

Organisation of Eastern  
Caribbean States (OECS)  
Biodiversity and Ecosystems  
Management Framework  
2020-2030  
DRAFT



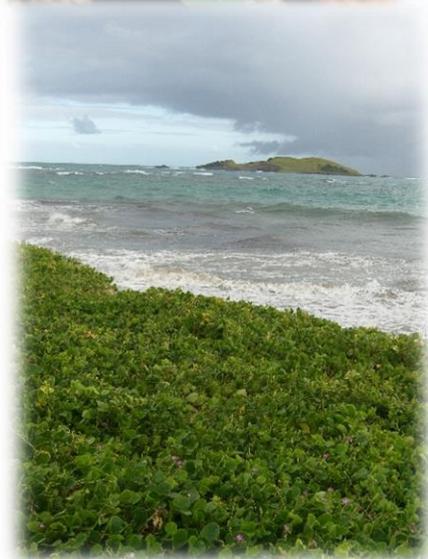
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## Acronyms and abbreviations

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<b>BEMC</b>	<b>Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Committee</b>
<b>CANARI</b>	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
<b>CARICOM</b>	Caribbean Community
<b>CBS</b>	Caribbean Biodiversity Strategy
<b>COMES</b>	Council of Ministers of Environmental Sustainability
<b>MEA</b>	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
<b>OECS</b>	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
<b>OECS-BEF</b>	OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Framework
<b>PPIs</b>	Projects, programmes and initiatives
<b>SAMOA Pathway</b>	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference

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# 1. Introduction

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The International Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in its 2019 Global Assessment, chronicled the rapid decline of species and ecosystems due to human activity, noting that around one million plant and animal species are facing extinction<sup>1</sup>. The Report's authors have called for "transformative change" to protect the earth's rapidly dwindling biodiversity base specifically a "fundamental, system-wide reorganisation across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and value"<sup>1</sup>

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)<sup>2</sup> also recognises the need for this "transformational change" especially given the pivotal role of biodiversity and ecosystems in sustaining the goods and services which OECS Member State livelihoods and economies depend heavily on. Protection of biodiversity and ecosystems has also been recognised as vital to building climate resilience in these islands. This need is particularly acute as the islands are coping with climate change impacts such as increased sea surface temperatures and sea level rise, greater intensity of storms and hurricanes, coastal erosion and other physical and ecological impacts. Climate change is also exacerbating the impacts of unsustainable human activity such as habitat loss, land degradation and pollution, damaging ecosystems and their ability to provide vital services. Moreover, OECS governments and people are faced with the challenge of repeatedly trying to manage the region's biodiversity while recovering from extreme weather events.

To guide the management of biodiversity and ecosystems, the OECS Member States through its administrative body, the OECS Commission, established the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Committee (BEMC). This body was first convened in March 2019 and is comprised primarily of Member States' national biodiversity focal points. Additionally, the OECS contracted the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) to develop the OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Framework (OECS-BEF). This framework comes on the heels of the development of the draft Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Biodiversity Framework (CBS), which was crafted by CANARI on behalf of the CARICOM Secretariat in 2018. The OECS-BEF aims to rapidly advance the most OECS-relevant priorities from the CBS as well as respond to OECS biodiversity-related directives such as the St. George's Declaration and the OECS Growth and Development Strategy (OGDS–e). Like the CBS, the purpose of the OECS-BEF is to address biodiversity and ecosystem issues that are best undertaken through a regional lens rather than those for which national level interventions are more effective. These are the initiatives where a regional approach can maximise economies of scale, making best use of scarce financial and technical resources through a multi-country approach.

It is anticipated that the development of the OECS-BEF will allow for a coherent approach led by the OECS Commission to complement and bolster individual OECS Member States' biodiversity conservation strategies and action plans. Further, it is expected that the framework and its strategic action plans will support OECS Member States in meeting their obligations under relevant international commitments, such as the International Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and associated CBD Global Strategic Plan for

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>

<sup>2</sup> The OECS is a regional governance body for a group of twelve states and territories in the Eastern Caribbean. There are: seven founding members - Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and four associate members - Anguilla, The British Virgin Islands, Guadeloupe and Martinique. St. Martin has observer status within the OECS. The OECS Commission is the administrative body of the OECS.

Biodiversity (2011-2020). The OECS-BEF will also advance a number of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for example SDG 14 which aims to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources” and SDG 15 which aims to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. The OECS-BEF will also contribute to implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway) in OECS Member States.

