in these and other reports. As noted in the 2016 World Bank report, "these drivers of change in the status of the Caribbean Sea's natural capital assets constitute an important constraint and significant risk to the potential growth of the region's ocean economy, similar to the risks to the global ocean economy (OECD 2016)." (Patil et al. 2016). In some cases the decline of these assets may prevent sectors and industries from reaching their potential in the region, for others it may create regulatory uncertainty that also presents a significant risk. For example, impacts of coastal development and pollution on coral reef ecosystems can directly impact the tourism sector of the region's ocean economy, and reduce the net benefits that it can generate for poverty reduction and economic growth. Similarly, the countries in the region are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and the increasing frequency and strength of hurricanes and other natural disasters (Ansuategi et al. 2015).

3 Existing Legal and Institutional Frameworks for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Caribbean Sea

Caribbean Sea ecosystems are highly interconnected, and the transboundary nature of the major issues affecting the marine resources in the region has resulted in the countries recognizing the need for effective management of their shared resources. This is evidenced by a commitment from many of the countries to participate in a number of global and regional multi-lateral environmental agreements (Table 1). The critical issues include:

- ✓ Overfished/declining fish stocks;
- ✓ Loss of habitat and biodiversity;
- ✓ Marine and land-based sources of pollution;
- ✓ Invasive species, primarily lionfish;
- ✓ Climate change impacts.

Several international and regional agreements have been adopted by Caribbean Member State to improve governance of ocean resources. The global agreements of relevance to SDG14 include the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity; the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); the 1973/78 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), with its six annexes; the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) governing straddling and highly migratory stocks.

Table 1. Country membership in global and regional marine agreements relevant to the Wider Caribbean Region

Coastal countries in the WCR	Agreements																			
	UNCLOS	UN FSA	UNFCC	CBD	FAO Compliance	MARPOL 73/78					Cartagena				CRFM	ICCAT	OLDEPESCA	OSPESCA	WECAFC	IAC
						Annex I/II	Annex III	Annex IV	Annex V	Annex VI Protocol 97	Convention	Oil Spills Protocol	LBS Protocol	SPAW Protocol						
Antigua and Barbuda	B		B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		N	N	C	
Bahamas	B	B	B	B		B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B		N	N	C		
Barbados	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		N	C		
Belize	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	C	B	
Brazil	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	N	N	N	N	N	B			C	
Colombia	B	B		B		B	B	B	B		B	B		B	N			N	C	
Costa Rica	B	B	B	B							B	B			N		B	B	C	B
Cuba	B	B		B		B			B		B	B		B	N		B	N	C	
Dominica	B	B		B		B	B		B		B	B		B			N	N	C	
Dominican Republic	B	B		B		B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	N			B	C	
France	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	N	B	N	N	C	
Grenada	B	B		B							B	B	B	B	B			N	C	
Guatemala	B	B		B		B	B	B	B		B	B			N	B		B	C	B
Guyana	B	B		B		B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B		B		C	
Haiti	B	B		B							B				B			N	C	
Honduras	B	B		B		B			B		B				N	B	B	B	C	B
Jamaica	B	B		B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B			B			N	C	
Mexico	B	B		B	B	B			B		B	B		C	N	B	B	N	C	B
Netherlands ⁴	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	N		N	N	C	
Nicaragua	B	B		B		B	B	B	B		B	B			N	B	B	B	C	C
Panama	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	N	B		B	C	B
St. Kitts and Nevis	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B			B		N	N	C	
Saint Lucia	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B		N	N	C	
St. Vincent and Grenadines	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	N	N	C	
Suriname	B	B	B			B	B	B	B						B				C	
Trinidad and Tobago	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B		N	C	
United Kingdom ⁵	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B			B	B	N	N	C	
United Kingdom (Montserrat)	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B					B	B	N	N	C	
United States ⁶		B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	N	B	N	N	C	B
Venezuela		B	B				B	B	B	B	B	B		B	N	B	B	N	C	B
% engagement											93	85	37	52	100	52	44	100	92	30

B = a binding commitment to the agreement by ratification, accession, acceptance or adoption
C = agreement to cooperate by signing
N = country not eligible to join this agreement.
Some agreements can be ratified and have potential to be all Bs, others can only be signed

⁴ Netherlands Antilles including St. Maarten, Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Eustatius

⁵ United Kingdom Overseas Territories including Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands.

⁶ This also includes two US territories: Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands

3.1 Key transboundary instruments

The key sub-global/regional transboundary instruments that address ocean affairs in the WCR are:

1. Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) – a Regional Seas convention with three protocols and its initial action plan:
 - a. Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region which was also adopted in 1983 and entered into force on 11 October 1986;
 - b. Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the Wider Caribbean Region which was adopted on 18 January 1990. The Protocol entered into force on 18 June 2000;
 - c. Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) which was adopted on 6 October 1999. The Protocol entered into force on 13 August 2010;
 - d. Caribbean Action Plan, of UNEP Caribbean Environmental Programme (1981)
2. The International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).
3. Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) establishing agreement and Common Fisheries Policy.
4. Organization for Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPECA) establishing agreement.
5. Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC) establishing agreement.
6. Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA) establishing agreement.
7. IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IIOCARIBE) establishing agreement.
8. Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC).
9. UN General Assembly's (UNGA) resolution A/C.2/67/L.41, 'Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations.'
10. The Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+ SAP).

3.2 Regional organizations

Various regional organizations play a crucial role in implementing the above-stated agreements. There is considerable variation in scope, capacity and resources to effectively implement and monitor effectiveness. Altogether, there are over 26 regional organizations in the WCR whose activities are relevant to the SDG14 targets. Twelve are indigenous intergovernmental organizations, five are regional bodies of United Nations Agencies, one is an independent RFMO and eight are regional NGOs, including the University of the West Indies (Appendix 2). The activities of some organizations address only their member countries (e.g. OECS, CARICOM and associated agencies), while others have broader geographical mandates that overlap the WCR (e.g. ICCAT, OLDEPESCA). Some organizations also have responsibility for the Pacific Ocean areas of their member countries.

3.2.1 Regional integrating organizations and associated bodies

At the overarching level, there are four regional political integration organizations in the WCR. In 1973, 12 former British colonies within the region, subsequently joined by Suriname and Haiti, formed the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), an economic bloc that allows for the implementation of common approaches and collaboration regarding, among others, the use and exploitation of marine resources within the maritime domain of member States. CARICOM has several associated bodies with mandates specific to SDG14, for example the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) (see Appendix 2 for others).

Ten island nations in the Eastern Caribbean, all CARICOM Member States, established the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in 1981 with the Treaty of Basseterre. The Treaty was revised in 2010 and stipulates in Article 4.2(o) that the OECS Economic Union shall pursue a common policy for “matters relating to the sea and its resources”. In 2013, the highest decision making body of the Union (the Authority) approved and adopted the Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy (ECROP) to promote a common approach to ocean governance in all member States and further mandated that each member develop the national ocean policy to support the regional policy. The competency for the implementation of the Oceans program including ECROP was given to the OECS Commission. The ECROP has a number of priorities and goals, of which many find synergy with the SDGs. For the remaining (non-OECS) CARICOM countries, the CARICOM Secretariat has not pursued ocean policy as intensively as the OECS.

In 2014, implementation of ECROP commenced and to date the following has been achieved: (i) a structure for research has been developed to strengthen the science policy interface (including a marine research strategy, a code of conduct for responsible marine research, a data platform to support greater access to information, and a guideline of marine standards); (ii) an OECS Ocean Governance Team (OGT) has been established, comprising one nominated representative of each member State who supports the connectivity and articulated the needs on behalf of the state; (iii) and five National Ocean

Policies have been developed (Patil et al. 2016).

Parallel to the efforts of the mainly English-speaking CARICOM and OECS countries, the seven primarily Spanish-speaking countries in Central America, as well as the Dominican Republic, established a political integration organization, the Central American Integration System/Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA). While SICA may be considered analogous to CARICOM, it differs in the greater degree of authority delegated to it by its Member States to make sub-regional level decisions and the binding requirement for its members to enact the national legislation needed to implement the decisions. An example of this authority is the closed season regulation for lobster harvesting (OSP-02-09) entitled “Regional Regulation of Caribbean Lobster Fishing (*Panulirus argus*)”, issued by the Organization for Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA) under the authority of SICA and signed by the governments of the isthmus on May 21, 2009. In this example, all Member States of SICA/OSPECA are bound to implement the regulations, unlike Member States of CARICOM who generally do not grant the regional organisation such delegated authority.

The fourth regional integration body is the Association of Caribbean States, comprising all countries in the region with the exception of the United States of America. Its focal areas are: (a) The preservation and conservation of the Caribbean Sea; (b) sustainable tourism; (c) trade and economic external relations; (d) natural disasters; and (e) transport. The first of these focal areas is particularly relevant to SDG14. It was first pursued through the Caribbean Sea Initiative (CSI) when ACS Member States tabled a proposal at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1999, calling for designation of the Caribbean Sea, as a ‘special area,’ within the context of sustainable development (ECLAC 2002, Berry 2014, p. 342). The UNGA did not endorse the proposal. Instead it adopted a variation as Resolution A/RES/54/225, ‘Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea within the context of sustainable development,’ which emphasized the need for an integrated approach to ocean governance in the WCR (Parris 2016). This resolution has been revised and renewed every two years; most recently in 2016 (UNGA 2017).

In 2007 the ACS established its Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) to promote and oversee the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea in accordance with the UNGA Resolution. The objective of the CSC is ‘to carry out the strategic planning and technical follow-up work for the advancement of the Caribbean Sea Initiative and to formulate a practical and action-oriented work programme for the further development and implementation of the Initiative’. The CSC comprises three sub commissions (technical and scientific, governance, and legal). It continues to pursue the concept of making the Caribbean Sea a ‘special area’. It has also been pursuing its mandate of carrying out practical activities, but has been hampered by a lack of funds and a full-time staff. In 2015 with the appointment of a Program Coordinator activity increased.

3.2.2 UN agencies

There are five regional bodies of UN agencies with specific mandates for SDG14 related activities that are based in the WCR. The first is the UN Environment-Caribbean Environmental Programme Regional Coordinating Unit which is the secretariat for the Cartagena Convention and its protocols. The protocols pertain the oil pollution, land-based sources of pollution, marine protected areas and marine biodiversity conservation in general. It also has a mandate to promote implementation of the CBD, Ramsar Convention and Highly Migratory Species Convention in the WCR. Its membership includes all countries except Brazil.

The FAO Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission is an Article VI (FAO Constitution) RFB. It has had a variety of working groups and activities since its inception in 1978 (Renard and Chakalall 2009). However, these have all been in the area of generating and sharing information and advice. Over the years there have been several efforts to upgrade it to an RFMO (Article XIV). At its most recent meeting in 2016, the Commission ‘agreed to launch a process to establish an RFMO and to clarify issues in relation to competency area, stocks coverage, budgetary implications for Members, institutional structure, membership, decision making processes, national sovereignty aspects, its objectives and any other relevant matters’ (FAO 2016).

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has a sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Trinidad and Tobago. Its focus has been on assisting States with monitoring and reporting on targets and with national level institutional arrangements for SDGs; in particular an integrated approach to the SDGs. At its workshop in 2016 it prioritized SDG target according to relevance to member countries and data availability. Only targets 14.4 (focusing on IUU fishing and restoration of fish stocks) and 14.5 (conservation of 10 % of coastal and marine areas by 2020) were assigned high priority. It will be closely engaged in the Regional Sustainable Development Forum described in section 4.1.3.

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE) seeks to implement IOC’s mandate in the WCR. It has implemented a number of science and information sharing projects in the region, including the Caribbean Marine Atlas. It is also responsible for promoting ocean acidification monitoring in the WCR. Its work programme was recently approved at the biennial commission meeting on April 26-28, 2017 (IOCARIBE in press) with a focus on capacity building.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has a Regional presence office in Trinidad that covers mainly CARICOM countries. In 2010 the Caribbean recently became a MARPOL (MARPOL Annex V) special area (IMO 2010). IMO is pursuing development of a Caribbean

Memorandum of Understanding (CMOU) of the Port State Control, which has been signed by 16 countries and has 1 associate member. The Secretariat is in Jamaica.

