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4
5 When are Payment for Ecosystems Services suitable for Coral Reef derived coastal protection?: a review of
6 scientific requirements

7
8 Abstract

9 Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) is an emerging tool intended to solve a range of ecosystem
10 management inefficiencies, by linking conservation action to payment. Such schemes have not been tested
11 to our knowledge, for coral reef derived coastal protection, which is a key Ecosystem Service (ES) for many
12 nations bordered by tropical coral reefs. Coral health is deteriorating globally, as are their ES and inadequate
13 finance is identified as a cross cutting factor stymieing management action. In this paper, we assessed the
14 feasibility of PES for coastal protection, with a focus on the scientific requirements. Key PES elements related
15 solely to ecological processes were isolated, the role of coral reefs in protecting beaches reviewed and priority
16 management options for improving reef health synthesized. Outputs indicate that there is adequate scientific
17 knowledge to satisfy a PES. While there is limited ability to prove and quantify causality between
18 management actions and ES delivery, PES criteria can be satisfied with the substitution of a management
19 proxy, rather than payments being conditional on ES measurements. Management, both passive and active,
20 would focus on maintaining reefs that already have a protective function and front stable beaches, above a
21 functioning threshold.

22
23 Keywords: Payment for Ecosystem Services; Coastal Protection; Coral Reefs; Caribbean

24

25 1 Introduction

26

27 Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), a tool for managing ecosystems by providing positive incentives for
28 behavioural changes (Bladon et al., 2016) has been touted as “the next best thing” for filling the conservation
29 financing gap (Fujita et al., 2013; Waylen and Julia Martin-Ortega 2018). The suitability of this scheme for
30 marine application and in particular coastal protection, which is often rated among the most important
31 services provided by coral reefs, is however unclear (Moberg and Folke 1999; Burke et al., 2008; Mehvar et al.,
32 2018).

33

34 PES is based on Ecosystem Service (ES) science, a relatively new field which seeks to link science, economics,
35 conservation management and economic development (Braat and de Groot 2012). At its simplest, Ecosystem
36 Services are defined as “benefits people obtain from ecosystems” (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005).
37 Looking at ecosystems through the lens of services provided to humans, allows for their value (economic and
38 intrinsic) to be clearly highlighted. PES then goes a step further and utilizes quantifications of these services,
39 as a base, to devise payments between buyers and sellers of the service. This is once the agreed upon
40 improvements to the flow of services or management of the ecosystem are provided. The link between
41 conservation action, service flow and payment is therefore made clear (Ingram et al., 2014).

42

43 Coastal protection in this paper refers to the ability of coral reefs to protect beaches from erosion by
44 absorbing and dispersing significant quantities of wave energy (Kushner et al., 2011; Storlazzi et al., 2019).
45 This attenuation of wave energy allows for reductions in shoreline erosion, flooding, damage to coastal
46 infrastructure and loss of life. The service can be characterised as the amount of attenuation that can be
47 attributed to the reef or to the increase in wave energy due to reef deterioration. Coral health is declining
48 considerably with both local and global stressors working synergistically to negatively impact the ecosystem
49 (De’ath et al., 2012; Jackson et al., 2014) resulting in a diminishing of the service and its value (Mumby et al.,

50 2014; Weijerman et al., 2018). This trajectory is expected to continue (Maynard et al., 2015) with predictions of
51 increasing climate change induced risks to ecosystems (Pachauri et al., 2014).

52
53 In spite of the variety of management measures implemented, such as ecosystem based management,
54 integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning and watershed management (Mcleod et al.,
55 2019) coral reef health continues to decline and inadequate finance has been identified as a cross-cutting
56 factor, undermining conservation action (Bladon et al., 2016; Gill et al., 2017). Private sector financing
57 mechanisms for coral reef conservation are scarce (Pascal et al., 2018; Meyers et al., 2020). However PES
58 might provide a way for conservation funds to be generated from non- public sources (Wunder et al., 2008;
59 Bos et al., 2015) if coastal protection can meet PES requirements.

60
61 With no examples found of PES schemes for coastal protection in the peer reviewed literature, our paper aims
62 to fill this knowledge gap and determine if there is adequate scientific knowledge of the provision of the
63 ecosystem service by coral reefs, to develop a PES scheme. This is with the knowledge that social and
64 financial structures also need to be put in place for a PES system to be implemented, and that the ecological
65 parameters provide the foundation on which other elements (e.g., negotiations of agreements, legal structure
66 and financing) are built.

