

FY 2021 Operating Plan

Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team



*North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia,
Florida, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands*

October 2020

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I. Introduction

NOAA's Regional Collaboration Network seeks to improve NOAA's productivity and value to customers by articulating and acting on the broader NOAA goals in terms of priority regional needs and regional contributions.

The network comprises eight regional teams plus support/engagement through NOAA Headquarters and Line Offices. The Southeast and Caribbean Regional Team (SECART) covers NC, SC, GA, FL, PR, and USVI. The team is currently composed of 21 members representing geographic and topical diversity of NOAA staff and partners within the region (App. 1).

Department and Agency Priorities

As an agency within the US Department of Commerce (DoC), activities of NOAA fall within and support the Department's [FY18-22 Strategic Plan](#).

NOAA's Mission is: Science, Service, and Stewardship

- To understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans and coasts;
- To share that knowledge and information with others; and
- To conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

NOAA will focus on four long-term goals that are central determinants of resilient ecosystems, communities, and economies — and that cannot be achieved without the agency's distinctive mission and capabilities. The objectives identified in NOAA's [Next-Generation Strategic Plan](#) are the basis for NOAA's corporate planning, performance management, and stakeholder engagement.

Regional Collaboration Strategy

The Regional Collaboration Network completed a revised “strategy map” in 2016 to articulate its vision, mission, goals, and strategies to meet its objective in the NOAA Strategy: “Integrated services meeting the evolving demands of regional stakeholders.” The Regional Collaboration Network's Strategy map is included in this document as Appendix 2.

SECART Priorities

NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Regional Team (SECART) has identified its priorities for FY19-22. These priorities are consistent with NOAA Goals and Regional Collaboration priorities but focus on current issues in the Southeast and Caribbean Region. These are:

Priority: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of NOAA's mission-execution through enhanced collaboration across NOAA offices and with partners.

- Goal: Address current and emerging regional priorities by connecting people and resources
- Goal: Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Goal: Improve awareness of NOAA's broad mission responsibilities and regional capabilities to achieve an understanding of, and respect for, the totality of NOAA's work

Priority: Improve Economic, Environmental and Social Resilience of Communities to

Weather, Water, and Climate Impacts

- Goal: Facilitate the development of emerging science and technology, enabling regional stakeholders to better plan for, respond, and adapt to the risks posed by extreme weather, water, and climate hazards and impacts.
- Goal: Facilitate the application of products, services, and knowledge to enhance the capacity of communities to understand, plan for, adapt and respond to risks posed by extreme weather at different time scales.
- Goal: Enhance organizational awareness and coordination within the region to improve preparation for and response to disasters.

Priority: Promote the sustainability of the region's living marine resources and habitats as key contributors to the nation's economy

- Goal: Increase the effectiveness of coastal and marine habitat conservation and restoration
- Goal: Enhance awareness of risks to living marine resources and habitats

The full SECART FY19-22 Strategy is presented as Appendix 3.

Annual Operating Plan Purpose and Organization

Purpose

The purpose of the SECART Annual Operating Plan (AOP) is to document and guide team activities during the fiscal year. The AOP also serves as a tool for communicating regionally-informed priorities and collaborative approaches.

Organization

This AOP for FY2021 addresses national and regional priorities by utilizing an integrative, cross-line office approach, with an emphasis on enhancing coordination and communication within the region. The priority activities of SECART are organized according to the three SECART priorities mentioned above. Activities may address multiple priorities and goals, but are organized within a single priority for the purposes of the AOP. Activity descriptions and milestones provide information about the purpose, scope, partners, budget, and expected results.

Regional Collaboration funding from NOAA (\$50K) has been allocated to enable SECART to address these priorities. Annual funding for SECART work has been, and will continue to be augmented and leveraged through other programs and funding opportunities. SECART's FY2021 spend plan is presented in Appendix 4.

II. Team Activities

SECART Priority: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of NOAA's mission-execution through enhanced collaboration across NOAA offices and with partners

Activity A1. Enhance NOAA's mission execution through strategic engagement - learning from, informing, and connecting NOAA offices and regional partners to address regional issues.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Leads:

- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)
- Richard Okulski (SECART Team Lead)
- Rebecca Ellin, Dana Wusinich-Mendez, Shirley Murillo, Chip Kasper (SECART Workgroup Co-leads)

Key Participants:

- State and federal agencies and programs;
- Sea Grant programs in the region (NC, SC, GA, FL, PR)
- Southeast Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS)
- South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative and Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy
- Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA) and the Caribbean Coastal Ocean Observing System (CaraCOOS)
- The Nature Conservancy and other non-governmental organizations
- Habitat Focus Areas in Biscayne Bay, FL and Northeast Reserves/Culebra, PR

Situation/problem this project will address:

NOAA has many formal and informal partners in the region who share NOAA's issues and priorities. Addressing these issues in an effective and efficient manner requires regular contact and coordination.

Target audience:

Primary partners include NOAA staff in the region and long-term NOAA partners such as state Coastal Zone Management Programs (CZMP), National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs), Sea Grant programs, Cooperative Institutes, Regional Climate Centers, Regional Integrated Science Assessments (RISA), and more. NOAA also works with other federal agencies to accomplish shared objectives.

Anticipated outcomes/benefits:

- Increase the level of understanding of NOAA products and services in the region
- Respond to region-wide needs through a variety of partnerships
- Advance regional and internal collaboration with regional partnerships
- Serve on steering committees, technical teams, and other collaborations as appropriate in support of regional partnerships
- Monitor progress of regional partnerships, and identify appropriate opportunities for engagement, addressing NOAA priorities, and responding to region-wide needs
- Utilize SECART's collaborative network to enhance the success of the regional partners

Approach:

The mission of NOAA's Regional Collaboration Network is to identify and address regional issues through enhanced awareness, communication, and collaboration among NOAA offices and partners. SECART will work with NOAA offices and partners in the region to share information and address problems that might be solved through an interdisciplinary (cross office) approach. Multi-partner coordination activities are occurring in the region focused on ecosystems, sustainability, and economic development integration. These partnerships provide ready opportunities for inter-agency and state-federal collaborations on issues of mutual interest. NOAA in the Caribbean Collaborative is proposed as a separate project in this work plan.

SECART will work to share information among NOAA offices and partners, identify key issues in the region, and bring together the "right" people to collaborate to more efficiently tackle the problem. Some of this work is accomplished through the two SECART Workgroups, but often this activity is generic engagement and sharing of information to enhance awareness and understanding. Objectives include: 1) improving awareness of NOAA and partner programs and projects; 2) representing "One NOAA" with partners; 3) connecting relevant entities on regional issues; 4) supporting NOAA offices and partners in the shared execution of NOAA's mission; and 5) working with Ecosystem and Resilience Workgroups to promote and share information and opportunities in the region, including the SE Climate Webinar Series and the Marine Debris Webinar Series (in development).

Comms / Outreach Plan: Accomplishments achieved through this activity will be reported to ReCo HQ via the weekly reporting mechanism, and if sufficiently significant, will be highlighted on the SECART website and included in the annual ReCo report to leadership.

Cost/Funding Source: \$4000

\$4000 of SECART funds: \$2000 to support team member travel to regional workshops and/or partner meetings, and \$2000 to support Regional Coordinator travel to partnership-related travel; in kind support by RC and other team members during engagement with regional partnerships.

If travel is curtailed through FY21 because of COVID-19, SECART will need to connect with staff and partners through remote means and reallocate travel funds to other useful purposes.

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- SECART members will participate in these partnerships as appropriate, and look to identify opportunities for engagement, if beneficial to NOAA’s mission in the region (Q1-4).
- Effectively communicate activities, projects, and opportunities to relevant NOAA programs and offices (Q1-4).
- Work with NOAA offices and partners to identify emerging issues and opportunities for enhanced collaboration (Q1-4).
- Meet with NOAA staff and partners in the region to enhance awareness of NOAA’s responsibilities and capabilities within the region (Q1-4).
- Increase engagement with the Biscayne Bay Habitat Focus Area Implementation Team and the Northeast Reserves and Culebra Habitat Focus Area in Puerto Rico (Q 1-4).
- Maintain and enhance engagement with the NC Sentinel Site Cooperative (Q1-4).
- Serve as a NOAA contact for Sea Grant Programs in the region (Q1-4), including on the SC Sea Grant Program Advisory Board.

Activity A2. Advance NOAA’s mission through engagement with the NOAA in the Caribbean Collaborative.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's mission and regional capabilities

Leads:

- Lisamarie Carrubba (NOAA/NMFS)
- Makeda Okolo (NOAA/OCM)
- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)

- Dana Wusinich-Mendez NOAA/NOS/OCM)
- Katie Dziedzic (NOAA/OLIA)

Key Participants:

The NOAA Carib Steering Committee consists of members from across NOAA LOs and partners in the US Caribbean, including Puerto Rico & USVI Coastal Management Programs, Caribbean Fisheries Management Council, Caribbean Landscape Conservation Cooperative, The Nature Conservancy, and others.