3.2.3 NGOs, research institutes and universities

There are numerous NGOs at the national level or operating across a few countries. These are too numerous to enumerate. However, despite this there are few indigenous regional NGOs in the WCR. The most prominent of these are: (a) the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), which focuses on community involvement in management and has a coastal and marine programme; (b) The Confederation of Artisanal Fishers of Central America (CONFEPESCA), and (c) The Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CFNO). The latter two seek to promote representation of fishers in regional fisheries matters in Central America and CARICOM (McConney et al. 2016). Two other regional NGOs contribute to coordination and information sharing: (a) The Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean (AMLC) which provides a forum for exchange of information among laboratories, and (b) the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, in operation since 1948, which hosts an annual, well-attended conference the proceedings of which are one of the primary sources of fisheries information in the region. Most of the NGOs operating in the WCR are regional arms of larger, even global NGOs. Notable are The Nature Conservancy (TNC), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and Conservation International (CI) all of which have programs related to SDG14 targets.

Indigenous regional NGOs have an important role to play in strengthening regional governance, especially those, such as the fisher associations, that facilitate stakeholder engagement from the local to regional levels in a legitimate and transparent way. Efforts to build capacity of these organizations where they exist, and to encourage their formation where they do not, should be considered.

There are many marine laboratories and research institutes in the WCR. AMLC membership is 33 and several laboratories are not members. These research institutes are associated with government ministries, Caribbean universities and overseas universities and institutions such as McGill University and the Smithsonian Institution. There are also numerous national level universities and colleges. However, the majority of these are concentrated in a few countries: namely the USA, Mexico and Colombia.

3.2.4 Projects

There are several projects that are regional or sub-regional in scope that should be considered in the context of SDG14 implementation and monitoring. It should be noted that there are many national and multilateral projects funded by a wide range of donors. However, the following are considered to be among the significant regional ones.

3.2.4.1 Caribbean Challenge Initiative

The Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI) is a coalition of governments, companies and partners working together to accelerate action on the marine and coastal environment. Founded in 2008 by a group of Caribbean governments to enhance the conservation of their marine and coastal resources, the CCI has since grown to include private sector membership and garner over US \$75 million in funding commitments. CCI Governments and territories signed a CCI Leaders Declaration in May 2013 committing them to protect and conserve 20% of their marine and coastal resources by 2020⁷ (supporting Target 14.5).

3.2.4.2 Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program (CMBP)

The overall objective of this ISAID funded project is “to reduce threats to marine-coastal biodiversity in priority areas in the Caribbean, including high biodiversity ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds, in order to achieve sustained biodiversity conservation, maintain critical ecosystem services, and realize tangible improvements in human wellbeing for communities adjacent to marine protected areas.” CMBP involves actions at four geographic scales: site, seascape, national, and regional, and specifically targets seven priority marine protected areas (MPAs) within four Caribbean priority seascapes (Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic and Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines). The Program extends from 2014-2019.

3.2.4.3 Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystem Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (GEF IWECO)

GEF-IWECO is a five-year (2016-2021) regional multi-focal area project with a GEF cash allocation of USD 20,722,572 and a total budget of USD 88.7 million including cash and in-kind co-financing. There are 10 participating Caribbean countries. It is being coexecuted by UNEP-CEP and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). The project’s primary goal is the implementation of an integrated approach to water, land and ecosystems services management, supported by policy, institutional and legislative reforms, and implementation of effective appropriate technologies to accelerate contribution to global targets on access to safe and reliable water supplies. The pollution reduction aspect of this project will be directly relevant to target 14.1.⁸

The project objective is to contribute to the preservation of Caribbean ecosystems that are of global significance and the sustainability of livelihoods through the application of existing proven technologies and approaches that are appropriate for small island developing States through improved fresh and coastal water resources management, sustainable land

⁷ <http://caribbeanchallengeinitiative.org/>

⁸ <http://www.cep.unep.org/gef-projects>.

management and sustainable forest management that also seek to enhance resilience of socio-ecological systems to the impacts of climate change.

3.2.4.4 GEF Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) Project

The CLME+ Project is focused on an Ecosystem Approach to governance of transboundary living marine resources in the WCR. It covers the full range of SDG14 targets, but with emphasis of target 14.c. Countries of the region have been working on addressing transboundary governance (with the support of the GEF) through two development phases (1998-1999, 2006-2008) and two full phases (2009-2013, 2015-2020) of the CLME and adjacent areas project covering the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf LMEs. This has included transboundary diagnostic analyses (TDAs) for the three fishery ecosystems and for governance (CLME Project 2011, Heileman 2011, Mahon et al. 2011, Phillips 2011), and the preparation of a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) as a roadmap for improved ocean governance 2015-2025 (CLME+ Project 2013)⁹. The SAP is signed at Ministerial level by 25 countries in the region. All the major regional organizations with responsibility for aspects of EBM of oceans are engaged in SAP implementation, as are all the countries that have signed.¹⁰

Implementation of the 10-year (SAP) commenced in 2015 (CLME 2013, Debels et al. 2016). The SAP is structured around a Regional Ocean Governance Framework which seeks to enhance governance efforts under six strategic themes. These are identified as arrangements aimed at the protection of the marine environment, sustainable fisheries, development of a regional policy coordinating mechanism for living marine resources, ecosystem based management of reefs and associated ecosystems, pelagic ecosystems and continental shelf ecosystems (CLME+ Project 2013, Debels et al. 2017). It is notable that GEF funding can only serve to catalyze SAP implementation and is insufficient to cover full implementation; the project must therefore include a great deal of partnership building. Indeed, all regional organizations are bringing a considerable amount of support for the SAP in the form of core activities and projects funded from other sources.

3.3 Complexity of the regional ocean governance framework and the need for coordination and integration

The complexity of the institutional frameworks for oceans is illustrated in Figure 2, which illustrates the current framework for the fisheries sector. The overlapping membership of the many bodies and sub-bodies with responsibility for fisheries results in the potential for

⁹ <http://www.clmeplus.org/>

¹⁰ The extensive research that has been done to develop the SAP can be found at <http://www.clmeproject.org/> and at <http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/cermes/projects/lme-governance.aspx>

significant gaps and overlaps in coverage of relevant issues. It also underscores the need for coordination among regional organizations. If one includes all the organizations with SDG14 responsibility in other sectors the picture is even more complex and coordination will clearly be challenging.

The need for an overarching coordinating mechanism for ocean governance in the WCR has frequently been noted. Promoting coordinated ocean governance at the regional level that is well connected to national and global efforts has been a primary aim of the CLME Project since the CLME PDFB phase elaborated the Large Marine Ecosystem Governance Framework (Fanning et al. 2007). This approach was supported by causal chain analyses conducted in the TDAs and led to the elaboration of a Regional Ocean Governance Framework, with an overarching coordinating mechanism for ocean governance, as a basis for the SAP (Mahon et al. 2013, 2014, CLME+ Project 2013).

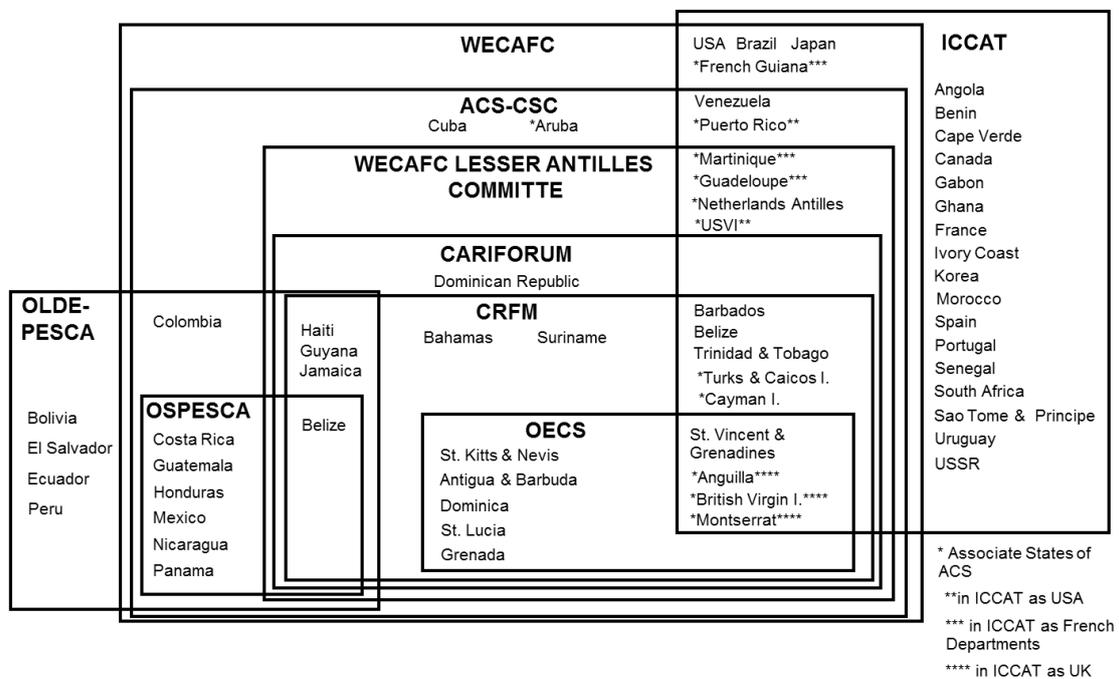


Figure 2. Institutional scale overlapping and nested fisheries-related organizations

Given its broad membership, the CSC has often been seen as an ideal body to undertake the overarching coordinating role for ocean governance (ACS/CERMES-UWI 2010, Parris 2013, Mahon et al, 2014). This role was explored and developed at a regional consultation in 2010 (ACS/CERMES-UWI 2010) and further endorsed by a report commissioned by the ACS (Daniels 2014). It was also explicitly proposed in the draft Strategic Action Programme (SAP) of the first CLME Project. However, the USA indicated that it would not support the SAP with such an objective and the SAP was redrafted to indicate that a coordinating mechanism would be researched and proposed in the next phase (Mahon et al. 2014). As yet the CSC

has not explicitly sought to adopt this critical role among regional organizations despite being uniquely positioned to do so and having received their endorsement to do so.

The current status as regards coordination is that the CLME+ Project is establishing an Interim Coordinating Mechanism (ICM) to play this role, while the most appropriate form for the permanent mechanism is developed during the current phase of the project. The ICM will be based on MOUs among organizations as was announced on Oceans Day 2017 in Costa Rica and at the UN Oceans Conference in New York, in June 2017. The aim is to have the permanent mechanism established by the end of the current CLME+ Project phase in 2020. Supporting the ICM is a regional coordinating mechanism for fisheries that connects CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC in the context of the CLME Project (there is also an MOU between CRFM and OSPESCA). OLDEPESCA is minimally connected with the fisheries organizations in the WCR. None of the fisheries arrangements are well connected with ICCAT, although CRFM participates in ICCAT meetings on behalf of CARICOM countries. The arrangements for pollution and biodiversity that fall under the Cartagena Convention are connected via the CEP, and have links to CARPHA and CCAM, but do not appear well connected with fisheries or with the IAC.

Clearly, the fact that coordination efforts are contained within a regional project of finite duration presents a risk that efforts will not be sustained after the end of the Project. This is despite the fact that the SAP has been signed by 25 countries and is essentially a formal multilateral agreement, even though it has not been lodged with the UN. While there may be another phase of the CLME+ Project, there is no guarantee that funding will be available from the GEF. Therefore, sustainability of the ground gained in regional ocean governance over the past 20 years must be a major focus in this phase of the CLME+ Project.

4 Preliminary Assessment of Current Activities of Caribbean States and Other Key Stakeholders

For the majority of countries in the region, the high and increasing exposure to hazards, dependence on coastal and marine resources, combined with very open and trade-dependent economies with limited diversification and competitiveness portray a structurally and environmentally vulnerable region, composed, in the most part, of middle income countries (UNDP 2016). The importance of building the shared capacity needed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has been highlighted in many fora since its launch at the United Nations in September 2015. Countries in the WCR recognize the increasing role that regional authorities and civil society organizations, with support from donor agencies, must play in boosting resilience and increasing gains in the economic, social and environmental domains.

In addressing the resources needed to implement Goal 14, focusing on ocean health and human dependence on coastal and marine ecosystems, WCR countries have emphasized that success can only be accomplished by taking a multidimensional and holistic approach that recognizes the linkages and synergies to be found in the remaining 16 SDGs. The full suite of SDGs associated with the Agenda provide the opportunity for countries to gauge the starting point from which they set out towards this new, collective vision of sustainable development. It also allows for countries to analyze and craft the means of its implementation (ECLAC, 2016a).