## 2. Development of the OECS-BEF

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### 2.1 Methodology

The development of the OEC-BEF was initiated with a Gap Analysis Report to identify priorities for the framework. The report included a literature review drawing heavily on the Draft CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy (CBS) and other frameworks designed by CANARI which summarised key issues and provided strategies for the management of the Caribbean’s biodiversity and ecosystems. Apart from the CBS these documents included the:

- Draft Caribbean Critical Ecosystem Profile (completed 2018)
- Draft Report on the State of Marine Ecosystems and shared Living Marine Resource in the Wider Caribbean (CLME+ and Gulf of Mexico) (in development 2019)

The literature review also captured information from:

- National biodiversity reports and strategies under the International Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)
- OECS regional reports and OECS biodiversity-related frameworks (strategies, policies, model legislation)
- Wider Caribbean biodiversity-related frameworks
- International agreements

Additionally, the report documented priorities articulated by the BEMC at the Sixth Meeting of the OECS Council of Ministers: Environmental Sustainability, in May 2019. Further, it captured BEMC perspectives presented at a regional webinar in July 2019 as well as priority biodiversity management needs outlined by participants at the OECS- iLAND Resilience programme closing meeting in April 2019. Lastly the report chronicled and analysed the results of an online survey conducted from August to September of 2019 which collected information on recent and current biodiversity initiatives within the OECS region.

The above information was analysed and synthesised within the Gap Analysis Report to determine priorities for the OECS BEF by applying the following filters:

- What are the critical biodiversity issues of concern identified in the literature and by the BEMC and other stakeholders?
- What can be better addressed at the OECS regional scale than at the national scale?
- What issues can be better dealt with at the CARICOM scale?
- What topics can be better addressed within other frameworks?
- What are Member States struggling with?
- What is not receiving enough attention as evidenced by a low number of national and regional projects and programmes addressing the specific biodiversity issue?

## 2.2 Results of the gap analysis study

The Gap Analysis Report pointed to five key themes and a number of cross cutting issues that the OECS-BEF should address. These are described in detail in Section 3 explaining the rationale for their inclusion in the OECS-BEF. The Gap Analysis Report also highlighted a number of existing frameworks and initiatives that the OECS-BEF should support or advance rather than duplicating activities under these frameworks. These themes, issues and supporting activities are summarised in the Table 2.1 below, showing the relationship of these aspects to the objectives and goals of the draft CBS, which was the main point of reference for the OECS-BEF, given that the OECS-BEF seeks to rapidly advance the most OECS relevant aspects of the CBS. Table 2.1 below also showcases some specific focal areas that stakeholders highlighted within each theme and cross cutting issue. These themes, focal areas and supporting activities are elaborated and built upon to develop the final strategy as detailed in Section 3.

Table 2.1 Summary of OECS-BEF themes, focal areas and activities emerging from the Gap Analysis Report.

CBS Goal	CBS objective	Corresponding themes, specific areas of focus and initial activities suggested for the OECS-BEF
Goal 1: To conserve biodiversity to protect natural heritage and assets.	Objective 1: To conserve species, particularly endangered and endemic species, and maintain and bolster genetic diversity including agricultural diversity throughout the region.	<p><b>Fair and equitable access to and sharing of benefits from biodiversity resources</b></p> <p>Specific areas of focus include: Ratification of the Nagoya protocol, development of relevant ABS guidelines, management of genetic resources of key species e.g. <i>Cannabis</i> sp.</p>
	Objective 2: To secure ecosystem goods and services, protecting, maintaining or restoring key ecosystems, within national or across transboundary landscapes and seascapes, including using spatial planning approaches.	<p><b>Protecting, maintaining and restoring ecosystems</b></p> <p>This theme should focus most heavily on <b>ecosystem restoration</b>. Overall there should be a greater emphasis on terrestrial ecosystems within an <b>island systems approach</b>. For coastal and marine ecosystems, the OECS-BEF could focus specifically on maintaining or restoring key systems across transboundary seascapes within a marine planning framework.</p>
Goal 2: To sustainably use ecosystem goods and services for national and	Objective 3: To support sustainable biodiversity-based sectors, livelihoods and enterprises focusing on the management of shared regional resources.	This did not emerge as a strong priority/focus for the OECS-BEF however the OECS-BEF should support the livelihoods and enterprises aspects under actions for frameworks such as the OECS Green-Blue Economy Strategy and