Situation/problem this project will address:

U.S. Caribbean territories (Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands) have differences in culture, resources, and issues from the rest of the Southeast United States. Therefore, it is important to strategically engage with partners to better understand their particular issues and needs and to enhance their understanding of NOAA products and services.

Target audience:

The purpose of this activity is to improve communication and coordination across NOAA offices and with our partners in the U.S. Caribbean. The target audience is therefore, NOAA staff in the Caribbean and partners including territorial agencies, other federal agencies, and not-for-profit groups.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

The NOAA Caribbean Collaborative facilitates improved communication, coordination, and collaboration with NOAA offices and partners in the US Caribbean and broader Caribbean basin.

Approach:

The NOAA in the Caribbean Collaborative (NOAA Carib) facilitates improved communication and collaboration with NOAA offices and partners in the US Caribbean and broader Caribbean basin. The NOAA Carib Newsletter reaches a wide audience and highlights NOAA products and services in the region.

SECART will continue to support the efforts of NOAA Carib through monetary and intellectual contributions. SECART will assist the NOAA Carib Steering Committee with the development and delivery of four issues of the NOAA in the Caribbean Newsletter through participation on the editorial committee and funding of Spanish translation services; assist in planning, funding, and execution of a 2021 NOAA Partners meeting in the U.S. Caribbean; and continue participation on NOAA Carib Steering Committee and Executive Committee to maintain communication and direction for the group.

Comms / Outreach Plan: Accomplishments achieved through this activity will be reported to ReCo HQ via the weekly reporting mechanism, and if sufficiently significant, will be highlighted on the SECART website and included in the annual ReCo report to leadership. Key outcomes will also be reported through the NOAA in the Caribbean Newsletter.

Cost/Funding Source: \$2100

\$2100 of SECART funds for RC travel to the 2021 Partners Meeting.

Supplementary funding: SECART provided \$10,000 of FY20 funds to CIMAS to work with us on planning and execution of the 2021 Partner Meeting, and provided \$3500 of FY20 funds to the National Sea Grant Office to complete SECART funding under the four-year award to Puerto Rico Sea Grant Program for working with NOAA Carib on the NOAA Carib Newsletter.

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- Assist the NOAA Carib Steering Committee with the development and delivery of four issues of the NOAA in the Caribbean Newsletter (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4) through participation on the editorial committee and funding of Spanish translation services.
- Review outcomes from the NOAA Carib meeting in FY19 and determine appropriate next steps for NOAA Carib.
- Review outcomes from the SECART/OCM meeting (June 2019) on specific actions of interest to PR and USVI.
- Continue participation on NOAA Carib Steering Committee and Executive Committee (Q1-4) to maintain communication, and chart a path forward for the group.
- Participate with the NOAA in the Caribbean Steering Committee to identify strategies for enhancing value of NOAA Carib to our NOAA staff and partners in the region.

Activity A3. Represent NOAA’s broad mission capabilities and accomplishments in the region and facilitate two-way flow of information between the region and NOAA leadership.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Leaders:

- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)
- Richard Okulski (NOAA/NWS, SECART Team Lead)

Key Participants:

- All SECART members
- ReCo HQ
- Individual NOAA Offices and partners as appropriate

Situation/problem this project will address:

NOAA staff in the region are necessarily focused on their particular job function, but to the extent that they better understand the totality of NOAA's mission and what other NOAA staff in the region are doing, the better equipped they are to represent NOAA. Similarly, it is to NOAA's benefit that our partners and stakeholders are more aware of how NOAA works to improve their lives. In addition, a key role of Regional Collaboration Teams is to understand and communicate regional priorities to NOAA leadership. Essentially this activity is to enhance communication - up, down, and across. Also as part of this activity, SECART will assist with NOAA leadership and other VIP visits to the region by providing "local knowledge" and logistics support.

Target audience:

The target audience includes those benefiting from or affected by NOAA's products and services (e.g., NOAA staff, partners, and the general public). An additional target audience for "informing up" is NOAA leadership.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

This activity should improve the awareness and understanding of, and appreciation for, NOAA's products and services in the region and NOAA's appreciation for regional issues and needs.

Approach:

Regional collaboration teams are one of the few entities within NOAA, and especially within the regions, that represent all of NOAA. A role of SECART is to expand awareness of NOAA's mission responsibilities, capabilities, and accomplishments, as an agency, not just for a particular office. Specific activities to help accomplish this objective:

- Provide updates to ReCo HQ through the weekly reporting mechanism.
- Contribute to the ReCO annual accomplishments report.
- ReCo branding styles will be implemented in SECART products.
- Work with activity leads and Workgroup leads to capture and disseminate accomplishments and products from SECART activities.
- Update the SECART website to provide highlights of accomplishments.
- The "NOAA in the Southeast and Caribbean" 2-pager will be updated in content and format.
- Produce the weekly news of interest to NOAA in the region.
- Host 1-3 webinars that help improve the understanding of staff and partners of the work being conducted in the region by NOAA and partners - possibly following the "three-minute thesis" type of format.

Comms / Outreach Plan: This activity is entirely about communications and outreach. Accomplishments achieved through this activity will be reported to ReCo HQ via the weekly reporting mechanism, and if sufficiently significant, will be highlighted on the SECART website and included in the annual ReCo report to leadership.

Cost/Funding Source: \$2000

\$1000 to support RC travel and \$1000 to support team member travel to NOAA offices and in support of leadership visits.

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- Develop/update “NOAA in the Region” communication pieces, implementing the new ReCo branding styles/formats (Q1-4).
 - Update 2-pager
 - Maintain and update website
 - Update presentations
 - Possibly create a SECART annual report (2-pager)
- Continue producing the weekly news for the region (Q1-4).
- Occasional updates to HQ for accomplishments, regional news, and upcoming events (Q1-4).
- Enhance NOAA leadership visits to the region by working with Program Coordination Office (PCO) and Line Office staff and providing “local” intelligence (as needed, Q1-4).
- Respond to specific requests for information or support from NOAA HQ or DOC (Q1-4).
- Meet with NOAA staff and partners in the region to enhance awareness of NOAA’s responsibilities and capabilities within the region (Q1-4).
- Monitor and assist SECART working groups with outreach support as needed (Q1 – Q4).

Activity A4. Promote an informed, skilled, and diverse NOAA workforce in the region.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Leaders:

- Activity Team: Geno Olmi, Beth Dieveney, Chip Kasper, Makeda Okolo, Todd Kellison

Key Participants:

- All SECART members
- Individual NOAA Offices and partners as appropriate
- Possibly Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in region

Situation/problem this project will address:

LOs typically work independently, including to train and diversify their workforce. SECART can serve to facilitate connections, information sharing, and collaboration across the region. Additionally, SECART may be able to bring training and recruitment to the region to benefit all LO offices/staff in that region.

Target audience:

The target audience is twofold: First is NOAA staff, as we provide opportunities for NOAA staff to become more cognizant of the breadth and reach of NOAA activities. Second, is potential NOAA employees - recruiting talented individuals of various backgrounds.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

This activity should improve the awareness and understanding of, and appreciation for, NOAA and partners' products and services in the region.

Approach:

This activity has two main components - increasing "One NOAA" awareness among NOAA staff in the region, and reaching out to minority/underrepresented populations to improve awareness of NOAA as a potential workplace.

We will work with ReCo HQ and a comms contractor (MCCI) to develop a regional NOAA video which can be used to inform existing NOAA staff and also to recruit new talent. This video can be used in "brown bag" seminars at various NOAA offices and at universities (including HBCUs) to attract talent. Develop slides/handouts that highlight in the region opportunities, such as internships, fellowships, work-study programs, etc.

Comms / Outreach Plan: This activity is entirely about communications and outreach.

Accomplishments achieved through this activity will be reported to ReCo HQ via the weekly reporting mechanism, and if sufficiently significant, will be highlighted on the SECART website and included in the annual ReCo report to leadership.

Cost/Funding Source: \$3000

\$2000 for within the region travel for the project team, plus \$1000 for RC travel.

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- Create a Regional “One NOAA” video (Q1-Q3).
- Create an outreach plan for the video (Q2).
- NOAA in the Region lightning talk webinar series (Q1-4).
- Hold brown bag presentations at NOAA Offices (if travel allowed) (Q2-4).
- Diversity and inclusion efforts - “One NOAA” presentations to HBCUs (Q2-3).

Activity A5. Engage with Congressional Staff to Convey the Value of NOAA and Partner Activities.**Regional Collaboration goals addressed:**

- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Leaders:

- Activity Team: Rich Okulski, Debra Hernandez, Susan White, Katie Dziejdzic, Chris Taylor, Makeda Okolo, Charles Grisafi, Geno Olmi, Ellen Mecray

Key Participants:

- All SECART members
- Individual NOAA Offices, Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (OLIA), and partners as appropriate

Situation/problem this project will address:

Congressional members and their staff are often not aware of the benefits to “their” constituents provided by the products and services of NOAA and partners.