4.1 Key Regional Level Activities Linked to SDG14

4.1.1 United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework

The major regional level activity relating to the assessment of a baseline to gauge the current status and subsequent implementation of efforts aimed at achieving the full suite of SDGs in the region is the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UN MSDF) for the Caribbean. This effort is limited to the 18 English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries and Overseas Territories for the period 2017-2021 and defines how the UN will jointly achieve development results in partnership with these countries and their associated regional level organizations (UN 2016). The countries covered are Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Aruba, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Commonwealth of Dominica, Curaçao, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The framework aims to ensure that no one is left behind in national development efforts, and exemplifies the commonly-shared belief that the similar development challenges of the Caribbean countries require a coherent and coordinated response by the UN.

National consultation had an important role in the development of the UN MSDF. The consultations were held in 15 countries using the Common Multi-Country Assessment (CMCA) as the basis for discussions, and provided opportunities for strategic alignment between UN activities and national priorities, as well as a space for countries to validate the CMCA and identify national priorities that the UN could address. The national consultations expanded on the principle that no one should be left behind, which is an integral tenet of the SDGs, and the results identified the common challenges faced by the countries. The challenges were grouped into four areas: climate change and environment; economic and social development; health and crime; and justice and citizen security. The consultations concluded that by joining efforts and resources to deal with these issues, the benefits to countries could be maximized.

In December 2015, a Strategic Planning Retreat (SPR), involving representatives of the 15 participating countries and other key stakeholders, provided an opportunity for validation of the priorities that were identified during the national consultations for inclusion in the MSDF. The SPR also:

- ✓ Developed draft outcome statements for each proposed priority area of the UN MSDF;
- ✓ Provided initial insights into where the UN is positioned to act;
- ✓ discussed the acceleration of progress to fulfill the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs;
- ✓ Gave stakeholders opportunities to simultaneously promote national agendas, and consider and explore regional synergies; and
- ✓ Reiterated the need for a human-centered development approach, with a focus on marginalized persons and those often facing inequitable opportunities, such as women, children, and youth.

At the conclusion of the SPR the four priority areas of the UN MSDF were jointly defined and several outcome statements were tentatively agreed upon. The SPR agreed that core concepts of gender equality, inclusion of youth, and a human rights-based approach to development would be integrated into the four priority areas and outcomes. It was also agreed that the over-arching importance of enhanced, nationally-owned data and statistics to monitor the SDGs must be reiterated in all four priority areas.

One of the four priority areas of the UN MSDF, “A sustainable and resilient Caribbean”, addressed a suite of SDGs that included SDG14 as well as Goals 1 (Poverty), 2 (Hunger), 7 (Energy), 11 (Cities and Communities), 12 (Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Change), and 15 (Life on Land). This priority area focuses on support to strengthen institutional and community resilience at both regional and national levels, in terms of natural resources management; the protection and sustainable use of terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems; renewable energy systems; and inclusive and sustainable societies. It is also based on an integrated approach to the sustainable use and management of the natural resources and ecosystems (UN 2016).

It is important to note that the 2017-2021 UN MSDF defines how the Agencies, Funds, and Programs of the UN will pool their comparative advantages within a single strategic framework that aligns with and supports the overarching strategic goals of the Caribbean's governments and key stakeholders. The expectation is to allow for a focus on common priorities, enhance regional initiatives and collaboration, and enable knowledge sharing and cross-collaboration within the region. To facilitate this, the UN System in the Caribbean will work with committees and institutions established with CARICOM and the OECS to identify sub-regional initiatives and programs for implementation through the UN MSDF.

Regional level coordination for the MSDF is the responsibility of a UN regional Steering Committee comprised of representatives for the UN agencies who will work "to provide Member States with the tools, partnerships, and resources needed to achieve national and sub-regional development priorities, in an inclusive and equitable manner, as reflected in the SDGs." (UN, 2016). National level coordination focuses on delivering sustainable development results in each country of the UN MSDF. The implementation is guided by the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) which is jointly led by the Resident Coordinator and a national government counterpart at strategic level, the latter identified by each national government. A Programme Management Team (PMT) within each country is responsible for developing and implementing country implementation plans or in the case of Barbados and OECS countries, sub-regional implementation plans. The PMT is responsible for monitoring the progress of outcomes of the UN MSDF at the national or sub-regional level.

4.1.2 Moving Towards a Blue Economy

A growing number of Caribbean States have expressed their desire to explore policies for a 'blue economy' in the region, notably during the inaugural Caribbean Region Dialogue with the G20 Development Working Group (Washington, D.C., April 13 2015). The notion of a 'blue economy' is consistent with the principles underlying the SDGs and in particular SDG 14 as it draws on the concept that oceans are development spaces where

"spatial planning integrates conservation, sustainable use, oil and mineral wealth extraction, bioprospecting, sustainable energy production and marine transport. The Blue Economy breaks the mould of the... 'brown' development model where the oceans [are] perceived as [available for] free resource extraction and waste dumping, with costs externalised from economic calculations. The Blue Economy will incorporate ocean values and services into economic modelling and decision-making processes.... [It will provide] a sustainable development framework for developing countries addressing equity in access to, development of and the sharing of benefits from marine resources; offering scope for re-investment in human development and the alleviation of crippling national debt burdens" (UN 2013)

The dialogue was attended by the region’s finance ministers and central bank governors and covered the opportunities and challenges around two interrelated themes: (a) ‘Developing the Blue Economy in the Caribbean’ and (b) ‘Mobilizing Resources’ in support. As the background document to the meeting stated: “by applying a blue economy approach many new opportunities arise for the region, which can create new jobs, achieve a higher rate of growth, reduce poverty, and secure international biodiversity and sustainability obligations” (Roberts 2015). Essentially the countries considered that the transition to a blue economy could contribute toward a number of broader policy objectives captured in the SDGs, including poverty reduction, food security, energy security, disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation, and ocean conservation.

To assist with policies aimed at transitioning to blue economy, governments and development partners have launched a number of regional initiatives to try to better measure and conserve the Caribbean Sea’s natural capital. Key among these is the GEF-funded CLME+ SAP. Additionally, in 2013 nine Caribbean States and territories signed the CCI Leaders Declaration committing to effectively conserve and manage at least 20 percent of the marine and coastal environment by 2020, together with sustainable financing mechanisms established to fund operating costs over the long term (Roberts 2015). These commitments follow a trend in the region to increase various forms of protection of ocean areas, that is, MPAs, with coverage growing from 6,463 square kilometers in 1983 to 143,096 square kilometers by 2014, or some 4 percent of the Caribbean Sea (TWAP 2015).

4.1.3 Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

In May 2016, member countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) established The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. Under the auspices of ECLAC, the Forum is designated as the regional mechanism to follow-up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the goals and targets, its means of implementation, as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The main purpose would be to assess the progress on the regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda based on annual reporting by Member States.

ECLAC’s support to the Forum is focused on four main areas:

- ✓ Support the integration of the SDGs in national development plans and budgets that would encourage the creation of a cross-sectoral and inter-institutional architecture at the highest level to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
- ✓ Strengthen the statistical capacities to measure SDGs through courses, seminars and technical assistance at the regional, national and sub-national levels;
- ✓ Enhance and support the analysis of the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level by aligning the national macroeconomic, social,

industrial and environmental public policies while fostering coalitions among the State, the market and citizens; and

- ✓ Strengthen the regional institutional architecture, which encompasses the work-plans of ECLAC's subsidiary bodies and the UNDG organizations, to ensure holistic support to Member States for its implementation. Furthermore, it would also involve tapping into the existing regional architecture through collaboration with other regional actors (CELAC, CARICOM, UNASUR, etc.) and coordination with other regional United Nations entities in LAC through the regional Coordinating Mechanism.

The first session of the Forum for Countries of LAC on Sustainable Development was convened on the 26-28 April 2017 in Mexico City and featured multi-stakeholder forums, with side events for civil society and the private sector. It also included presentations on national voluntary reviews and reports by ECLAC's subsidiary bodies. At time of writing a final report on the meeting was not yet available.

In preparation for the meeting, questionnaires were sent to National Statistics Offices in 43 Member States and Associate Members of Latin America and the Caribbean. The aim of the survey was to conduct situational country assessments regarding the production of each of more than 200 indicators in the global list. The assessment covered data sources, availability of and access to information to produce indicators, levels of disaggregation, periodicity of data collection, statistical results dissemination, causes of data gaps and technical cooperation requirements related to SDGs measurement.

While not specific to SDG14, preliminary results highlighted the following: 29 countries designated a focal point, 16 countries completed the questionnaire, including 6 countries from the Caribbean region, 14 countries requested an extension of the deadline and 14 countries reported having strengthened their statistical capacities.

Based on the countries that responded, indicators were grouped as 'Being Produced', 'Could be produced', 'need refinement to be produced' and 'data not available'. Further preliminary results revealed data were not available for Caribbean countries that submitted the questionnaire. Countries also noted the following generalized concerns:

- ✓ Internationally agreed-upon methodology had not yet been developed;
- ✓ Lack of agreement at the national level to produce the required indicators,
- ✓ Need for specialised surveys for producing some of the indicators;
- ✓ Lack of financial resources to generate/produce the required indicators on a regular basis;
- ✓ Lack of technical capacity, specialized human resources and technological resources to generate indicators;
- ✓ Lack of disaggregated data, in particular with respect to disability, geographical location, migration status, income, race and ethnicity; and

- ✓ Irregular and non-systematic data collection system.

It is likely that the above issues are also applicable to the monitoring and implementation of indicators proposed for SDG14.

4.1.4 Regional Consultation and Training to Develop a Set of Core Indicators for Monitoring Implementation of SDGs

The Regional Consultation and Training on the Development of a set of Core Indicators for Monitoring Implementation of the SDGs and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway) was held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on 6-9 December, 2016. The meeting was a collaborative initiative of the CARICOM Secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Sub-regional Headquarters, Port of Spain and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Sustainable Development Division in New York.

The overall objective of this meeting was to support Caribbean SIDS to identify from among the Tier I/II global SDG indicators a minimum core set to monitor implementation of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway in the Caribbean, which was a recommendation that emanated from the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the CARICOM Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS). This need for an agreed set of core indicators by Caribbean SIDS arose following agreement at the United Nations for a global framework to monitor progress of the SDGs and the subsequent identification of some 230 indicators by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IEAG-SDG), corresponding all 17 SDGs and their 169 targets.¹¹

The CARICOM Secretariat convened its first e-meeting in January 2016 to refine the recommendations by Member States on the list of indicators and a second e-meeting was also convened in February 2016 which served to complete the work of the January e-meeting. The outcomes were sent out to countries including those representing the WCR at the global groups reviewing/planning on the SDGs. Of the list of indicators proposed by the IEAG-SDG for SDG14 (Appendix 3), only a small subset appear to be ranked by as core indicators at this time by the countries (Appendix 4). However, it was recognized that the draft core list would need to be reviewed by the technical focal points of respective areas and that similar discussions would need to take place at the national level in order encourage ownership by the countries. Furthermore, regional bodies such as CARICOM will no doubt continue to provide advice to their member countries on the developing core set of indicators as well as reporting on progress on the indicators, measurement, capacity-building needs, etc. to the various Councils of CARICOM and its subsidiary bodies.

¹¹ The updated Tier classification can be found at: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-04/>

4.1.5 Additional Efforts to Identify the Current Status and Perspective of SDG14 Implementation in the WCR

As highlighted above, the current level of activities regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the intergovernmental level in the region is substantial. However, to complement this level of documentation, a brief survey was constructed and sent by the authors to key regional organizations and national governments. The survey focused on soliciting input on the recipient's views regarding responsibility for and activities associated with implementing SDG14, the level of understanding of regional processes currently underway to implement SDG14, level of capacity and observations on how progress can be monitored at both the regional and national levels. To gauge the level of priority assigned to each of the targets established for SDG14, recipients were also asked to score each target on a scale of 1 to 5 (Appendix 5). Recipients were invited to provide their responses either by filling in the questionnaire and returning it to the authors or by sharing their responses in person or over the telephone.

Due to time and funding constraints, the survey was sent to 13 intergovernmental organizations, 5 regional level non-governmental organizations, 1 regional university, 17 countries and two regional-level projects. The results of the survey, along with data obtained from desk top research are provided in the following sections of this report.