regional development.		Action Plan (in development) and existing OGDS–e.
	Objective 4: To mainstream biodiversity within sectoral, national and regional plans as well as national budgets, accounting and reporting systems.	<p><b>Assessing and integrating biodiversity and ecosystems into national development processes</b></p> <p>Specific areas of focus include: ecosystem valuations and the subsequent incorporation of the information into national budgets accounting and reporting systems.</p>
Goal 3: To address biodiversity threats from intra-Caribbean transboundary issues and external sources.	Objective 5: To build the resilience of the region’s biodiversity to climate change and natural hazards.	<p><b>Climate and disaster resilience</b></p> <p>This theme should emphasise management shifts to factor in climate and disaster induced changes to species populations, species geographic range etc.</p>
	Objective 6: To protect the region against invasive alien species as well as biosafety and biosecurity threats.	<p><b>Invasive species management, biosafety, biosecurity</b></p> <p>Specific areas of focus include: development of a regional biosafety policy, model biosafety and biotechnology legislation. The OECS-BEF should also advance actions and mobilise resources to support the Draft Action Plan for Addressing Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in the OECS Region.</p>
Goal 4: To build an enabling regional environment to manage biodiversity.	Objective 7: To ensure generation, storage and use of current, multi-source biodiversity information by Caribbean biodiversity managers, using accessible mechanisms in suitable formats for decision making.	A specific emphasis on inventory data was noted
	Objective 8: To develop and implement a coordinated regional approach to the implementation of the CBS through partnerships among governments, academia, civil society, private sector, regional and global agencies.	Regional coordination with regards to funding was noted as a concern, given that the OECS includes a number of OTS
	Objective 9: To equip Caribbean stakeholders with the capacity, entry points and mechanisms for	Not a strong priority/focus- described in general terms only

	participatory management of biodiversity while protecting their rights and benefits.	
	Objective 10: To enhance regional resource mobilisation for biodiversity conservation.	Regional coordination with regards to funding was noted as a challenge given that the OECS includes a number of OTS
	Objective 11: To harmonise regional and national legal, policy, regulatory and fiscal frameworks to promote the sustainable use of Caribbean biodiversity.	Frameworks on ABS, invasive species, biosafety and biosecurity were priorities.
	Objective 12: To establish coordinated planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting systems for biodiversity conservation.	A corresponding OECS-BEF system will have to be established.

### 2.3 Structure of the OECS-BEF

The OECS-BEF is presented in Section 3 below starting with an overarching vision and goal. This is followed by a series of technical themes which are organised into tables with targets and actions elaborated under each theme. These themes as showcased in Table 2.1 above are:

- Protecting, maintaining and restoring ecosystems
- Invasive species management, biosecurity and biosafety
- Climate and disaster resilience
- Fair and equitable access to and sharing of benefits from biodiversity resources
- Assessing and integrating biodiversity and ecosystems into national development processes

To begin to address these themes it must be acknowledged that there has been significant work already executed within the OECS region that can be built upon. For instance, there are a number of strategies, plans and guidelines that already address some aspects of these themes. In these instances, it is sensible for the OECS-BEF to focus on supporting, implementing or updating these frameworks as needed. Similarly, there are a number of current initiatives that the OECS-BEF can contribute to or facilitate participation in, to support the themes highlighted above. As well, there are a number of past successful initiatives that the OECS-BEF can scale horizontally (out) and vertically (up). Scaling out refers to the replication of an initiative from one area to another including across multiple countries and territories. Scaling up refers to the development of long- term programmes embedded within the work programmes of national and regional agencies. Also, where necessary, the OECS-BEF should showcase new approaches and initiatives to address key concerns under each theme. As such, for each of the priority themes identified, the strategy seeks to:

- Catalyse and support the implementation of existing frameworks that directly or indirectly address priority themes;
- Support, build on or harmonise OECS-BEF actions with current or upcoming initiatives;
- Scale out those initiatives that have successfully addressed key issues across OECS Member States, and scale up by institutionalising into policies, laws, structures and processes; and
- Develop new approaches and initiatives to address key issues and emerging concerns under each theme.

A number of the actions and targets cited in the OECS-BEF below are extracted directly from the CBS. Others are extracted from the CBS but modified to suit the OECS context. This approach ensures

synergy and reduces duplication of activities in the implementation of these two complementary frameworks. However, where necessary, unique OECS specific actions have been developed using the information and stakeholder perspectives from the data sources described in Section 2.

Overall the OECS-BEF seeks to transform and advance the OECS biodiversity and ecosystem management landscape to effect maximum change in the shortest possible time, recognising the rapid decline of species and ecosystems in the OECS and across the region and globe. It aims to be as targeted and as focused as possible, highlighting a few select themes and issues of priority to the region to rapidly advance, rather than a broader more diffused pathway. This targeted approach is presented in Section 3 below outlining the vision, goal, themes, targets and actions of the OECS-BEF.