Target audience:

The target audience is Congressional District Staff in the region and, hopefully by extension, congressional members. NOAA staff and partners are themselves a secondary audience by building relationships and learning from each other.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

This activity should improve the awareness and understanding of, and appreciation for, NOAA and partner’s products and services in the region.

Approach:

The purpose of congressional engagement is to inform district staff of the work being done by NOAA and partners that benefits the citizens of the state. In FY20, SECART developed a congressional engagement strategy. The strategy provides guidance on determining why, how, and when to conduct congressional engagement events. It also calls for two in-region congressional engagement events each year. Given COVID-19 considerations, we will assess the value of holding one or more events as virtual.

Comms / Outreach Plan: This activity is entirely about communications and outreach. Accomplishments achieved through this activity will be reported to ReCo HQ via the weekly reporting mechanism, and if sufficiently significant, will be highlighted on the SECART website and included in the annual ReCo report to leadership.

Cost/Funding Source: \$2500

\$1000 for meeting room space and other logistics. \$1500 to support travel of speakers as needed.

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- Following the congressional engagement strategy, refine approach for conducting congressional engagements in FY21, including locations, partners, target staff, etc. (Q1).
- Conduct a virtual engagement (Q2).
- Prepare summary report of event and highlight in communications (Q2).
- Conduct an in-person or virtual engagement session (Q3-4).
- Prepare summary report of event and highlight in communications (Q3-4).

Activity A6. Provide organization, coordination, and leadership for SECART to be effective in accomplishing its mission.**Regional Collaboration goals addressed:**

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's mission and regional capabilities

Activity Lead(s):

- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)
- Rich Okulski (NWS, SECART Lead)
- Dana Wusinich-Mendez (NOAA/NOS)
- Rebecca Ellin (NC DENR)
- Chip Kasper (NOAA/NWS)
- Shirley Murillo (NOAA/OAR)

Key participants:

SECART members and collaborators on specific activities

Situation/problem this project will address:

SECART, as with all the NOAA Regional Collaboration Teams, has a goal of improving communication and collaboration across NOAA offices and with NOAA's partners to tackle issues of importance to the region. For SECART to be successful in meeting that goal, there must be organization and communication within the team to ensure that opportunities within the region are identified and pursued.

Target audience:

The first order target audience is the team members, but ultimately the target audience is constituents that benefit from NOAA's products and services in the region.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

This activity will result in SECART accomplishing the vision of regional collaboration and thereby NOAA providing more effective and efficient services.

Approach:

For regional collaboration teams to be effective, they must have regular and effective coordination and communication. This activity is the nurturing of SECART, including planning and organizing team meetings and calls, development and execution of annual operating plan, preparing and tracking the budget and spend plans, and regularly communicating with the SECART Leadership Team. SECART continues to refine the purpose and format of meetings to be more productive and efficient. This particular activity is about the organization and business of SECART but touches on all the other elements in this operating plan.

Cost/Funding Source: \$6,000

\$6,000 to support team member travel to one in-person SECART meetings in the region (if their LO is unable to cover travel costs).

Comms / Outreach Plan: Accomplishments achieved through this activity will be reported to ReCo HQ via the weekly reporting mechanism, and if sufficiently significant, will be highlighted on the SECART website and included in the annual ReCo report to leadership.

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- Complete FY21 Annual Operating Plan with spend plan (Q1).
- Present AOP to the Advisory Group (Q1 or Q2).
- Host one virtual and one in-person team meeting (Q2, Q4).
- Convene monthly team calls and distribute notes (Q1 – Q4).

- Accomplish FY21 Work Plan (Q1 – Q4).
- Draft FY22 Annual Operating Plan with spend plan (Q4).

Activity A7. Improve the capacity of NOAA’s inter-regional and national integrated services.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Activity Lead(s):

- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)
- Richard Okulski (NOAA/NWS, SECART Team Lead)
- Louisa Koch (ReCo National Team Lead)
- Meredith Cameron (ReCo HQ Liaison)

Key Participants:

- Regional Team Leads and Coordinators
- ReCo HQ
- NOAA Regional Collaboration Council

Situation/problem this project will address:

SECART is one of eight NOAA Regional Collaboration Teams. For the broader network to be successful, there must be organization and communication to ensure that regions are addressing NOAA priorities and that best practices within regions are shared among regions.

Target audience:

The target audience for this activity is the Regional Collaboration Network, including ReCo HQ and the other Regional Collaboration Teams. NOAA Leadership is also an audience of this activity.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

This activity will result in the Regional Collaboration Network being an effective mechanism to enhance NOAA’s services nationally.

Approach:

SECART will remain active in bi-weekly Regional Coordinator calls, monthly Regional Collaboration Council calls, and other activities that serve to coordinate and integrate the network.

The SECART RC will help plan and participate in the annual RC meeting. Finally, SECART will explore opportunities to work with the North Atlantic Regional Team and the Gulf of Mexico Regional Team to identify fruitful areas of integration.

The objectives of this activity are to:

- Improve inter-regional coordination and identify any regional emerging issues that SECART can help address
- Support the NOAA Regional Collaboration Council and ReCo HQ in oversight responsibilities, and influence strategic direction setting, for NOAA regional collaboration
- Help plan and execute the annual Regional Coordinator meeting (June)
- Participate in the annual Regional Collaboration Network Workshop (Feb)
- Continue participation in network-wide coordination activities (calls, meetings, etc.)
- Pursue opportunities for cross-regional coordination on topics of mutual interest
- Begin planning 2022 Network Workshop in Charleston (Q4)

Comms / Outreach Plan: Accomplishments achieved through this activity will be reported to ReCo HQ via the weekly reporting mechanism, and if sufficiently significant, will be highlighted on the SECART website and included in the annual ReCo report to leadership.

Cost/Funding Source: \$4500

\$2300 for RC and Team Lead travel to Silver Spring; \$2300 for RC travel to annual RC meeting (June 2021, Mass). (Annual ReCo Workshop to be virtual in 2021).

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- Participate in Regional Coordinator annual meeting (Q3).
- National Regional Collaboration (virtual) Workshop (Q2).
- Annual report of ReCo accomplishments (Q1 for previous year).
- Participate in bi-weekly Regional Coordinator calls (Q1 – Q4).
- Participate in monthly Regional Collaboration Council calls (Q1 – Q4).
- Support ReCo HQ as needed to further regional collaboration (Q1 – Q4).
- Contribute to weekly reporting as appropriate (Q1-4).
- Explore opportunities with the NART and GoMRCT for better coordination on topics of mutual interest.

SECART Priority: Improve Economic, Environmental and Social Resilience of Communities to Weather, Water and Climate Impacts.

Activity B1. Resilience Webinar Series.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Project Lead(s):

Shirley Murillo
Chip Kasper
Charles Grisafi

Key Participants:

Dan Brown (NOAA/NWS National Hurricane Center)
Roberto Garcia (NOAA/NWS, WFO San Juan)
John Schmidt (NOAA/NWS/SERFC)

Situation/problem this project will address:

The understanding of, and forecast products for, tropical cyclones and their impacts are constantly evolving. Emergency management officials and broadcast media need to be able to access and understand these advancements so that they can properly use and relay critical information to their constituents. In addition, there is an identified need to raise awareness and educate NOAA staff and partners about NOAA work related to hurricanes, extreme weather events, and other hazards, and NOAA efforts to enhance resilience to those events. While many NOAA offices have experts with the capability to describe resilience to severe events and weather, they lack the infrastructure and staff time to coordinate, advertise, and execute webinars to a large audience of NOAA staff and key partners.

Target audience:

Emergency managers, state and community resilience managers, broadcast meteorologists, those responsible for hurricane preparations within organizations, nongovernmental organizations, coastal managers, and other NOAA employees in the region.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

Through this webinar series, SECART facilitates the understanding of the latest products, services, and research NOAA produces to enhance the capacity of communities to plan for, and respond to risks posed by hurricanes, flooding, and other events. Targeted outreach and communication efforts facilitate delivery of resilience-relevant information to populations at risk to hurricane hazards and impacts.

Approach:

Webinars are a cost-effective tool to educate key partners and constituents on a range of resilience related activities. For FY21, we will continue to provide hurricane related webinars and as well as expanding to include additional resilience related webinars (quarterly), to better reflect the contributions of multiple line offices and partners that culminate in improved NOAA products and services.

We will continue to grow our audience size through outreach and other means. Our FY21 objectives will be (1) educate audiences about updates to NOAA's hurricane forecast products (e.g., storm surge forecasting), prediction of associated impacts such as rainfall, and the research and lessons learned from recent storms and how NOAA is improving as a result; (2) provide webinars on other potential hazards such as (e.g., spring flood, hurricane, drought, fire weather); and (3) educate NOAA staff and partners in the region about the resilience-related roles and responsibilities of various NOAA offices -- all while promoting awareness of cross line office activities and SECART involvement.