4.2 Regional Organizations

The numerous regional organizations reviewed in section 2 (see also Appendix 2) carry out a diversity of activities relating to SDG14 targets. Table 2 summarizes the priorities given these targets for a selection of the most important organizations in the region in response to the survey mentioned above. Where numerical priorities are shown, they were provided by representatives from the organizations. For others, priorities were assigned by the authors based on secondary information including the authors' knowledge of them. The rest are assigned only a check mark to indicate that they are active regarding that target.

Table 2. Priorities/engagement of regional organizations in SDG14 targets (1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high, 5 = very high)

Target	Organizations' priorities																	
	ECLAC ¹²	IOCARIBE	UNEP-CEP	WECAFC	ACS-CSC	CARISEC	OECS	OSPESCA ¹³	CCAD	CRFM	CARPHA	CTO	AMLC	CANARI	GCFI	TNC	UWI CERMES	CLME+
14.1 - By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds	✓	5	5	1	4	3	5	✓	✓	3	✓	✓	✓	4	✓	✓	5	4
14.2 - By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems	✓	5	4	3	3	4	5	✓	✓	4	✓	✓	✓	4	✓	✓	4	4
14.3 - Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification	✓	5	2	1	4	2	5	✓		4			✓	3	✓		1	2
14.4 - By 2020, restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible	✓	3	2	5	1	4	5	✓		5		✓	✓	5	✓	✓	3	5
14.5 - By 2020, conserve at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas	✓	5	5	3	2	3	5	✓	✓	4		✓	✓	3	✓	✓	4	3
14.6 - By 2020, prohibit certain forms of bad fisheries subsidies	✓	2	1	2	1	4	5	✓		5			✓	3	✓		1	2
14.7 - By 2030, increase the economic benefits to SIDS	✓	5	3	5	4	5	5	✓		5			✓	5	✓		4	4
14.a - Increase scientific knowledge, research capacity and technology transfer	✓	5	3	3	5	3	5	✓	✓	5	✓		✓	4	✓		4	3
14.b - Provide access for SSF to marine resources and markets	✓	2	1	5	1	4	5	✓		5			✓	5	✓		3	4
14.c - Implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS	✓	4	3	5	3	3	5	✓	✓	5	✓		✓	4	✓		3	5

¹² ECLAC has indicated that, as an organization, it has equal priority across all targets, and that any variations are based on member country preferences

¹³ OSPESCA declined to provide priorities noting that these are determined by countries.

4.2.1 Organizational mandates

Organizational mandates will be reviewed in relation to each SDG14 target in sections below. However, organizations were clearly aware of how their mandates related to these targets and most had, or were in the process of, relating their strategies and work programmes to them. Similarly, organizations' that did not have direct mandates were also aware of how their supporting activities would contribute to the achievement of the targets in the region.

4.2.2 Regional arrangements

All organizations that responded to the questionnaire had a clear view of how the countries of the region are seeking to move forward at the regional level through a coordinated approach. Much of this has been described earlier. This common view of the way forward can be attributed to their engagement with the work of the CLME Projects. All indicated that the weak areas were: (a) capacity and resources for implementation across all targets, at both regional and national levels, as has been the case for decades, and (b) the need for a permanent regional coordinating mechanism. Technical details of the first of these two weak areas are extensively documented in the annual reports, strategic plans and work programs of these organizations.

4.2.3 SDG14 targets

4.2.3.1 Target 14.1

By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

Implementation of Target 14.1 is the primary responsibility of UNEP-CEP, CARPHA and CCAD. However, all organizations with a mandate for marine EBM have an interest in seeing this target achieved. Some, such as the CSC, have assigned it a high priority in their work even though they are primarily in a supporting role. Similarly OSPECA has committed that, together with the competent entities, pollution of water bodies will be combatted in its member States, as a safeguard for the health of the population living around these ecosystems and the health of fish species. Specific attention will be focused on reducing engine emissions and prevention of incidental hydrocarbon spills in aquatic environments, among other related topics.

4.2.3.2 Target 14.2

By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

Implementation of Targets 14.2 appears to be the most broadly subscribed among regional organizations. This is probably because it is overarching, and also because it is interpreted as being mainly about reefs and associated systems (mangroves and seagrasses). These iconic marine ecosystems have deteriorated significantly (Jackson et al. 2014) and are the focus of considerable attention at local, national and regional levels, as well as globally. In the case of OSPESCA and CCAD, during the 47th Ordinary Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Member Countries of SICA (Roatán, June 30, 2016), the Presidents of Central American Integration System (SICA) member countries decided: "To instruct the Councils of Ministers of the SICA to elaborate a prioritized strategic agenda of their respective sectors, having as reference the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, forwarding them to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs within a term 3 months for its recommendations to the Meeting of Presidents."

Nearly all organizations in the WCR that are concerned about marine ecosystems have some focus on reefs. Much of this attention has been oriented towards promotion of MPAs (see Target 14.5). While fishing has been recognized as a major contributor to reef ecosystem decline, there have been very few significant efforts to manage reef fish fisheries. The fact that reef fishers are small-scale, rural, and generally poor has made it difficult to get political support for management. However, recent recognition of the critical role of herbivores, especially parrotfishes, has resulted in bans on fishing them in a few countries, aimed at supporting reef system recovery. Marine ecosystem restoration has seldom been carried out in the WCR except in a few limited localities.

4.2.3.3 Target 14.3

Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

Whereas, all organizations recognize that ocean acidification could have huge impacts on marine ecosystems in the WCR, especially reefs, there are few activities to address the problem. The majority of countries, especially SIDS, emit minimal quantities of greenhouse gases, so mitigation options are negligible. Of greatest concern is understanding exactly what is likely to happen and determining adaptive responses. The recently concluded (2015) Future of Reefs Project (FORCE) was focused on all climate change impacts including acidification. Its recommendations are provided in a reef managers' handbook (Mumby et al. 2014). However, the accessibility of this and other FORCE outputs and the extent of uptake of recommendations is uncertain. IOCARIBE is focused on ensuring Caribbean coverage of IOC's global ocean acidification network.

4.2.3.4 Target 14.4

By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to

levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.

The three major fisheries organizations, WECAFC, CRFM and OSPESCA, have primary responsibility for this target. Among them there are extensive activities ranging from promoting an overall Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), through data collection and stock assessment, research on fishery ecosystems, revision of legislation, enforcement of regulations, reduction of IUU fishing, infrastructure development, poverty alleviation, and strengthening governance arrangements. Despite all this activity, the focus is primarily on lobster, conch, flyingfish, large pelagic, shrimp and trawlable demersal fishes. As indicated under Target 14.2, reef fisheries have received limited attention except in a few countries, notably Belize, USA (and territories) and Cayman islands, or for a few iconic species such as large groupers that form spawning aggregations. Hence reef fisheries management is minimal throughout the region. Additionally, there are no established mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the progress and compliance with this target, such as a Regional Action Plan.

Given the linkages between fishing, reef ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation several other organizations, especially NGOs, are involved in promoting sustainable fisheries, especially through MPAs (see Target 14.5), community-based management, alternative livelihoods and exchange of research outputs. WECAFC is the only fisheries organization that has a mandate for Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) and has begun to consider fisheries issues in ABNJ adjacent to Caribbean EEZs.

4.2.3.5 Target 14.5

By 2020, conserve at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

This target can be considered a subset of Target 14.2 and is covered by the same range of organizations, although for SICA member countries, it is the primary responsibility for CCAD, the environmental organ of the organization, rather than OSPESCA. Additionally, it is the specific focus of several NGOs, such as TNC and IUCN and projects such as the Caribbean Challenge Initiative and USAID CMBP. MPA work is also prominent on the agendas of GCFI and AMLC. For many years, UN Environment-CEP (now in collaboration with GCFI and support from NOAA) has been running the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM) which is a discussion forum, maintains an MPA database and promotes MPA manager training and capacity building in general. As regards High Seas MPAs the Sargasso Sea Commission is engaging Caribbean countries.

4.2.3.6 Target 14.6

By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation

This target is closely allied to Target 14.4 and is the mandate of the same three fisheries organizations. However, given that most fisheries are small-scale, removal of subsidies has not been a high priority in the region. Subsidies can rarely be seen as contributing to corporate profits in the WCR. They do however support low income fisheries and promote food security in many countries, and in so doing may contribute to overfishing of coastal resources.

4.2.3.7 Target 14.7

By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

Virtually all regional organizations identify with this target, as the WCR has more SIDS than any other region of the world. Most activities towards this target are related to fisheries, and are already covered under targets 14.4 and 14.6. One area not previously mentioned in which there is some activity, is to focus on value added fishery products, and better understanding of the value chain. The connection between marine ecosystems and tourism is clearly substantial. However, the tourism industry has yet to engage significantly with marine conservation. Two areas of light development activity are recreational fishing and whale watching for which there is probably considerably greater potential than currently recognized.

In the member States of SICA, the Policy on the Integration of Fisheries and Aquaculture has designated that the human component is the most essential priority for the policy and as such, has specifically linked efforts that take into account the blue growth or blue economy approach, as promoted by FAO, with emphasis on protection and sustainable management. This is based on the premise that healthy aquatic ecosystems are more productive and represent the only way to ensure sustainable economies. It also considers the ecosystem approach to the management and sustainable use of biological biodiversity with good practices for fisheries and aquaculture. Particular attention is given to resources for commercial exploitation, based on an inter-institutional and intersectoral coordination strategy.

4.2.3.8 Target 14.a

Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to

enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries

Whereas this is the specific mandate of IOCARIBE, most organizations claim to have some orientation towards this target. Virtually all activities of all organizations would include aspects of increasing scientific knowledge, developing research capacity and transferring marine technology in order to ensure sustainability of the intervention. These activities are sufficiently diffuse as to be difficult to account for specifically. One area that has seen several attempts is the development of data and information clearing houses. A recent attempt was the development of a decentralized data and information portal in the first phase of the CLME Project. This was implemented by IOCARIBE in collaboration with GCFI, but is no longer maintained. The IOCARIBE Caribbean Marine Atlas is another attempt that is ongoing under IOCARIBE auspice, but which is limited to the eastern Caribbean¹⁴.

Under the 2015-2025 strategic Policy for OSPESCA, A Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Plan will be implemented to obtain the scientific evidence required for the various regional development and management measures. The Plan will pay special attention to management measures based on the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach. It will also promote an interdisciplinary regional scientific organization mechanism so that its contributions can provide support for regional fisheries and aquaculture management decisions and support the monitoring and implementation of the Research Plan. Regional fisheries surveys are also expected to be continued in the oceans, seas and inland water bodies of SICA member countries in order to have the necessary information on the status of fishery resources, among other parameters. This information will be part of a regional database on marine resources at the regional level.

4.2.3.9 Target 14.b

Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

Considering that most fisheries in the WCR are small-scale this is a prominent target for all fisheries organizations. Many of the activities referred to under Target 14.4 are oriented towards this target. Taken broadly, access to resources by small-scale fishers includes safety at seas, shore-based facilities, access to loans, and may even include appropriately targeted subsidies. Access to domestic markets may also include shore-based facilities, distribution systems, and market information systems. Access to export markets may require support for: certification of vessels, landing sites and processors and exporters; small-scale processors for product development; and exporter businesses. All these activities can be found in recent and ongoing projects of the major fisheries organizations and to a lesser extent NGOs with an interest in fisheries development.

¹⁴ <http://www.caribbeanmarineatlas.net/>

4.2.3.10 Target 14.c

Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want

This target is a major focus of the CLME+ project and its partner organizations (UNEP-CEP, CRFM, OSPESCA, WECAFC, IOCARIBE, OECS, CARICOM, CANARI and UWI (CERMES)) all of which serve on the CLME+ Project Executive Group and most of which (the IGOs) serve on the SAP Interim Coordinating Mechanism. The overall orientation of the CLME+ SAP is towards building a Regional Ocean Governance Framework. Consequently, core CLME+ activities and the pilot projects (implemented by partner organizations) all contribute to the regional framework and serve to operationalize it. Therefore, there can be considered to be a coordinated approach to the SAP, even if it is not as widely known as would be desired.

Recently, CARICOM countries with support from UWI have engaged in the development of the new Implementing Agreement on Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). This reflects an increasing awareness of the fact that sustainability of 'upstream' ABNJ are likely to be critical for sustainability of national waters in the WCR. Their continued input can be expected.