## 3. OECS-BEF

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### 3.1 Vision

Healthy and resilient biodiversity and ecosystems in the OECS sub-region provide goods and services that support socio-economic development and livelihoods for its people while conserving the rich natural heritage of the sub-region.

### 3.2 Goal

To provide a framework for a strategic, coordinated and transformational approach to the management of biodiversity and ecosystems in the OECS.

### 3.3 Theme 1: Protection, maintenance and restoration of ecosystems

Ecosystem protection, maintenance and restoration is critical to safeguard the goods and services that the people of the OECS region depend on. This includes not only the goods that support individual livelihoods and national economic sectors, but also important ecosystem services such as food security, source water protection and climate mitigation. However, given the current degraded state of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems in the OECS region, the restoration component of this theme is the most important aspect. Ecosystem restoration has also been emphasised in regional frameworks such as the OECS Growth and Development Strategy for the Environment (OGDS-e) and on a wider scale at the Latin American and Caribbean Level. For example, at the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2018 the Ministers emphasised restoration of degraded ecosystems noting that a focus on restoration of degraded ecosystems “presents a transformative opportunity to focus in an integrated manner on the relationship between ecosystem degradation, desertification and combating climate change, and move towards compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda”. Ecosystem restoration is also embedded in Aichi Target 15 of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). A focus on restoration requires Caribbean specific research, making use of existing regional and international databases and platforms. It will also benefit from appropriate restoration guidelines for the different ecosystem types of the OECS region. This is particularly important for any post hurricane biodiversity recovery programmes including the guiding the discussion on when and where it may be best to allow natural regeneration to take place, rather than any anthropogenic intervention.

For ecosystem protection, maintenance and restoration, there should also be an emphasis on spatial planning as it pertains to both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. There also needs to be the recognition of the inter-connectivity of ecosystems utilising an Island System Management (ISM) perspective inclusive of ridge to reef and landscape level approaches.

## Theme 1: Protection, maintenance and restoration of ecosystems

**Objective:** To secure ecosystem goods and services through protecting, maintaining or restoring key ecosystems within national or across transboundary landscapes and seascapes.

### Key targets:

- 1.1 Watersheds, rivers and riparian areas are protected and restored to ensure slope stabilisation, soil conservation, protection of water supplies and food security.
- 1.2 Coral reefs, seagrass beds and coastal wetlands are protected and restored to ensure coastal protection services, especially to build resilience to climate change and associated natural hazards.
- 1.3 Biodiversity and ecosystem assessments, inventories and monitoring conducted, and knowledge shared and used to guide management action.
- 1.4 Land use planning, fiscal, and other tools used to support management of terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems.

	Implement existing frameworks	Link with current or upcoming initiatives	Scale successful initiatives up and out	Address key concerns and emerging issues through new approaches and initiatives
<b>Actions</b>	<p>Implement the OGDS—e including projects to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the environment while creating new economic opportunities</li> <li>• Protect ecosystem services</li> <li>• Rehabilitate/restore ecosystems</li> <li>• Utilise and promote Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) approaches for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and share outcomes of Caribbean specific research and pilot initiatives, as well as collate and share appropriate knowledge from other regions, including scientific and traditional knowledge, models, case studies and lessons learnt, including on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ecosystem restoration</li> <li>○ Landscape approaches for</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale up/out initiatives to protect and restore critical ecosystems, emphasising multi-stakeholder approaches with the engagement of civil society, communities and the private sector, to promote:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Island System Management approaches (ISM)</li> <li>○ Watershed management</li> <li>○ Landscape approaches</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist OECS Member States in the generation and depiction of accurate land, coastal, freshwater and marine data (including national and transboundary mapping of protected areas, ecosystems providing critical services, sensitive habitats and species ranges) to identify priority areas for biodiversity management</li> <li>• Develop and implement regional and national initiatives to revise spatial (land and marine area) plans and policies to be biodiversity-sensitive and promote adherence to these revised plans and policies</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms to encourage biodiversity conservation on private lands including land use tax easements and other land management initiatives.</li> <li>• Conduct species inventories and monitoring and use information to guide management interventions.</li> </ul>