Comms / Outreach Plan:

To continue reaching and expanding the audience we will (1) advertise the hurricane webinars through the North Atlantic, Gulf and the SECART regions, as hurricanes affect the entire east coast and Gulf of the United States, (2) continue to provide a Spanish language version of select webinars; and (3) advertise the webinar series through SECART networks (including Weather Forecast Offices, Sea Grant, the ONE NOAA Science Seminars). Webinars will be recorded and subsequently posted on the SECART website, along with presentation materials, as a resource.

Cost/Funding Source: \$1200

\$1200 Rev.com fee for subtitles in English and Spanish for Hurricane Webinars.

Key Milestones/Deliverables:

- Finalize list of webinar topics (Q1).
- Hold 1st resilience/extreme weather webinar (TBD) (Q1).
- Hold 2nd resilience/extreme weather webinar. (TBD) (Q2).
- Hold Hurricane Webinar series April-June (Q3).
- Hold 3rd resilience/extreme weather webinar. (TBD) (Q4).

Activity B2. Build regional resilience through the Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Activity Lead(s):

- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)
- Debra Hernandez (SECOORA)
- Barbara Bischof (Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership; SCDRP)

Key Participants:

Lindy Betzhold (NOAA/OCM)

SCDRP

Adam Stein (NOS/OCM)

Situation/problem this project will address:

The Southeast and Caribbean Region has experienced several significant weather and climate-related events over the past six years, and the capabilities of NOAA and its various components have been at the forefront of planning, prediction, assessing, responding, and mitigating for each. For a community to be disaster-resilient, planning and partnerships with all sectors of society to develop comprehensive approaches to disaster preparedness and recovery are necessary.

Target audience:

Under the SCDRP, the target audience is beneficially expanded to include more private sector participation while also including the “traditional” audiences of the CCOP: Climate and resilience practitioners in the region, NERRs, local communities, states, small business, Sea Grant Programs, Universities, etc - anyone working to improve resilience to climate change and extreme events.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

The SCDRP provides a forum for climate/disaster resilience practitioners to share information and assist our region in becoming more resilient.

Approach:

The “Southeast Disaster Recovery Partnership” started as a NOAA Coastal Resilience Grant and subsequently added the Caribbean to its name and changed from "Recovery" to "Resilience". In FY20, the long-time SECART-supported Southeast and Caribbean Climate Community of Practice merged with the SCDRP, so as not to have two entities in the region trying to accomplish the same objectives. The SCDRP is a forum for climate and disaster professionals to exchange information on topics of response, recovery, adaptation, and planning related to short and long-term disasters. Members include local, state and federal government agencies, non-profits, and the private sector.

The SCDRP is working to complete a strategic plan which will guide its activities for the next few years. SECART will support the SCDRP to be an inclusive forum for sharing information to support disaster (short and long-term) resilience in the region. The SCDRP hosts an annual meeting which allows in-person exchange of information and development of relationships. The annual meeting will be virtual this year. All of the leads are members of the SCDRP Advisory Board.

Cost/Funding Source: \$4000

\$1000 for RC travel to engage in discussions and advisory board meetings as needed. \$3000 to support outreach activities of the SCDRP.

Key Milestones/Deliverables:

- Serve on the SCDRP Advisory Board to help guide the direction of the Partnership (Q1-Q4).
- Assist in creation of a SCDRP strategic plan (Q1).
- Participate in planning the annual workshop (virtual) (Q1-Q2).
- Work to expand the potential of the SCDRP its value to NOAA and partners (Q1-4).

Activity B3. Disaster Resilience: Guide to Integrated NOAA Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region.**Regional Collaboration goals addressed:**

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Leader(s):

- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)
- Chip Kasper (NOAA/NWS, WFO Key West, FL)
- Shirley Murillo (NOAA/OAR/AOML)
- Rich Okulski (NOAA/NWS, WFO Columbia, SC)

Key Participants:

All NOAA Offices.

Engaging NOAA partners to be sure the product is useful to them also.

Situation/problem this project will address:

NOAA staff, partners, and stakeholders all have identified a need to better understand the roles, capabilities, and responsibilities of NOAA offices, across the Southeast and Caribbean Region. This need has been expressed during workshops, training sessions, and before, during, and following recent disasters (e.g., Hurricane Matthew in 2016, Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, Hurricanes Michael and Florence in 2018, and Hurricane Dorian in 2019). NOAA staff, partners, and stakeholders also have identified the need for easy access to contacts at NOAA offices during various stages of the disaster management cycle (i.e., preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation/adaptation). Development of a comprehensive guide, akin to what the Great Lakes and Pacific Regional Collaboration Teams have completed, would address these needs in the Southeast and Caribbean Region.

Target audience:

NOAA staff, partners, and stakeholders in the Southeast and Caribbean Region.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

- Potential lives saved and mitigation of impacts through improved coordination among NOAA staff, and between NOAA staff and their partners and stakeholders.
- Leveraging of resources among NOAA offices and between NOAA offices and its partner organizations in the Southeast and Caribbean Region through more efficient and effective collaboration, facilitated by the Guide and improved communication and new opportunities.

Approach:

The primary objective is to complete and distribute a *Guide to Integrated NOAA Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region* in electronic form (PDF file) to NOAA staff, partners, and stakeholders in the Southeast and Caribbean Region, building on work done in FY18, FY19, and FY20. Feedback will be sought from NOAA staff, partners, and stakeholders in order to improve a future version of the Guide. A secondary objective will be to develop and execute a dissemination and outreach plan in order to ensure that the Guide reaches the intended audience, and that awareness in the Region is raised.

In FY2019 we completed:

- The third annual NOAA Disaster Resilience workshop, in which we focused on the recovery portion of the disaster cycle
- Had a NOAA Rotational Assignment Program person work with us to make great progress on the guide.

Unfortunately, we made little additional progress during FY20. During FY21, we will complete development of the *Guide to Integrated NOAA Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region*. We will work with the Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Studies (CIMAS) at the University of Miami to complete this activity.

Comms / Outreach Plan:

While we are working to complete the guide, we will develop a dissemination and outreach plan. The status and completion of the Guide will be communicated to the team and to ReCo HQ.

Cost/Funding Source: \$3800.

\$3000 to support travel of two activity leads to work with faculty and a student at CIMAS. \$800 for supplies, printing, etc as needed to complete and distribute the guide.

Supplemental funding; \$10,000 in FY20 funds was included in the CIMAS award (from NOAA) to provide an opportunity for a student to work with NOAA on completion of the guide.

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- Work with CIMAS to identify a student to work on the guide (Q1).
- Develop a work plan and timeline for the activity (Q1).
- Complete a draft for review (Q2).
- Incorporate review comments into a final (Q2).
- Distribution and outreach of product prior to hurricane season (Q3).
- Advertise product during hurricane webinar series (Q3).
- Evaluate utility of product (Q4).

**B4. Improving Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region:
Exercise with Partners for Large-Scale Disasters.**

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's mission and regional capabilities

Leader(s):

- Mike Proud (NOAA/NWS, WFO Columbia, SC)
- Rich Okulski (NOAA/NWS, WFO Columbia, SC)
- Charles Grisafi (NOAA/NOS/DPP)

Key Participants:

NWS, NOS, NMFS, NOS Disaster Preparedness Program, SC Div Emergency Management, US Coast Guard

Situation/problem this project will address:

The Southeast and Caribbean Region has experienced several significant weather and climate-related events over the past six years, and the capabilities of NOAA and its various components have been at the forefront of planning, prediction, assessing, responding, and mitigating for each. For a community to be disaster-resilient, planning and partnerships with all sectors of society to develop comprehensive approaches to disaster preparedness and recovery are necessary. A workshop planned for March 2020 in Charleston, with an earthquake as the disaster, was postponed/canceled because of the pandemic.

Target audience:

The target audience for this activity is NOAA offices and partners involved in emergency management (e.g., state and local emergency management offices, USGS).

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

Invited participants would include federal, state, and local emergency response officials who require “environmental intelligence” from NOAA employees to execute their disaster response and recovery mission.

The NOAA Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team would incorporate the best practices and lessons learned into the *Guide to Integrated NOAA Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region*.

Approach:

Prior Disaster Resilience Workshops (2017, 2018, 2019) focused on gaining a better understanding of NOAA program roles and responsibilities during the preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation phases of disaster management.

A workshop planned for March 2020 in Charleston, with an earthquake as the disaster, was postponed/canceled because of the pandemic. The objective is to hold the workshop planned for 2020 in 2021. The focus on response and/or recovery with an all-hazards approach will bring together the NOAA, federal, state, and local partners/responders. We plan to have two days of presentations and discussions with a one-day exercise/simulation. The simulation will have a morning response and afternoon recovery type scenario that would allow everyone to see the capabilities of each other and how we can improve our cooperation during planning, preparation, response, and restoration. We also will consider holding virtual options of such workshops. Virtual

options, while losing some of the in-person benefits, might allow us to reach additional NOAA staff and partners, including more local specificity.

We are tentatively planning for the 2021 Workshop to be held in Charleston, Savannah, GA, or Columbia, SC in Q2 or Q3. To reach the widest audience possible, the presentations will be “broadcast” on the web using a platform such as GoToMeeting. This will allow us to reach those unable to attend for all three days as well as those limited by travel funds.