For SICA member countries, explicit reference is made in the 2015-2025 strategic policy on strengthening the management scheme for highly migratory and straddling fishery resources based on principles of regional governance and international agreements signed and ratified by the competent authorities. Additionally, the countries agree that joint management work in areas where fisheries resources are shared by two or more countries, will be carried out when the competent authorities of the countries involved formally submit them. Such work is to be undertaken using harmonized criteria and consistent with an ecosystem approach.

4.3 Regional NGOs

While the WCR has an increasing number of non-governmental organizations with mandates consistent with SDG14 that are operating within individual countries, the number of NGOs operating at the sub-regional or regional level is quite limited. As highlighted in Table 2 above, key indigenous NGOs operating in more than one country with activities linked to SDG14 are either research based networks (e.g. AMLC and GCFI) or capacity-building and project-based (e.g. CANARI). International NGOs with active programs supporting SDG14 within the region is also limited. These include the IUCN, with membership in 20 countries within the region and TNC, currently involved in projects in some 16 Caribbean countries and territories.

Based on survey responses, desk-top research and knowledge of these organizations by the authors, all are fully aware of the need to implement the 2030 Agenda within the region. However, given their non-governmental status, none of the organizations have any specific responsibility for implementing SDG14 or for ensuring the specific targets are reached. In contrast, a review of their goals and mandates indicate a tight coupling with activities that address most if not all of the targets (Table 2), although some variation in priority levels were observed.

Unsurprisingly, CANARI, with its mission to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing the natural resources critical to development scored the restoration of fish stocks (Target 14.4), enhancing economic benefits to SIDs (Target 14.7) and providing access to small scale fishers (Target 14.b) as highest in terms of assigning priority for its activities. Similarly, IUCN, with its emphasis on protected areas in the region and TNC, committed to protecting oceans and coasts and safeguarding against impacts of climate change, ranked the management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems (Target 14.2) and conservation of coastal and marine areas (Target 14.5) the highest. Among the research-based networks, there was no discrimination among the targets for GCFI. This is understandable given its purpose is stated as the exchange of current information on the use and management of marine resources in the Gulf and Caribbean region. In the case of AMLC, its focus is on exchanging marine science results and exposing students to the scientific method and as such, declined to assign any ranking to the targets.

While none of the targets received scores indicating low priority from any of the NGOs, regardless of whether they were indigenous or international, Target 14.6 calling for a prohibition of certain forms of bad fisheries subsidies by 2020 was scored the lowest by all of the organizations. This should not be interpreted as opposition to Target 14.6 but rather recognition that the WCR is not noted for large industrialized fisheries where subsidies have significant negative effects.

4.4 Countries

While this report is primarily about a regional approach the national level is critical and there are insights that can inform a regional approach. Three aspects will be considered. The first is the structure and function of the national ocean integration mechanisms and the national interface with regional organizations. The second is country level coordination of SDG14 and the third is national priorities for SDG14 targets.

4.4.1 National ocean integration mechanisms and the national interface with regional organizations

For a regional approach to be effective there is need for effective interfaces between countries and regional organizations. Many countries, especially small ones, struggle to participate effectively in regional and global processes. There are many reasons for this, not

the least being weak or non-existent national level coordination mechanisms which are in their own right needed for an integrated EBM approach to ocean governance (McConney et al. 2016).

GEF International Waters projects require participating countries to have or establish national level cross-sectoral coordinating mechanisms termed Interministerial Committees (IMCs) or National Intersectoral Coordinating Mechanisms (NICs). The importance of NICs is highlighted in the CLME+ SAP. A survey of NICs in 41 countries/States participating in the CLME+ project found that about two-thirds of the countries had NICs of some type. However, none were found to match all the characteristics of an ideal NIC (McConney et al. 2016). Most concerned fisheries or marine governance, but some addressed coastal zones, environment or broader topics. The study concluded that there was considerable scope for strengthening NICs in the WCR towards strengthening regional ocean governance. Areas in which strengthening should focus area summarized by McConney et al. (2016). CLME+ pilots will address some of these areas for some countries.

4.4.2 National SDG coordinating mechanisms

As might be expected from the previous section, few countries, despite being clearly conscious of the 2030 agenda, reported having a clearly established intersectoral coordinating mechanism for SDG14, or even for all SDGs. This is also reflected in the report of the ECLAC meeting on SDG monitoring (ECLAC 2016b). Nonetheless, most countries indicated that there was a lead ministry for all SDGs, usually the ministry with responsibility for planning and or development. They also indicated that that ministry would liaise with sectoral ministries depending on the SDG in question. Consequently, ministries with fisheries and environment mandates were most often cited as being the agency responsible for ensuring that SDG14 targets were implemented and monitored. Jamaica reported that its National Council on Oceans and Coastal Zone (NCOCZ) was tasked with coordinating SDG14 matters. Although not surveyed, Colombia is also known to have an intersectoral mechanism for ocean and coastal affairs.

Most countries reported that there were ongoing discussions regarding setting up such a mechanism. The country reporting the most advanced strategies for implementing SDG14 is Cuba, which has assigned responsibilities to CITMA, the Ministry responsible for Science, Technology and the Environment, with the involvement of other ministries such as those with responsibilities for fishing, tourism, mining, transportation and ports as well as support from research centers and universities. The country has also set specific national level targets for most of the SDG14 targets.

4.4.3 Country level priorities for SDG14 targets

In general, countries in the region that responded to the questionnaire offered considerable variation in their ranking for the 10 SDG14 targets (Table 3). However, consistency was noted with regard to Target 14.1 (reduce marine pollution). This target received high to very high scores from all of the countries that provided feedback, regardless of whether they were large continental countries (e.g. Mexico), larger island States (e.g. Jamaica), small island States in the eastern Caribbean (e.g. Barbados), Spanish speaking island (e.g. Cuba) or overseas territories (e.g. Montserrat). Similarly, Target 14.c (implement international law) received high to very high scores from all of the countries, with the exception of Trinidad & Tobago which scored this target as having a medium priority.

Table 3: Country level priorities for the SDG14 targets (1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high, 5 = very high) (U = respondent uncertain)

Target	Countries' priorities												
	Barbados	Costa Rica	Belize ¹⁵	Cuba	Dominican Rep.	Guyana	Jamaica	Martinique	Mexico	Montserrat	St. Kitts & Nevis	St. Lucia	Trinidad & Tobago
14.1 - By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds	4	4	✓	4	3	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	5
14.2 - By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems	3	4	✓	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
14.3 - Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification	2	3	✓	3	2	2	4	2	3	5	5	1	2
14.4 - By 2020, restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible	4	3	✓	4	3	5	5	2	3	5	5	5	5
14.5 - By 2020, conserve at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas	3	4	✓	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	3
14.6 - By 2020, prohibit certain forms of bad fisheries subsidies	2	2	✓	5	2	U	5	1	4	5	5	2	3
14.7 - By 2030, increase the economic benefits to SIDS	4	U	✓	4	3	5	5	1	4	5	5	5	3
14.a - Increase scientific knowledge, research capacity and technology transfer	3	3	✓	5	3	4	5	4	4	5	5	2	3
14.b - Provide access for SSF to marine resources and markets	5	4	✓	4	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	U
14.c - Implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS	4	4	✓	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3

¹⁵ Belize preferred not to give priorities at this time as they will be holding national consultations in May 2017 during which these priorities will be determined.

Target 14.b focusing on the provision of access for small scale fishers to marine resources and Target 14.7 on economic benefits to SIDS also received high to very high scoring from all countries except Martinique which scored these two target as having medium and a very low priority, respectively and Trinidad & Tobago which scored 14.7 as medium as well but indicated an “unknown” ranking for 14.b. This lower level of priority from Martinique may be a reflection of the fact that the island is a part of France, which is not a SIDS, while Trinidad & Tobago’s medium ranking for Target 14.7 may be due to its oil and gas revenues.

Of some concern is the low ranking of priority assigned to Target 14.3 (impacts of ocean acidification) from the majority of countries responding to the survey. Given the dependence of these countries on a healthy marine ecosystem that could be severely impacted by ocean acidification, especially coral reefs, it is essential that efforts be made to increase the awareness of the importance of this issue to all countries in the region. One explanation that has been offered for the low ranking is the current intangible nature of the consequences of ocean acidification, as compared, for example, to the very visible issue of marine pollution.

Target 14.6 on removing fishing subsidies showed a large range in responses with half of the countries (mostly those with small scale fisheries) ranking it very low to low while the remaining half ranked it high to very high and included some countries with larger scale industrial fisheries (either indigenous or foreign) taking place in their exclusive economic zone.

Lastly, it is worth noting that while some of the countries (e.g. Montserrat and St Kitts and Nevis) ranked all of the targets as having a very high priority, others clearly identified the areas that they would likely be focusing resources and attention on and conversely, where they would not likely be doing so. For example, Barbados has identified Target 14.b on small scale fishers’ access to the resources as its highest priority while as mentioned above; St. Lucia has identified Target 14.3 on ocean acidification as its lowest priority. Overall, it should be cautioned that while these survey results provide some interesting preliminary insights into how countries in the region might view the targets in terms of priority, a much more comprehensive assessment is needed before any policy level conclusions can be reached. This level of analysis is expected from the survey undertaken by ECLAC on behalf of The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, the results of which were discussed at the UN Sustainable Development Forum meeting in Mexico in May 2017¹⁶.

¹⁶ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2017/eclac>

5 Needs, priorities and a ‘learning by doing’ approach towards a regionally harmonized implementation of SDG14

5.1 Needs and Priorities

With regard to the implementation of SDGs, including SDG14, Caribbean countries have identified a suite of challenges and constraints that must be addressed in order to meet their responsibilities as agreed to at the United Nations in 2015 and to achieve the benefits expected. While these challenges vary in level of severity among the countries in the WCR, they appear to be cross-cutting throughout the region. Key identified needs focus on issues relating to in-country financial and human capacity, governance and political will, technical requirements for monitoring data collection and analysis, institutional issues, geographic configuration and socio-economic and cultural realities (Table 4).

It is worth noting that in these highlighted issues notably absent is the need to engage civil society and private sector participation in addressing the challenges. This may be attributed to a characteristic of the WCR where the current public policy framework remains primarily oriented towards a dependence on government control and regulation, despite policies that allow for civil and private sector engagement, such as articulated for OECS countries in the St. George Declaration¹⁷.

¹⁷ St George’s Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS <http://www.oecs.org/public-resources-centre/oecs-library?task=document.viewdoc&id=317>

Table 4. Country-Identified Challenges and Constraints to Implement SDG14 (adapted from CARICOM/ECLAC/UNDESA, 2016)

Capacity	Governance/Political Will	Technical Issues	Institutional Issues	Geographic Issues	Socio-Economic/ Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited financial and human resources for all priority areas; • Inability to reach targets and objectives; • Lack of training and resources to carry out tasks assigned; • Lack of knowledge and skills; • Lack of funding for surveys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support from relevant authorities; • Limited capabilities of Government and poor governance issues (necessary improvements to transparency, accountability, government efficiencies and public sector reforms not yet secured); • SDG implementation not specifically linked to National Development Plans; • Limited engagement in non-state actors; • Citizen mistrust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of proper documentation of procedures and an agreed upon process; • Storage of Data; • Poor data collection and dissemination methods; • Lack of data sharing protocols • Inability to comply with International Standards and Guidelines; • Lack of historical data for comparison; • Recognition of differing scales of data collection by countries in the region; • Poor or non-existent metadata • Some targets are overly complicated and cannot be realistically measured; • Infrequency of data collection due to competing priorities. Ad hoc collection of data is insufficient to meet reporting demands of Agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Inter-Agency Collaboration; • Lack of requirement to share data; • Ministries and agencies do not see the associated tasks as part of their normal work; • Lack of succession planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging geographic configuration, particularly for archipelagic States in the region • All aspects of climate change pose a significant threat to countries in the region yet only some (visible) impacts are being considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable economy (two-sector dominance – tourism and finance. Both sectors are suffering downturn, sluggish growth subject to external shocks); • Large and widening trade deficit • Relative high costs of living • Some targets are not culturally relevant or applicable to our local context • Development has changed the environmental and ecological landscape • Rapid population growth spawned by private investment has outpaced rational planning and critical infrastructure needs.

Recognizing that most of these challenges cannot be addressed at the national level, the need to adopt a regional approach has been endorsed through formal mechanisms such as the previously mentioned Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) Resolution 94(XXVI) (2016). This latter instrument “Request[ed] the secretariat of the Commission [for Latin America and the Caribbean], through its sub regional headquarters for the Caribbean and in collaboration with the relevant agencies of the United Nations system and CARICOM, to provide the institutional support to facilitate synergies in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway at the national and regional levels.”