	<p>cross-sectoral and adaptive management of landscapes and seascapes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development and implementation of the OECS Green-Blue Economy Strategy and Action Plan to support economic activities which conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services that are critical to OECS</li> </ul>	<p>ecological connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise information available in existing knowledge platforms such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and the Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway to inform the development and implementation of ecosystem restoration and landscape management initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>for protected areas emphasising connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source water protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and promote Caribbean specific ecosystem restoration guidelines and benchmarks for countries to adapt to their national context</li> <li>• Develop regional ecosystem restoration initiatives focusing on degraded areas and key ecosystems especially those important for food and water security as well as adaptation, mitigation and resilience to climate change and natural hazards</li> <li>• Rehabilitate and restore fresh water ecosystems and associated wetlands</li> <li>• Develop sub-regional initiatives for management of transboundary ecosystems (e.g. cross-national protected area networks) and biodiversity (e.g. migratory species)</li> </ul>
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### 3.3 Theme 2 Invasive species management, biosafety and biosecurity

Invasive alien species (IAS) are a significant threat to the biodiversity of the OECS Member States given the high level of endemism in the region. This threat is expected to be more severe in the future given the likely competitive advantage IAS will have under climate change scenarios predicted for the region. IAS are also a significant transboundary threat thus; a fitting focus of the OECS-BEF. Biosafety is another transboundary issue of concern, specifically the management of living modified organisms (LMOs) to reduce potential negative impacts on human health, plants and animals. Internationally biosafety concerns are addressed under the CBD through the Cartagena Protocol. This protocol entered into force in 2003 and has been ratified by OECS Member States. However, Member States have expressed a need for support for the implementation of the Protocol. Both

IAS and biosafety management are key biosecurity issues where biosecurity refers to the “strategic and integrated approach to analysing and managing relevant risks to human, animal and plant life and health and associated risks to the environment.”<sup>3</sup>

In addressing this theme, the OECS region can build on existing OECS frameworks like the existing regional IAS Action Plan and learn from successes from past projects such as the recent Global Environment Facility (GEF) project on “Mitigating the Threat of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean”

<b>Theme 2: Invasive species management, biosafety and biosecurity</b>				
<b>Objective:</b> To protect the OECS region against invasive alien species, biosafety and biosecurity threats.				
<b>Key targets:</b>				
1.1 OECS IAS Regional Action Plan (2016-2025) implemented. 1.2 National legislation and regulations strengthened to address IAS and implement the Cartagena Convention Protocol on Biosafety. 1.3 Initiatives to manage IAS and LMOs of priority concern evaluated and scaled up and out where appropriate.				
	<b>Implement existing frameworks</b>	<b>Link with current or upcoming initiatives</b>	<b>Scale successful initiatives up and out</b>	<b>Address key concerns through new approaches and initiatives</b>
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and implement the OECS Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regional Action Plan (2016-2025)</li> <li>Implement the updated Regional Communication Strategy on IAS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist Member States to fulfill obligations under the Cartagena Convention Protocol on Biosafety</li> <li>Utilise existing networks and information sharing platforms such as the Caribbean Invasive Alien Species Network (CIASNET) and the Sargassum online forum to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scale out experiences with managing the invasive plant species. One example is building on successes in managing lemon grass in in Dominica, targeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop OECS model legislation to assist Member States to develop or update national legislation and regulations to address IAS</li> <li>Build awareness, capacity and points of engagement for civil society and government security agencies (e.g. Coast Guard and Police Force) to address the movement of IAS across borders</li> <li>Develop a regional initiative to manage the entry of priority IAS into the region</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> FAO, 2007. FAO Biosecurity Toolkit. Rome, FAO

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Regional biosafety plan</li> <li>• Implement the OECS Growth and Development Strategy (OGDS–e) including projects to: manage invasive species and implement biosafety interventions</li> </ul>	<p>support IAS and biosafety management interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and share outcomes of Caribbean specific research, and collate and share appropriate research from other regions, including scientific and traditional knowledge and models, case studies and lessons learnt on IAS management for example: IAS management under regional climate change scenarios predicted for the Caribbean region.</li> </ul>	<p>replicated to Member States like St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda which are also struggling with this IAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse, document and share best practices on managing lionfish and Sargassum from the Caribbean and beyond</li> </ul>	<p>as well as their intra-regional movement, including elements of early detection and response to prevent species establishment. This should also include measures to ensure goods, materials and machinery entering the region are sanitised prior to entry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a regional policy and model legislation on Living Modified Organisms (LMOs). Support the national level implementation of LMO legislation including capacity building and stakeholder engagement.</li> </ul>
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### 3.4 Theme 3 Climate resilient ecosystems