For all agencies in attendance to achieve a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those in attendance, we plan to:

- Improve abilities to rapidly share information, technology, and equipment in the response and recovery phases across agencies.
- Allow all agencies to promote their abilities, technology, and research as well as partner with agencies which can help further their abilities.
- Increase direct access to a large number of response, recovery, and restoration partners, allowing new relationships to be forged.
- Include university and higher education programs/students to have opportunities to participate and assist agencies with research projects.
- Incorporate the best practices and lessons learned into planning, response, recovery, and restoration phases, as well as the *Guide to Integrated NOAA Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region*.

Comms / Outreach Plan:

Activity Leads and key partners will promote the workshop by notifying contacts with federal, state, and local agencies. A website will be established to facilitate communication and coordination, and selected agency contacts will be asked to present at the workshop, detailing their agency's mission, expertise, and capacities.

Cost/Funding Source: \$5000. \$1000 to be used for a meeting facility for approximately 150 people for three days with room to have breakout sessions and groups for the exercise (inquiring about involving local universities or locations on the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center complex to help lower costs). \$4000 for travel expenses of invited speakers. If a free meeting facility can be found those funds will also be applied to travel support.

Key Milestones/Tasks:

- Convene a steering committee to guide FY21 efforts (Q1).
- Select date and location of workshop (Q1).
- Plan workshop (Q1-3).
- Host workshop (Q2 or Q3).
- Organize and distribute/post workshop notes and materials (Q4).

Activity B5. Disaster Resilience: Addressing previously identified needs and sharing NOAA relevant information.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Activity Lead(s):

- Chip Kasper (NOAA/NWS)
- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)
- Rich Okulski
- Charles Grisafi
- Katie Krushinski

Key Participants:

- NOAA Offices throughout the region
- Partners (such as CZ and Sea Grant)

Situation/problem this project will address:

We have held three successful workshops largely focusing on increasing NOAA's preparedness for and resilience to disasters. Numerous recommendations emerged from these workshops, only a few of which have been acted on to date. In FY20, we started examining workshop recommendations. In FY21, we will examine these recommendations further, and develop subsequent actions which will achieve additional "follow through" from our prior workshop engagements. In addition, we plan to review suggestions from the resilience conversation at the joint OCM/SECART meeting in 2019, for possible follow-up actions to be taken by SECART (and perhaps, OCM).

Target audience:

NOAA staff, partners, and stakeholders in the Southeast and Caribbean Region.

Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits:

Very useful information and ideas were generated during previous resilience workshops. The purpose of this activity is to capture and share that information and knowledge with colleagues.

Approach:

In FY20, we explored the recommendations and actions resulting from our three previous workshops - in 2017, 2018, and 2019. This activity will be to explore the After Action Reports and workshop notes in more detail, and create a list of tangible recommendations. One such

recommendation from the initial scan is for SECART to provide a site/forum for sharing information and knowledge across the region. As the SECART website transition (from Wordpress to Drupal) is completed, we will build a site where we can share the workshop reports, the *Guide to Integrated NOAA Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region*, and other materials. Coordinate with the NOAA Disaster Preparedness program regarding the types of information being shared (avoid redundancy)

Cost/Funding Source: \$5000

If needed, provide funds for web support to develop Disaster Resilience web pages for SECART.

Key Milestones/Deliverables:

- Q1 - complete analysis of recommendations and actions and establish reasonable goals.
- Q2 - determine what content to add to the site.
- Q2-Q3 - populate web page.
- Q3 - roll out site prior to 1 June.

Activity B6. Aquaculture storm preparedness and gear management.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's mission and regional capabilities

Project Lead(s):

- Charles Grisafi (NOS/ORR/DPP)
- Sarah Latshaw (NOS/ORR/MDP)

Key participants:

NMFS Division of Aquaculture, NOAA Marine Debris Program, NOAA Disaster Preparedness Program, Sea Grant, State agencies that regulate aquaculture leases

Situation/problem this project will address:

Aquaculture gear is vulnerable to severe weather and may create significant post-storm marine debris issues.

Target audience:

Regional scale decision makers (e.g. coastal managers, community planners, state emergency managers, coastal planners, infrastructure managers, public health officials, agricultural producers, fisheries managers).

Anticipated outcomes/benefits:

Reduced marine debris and greater capacity to manage the debris that may occur from aquaculture gear. Increased storm preparedness for shellfish aquaculture farms and businesses.

Approach:

This workshop will provide the aquaculture industry and shellfish farmers in the Southeast with resources and information about aquaculture debris issues including practical gear management techniques, proper gear anchoring methods, and severe-storm preparation strategies. NOAA MDP (Charles, now with NOAA DPP) helped to previously develop a similar workshop in the state of Florida, and the template used for that workshop will be used to help guide planning efforts. Additionally, the NOAA Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team will identify best practices and lessons learned from the workshop.

The workshop will be a one day, in-person meeting in Raleigh, NC or Charleston, SC - unless conditions warrant and we need to move to a virtual format - and held in Q3 of 2021. Zero waste initiatives will be implemented, per the NOS Zero Waste guidance, to reduce waste generated at the meeting (in-person only).

This is a cross-working group activity with the Ecosystems working group.

Comms / Outreach Plan: Materials will be created for workshop participants and results will be reported through SECART and through OR&R.

Cost/Funding Source: \$4700

Venue, \$1200; travel assistance, \$3400; workshop supplies \$100

Note: if the workshop is held virtually, venue and travel assistance funds can be used for providing identified needed supplies (i.e. information tags for gear) to aquaculture farmers.

Key Milestones/Deliverables:

- Form planning team (Q1).
- Secure workshop location (Q1).
- Develop workshop agenda, secure speakers, and advertise workshop (Q2).
- Host Workshop (Q3).
- Write and distribute workshop report (Q3-4).

Activity B7. Regional presence for the Southeast and for the Caribbean on the Climate Resilience Toolkit.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities

Project Lead(s):

- Ned Gardner (NOAA/NESDIS)
- Ellen Mecray (NOAA/NESDIS)
- Geno Olmi (SECART Coordinator)
- Nina Hall and Luanne Dahlman (UNC-Asheville)

Key participants:

NOAA Climate Program Office

Members of Southeast CRT Team and Caribbean CRT Team

Situation/problem this project will address:

The Climate Resilience Toolkit (<https://toolkit.climate.gov/>) is a premier source of information about climate change and climate adaptation. With interagency participation and led by the NOAA Climate Program Office, the Toolkit offers information, tools, case studies, contacts, and more. A section on "Regions" currently includes the Northeast, Great Lakes, Mid-west, Pacific Islands, and Alaska. The Southeast Region and the Caribbean Region (following the National Climate Assessment 4 regional jurisdictions) are not represented on the Climate Resilience Toolkit.

Target audience:

The immediate audience is the climate and climate adaptation practitioners in the region who can offer advice, information, and case studies for the regional presence. Once populated, the Southeast and Caribbean sections will become a valuable resource for the practitioners but also for community and state leaders grappling with climate change in their jurisdictions.

Anticipated outcomes/benefits:

Local and state officials, climate practitioners, and others have ready access to a wealth of regionally-specific valuable information about climate change and climate adaptation.

Approach:

Our goal with this Activity is to work with NOAA contractors to create and populate sections for the Southeast and for the Caribbean (as separate regions following NCA4).

We will work with NCEI and University of North Carolina Asheville (UNC-A) to set up a virtual workshop which UNC-A will lead to inform community/partnership participants about the Climate Toolkit and the types of information desired to populate a section for the Southeast Region and a section for the Caribbean region. SECART will help identify appropriate contacts within the Southeast and Caribbean Regions to form an interagency team to review and generate toolkit content, working with the contractor team to meet guidelines of the Toolkit.

Comms / Outreach Plan: Progress of this activity will be communicated through SECART channels and up through multiple internal channels in NOAA. The product itself is an outreach tool for wide use.

Cost/Funding Source: \$0

No SECART funds committed to this effort. SECART will leverage existing staff expertise within the region to assist with development and review of materials. Contractors through the NOAA Climate Program Office (and their students) will provide much of the organization and writing required.

Key Milestones/Deliverables:

- Q1 (or earlier): create an "CRT Team" for each region.
- Q1 (or earlier): - hold a virtual "workshop" to kick off the process.
- Q1-2: Develop content for the web site and hold monthly calls of the CRT SE team and the Caribbean CRT Team.
- Q3: Regional presence for Southeast and for Caribbean are live on Climate Toolkit website.
- Q3-4: Host a webinar to “present” the new regional content.
- Q3-Q4: Report and advertise the results.

SECART Priority: Promote the sustainability of the region's living marine resources and the habitats upon which they depend

Activity C1: SE and Caribbean Regional Workshop on Using Drones for Coastal Management and Conservation.