At the level of CARICOM, the organization’s Strategic Plan for 2015-2019 (CARICOM 2014) highlighted a number of challenges and identified priorities aligned with clusters of SDGs which included SDG14. Under the thematic area of Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management, Priority 7, Climate Adaptation and Mitigation and Disaster Mitigation and Management include Areas of Focus, such as: ‘Ensure the periodic updating of the Regional framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change and the Implementation Plan 2011 – 2021’. The stated outcomes expected are: (a) Enhancing the region’s ability to be more resilient to the impacts of long-term climate change and increased climate variability; and (b) Better informed and educated about climate change adaptation and mitigation related to SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15.

As regards implementation of the CLME+ SAP, capacity for implementation at the national level, that will allow countries to engage for full benefit, varies widely across countries being lowest in SIDS, the countries that will benefit most from successful implementation. National level capacity needs for implementation range from policy and planning for management of marine resources, intersectoral coordination for such planning and for engagement with regional and global processes, to operational aspects of implementation such as data and information for monitoring, surveillance and enforcement, awareness building and stakeholder empowerment and engagement.

This report has a significant focus on the CLME+ SAP and may appear to ignore the programs of other regional organizations. It should be noted that the CLME+ SAP partnership announced on Oceans Day 2017 includes all of these organizations and that the SAP overarches their programs. The aim of the SAP is to make best use of the capacity of existing regional organizations and integrate their activities. A ‘learning-by doing’ approach towards Regional Ocean Governance in the WCR.

The regional ocean governance framework (ROGF) approved for implementation in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf LMEs SAP under the GEF-funded CLME+ Project was developed to seize the opportunities available from the current array of existing governance institutions in the region for living marine resources. It also was designed to address the

legacy of fragmentation inherent in the sector-based organizations which inhibits the integration needed for an ecosystem approach to management.

From this perspective, the emerging system in the WCR, with its array of institutions each focusing on its sector-specific mandate has the potential to be viewed as a regional ocean governance regime complex (Orsini et al. 2013). However, it was noted that a key component of an effective governance network or regime complex is policy coordination and harmonization, and that in the WCR the system had been emerging on its own in a somewhat haphazard way with limited results. It was therefore thought that an appropriate direction for the CLME Project would be to seek to rationalize and guide the emerging ocean governance regime. This was approached in a two-staged, phased process by:

1. Explicitly developing a conceptual framework at the LME level for regional ocean governance in the WCR, based on a wide range of current governance research and theory.¹⁸
2. Using the conceptual framework in the next phase of the project to guide the assessment of the governance arrangements and piloting of governance-specific activities so as to offer operational recommendations aimed at improving regional ocean governance in the WCR (Figure 3).

Given the geopolitical complexity of the region and the nested, multi-scale and multi-level nature of the living marine resources and the ecosystems that support them, a consideration of the integration and linkages among arrangements leads to a set of nested arrangements at both operational and policy levels such as is depicted in Figure 3. The distinction between the governance levels of 'policy development and 'planning/operations' is conceptually important for effective governance. In institutional terms, policy and planning/operations may be taken care of within the same organization, or may take place within different organizations in the same arrangement and even at different organizational levels (Fanning et al. 2013). They have been presented separately and nested here as findings to date from within the WCR point to the need for an overarching policy setting body for regional ocean governance (Mahon et al. 2013).

As illustrated in Figure 3, the Planning and Operational level centers around the major marine ecosystems found in the WCR, namely reef, pelagic and continental shelf, thereby allowing for interactions to be recognized within a given ecosystem type for the key transboundary issues regarding fisheries, habitat, and pollution. Relevant existing organizations (at the international, regional and sub-regional levels) are also flagged as potentially being responsible for taking the lead within specific areas of the governance framework.

¹⁸ The theoretical underpinning and potential application of the framework have been discussed in number of previously published articles and in the interest of space will not be repeated here (Fanning et al 2007; Fanning et al. 2009; Fanning et al. 2011; Mahon et al. 2011; Fanning et al. 2013; Mahon et al. 2013; Mahon et al. 2014).

Each component within the Planning and Operational level is expected to have linkages to the others so as to further enhance opportunities for EBM within the region at this level. Finally, and critical from a regional governance perspective, the framework builds in a regional ocean governance policy mechanism that connects with all components in the Planning and Operational level. At this stage, the assigning of responsibility for this regional collaborating mechanism is yet to be determined since the region currently lacks such a region-wide body. However, as noted previously, one potential candidate that has been identified is the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) under the auspices of the Association of Caribbean States (Mahon et al. 2014).

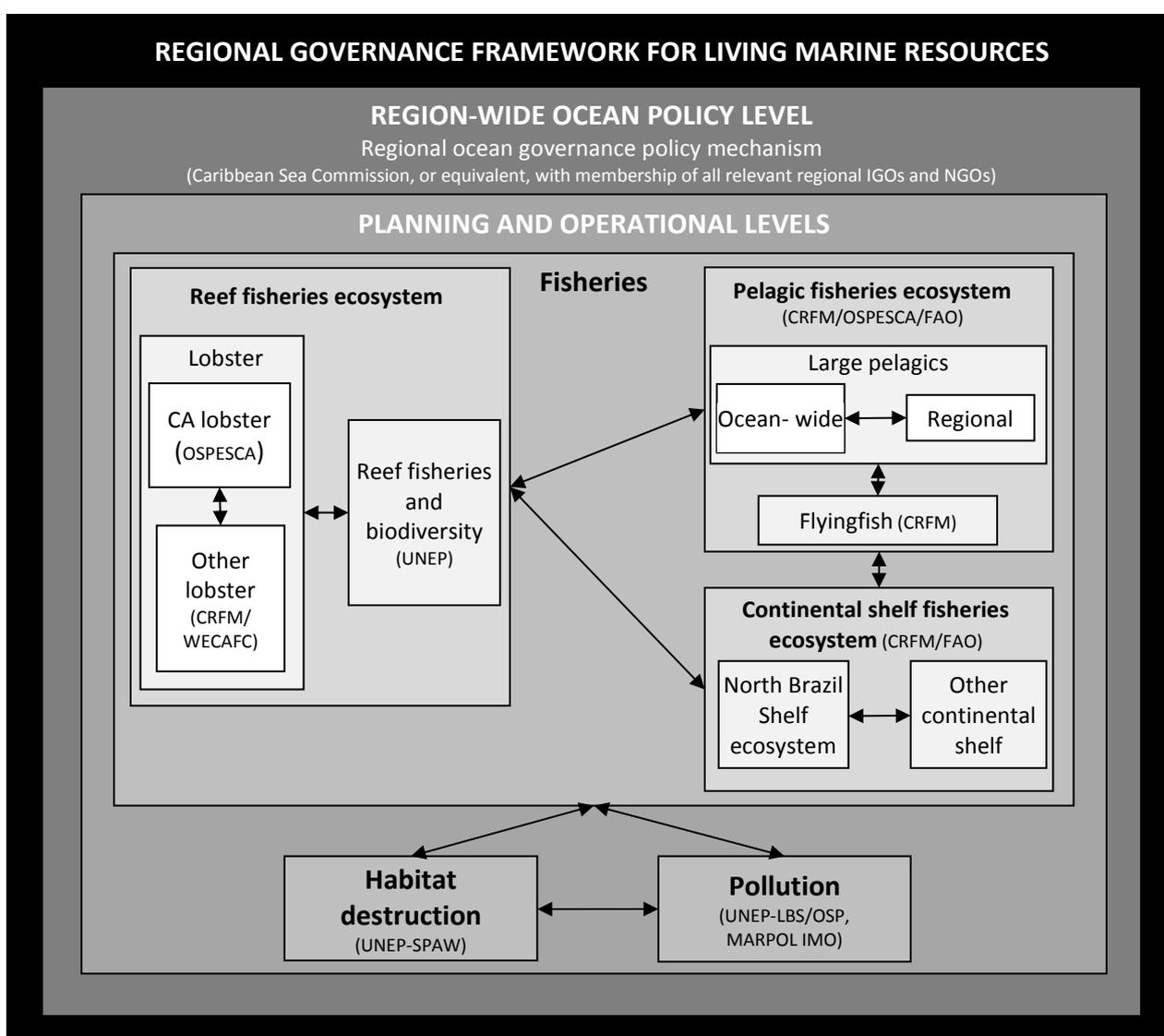
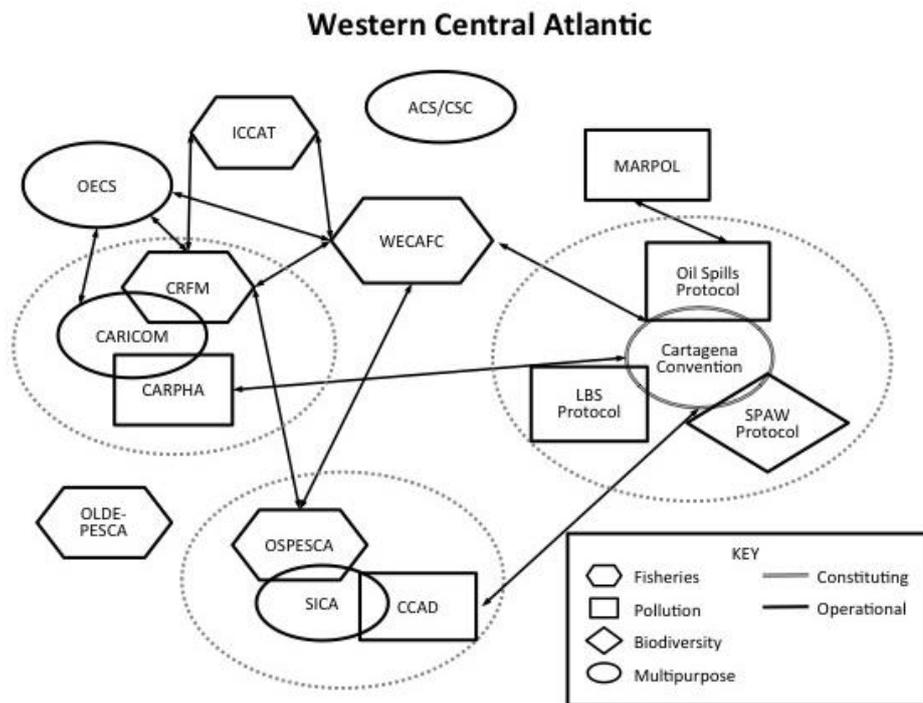


Figure 3. A diagrammatic representation of the nested, multi-scale level nature of the proposed operational Regional Ocean Governance Framework for living marine resources in the WCR. (Source: Mahon et al. 2014)

Plans for strengthening the framework are underway with the engagement of the multitude of organizations already involved in aspects of ocean governance to determine if they are willing to: (a) continue these roles; (b) expand their mandates and activities to take up appropriate functions within the framework; and (c) develop the interactions and linkages that will be essential if the framework is to function effectively. Agreement on these issues will also contribute to the region playing a key role in facilitating other global level commitments as was noted in the recent Transboundary Waters Assessment Program (TWAP) Assessment of governance arrangements for ocean Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (Mahon et al. 2015). The report identified some 16 regional clusters, including the one in the Western Central Atlantic, which could facilitate better global-to-national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements relating to the oceans and as such, positively affect the achievement of SDG14 targets.

The regional cluster for the WCR includes arrangements that cover areas both within and beyond national jurisdiction and incorporates all of the key regional and global organizations previously mentioned in this report as critical to SDG14 successful implementation (Figure 4). Most striking in the illustration is the disconnect between the arrangements in place for fisheries, pollution and biodiversity in the region, even within each of the two broad legacy-type arrangements, and the significant lack of a regional coordinating policy arrangement in the cluster comprising the WCR. The GEF-IW governance assessment concluded, as did Rochette et al. (2015), that despite their current deficiencies, regional clusters could have a potentially important role in implementing EBM in their respective regions, including for ABNJ, if their mandates are extended. It recommended that there should be focused initiatives to build and strengthen them first, prior to creating new organizations to address any identified gaps.