Climate change and climate variability are expected to have multiple impacts on the species and ecosystems of the OECS region. Impacts are due to slow onset events e.g. reduced rainfall, rising temperatures and ocean acidification as well as rapid onset events e.g. intense hurricanes. Hurricanes for example can cause structural damage to trees or at higher intensities lead to immediate plant death. Overall hurricanes lead to a reduction in plant and animal biodiversity in affected areas. Examples of the impact of slow onset climate changes include coral bleaching due to rising temperatures and reduced freshwater habitat due to reduced rainfall regimes. Climate change effects can also be indirect e.g. rising temperatures result in more wildfires and subsequent loss of species and habitat. Specific changes are likely to differ based on local geographic characteristics and also the current health of the ecosystem e.g. a heavily polluted ecosystem is likely to be less resilient to climate change. The net impact of all these effects on the region's biodiversity is likely to be negative<sup>4</sup> especially in the OECS region which is vulnerable given high levels of species endemism, limited land areas and current high levels of habitat degradation.

Climate change adaptation is a pivotal issue for the OECS region and to date there are many projects and initiatives that address this topic e.g. the current Green Climate Change Fund project for a Climate-Resilient Water Sector in Grenada (G-CREWS). Many of these projects use an ecosystem-based approach to climate adaptation e.g. reforestation on steep slopes to reduce landslides and soil erosion during storms and hurricanes. However, the specific gap that exists is the direct management of species and ecosystems to address the impacts of climate change on them. If these threats are addressed, ecosystems will be healthier and in turn, be better able to facilitate ecosystem-based adaptation approaches. Specific management interventions could include for example developing wildlife corridors to facilitate migration of species to cooler locales in response to rising temperatures. These management interventions should be guided by current Caribbean specific research or if not available, research from similar areas in the short term. However, in the long-term, Caribbean specific data are needed as well as long term species and ecosystem monitoring studies. Mobilising climate finance specifically for biodiversity management interventions is another need.

#### **Theme 3: Climate resilient ecosystems**

**Objective:** To build the resilience of the region's biodiversity to climate change and natural hazards

**Key targets:**

- 3.1 Long-term monitoring studies on the impacts of climate change on the ecosystems and biodiversity of the OECS sb-region initiated.
- 3.2 Protected area networks used as a tool to enhance resilience of biodiversity and ecosystems to climate change.
- 3.3 Regional initiatives developed to address the impact of climate change and natural hazards on biodiversity

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<sup>4</sup> Draft Caribbean Critical Ecosystem Profile

	Implement existing frameworks	Link with current or upcoming initiatives	Scale successful initiatives up and out	Address key concerns and emerging issues through new approaches and initiatives
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Caribbean Ocean Policy and Strategy Action Plan</li> <li>• OECS Marine Research Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and share outcomes of Caribbean specific research, and collate and share appropriate research from other regions, including scientific and traditional knowledge and models, case studies and lessons learnt on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Species and ecosystem responses to climate change</li> <li>○ Species that are resilient to slow onset climate change impacts (for example sea level rise) as well as those resilient to rapid onset impacts (for example extreme weather events)</li> <li>○ Management of species, ecosystems and protected areas in response to Caribbean climate change scenarios</li> <li>○ Ecosystem restoration after extreme weather events</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse results and lessons from coral reef, mangrove and lagoon restoration initiatives (e.g. from Grenada) and replicate initiatives in other Member States</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate long-term monitoring studies on the impacts of climate change on the ecosystems and biodiversity of the OECS sub-region</li> <li>• Provide regional support to update protected area management plans to be more climate resilient</li> <li>• Provide regional support for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of climate resilient protected area management plans emphasizing landscape approaches</li> <li>• Develop and implement regional initiatives focusing on biodiversity and ecosystem management to address climate change impacts including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ management in light of slow onset and rapid onset events</li> <li>○ focusing on ecosystems that are most vulnerable to climate change</li> <li>○ restoration of degraded ecosystems to build resilience</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support Caribbean countries in accessing climate financing for biodiversity conservation.</li> </ul>

### 3.5 Theme 4: Fair and equitable access to and sharing of benefits from biodiversity resources

The relatively large number of endemic species in the OECS region represents a unique, economically valuable genetic resource base. Equally valuable is the indigenous knowledge surrounding the use, preparation and processing of these resources for medicines and other purposes. Both the genetic

base and the accompanying knowledge resource are important assets to protect to ensure that the economic benefits support local communities, national stakeholders and national economic growth.

Ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol is one way that OECS Member States can protect this unique natural heritage. This protocol addresses the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, emphasising the rights of local communities and indigenous people. However, ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol by the Member States of the OECS has been slow despite regional initiatives such as the recent GEF Project on “Advancing the Nagoya Protocol in Countries of the Caribbean Region”, aimed at generating awareness of and support for the Nagoya Protocol. This project developed virtual knowledge platforms, databases and relevant permitting systems, however Member States need greater support in terms of developing regional and national technical capacity and advancing the development of appropriate national legislation and policies.

<b>Theme 4: Fair and equitable access to and sharing of benefits from biodiversity resources</b>				
<b>Objective:</b> To equip Caribbean stakeholders with the capacity, entry points and mechanisms for participatory management of biodiversity and ecosystems while protecting their rights and benefits.				
<b>Key targets:</b>				
4.1 Advance ratification of the Nagoya Protocol amongst OECS Member States.				
4.2 Develop a regional ABS model policy and guidelines.				
	<b>Implement existing frameworks</b>	<b>Link with current or upcoming initiatives</b>	<b>Scale successful initiatives up and out</b>	<b>Address key concerns and emerging issues through new approaches and initiatives</b>

<p><b>Actions</b></p>	<p>Implement the OGDS—e including projects to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate access and benefit sharing (ABS) among OECS stakeholders</li> <li>Advance ratification of the Nagoya Protocol amongst OECS Member States</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse the results and lessons from current regional initiatives and frameworks for Biodiversity Access and Benefits Sharing (ABS) e.g. the recent GEF Project on “Advancing the Nagoya Protocol in Countries of the Caribbean Region” identifying the regional way forward in terms of remaining gaps and areas of weakness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a regional ABS model policy and guidelines including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines for operation, duties and responsibilities of the Competent National Authorities</li> <li>Guidelines on the management of Cannabis genetic resources including fair and equitable access to and sharing of benefits</li> </ul> </li> <li>Support the revision and updating of national environmental management strategies, national environment policies, and NBSAPs to include ABS provisions</li> </ul>
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### 3.6 Theme 5: Assessing and integrating biodiversity and ecosystems into national development processes

The need to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem values into national development processes in the OECS region has been well documented in Member States’ NBSAPs. It was also highlighted as a significant gap in the online survey conducted for the Gap Analysis Report under this initiative. This need includes the general incorporation of valuation information in national policy formulation as well as the specific use of biodiversity values when conducting site specific Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). A major challenge contributing to this regional deficiency is the lack of regional technical capacity to conduct ecosystem evaluations. Further there is limited ability to develop environmentally adjusted national accounts and national policies to reflect ecosystem and biodiversity values. Apart from the technical capacity issues, another significant challenge is obtaining decision maker buy-in for the use of environmentally adjusted national accounting systems. In addressing this issue there have been some economic valuation initiatives which can be built on e.g. the current National Ecosystem Assessment of Grenada. This initiative is not only focused on the ecosystem valuation aspect but also the use of the information in decision making.

## Theme 5: Assessing and integrating biodiversity and ecosystems into national development processes

**Objective:** To assess and integrate biodiversity and ecosystems information into national development processes.

**Key targets:**

- 1.1 Ecosystem valuation conducted to provide economic information to feed into decision-making.
- 1.2 Biodiversity values integrated into economic and financial decision-making and incorporated into Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)
- 1.3 Alternative economic development options that protect biodiversity and ecosystems tested and promoted.
- 1.4 Regional, national and sectoral policies and plans better reflect consideration of priorities for protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.

	Implement existing frameworks	Link with current or upcoming initiatives	Scale successful initiatives up and out	Address key concerns and emerging issues through new approaches and initiatives
<b>Actions</b>	Support the development and implementation of the OECS Green-Blue Economy Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and share outcomes of Caribbean specific research, and collate and share appropriate research from other regions, including scientific and traditional knowledge and models, case studies and lessons learnt on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Biodiversity economic valuation methodologies and tools</li> <li>○ Incorporation of biodiversity conservation and biodiversity economic values into:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional, national and sectoral policies and plans</li> <li>▪ Environmental impact assessments and strategic</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Assess early lessons from the Grenada National Ecosystem Assessment process for possible replication to other countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the integration of biodiversity values in national and sectoral plans and strategies, environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments, and national budgets and accounts</li> <li>• Support the mainstreaming of biodiversity within:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regional, national and sectoral policies and plans</li> <li>○ Environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Research and pilot initiatives for development of economic and livelihood opportunities supported by pristine</li> </ul>