Regional Collaboration Goal(s) Addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action

Lead(s):

- Debra Hernandez (SECOORA)
- Chris Taylor (NOAA/NOS/NCCOS)
- John McCombs (NOAA/NOS/OCM)

Key Partner(s), Collaborators and Contributors:

- Abbey Wakely, SECOORA
- Dave Johnston, Duke University Marine Lab
- Scott Eastman, Whitney Jenkins, SE NERRS
- NMFS SERO
- Atolla (private industry)

Situation or problem that this project will address:

Drones are being utilized for a wide variety of research and management purposes. Many technical challenges exist to effectively implement drones including permitting, technology specifications, data management and analysis.

Target audience:

Scientists, coastal managers, especially habitat managers, shoreline managers. Technical users of the technology and users or decision makers that require data products.

Desired Outcomes/Benefits:

- A workshop report will provide a summary of outcomes, specifically addressing research and management applications in the coastal zone, best practices for implementing drone technology and an overview of current and emerging technologies in drone hardware and analytical software

- A regional network of drone expertise as requested in the NOAA Unoccupied Systems Strategy
- Increased awareness by decision makers of the requirements, capabilities, challenges and limitations in drone technologies in coastal ecosystems

Approach:

In FY19, SECART convened a steering committee to scope a regional workshop to provide an opportunity for interested scientists and managers in the region to 1) network with other users; 2) gain knowledge of technical challenges and requirements associated with varying science and management applications; and 3) assess regional needs for future collaboration and best practice sharing.

The original workshop was scheduled for March 2019, however due to COVID, the workshop was rescheduled for October 2020, and will be reformatted into a mix of synchronous webinars, asynchronous online training, and small in-person workshops. The workshop will cover aspects of drone technology including governmental policy and procedures, mission planning and data management, and demonstrations on emerging drone technologies, imaging and data analysis and visualization techniques. The workshop will also provide a venue to share experiences and network with experts and colleagues around the Southeast and US Caribbean. Work with Geno to share format to/with other RCTs, OOS's and OCM Geospatial networks.

Comms / Outreach Plan:

- A SaveTheDate was distributed to NOAA staff and partners in the SE and Caribbean.
- A website has been developed and is being used to share important information
- A workshop summary will be distributed to SECART and the NOAA UxS initiative.
- The workshop will take place as a series of webinars during the second half of October 2020
- A workshop report will be drafted and distributed by the end of FY20.

Estimated Cost and Funding Source(s): \$2200

\$2200 of SECART funds for FTE travel. Supplemental funding: SECOORA and IOOS will provide \$25,000 (funds received from joint proposal with SECART) + \$15,000. Additional in-kind will be provided by Duke University and NCCOS Beaufort Laboratory.

Key Project Milestones:

- Q1 Kickoff webinar and initial online training.
- Q1 Webinars and in-person training.
- Q2 Engagement with other NOAA Regions to consider transfer of workshop materials for regional use.
- Q1-2 Recordings from the Drones in the Coastal Zone workshop will be posted and shared on the SECOORA website after the October 2020 workshop

Activity C2. SE States Shellfish Sanitation Forecasting Strategy.

Regional Collaboration Goal(s) Addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's mission and regional capabilities

Lead(s):

- John Schmidt (NOAA/NWS/SERFC)
- David Glenn (NOAA/NWS/WFO Morehead City)
- A.K. Leight (NOAA/NOS/NCCOS)

Key Participants:

NCCOS, NWS, FDA, State shellfish sanitation agencies

Situation or problem that this project will address:

There is a great range of data analysis capabilities and methodologies employed across the southeast US states in the execution of state shellfish sanitation missions. Recent SECART projects supporting the post-processing of NWS precipitation products for application in this community's decision-making process. In addition, recent interactions with NCCOS/Oxford Lab and the state of NC and the NWS SERFC are highlighting the need for a regional meeting to share best practices and identify gaps such that NOAA entities might provide more effective and efficient support for this community.

Target audience:

State shellfish sanitation entities.

Desired Outcomes/Benefits:

- Best practices will be shared amongst state officials.
- Gaps in data availability and usage will be identified and addressed.
- Potential decision support tools and datasets will be identified during a gap analysis with action item assignments or small teams established to address.
- Assessment of the feasibility/need of expansion to the aquaculture community in FY21.

Approach:

The success of the initial meeting held in 2020 has inspired follow-on activities. This activity would be a continuation of FY20 meeting to touch base on collaborative work between attendees. The FY20 meeting was introductory in nature to share specific local collaborative projects between feds and states, allow states to present current state of their programs to identify state-to-state

collaboration and to identify potential regional-scale collaborations between NOAA and states. Several action items resulted from this meeting. The FY21 meeting would maintain momentum and allow for sharing of progress. There was a desire to expand out of sanitation into aquaculture, but given the likelihood of travel restrictions in FY21, perhaps that expansion is best left to FY22.

The FY 21 meeting would be virtual and expected to be 1/2 to a full day. Participants would include all those invited to the FY20 meeting (state shellfish sanitation officials, SECOORA, FDA, NCCOS, NWS).

Comms / Outreach Plan:

Communicating with constituency groups and federal partners via email, phone call, and conference call in preparation phase. Report of meeting will be produced, including action items. Outcomes will be shared with the ReCo National Office and posted to the SECART website.

Estimated Cost and Funding Source(s): \$0

No funds requested to hold this virtual workshop.

Key Project Milestones:

- Establish Planning Team (Q1).
- Execute virtual meeting (Q2-Q3).
- Produce document of meeting notes and action items (Q3).

Activity C3. Improve awareness of NOAA resources and capabilities to address ecosystem issues in the SE and Caribbean.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's mission and regional capabilities

SECART Lead(s):

- Rebecca Ellin, NC NERR
- Dana Wusinich-Mendez, NOAA/NOS/OCM

Key Participants:

- Ginny Fay (NOAA/NMFS)
- Scott Cross (NOAA/NESDIS/NCEI)
- Chris Taylor (NOAA/ NCCOS)
- Todd Kellison (NOAA/NMFS/SEFSC)

Situation/problem this project will address:

State and Federal resource managers and non-governmental organizations are not aware of the full range of NOAA data resources and expertise available regionally to inform decision making. SECART serves as a conduit to NOAA resources and capabilities including online data portals and inventories relevant to ecosystem management and coastal decision making in the Southeast and Caribbean Region.

Target audience:

State Coastal Zone Management Programs (CZMs), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Non-Governmental Organizations

Anticipated outcomes/benefits:

Improve access to NOAA expertise and data resources for decision making related to ecosystem management or coastal natural resources. This project team has identified specific areas for focus in FY2021

- Receive status updates on two Habitat Focus Areas in the SECART region
- Increase awareness of ecosystem-related restoration
- Explore needs and opportunities for regional collaboration to support information sharing on ecosystem-related initiatives and trends in the Southeast and Caribbean
- Share information on the SE US Ecosystem Status Report

Approach:

SECART serves as conduit to NOAA resources and capabilities including online data portals and inventories relevant to ecosystem management and coastal decision making in the Southeast and Caribbean Region.

Activities:

- Work with Resilience Workgroup on Aquaculture Storm Preparedness and Gear Management (B6)
- Engage Habitat Focus Areas (FL, PR) to expand awareness of those efforts, track progress, and seek opportunities for collaboration.
- Increase awareness in the region of the NOAA Water Initiative and enhance opportunities for benefits in the region
- Increase awareness of ecosystem-related restoration (e.g., Everglades restoration, Restoration Center projects)
- Support information sharing on ecosystem-related initiatives and trends in the Southeast and Caribbean (e.g., living shorelines, ecosystem-based management, coral disease management, marine debris damage and assessment). Promote webinars of interest to the SE&Carib region.

- Maintain awareness and assist with distributing updates (including webinars and draft reports as available) related to NMFS-SEFSC-led:
 - SE US Atlantic Ecosystem Status Report (Todd Kellison)
 - SE US Atlantic Climate Vulnerability Assessment (Todd Kellison)
 - Caribbean Ecosystem Status Report (Mandy Karnauskas)

Comms / Outreach Plan:

Outreach from these activities will be communicated through weekly and annual reports to ReCo.

Cost/Funding Source: \$0

No SECART funds required for this effort this year.

Key Milestones:

These ad hoc activities will not carry key milestones.

Activity C4. Improving coordination of seafloor mapping in the Southeast Region.

Regional Collaboration goals addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action
- Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA’s mission and regional capabilities

SECART Lead(s):

- Chris Taylor (NOAA/NOS/NCCOS)

Key participants:

SECOORA, NMFS (SEFSC and -SERO), NOS (NCCOS, OCM, ONMS) OAR/AOML, OASOA

Situation/problem this project will address:

Offices in NOAA as well as other state and federal agencies conduct seafloor mapping to support safe navigation (OCS), ocean planning (NOS) and resources assessments (NMFS, NOS).

SECART can assist and facilitate greater awareness of the mapping activities conducted by NOAA in the SE and Caribbean Region. The SECART can also facilitate access to mapping data and prioritization tools for NOAA offices and our partners in the US Caribbean and the Southeast US.