5.2 Opportunities for advancing SDG14 implementation at the regional level

The geopolitical diversity of the Wider Caribbean Region presents a wide range of opportunities to support SDG14 implementation at the regional level or through programs led by regional organizations that support implementation at the national level. In considering these opportunities it is important to recognize that SDG14 implementation in the WCR is taking place within a broader regional SDG implementation context. Multipurpose organizations (CARICOM, SICA, OECS, ACS, ECLAC and UNDP) are dealing with the entire set of SDGs. This can be a constraint, in that SDG14 targets could end up being marginalized relative to some of the other areas such as agriculture and health. However, it also presents an opportunity for ocean-related organizations to be seen as taking up some of the load by addressing the SDG14 targets. ECLAC, for example, is interacting with the CLME+ Project regarding its State of Marine Environment and Economy (SOME) reporting to determine if they can share the load for the SDG14 targets. Fostering a mechanism to promote and build the linkages among organizations for SDG14 implementation would be valuable input. The need for such a mechanism to coordinate ocean affairs more broadly at the regional level is a recurrent theme.

It is also important to note that while the organizations recognize the importance of having ocean issues brought together under the SDG14 targets, these organizations and the countries of the region have been addressing these issues on an ongoing basis for decades, and are continuing to do so. To some extent, this is a continuation of MDG processes, e.g. sustainable fisheries and protected areas, however, most of the strategic directions needed

predate the MDGs. Thus when asked what is needed to support SDG14 implementation, their response has been, “more support for what we have been doing and must continue doing”. Indeed, organizations and countries are only just beginning to translate their previous activities into an SDG14 frame of reference. For example, OECS Commission was able to show how all the areas of their ECROP corresponded to SDG14 targets. Assistance with this translation is an area of opportunity that would facilitate the development of an SDG14 perspective and monitoring progress towards targets.

Despite the perspective that many activities needed for SDG14 are already being pursued, and just need more support, there is a relatively new and growing awareness that ocean and coastal issues need an holistic, integrated, ecosystem approach; at both national and regional levels. At the national level, despite the requirement of a NIC by the CLME+ SAP, and an oceans committee by IOCARIBE, countries have been slow to establish and strengthen these bodies, which could also serve to coordinate SDG14 implementation. Programmatic support for national level integration mechanisms for SDG14 is an area of opportunity. This could be pursued in a ‘learning by doing’ mode, and could include the development of national ocean policies, as are already underway in the OECS sub-region. A mechanism for sharing best practices in national level coordination would also be useful. However, it is important to note that approaches may differ among countries so ‘one size will not fit all’.

At the regional level the need for a coordination mechanism for oceans, as a critical component of the emerging regional ocean governance framework, has already been emphasized throughout this report. Such a mechanism can play a key role in putting oceans on the agendas of the regional multipurpose organizations, and also in promoting uptake at the national level, in the way that is being accomplished in the OECS sub-region. The mechanism could also coordinate SDG14 implementation and collaborate with ECLAC in ensuring that progress towards targets is monitored and reported upon. This is beyond the current scope of the CLME+ Project, as was recognized by IOCARIBE, which offered to play this role in the interim, until the permanent coordinating mechanism envisaged in the CLME+ SAP is established (Appendix 6).

The need for a regional coordinating mechanism can be approached in one of several ways: create a new institution (the least desirable and least likely option); mandate (and provide resources for) an existing institution to play this role (e.g. ACS CSC at wider Caribbean level); or use a network approach to create a virtual mechanism with all partners engaged via MOUs or a partnership agreement. This last approach is being pursued in the CLME+ Project through an Interim Coordinating Mechanism which may continue after the project or transition into one of the other options. While appearing to be least costly, the network approach still requires additional human and financial resources to function. It cannot be added onto the current mandates of partner organizations. The CLME Project and its ICM (which includes all CLME+ IGO partners) will explore these options, recommend a

mechanism and try to get it started by 2020. Support for this process is an opportunity to contribute to regional ocean governance.

At the regional level, support is needed for a range of regional ocean governance framework building activities such as developing the lateral interactions among organizations that share responsibility for critical issues. Collaboration among fisheries organizations is a prime example. Despite the progress with information sharing made through the Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism established under the CLME+ SAP, alignment of programs and collaborative activities have been slow in getting started. Furthermore, there is the need to determine how this initiative will be sustained after the CLME+ Project. However, the need for interaction goes far beyond fisheries to include environment, tourism and shipping.

Even taking a regional approach, there is considerable variation among the countries comprising the various sub-regions in the WCR (Central America, insular Caribbean, Lesser Antilles sub-region of the insular Caribbean, Guianas-Brazil Shelf sub-region). Consequently opportunities vary among sub-regions. In terms of current status of approach to oceans, the OECS sub-region is clearly most cohesive and making steady progress via the OECS Commission. Central America is the next most cohesive sub-region guided by SICA and its sub-bodies. CARICOM is less cohesive, and does not have a strong oceans orientation, except for fisheries through the CRFM. Finally, the Guianas-Brazil shelf region¹⁹ lacks any agency that can provide significant sub-regional coordination. Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico and Cuba are not significantly associated with any sub-regional ocean initiatives, although they are members of region-wide organizations such as WECAFC, UNEP-CEP, IOCARIBE and ACS-CSC. Strengthening sub-regional initiatives is an opportunity for supporting SDG14 implementation.

Overall, it is recommended that efforts to support implementation and monitoring of SDG14 targets be aligned with CLME+ SAP activities and foster sustainability of this initiative. There are numerous areas identified in the SAP that could not be funded with the GEF funding available. These provide an opportunity for support of SDG14 implementation in the WCR that build sustainable capacity.

¹⁹ This region is ecologically homogeneous and quite different to the Caribbean Sea proper, but is politically integrated with the Caribbean and recognized as an important 'upstream' area from an oceanographic perspective.

6 Conclusions

The WCR faces substantial challenges at the regional and national levels with regard to reducing fisheries overexploitation, reducing marine pollution, halting habitat degradation and biodiversity loss. These and other ocean related issues, such as the aggravating impacts of climate change, are well reflected in SDG14. While there are substantial challenges to be overcome in the implementation of SDG14 within the WCR, the opportunities for overcoming them by taking a harmonized regional approach are substantial.

For almost two decades, the countries of the WCR have been making a concerted effort to understand and ultimately address the consequences arising from the legacy of fragmented governance arrangements for living marine resources (Mahon et al. 2014). This focus on governance is reflected in the region being a leader among other GEF-funded LME projects by specifically targeting opportunities to improve ocean governance mechanisms within the region. The recent approval of the SAP activities in the transboundary CLME+ Project adds credence to the leadership role taken in advancing efforts to improve living marine resource governance in the region and thus increasing the potential for achieving SDG14.

These regional efforts have deliberately avoided what has been termed “dead-end tracks”, identified by Rochette et al. (2015, p. 17) as by-passing existing regional and sub-regional organizations in favor of creating new ones, developing legal instruments without considering implementation challenges and ignoring weak organizations rather than strengthening them. They have also avoided the concerns expressed by Soderbaum and Granit (2014) that GEF Projects were not as engaged with regional multipurpose organizations as they should be. Engagement of these organizations in CLME+ SAP implementation in the WCR offers considerable potential for integration of ocean affairs into regional sustainable development policy.

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Appendix 1. Country data

Country	Population ²⁰	Land and internal waters (km ²)	EEZ within WCR (km ²)	GDP per capita (USD)
Antigua and Barbuda	93,581	443	110,089	\$24,100
Bahamas	327,316	13,880	654,715	\$24,600
Barbados	291,495	430	186,898	\$17,200
Belize	353,858	22,966	35,351	\$ 8,200
Brazil	205,823,665	8,515,770		\$15,200
Colombia	47,220,856	1,138,910	471,383	\$14,200
Costa Rica	4,872,543	51,100	26,866	\$16,100
Cuba	11,179,995	110,860	350,751	\$11,600
Dominica	73,757	751	28,985	\$11,400
Dominican Republic	10,606,865	48,670	255,898	\$15,900
France - Territories				
Guadeloupe	---	---		----
Martinique	---	---		----
St. Martin	31,949	54		\$19,300
Grenada	111,219	344	27,426	\$14,100
Guatemala	15,189,958	108,889	1,569	\$ 7,900
Guyana	735,909	214,969	137,765	\$ 7,900
Haiti	10,485,800	27,750	126,760	\$ 1,800
Honduras	8,893,259	112,090	249,542	\$ 5,300
Jamaica	2,970,340	10,991	258,137	\$ 9,000
Mexico	123,166,749	1,964,375	88,911	\$18,900
Netherland Territories				

²⁰ Source: The World Factbook, available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

St. Maarten	41,486	34		\$66,800
Aruba	113,648	180		\$25,300
Bonaire	---	---		----
Curacao	149,035	444		\$15,000
St. Eustatius	---	---		----
Nicaragua	5,966,798	130,370	65,947	\$ 5,300
Panama	3,705,246	75,420	142,671	\$22,800
St. Kitts and Nevis	52,329	261	9,974	\$25,500
Saint Lucia	164,464	616	15,617	\$12,000
St. Vincent/Grenadines	102,350	389	36,302	\$11,300
Suriname	585,824	163,820	127,772	\$15,200
Trinidad and Tobago	1,220,479	5,128	74,199	\$31,900
UK - Territories				
Anguilla	16,752	91		\$12,200
British Virgin Islands	34,232	151		\$42,300
Cayman Islands	57,268	264		\$43,800
Turks and Caicos,	51,430	948		\$29,100
UK (Montserrat)	5,267	102		\$ 8,500
US - Territories				
Puerto Rico	3,578,056	13,791	140,219	\$37,700
US Virgin Islands	102,951	1,910	15,262	\$36,100
Venezuela	30,912,302	912,050	471,507	\$15,100

Appendix 2. Key regional organizations with mandates relating to SDG14

Organization	Role
Indigenous intergovernmental organizations	
Association of Caribbean States and the Caribbean Sea Commission (ACS and CSC) http://www.acs-aec.org/index.php?q=csc	<p>The ACS' primary purpose is to be an organization for "consultation, cooperation and concerted action" for its member countries (all countries in the WCR except the USA). It provides a forum for political dialogue that allows Members the opportunity to identify areas of common interest and concern that may be addressed at the regional level, and the solutions for which can be found through cooperation.</p> <p>The CSC is a part of the ACS. It was established in 2008 to promote and oversee the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea. The objective of the CSC is 'to carry out the strategic planning and technical follow-up work for the advancement of the Caribbean Sea Initiative and to formulate a practical and action-oriented work programme for the further development and implementation of the Initiative'. Based in Trinidad.</p>
Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) http://caricom.org/	<p>CARICOM, established in 1973, is a regional economic integration organization that focuses on: economic integration; foreign policy coordination; human and social development; and security (Members: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago; Associate Members: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands). It has a sustainable development unit that covers all aspects of sustainable development including SDG14. CARICOM has several associated agencies that deal with sector specific issues related to SDG14, such as fisheries (CRFM), climate change (CCCC), tourism (CTO), and health (CARPHA) and meteorology (CIMH). CARICOM is based in Guyana.</p>
Central American Integration System/Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA) http://www.sica.int/index_en.aspx	<p>SICA is the regional economic integration organization for Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, Dominican Republic). SICA's mandate includes the full range of activities required 'for the Isthmus to become a Region of Peace, Freedom, Democracy and Development'. SICA has several associated agencies that deal with sector specific issues related to SDG14, such as fisheries (OSPESCA), environment (CCAD) and marine transport (COCATRAM). SICA is based in El Salvador.</p>
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) http://www.oecs.org/	<p>The OECS, established in 1981, is dedicated to economic harmonisation and integration, protection of human and legal rights, and the encouragement of good governance between countries and dependencies in the Eastern Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Martinique). The SDGs are integrated with the Organization's Strategic Goals. The Ocean Governance and Fisheries Unit is most relevant to SDG14. It was established to maintain the benefits and functions of marine ecosystems; and to address international legal instruments with an ecosystems-based approach.</p>
Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism	<p>The mission of the CRFM is to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region's fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the</p>