		<p>environmental assessments and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National budgets and accounts</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify or develop models or templates showcasing how biodiversity conservation and biodiversity economic values can be incorporated into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regional, national and sectoral policies and plans</li> <li>○ Environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments</li> <li>○ National budgets and accounts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Advocate for the integration of the value of biodiversity and the need for its protection in national and sectoral policies, plans and strategies by using regional fora to enhance policy maker awareness on values of biodiversity and economic impacts of biodiversity threats (for example IAS), including advocating for greater allocation of national and regional budgets for biodiversity conservation</li> </ul>		<p>ecosystems and promote as viable development alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate land use tax easements and other land management initiatives which promote biodiversity conservation on private lands</li> </ul>
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## 5. Implementation framework

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For maximum, rapid effect the implementation of the OECS-BEF requires a strong emphasis on coordination, information and knowledge sharing, partnerships and stakeholder engagement, capacity building and resource mobilisation. These aspects are discussed below with specific targets and actions highlighted in Table 5.1

### 5.1 Coordination

*To be inserted.*

### 5.2 Information and knowledge sharing

*To be inserted.*

### 5.3 Capacity building

*To be inserted.*

### 5.4 Partnerships and stakeholder engagement

*To be inserted.*

### 5.5 Resource mobilisation

*To be inserted.*

### 5.6 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

*To be inserted.*

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**Table 5.1: Targets and actions for implementation**

	<b>Key targets</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OECS Commission effectively coordinating implementation of the OECS-BEC in the sub-region.</li> <li>• OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Committee (BEMC) providing strategic guidance on the work of the OECS Commission and facilitating coordination across OECS Member States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate regular meetings of the BEMC to facilitate strategic input and coordination of implementation of the OECS-BEC.</li> </ul>
<b>Information and knowledge sharing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online knowledge sharing platforms used to share local, traditional and scientific knowledge on management of biodiversity across the OECS sub-region.</li> <li>• Local and traditional knowledge captured, documented and shared to inform decision-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support data generation, collation and sharing of research outcomes.</li> <li>• Facilitate community, civil society and private sector engagement in biodiversity inventories incorporating the use of local and traditional knowledge.</li> <li>• Focus on techniques appropriate for the Caribbean region and those integrating scientific methodologies with community-based approaches and the capture of local and traditional knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted capacity building strategy for implementation of the OECS-BEF developed and being used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement regional capacity building programmes to address regional biodiversity valuation capacity gaps by incorporating into university and technical continuing education programmes and curricula in the region</li> <li>• Build regional shared capacity for management through development of centres of excellence focusing on specific issues (e.g. management of Sargassum) and facilitate collaboration across Member States to share expertise (e.g. using inter-country IAS hunter/ eradication groups)</li> <li>• Conduct regional peer exchanges to share experiences across Member States and to support scale out.</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships and stakeholder engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intra-regional partnerships established or strengthened among Member State governments to support implementation of the OECS-BEF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OECS Commission to broker development of partnerships among Member States governments, including with the French territories.</li> <li>• Develop a stakeholder engagement strategy to guide involvement of key target stakeholders in implementation of the OECS-BEF, and periodically review and update as needed.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society and the private sector playing an effective role as OECS-BEF implementation partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a budget allocation (e.g. 10-15%) in OECS sub-regional projects to support a role for civil society and the private sector in implementation, including via on-granting.</li> </ul>
<b>Resource mobilisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OECS Commission acts as a focal point for Caribbean stakeholders and international development partners seeking to work in the OECS.</li> <li>• Private investment leveraged to support implementation of the OECS-BEF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and maintain an online database of projects, programmes and initiatives for biodiversity management in the OECS to enhance coordination and identification of synergies and gaps.</li> <li>• Develop projects, programmes and initiatives to address priorities and gaps, including via partnerships.</li> <li>• Conduct periodic donor roundtables, including at COMES meetings.</li> <li>• Engage with donors to advocate for inclusion of OECS-BEF priorities in donor programming.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring, evaluation and learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-regional reports produced on implementation of the OECS-BEF.</li> <li>• National reports on biodiversity and ecosystem management include reference to contribution to implementation of the OECS-BEF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish database and track contribution of projects, programmes and initiatives to achievement of targets in the OECS-BEF.</li> <li>• Undertake participatory monitoring and evaluation exercises every 3 years to assess progress and lessons learnt in implementation of the OECS-BEF.</li> <li>• Disseminate monitoring and evaluation framework for implementation of the OECS-BEC to Member States and conduct outreach and capacity building to support national actions.</li> <li>• Produce reports on findings of monitoring and evaluation and disseminate to key target audiences including in Member States.</li> </ul>