Target audience:

NOAA Line/Program Offices, Other Federal Agencies, State/Regional Coastal and Fisheries Management Agencies, Academic Institutions

Anticipated outcomes/benefits:

- Improved coordination of mapping priorities and activities will reduce redundancy and cost and lead to more rapid completion of priority areas.
- Habitat webinars (“habinars”) will improve awareness of NOAA mission, capabilities and activities in the Southeast region, connecting managers, stakeholders and other users of seafloor habitat data with practitioners conducting mapping activities or producing mapping products.
- The online GIS prioritization tool will improve awareness of regional needs for seafloor habitat data and improve efficiency by which NOAA meets goals across agencies and stakeholders.

Approach:

In FY20, SECART supported a regional prioritization for seafloor mapping in the SE. The prioritization exercise reached 25 program offices and agencies inside and outside NOAA. A technical report will be published late FY20, early FY21. The outcomes from the prioritization may evolve into coordinated mapping campaigns that are helping achieve the Executive Memo on Ocean Mapping. In FY21, SECART will monitor and continue to facilitate continued dialog among NOAA offices and partners regarding access to mapping data or new mapping needs. SECART will also receive updates on mapping activities in the region from workgroup members, NOAA offices or outside partners.

Comms / Outreach Plan:

Outcomes from the prioritization tool will be conveyed to SE agency and organization partners through webinars, these webinars will be advertised to program and line offices.

Cost/Funding Source: \$0

No funds are requested this year of this continuing activity.

Key Milestones/Deliverables:

- Quarterly updates to SECART on “accomplishments” from the prioritization and coordination.

Activity C5. Enhance awareness of and participation in NOAA UxS developments with regional applicability.

Regional Collaboration Goal(s) Addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action

Lead(s):

- Debra Hernandez (SECOORA)
- Chris Taylor (NOAA/NOS/NCCOS)
- John McCombs (NOAA/NOS/OCM)
- Todd Kellison (NOAA/NMFS/SEFSC)

Key Partner(s), Collaborators and Contributors:

SECOORA, NMFS (SEFSC and -SERO), NOS (NCCOS, OCM, ONMS) OAR/AOML, OASOA

Situation or problem that this project will address:

The capability and utility of Uncrewed Aerial and Marine Systems (UxSs) in support of ecosystem-level research, monitoring, and support for management decisions continues to increase. A NOAA Uncrewed Systems Strategy is under development, and the NMFS Southeast Regional Strategic Plan includes a priority to work with SECOORA on developing UxS applications to reduce the cost of collecting and processing environmental and habitat data, and produce more accurate and timely scientific products.

A NERRS Catalyst Grant to incorporate drones into the vegetation/wetland habitat monitoring system has been funded. Drones would fill the gap between quadrat (1-m) mapping and medium resolution full system mapping. The project would help to define best practices and approaches to bringing in drones to help map and monitor NERRS habitats.

Target audience:

Scientists, coastal managers, especially habitat managers, shoreline managers. Technical users of the technology and users or decision makers that require data products.

Desired Outcomes/Benefits:

- Reduce the cost of collecting and processing environmental and habitat data, and produce more accurate and timely scientific products
- Define best practices and approaches to bringing in drones to help map and monitor NERRS habitats

Approach:

The leads for this activity will monitor developments with the NOAA Uncrewed Systems Strategy and with UxS application and potential within their respective organizations (including outcomes of the "SE and Caribbean Regional Workshop on Using Drones for Coastal Management and Conservation" and the "NERRS Catalyst Grant"), and convey updates as appropriate within SECART. The activity leads will explore options for sharing this information in the region and bringing such applications to use.

The activity will:

- Monitor developments with 1) the NOAA Uncrewed Systems Strategy and 2) with UxS potential and applications within NOAA offices and partner organizations (including outcomes of the "SE and Caribbean Regional Workshop on Using Drones for Coastal Management and Conservation").
- Convey updates as appropriate within SECART.
- Explore the possibility of scheduling a webinar focused on the NOAA Uncrewed Systems Strategy, and potentially other UxS-related webinars.
- Share updates and webinar opportunities through SECART and partner networks.
- Help formalize the final best practices documentation from the NERRS Catalyst Grant and assist with outreach beyond the scope of the NERRS. Share results in the region (eg. webinars) highlighting the resulting documents, methodologies, and outcomes.

Comms / Outreach Plan:

- Provide updates to the SECART team regarding progress on the NERRS Catalyst Grant

Estimated Cost and Funding Source(s): \$0

No funds requested for this activity in FY21.

Key Project Milestones:

- Quarterly updates from the NERRS Catalyst Grant project will be shared with SECART
- At least one presentation to SECART focused on UxS activities in the Southeast and/or Caribbean.

Activity C6. Support for NOAA Response to Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease.

Regional Collaboration Goal(s) Addressed:

- Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources
- Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action

Lead(s):

- Dana Wusinich-Mendez (NOAA/NOS/OCM)

Key Participants:

OASOA, NOS (OCM, ONMS, NCCOS), NMFS (SERO, PIRO), OAR (AOML)

Situation or problem that this project will address:

Coral reefs in Florida, the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are currently in the midst of an epidemic of a newly identified coral disease referred to as Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) which is affecting approximately half of the existing hard coral species found in Florida and one third of those found in the wider Caribbean region. This particular disease is characterized by rapid tissue loss and high mortality rates. While the disease was first identified on Florida's reefs in 2014, there had been no reports of its spread to the wider Caribbean region until early 2018. It has now been reported in Mexico, Belize, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, the US Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, the Turks and Caicos Islands; the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, St. Lucia, Guadeloupe and Honduras.

Target audience:

Coral reef research, monitoring, and management partners confronting SCTLD.

Desired Outcomes/Benefits:

Support for local SCTLD response efforts in FL, USVI and PR

Approach:

Over the past 2 years SECART has provided strategic support for efforts to respond to the outbreak of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands including support for efforts to build capacity for detection and response to this new and significant threat to coral reef ecosystems in our region. NOAA Leadership, namely RDML T. Gallaudet, has called for the development of a NOAA Strategy for SCTLD at a national level. Our state and territory partners have requested support for national level coordination of SCTLD detection and response efforts and NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program has committed funding to support a new National SCTLD Coordinator Position that will foster improved coordination and information exchange.

The activity leads will:

- Assist in the development of the NOAA SCTLD Strategy and keep team and WG members informed on its scope, content and progress; and
- Seek opportunities for SECART to support implementation of the NOAA SCTLD Strategy and the involvement of the National SCTLD Coordinator in executing the NOAA SCTLD Strategy and supporting local SCTLD response efforts in the SE and Caribbean region.

Estimated Cost and Funding Source(s): \$0

No SECART funds are requested for this activity in FY21.

Key Milestones:

- Q1: completion of NOAA SCTLD Strategy.
- Q1: Placement of National SCTLD Coordinator