(CRFM) http://www.crfm.net/	current and future population of the region. CRFM's objectives include: (a) sustainable development of Member States' marine and other aquatic resources, (b) the promotion and establishment of co-operative arrangements management of transboundary resources, (c) the provision of technical advisory and consultative services to Member States. It is an arm of CARICOM based in Belize.
Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector in the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA)	OSPESCA was established to promote sustainable and coordinated development of fishing and aquaculture, in the framework of the Central American integration process. It is an arm of SICA based in El Salvador.
Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA)	OLDEPESCA's purpose is to meet Latin American food requirements adequately, making use of Latin American fishery resource potential for the benefit of Latin American peoples, by concerted action in promoting the constant development of the countries and the permanent strengthening of regional cooperation in this sector.
Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC) http://www.cathalac.org/	Based in Panama.
Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD)	An arm of SICA.
Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)	The objectives of the Centre are: (a) protection of the climate system of Members of the Centre for the benefit of present and future generations of their peoples; (b)enhancing regional institutional capabilities for the co-ordination of national responses to the negative effects of climate change; (c)providing comprehensive policy and technical support in the area of climate change and related issues and spearheading regional initiatives in those areas; and (d)performing the role of executing agency for regional environmental projects relating to climate change. Based in Belize. Associated with CARICOM
The Central American Commission of Maritime Transport (COCATRAM)	COCATRAM was established to address matters relating to the development of the maritime and port sector in Central America. Specifically, COCATRAM is to make recommendations regarding measures for the protection of the marine environment as a result of activities related to maritime transport. It is part of SICA.
The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)	CTO's mission is to 'provide to and through its members the services and information necessary for the development of sustainable tourism, for the social and economic benefit of the people of the Caribbean. It is an arm of CARICOM based in Barbados.
Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH)	It is an arm of CARICOM based in Barbados.
UN Agencies	

<p>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean http://www.cepal.org/en/headquarters-and-offices/eclac-caribbean</p>	<p>The mission of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean is to deepen the understanding of the development challenges facing the Caribbean, and to contribute to solutions by conducting research and analysis and providing sound policy advice and technical assistance to Caribbean governments, focused on growth with equity and recognition of the subregion's vulnerability. Regarding the SDGs, ECLACS focus is on assisting States to establish monitoring and reporting programmes, and in institutionalizing the SDGs at the national level.</p>
<p>Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE)</p>	<p>The Sub-Commission's mission is to promote, develop and coordinate IOC marine scientific research programmes, the ocean services, and related activities, including training, education and mutual assistance (TEMA) in the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions. It is based in Cartagena Colombia.</p>
<p>UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP)</p>	<p>UNEP-CEP is the secretariat for the Cartagena Convention and promotes regional co-operation for the protection and sustainable development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region. The Convention focuses on the various aspects of marine pollution arising from ships, by dumping, from sea-bed activities, airborne pollution and pollution from land-based sources and activities. The three main sub-programmes of the CEP are Assessment and Management of Environment Pollution (AMEP), Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) and Communication, Education, Training and Awareness (CETA).</p>
<p>Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/weca/c/en</p>	<p>The general objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources of the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries</p>
NGOs	
<p>The Association of Marine Laboratories (AMLC)</p>	<p>The AMLC was established to advance common interest in the marine sciences by: (a) assisting and initiating cooperative research and education programs; (b) providing for an exchange of scientific and technical information; (c) fostering personal and official relations among members; (d) publishing the proceedings of scientific meetings and a newsletter; (e) cooperating with governments and other relevant organizations;</p>
<p>Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)</p>	<p>CANARI was established to undertake research, analysis and advocacy on participatory natural resource planning and management for the Caribbean region. Its mission is 'to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing the natural resources critical to development'. Based in Trinidad.</p>
<p>Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO)</p>	

Confederation of Artisanal Fishers of Central America (CONFEPESCA)	The purpose of CONFEPESCA is to facilitate the incorporation of the Central American fishermen into the integration movement that occurs in the area and offer technical assistance, financial intermediation and non-profit representation to the national federations. The main objective of CONFEPESCA is to ensure the economic, political and social development of artisanal fishermen of Central America, through the strengthening of their base organizations and the development and effectiveness of the national federations of each country.
Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) http://gcfi.org/index.php	The purposes of the Institute are to: (a) Support fisheries development and management activities throughout the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and adjacent regions; (b) Provide for acquisition and exchange of information on scientific findings, management techniques, fishing technology, aquaculture and other topics affecting the well-being and the use of marine fishery resources of the regions
International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	The objectives of the IUCN are to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	The mission of the Conservancy is 'to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends'. It has an active programme relating to marine conservation, especially via MPAs, in the Caribbean.
University of the West Indies (UWI)	UWI is the university of the Caribbean Community and serves all CARICOM countries. There are three physical campuses (Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados) and a virtual campus. UWI has a diversity of expertise relevant to SDG14 ranging from biological and physical sciences, through social sciences to international relations and law.

Appendix 3. Official List of SDG14 Indicators

Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1) 18/25 - Goals and targets (from the 2030 Agenda) Indicators

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Target 14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

Indicator 14.1.1 Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density

Target 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

Indicator 14.2.1 Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches

Target 14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

Indicator 14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations

Target 14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics

Indicator 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within

biologically sustainable levels

Target 14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

Indicator 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas

Target 14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.

Indicator 14.6.1 Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Target 14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

Indicator 14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a percentage of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries

Target 14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop

research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries

Indicator 14.a.1 Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology

Target 14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

Indicator 14.b.1 Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/ regulatory/ policy/ institutional framework which recognizes and

protects access rights for small-scale fisheries

Target 14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”

Indicator 14.c.1 Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources.

Appendix 4. Draft List of Caribbean Core SDG14 Indicators

GROUP WORK ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF A DRAFT CORE SET OF SDGS FOR THE CARIBBEAN

INDICATOR	TIER	CORE	DATA AVAILABILITY	JUSTIFICATION	IEAG-SDG INDICATOR #
Draft Priority Core Indicators for SDG14 in the Caribbean					
Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development					
<p>Target 14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science- based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics</p>					
<p>14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels</p>	1	yes		National priority, SAMOA, CSMDG, need further discussion	104

Target 14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information				
14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	1	yes		National priority (Ocean and Seas), SAMOA

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Appendix 5. Survey Questionnaire

Scoping report on the implementation challenges and opportunities for SDG14 in the Caribbean

Background

In September 2015, the international community adopted a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including a dedicated Ocean SDG: “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” (SDG14). The implementation of this SDG and related targets is first and foremost the responsibility of the national authorities. In light of the transboundary nature of the marine environment and interdependencies between the Agenda’s targets and goals, the implementation of the Ocean SDG will however fall short of the transformative ambition of the Agenda 2030 without an effective coordination at the regional (multijurisdictional) level. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1 para 21²¹ recognizes “the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions (...) in sustainable development” and draws attention to the regional level with regard to the follow-up and review process. In the different marine regions, stakeholders should therefore build and strengthen cooperation for the implementation of the Ocean SDG.

To address the issue of linking regional efforts to the national implementation of SDG14, members of the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG) (IDDRI, IASS and UNEP)²² are currently conducting a project on the role of regional cooperation and coordination in the implementation of the Ocean SDG. Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), it specifically focuses on the Western Indian Ocean and the Caribbean marine regions.

Scope of work

Profs Robin Mahon, UWI and Lucia Fanning, Dalhousie University are preparing a scoping report on the potential role of regional ocean governance towards the implementation of SDG14 in the wider Caribbean. The report will cover:

- The legal and institutional frameworks for the conservation and sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea, including regional conventions and organizations, main projects, and stakeholders within and across the wider Caribbean;

²¹ United Nations General Assembly. 2015. A/RES/70/1 - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available online at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1

²² Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies and United Nations Environment Programme.

- An overview of the positions and activities of selected Caribbean States and other stakeholders on the implementation of SDG14;
- Priorities, needs, possible options, approaches and steps towards a regionally harmonized implementation of SDG14; and,
- Potential pioneer countries, regional ocean governance initiatives, and/or regional actors with regard to advancing good practice relevant for SDG14 implementation.

The report is to be completed by the end of April 2017. Your input in answering the attached questions (from either a national or regional perspective) will greatly assist in helping ensure the report accurately reflects the current state and need for SDG implementation in the region.

Questions to be addressed by regional organizations²³

Does your organization have responsibility for any of the SGD14 targets?

What activities is your organization involved in relating to these targets?

What is your understanding of the regional level processes towards implementing and monitoring SDG14 targets?

Do you have any observations regarding the capacity to pursue and monitor progress towards SDG14 targets:

- At the regional level?
- At the national level for your member countries in the region?

Do you have any suggestions on what is needed to pursue and monitor progress towards SDG14 targets:

- At the regional level?
- At the national level for your member countries in the region?

Question to be addressed by countries²⁴

Does your country have a process in place to implement and monitor SGD14 targets?

What is your understanding of the regional level processes towards implementing and monitoring SDG14 targets for your country?

Do you have any observations regarding the capacity to pursue and monitor progress towards SDG14 targets:

- At the national level for your country?
- At the national level for other countries in the region?
- At the regional level?

Do you have any suggestions on what is needed to pursue and monitor progress towards SDG14 targets:

- At the national level for your country?
- At the national level for other countries in the region?

²³ If desired we can call and address these questions in an interview.

²⁴ If desired we can call and address these questions in an interview.

- At the regional level?

Please give a level of national/organizational priority for the SDG14 targets listed below (score each from 1-5. 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high, 5 = very high).

Target	Score
14.1 - By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	
14.2 - By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	
14.3 - Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels	
14.4 - By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics	
14.5 - By 2020, conserve at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information	
14.6 - By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation	
14.7 - By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism	
14.a - Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries	
14.b - Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets	

<p>14.c - Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want</p>	
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Appendix 6. IOCARIBE SDG14 coordination initiative

Implementing the Oceans Sustainable Development Goal in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR)

The SDGs: On September 25th 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\)](#) has specific targets to be achieved between now and 2030. The 17 goals and their targets cover the full range of sustainable development issues and enabling conditions. Reaching these goals by 2030 will require a significant coordinated effort from governments, the private sector, civil society organizations and individual citizens. The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators ([IAEG-SDGs](#)) is working on developing indicators for the targets. These will have to be adapted to local, national and regional realities.

The SDG for oceans: Issues relating to the oceans are addressed in SDG14 which has 10 targets covering critical issues such as: ecosystem restoration, pollution, ocean acidification, illegal fishing, protected areas, fisheries subsidies, SIDS, research capacity and technology transfer, small scale fisheries and multilateral agreements (see box on page 2). Other goals also have targets that are important for ocean sustainability. For example, Goal 16 (*Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies*) targets 6, 7 and 8 (*develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance*) are critical for effective governance of oceans.

Implementing the SDG for oceans in the Wider Caribbean: Local, national and regional organizations are currently engaged in many activities that will help WCR countries achieve SDG14. With 44 States and more than 25 regional organizations involved in ocean governance in the WCR, there is the need for careful attention to which organizations will be responsible for implementation of each of the target areas. This is key to ensure that all targets will be addressed as fully as possible and to ensure the efficient and effective use of the resources available to these organizations. There will also be the need for coordination of monitoring, sharing of information on progress and ultimately reporting.

A multilevel, multiorganization approach to the ocean in the WCR: For the past 15 years, the region has been grappling with the geopolitical complexity of ocean affairs and has made considerable progress in addressing it. The GEF Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Project has prepared a [Strategic Action Programme](#), endorsed by the majority of countries, for a Regional Ocean Governance Framework (ROGF). The SAP is a roadmap for implementing ocean governance in the WCR, with a 20 year time frame. The CLME+ Project is tasked with implementing the first five years of the SAP. The core concept of this ROGF is engagement of the full range of organizations in a coordinated network in which all actors have a defined role and all key issues are covered by these roles. While the initial activities of the SAP are focused on ocean ecosystems, it is expected to grow in scope to encompass all ocean related matters.

Who should coordinate implementation of SDG14? Ideally, coordination of implementation of SDG14 should fall under the coordinating mechanism for the ROGF. However, the mechanism is only just being developed in the first five years of SAP implementation and will only become operational

in five years. There is the need to fill this gap. IOCARIBE is proposing to undertake this gap filling role in a way that is fully consistent with the CLME SAP.

What will coordination comprise? Coordinating the implementation of SDG14 will involve consulting with regional organizations to:

- Determine which goals and targets in addition to SDG14 are critical for sustainable use of the ocean in the WCR;
- Reach agreement on which organizations are responsible for the goals and targets;
- Assist with adapting goals, targets and indicators to the circumstances in the region;
- Identify the current level of achievement within the region with respect to each of the regionally adapted goals, targets and indicators;
- Determine any gaps in capacity (human, technological, financial, etc.) needed to move towards achievement of targets;
- Develop a common integrated approach to monitoring and reporting on targets at the regional level in a form that is useful for policymakers;
- Support the emerging regional ocean coordinating mechanism with defining and taking up its role in coordinating the SDGs that are important for the ocean.