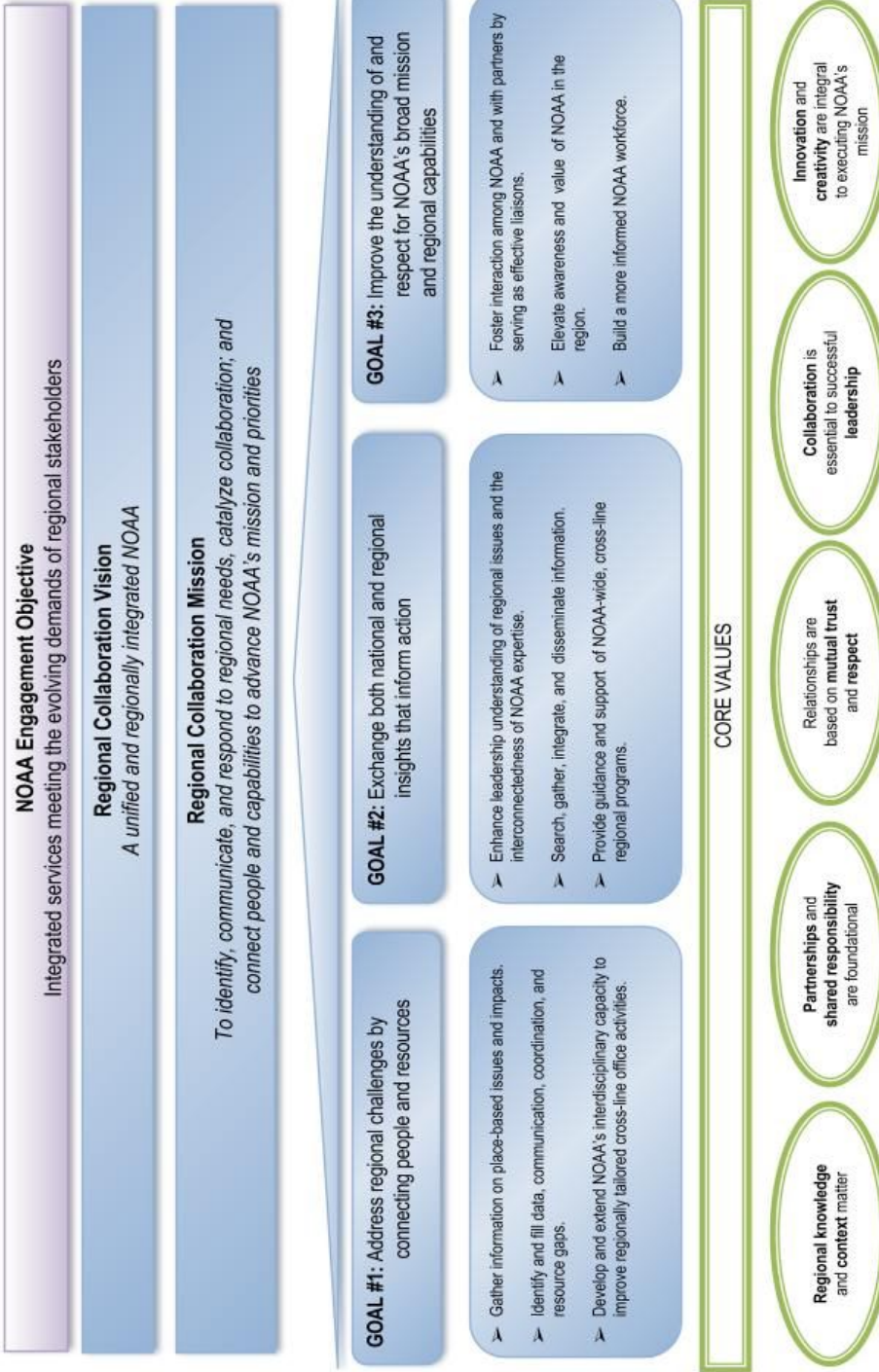
III. Appendices

Appendix 1. Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team Membership (September 2020)

Name	Affiliation	Location	E-mail
Barnes, Tomma	NOS/NCCOS	Beaufort, NC	Tomma.Barnes@noaa.gov
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Wusinich-Mendez, Dana	NOS/OCM	Palm Beach Gardens,, FL	Dana.Wusinich-mendez@noaa.gov

Appendix 2. Regional Collaboration Strategy

Regional Collaboration Strategy 2016



Updated: July 2016

Appendix 3. NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team FY19-FY22 Strategic Priorities

Through engagement, integration, and innovation, NOAA's Regional Collaboration Network improves cooperation among the NOAA Line Offices and partner entities to more effectively address our shared regional challenges and respond to emerging opportunities. Regional Collaboration expands on existing coordination and communication efforts by enhancing program integration activities to address NOAA's priorities at regional scales, thereby improving productivity and value to constituents. NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Regional Team (SECART) network creates means for people to engage at a regional scale (NC, SC, GA, FL, PR, and USVI) and invites new approaches to develop products and services that are responsive to the region's changing economy and environment. SECART has identified three priority areas for action over the period FY19-22: engaging NOAA staff and partners; improving resilience of communities; and sustaining the region's marine and coastal resources. This strategy is responsive to NOAA's priorities and the Regional Collaboration Network strategy.

Priority Area: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of NOAA's mission execution through enhanced collaboration across NOAA line offices and with partners.

Goal 1: Address current and emerging regional priorities by connecting people and resources.

- Identify information, communication, coordination, and resource gaps and identify solutions for closing the gaps;
- Understand the capabilities of NOAA and its partners within the region and facilitate bringing those capabilities to bear on priority regional issues, consistent with NOAA's mission;
- Convene NOAA and partners together to address specific regional priorities;
- Support and engage regional partnerships to efficiently address shared goals.

Goal 2: Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action.

- Enhance NOAA leadership's understanding of the region's issues and NOAA capabilities in the region;
- Promote improved understanding of the region's unique needs, capabilities, and contributions as related to NOAA's priorities (Coastal and Ocean Economy, Severe Weather Impacts, and Earth Observations);
- Help regional staff and partners understand NOAA's mission, goals, capabilities and constraints;
- Provide guidance and support in the regional development and implementation of NOAA-wide programs.

Goal 3: Improve awareness of NOAA's broad mission responsibilities and regional capabilities to achieve an understanding of, and respect for, the totality of NOAA's work.

- Elevate the awareness and value of NOAA through strategic partnerships, outreach, and communication, including outreach to elected officials and staff;
- Build NOAA's interdisciplinary capacity and organizational integration;
- Assist in developing and tailoring engagement strategies for the regional implementation of national priorities.

Priority Area: Improve Economic, Environmental, and Social Resilience of Communities to Weather, Water, and Climate Impacts

Goal 1: Facilitate development of emerging science and technology, enabling regional stakeholders to better plan for, respond and adapt to the risks posed by extreme weather, water, and climate hazards and impacts.

- Collect, analyze, and evaluate the resiliency related needs of partners and users in the region to inform and focus research and development efforts to help address the issues;
- Connect people and resources to enhance existing and develop new products and services;
- Encourage and facilitate the transition of research to develop societally relevant applications.

Goal 2: Facilitate the application of products, services, and knowledge to enhance the capacity of communities to understand, plan for, adapt, and respond to risks posed by extreme weather at different time scales.

- Support delivery of resilience-relevant information to communities;
- Facilitate the application of science and tools in communities;
- Support opportunities to bring customer needs for risk identification and the development of mitigation and adaptation strategies to the attention of NOAA.

Goal 3: Enhance internal organizational awareness and coordination within the region to improve preparation and response to disasters.

- Identify agency capabilities within the region to prepare for and respond to disasters;
- Improve communication among appropriate NOAA entities both within and outside the region building a better understanding of capabilities and roles during a disaster response.

Priority Area: Promote the sustainability of the region’s living marine resources and habitats as key contributors to the nation’s economy

Goal 1: Increase the effectiveness of coastal and marine habitat conservation and restoration.

- Improve coordination among NOAA entities and partners to identify gaps, capabilities, and efficiencies in achieving regional priorities in resource management and conservation;
- Improve awareness of NOAA’s mapping activities in the region and access to mapping products;
- Promote regional habitat conservation initiatives in the US Southeast and Caribbean (e.g., NOAA’s Habitat Blueprint Framework and NC Sentinel Site Cooperative).

Goal 2: Enhance awareness of risks to living marine resources and habitats.

- Improve regional awareness of impacts from human activities and climate variability (including extreme weather events), on natural systems;
- Identify and prioritize emerging regional needs (e.g., marine debris) and promote activities that address risks (e.g., nature-based infrastructure).

Appendix 4. SECART FY2021 Spend Plan

FY20 SECART Activities			
Priority/Activity	SECART Funds	RC Travel portion	Supplem. funding
Priority: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of NOAA’s mission execution through enhanced collaboration across NOAA offices and with partners.			
Activity A1. Enhance NOAA’s mission through strategic engagement with regional partners	4000	2000	0
Activity A2. Advance NOAA’s mission through engagement with the NOAA in the Caribbean Collaborative	2100	2100	13,500
Activity A3. Represent NOAA’s broad mission capabilities and accomplishments in the region and facilitate two-way flow of information between the region and NOAA leadership.	2000	1000	0
Activity A4. Promote an informed, skilled and diverse NOAA Workforce in the region.	3000	1000	0
Activity A5. Engage with Congressional Staff to convey the value of NOAA and partner activities.	2500	0	0
Activity A6. Provide organization, coordination, and leadership for SECART to be effective in accomplishing its mission..	6000		0
Activity A7. Improve the capacity of NOAA’s inter-regional and national integrated services	4500	1400	0
Priority: Improve Economic, Environmental, and Social Resilience of Communities to Weather, Water, and Climate Impacts			
Activity B1. Resilience Webinar Series	1200	0	0
Activity B2. Build regional resilience through the Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership	4000	1000	0
Activity B3. Disaster Resilience: Guide to Integrated NOAA Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region	3800	1600	10,000
Activity B4. Improving Disaster Resilience in the Southeast and Caribbean Region: Exercise with Partners for Large Scale Disasters	5000	0	0
Activity B5. Disaster Resilience: Addressing previously identified needs and sharing NOAA relevant information.	5000	0	0

B6. Aquaculture storm preparedness and gear management.	4700	0	TBD
B7. Regional presence for the Southeast and for the Caribbean on the Climate Resilience Toolkit.	0	0	0
Priority: Promote the sustainability of the region's living marine resources and the habitats upon which they depend.			
Activity C1. SE and Caribbean Regional Workshop on Using Drones for Coastal Management and Conservation	2200	0	20,000
Activity C2. SE States shellfish sanitation forecasting strategy.	0	0	0
Activity C3. Improve awareness of NOAA resources and capabilities to address ecosystem issues in the SE and Caribbean	0	0	0
Activity C4. Improving coordination and prioritization of seafloor mapping in the southeast region	0	0	0
Activity C5. Enhance awareness of and participation in NOAA UxS developments with regional applicability.	0	0	0
Activity C4. Training and support for Coral Disease prevention and Response in Puerto Rico	0	0	0
	50,000	10,100	43,500+
	SECART Funds	RC Travel	Supplem. funding