67
68 Our focus for PES development is on Caribbean coral reefs, which are considered globally to be among the
69 most threatened (Gardner et al., 2003). At the same time, these reefs are capable of generating huge
70 amounts of revenue from reef associated tourism, estimated at more than USD\$7.9 billion (Spalding et al.,
71 2018). Deriving income from this sector for reef protection therefore, seems a logical course of action.

72
73 Our objectives are as follows: (i) define PES and outline the key biophysical elements required to develop a
74 scheme; (ii) compile information on the biophysical elements required from coral reefs to provide the
75 ecosystem service; (iii) outline the management measures on ES delivery and (iv) based on these outputs
76 determine if the science behind both the delivery of the ES and management action is adequate for the
77 development of a PES scheme.

78

79 2 Methods

80

81 We reviewed peer-reviewed journal articles using the online academic search engine SCOPUS (cut off date
82 July 8th, 2020). No geographical or temporal boundaries were set and key word combinations were searched
83 within the title, abstract and keywords. Only papers and their references relevant to our objectives were
84 assessed and additional papers were consulted as required.

85

86 Assessment# 1: Sourcing PES schemes for coastal protection. Key words - "payment for ecosystem services"
87 and "coastal protection" and "coral reefs". We first carried out this search to gain an overall sense of what has
88 been written about PES mechanisms for coral derived coastal protection. SCOPUS - 42 articles were obtained
89 from the search of which only 4 were directly related to developing PES specifically for coral reefs.

90

91 Assessment# 2a: Synthesising the science behind the ability of coral reefs to deliver the coastal protection
92 ES. Key words – "coastal protection" and "coral reefs". 139 results were obtained from the search of which 104
93 were eliminated as coral reefs were not central to the discussion and/or the ability of reefs to provide the
94 service was only mentioned but not further assessed. The results of the remaining 35 articles were
95 summarised.

96

97 Assessment# 2b: The role of live coral in delivery of the service. We added the key word "live coral" to this
98 search. 7 articles resulted, of which 2 were excluded due to lack of direct relevance (e.g., a focus on sea cages

99 and economic valuations). A further 27 relevant papers were found in references related to reef health (e.g.,
100 maintenance of carbonate budgets). 32 articles were summarised.
101

102 3 Definition and key PES requirements

103
104 PES is a market based approach, designed to provide financing for environmental management (Waylen and
105 Julia Martin-Ortega 2018). The scheme is based on the principle that those who contribute to producing the
106 service (providers) via effective conservation/management action, should be compensated, while those who
107 benefit from the service (beneficiaries), should pay for it.
108

109 There is an ongoing debate about what is actually a PES (Muradian et al., 2010; Vatn 2010; Moros et al., 2020)
110 and therefore a sliding scale of PES definitions. These range from strongly market based (Wunder 2005) to an
111 overarching term for approaches that provide positive incentives for management of ecosystems (Engel et al.,
112 2008). With a variety of definitions to choose from, there is also some leeway with which to fit coastal
113 protection to PES requirements. The definition used therefore, can depend on the level of specificity obtained
114 by service provision.
115

116 In this paper we used definitions of Wunder as both our maximum (Wunder 2005) and minimum standards
117 (Wunder 2015). Wunder is acknowledged as an authority on PES, with 6 articles cited more than 8000 times
118 between 2005 and 2020 according to Google Scholar. His 2005 definition is among the earliest and most
119 heavily utilised (Sommerville et al., 2009) which he revisited in 2015. Wunder's (2005) definition, "A voluntary
120 transaction whereby a well-defined ES (or actions likely to secure it) is 'bought' from at least one ES provider
121 by at least one buyer, if and only if the payment is conditional on provision," requires robust science. His 2015
122 definition, "Voluntary transactions (between service users and service providers) that are conditional on
123 agreed rules of natural resource management for generating offsite services", however allows for some
124 scientific imprecision (inherent in ecological studies) while not being so broad as to eliminate scientific
125 accountability.
126

127 In order for participants to demand and make payments for a service, they should know (as clearly as possible)
128 what is being bought and sold, as well as where and how it is delivered (Forest Trends et al., 2008; Fripp 2014).
129 Therefore, identifying, quantifying and assessing the service is key. This requires: (i) the selection of suitable
130 indicators which are accepted by the scientific community to have impacts on service flow, and can be
131 replicated via reliable methods, (ii) baselines against which success or failure will be measured and, (iii) the
132 definition of spatial boundaries, so that it is clear where the service originates and where it is being delivered.
133 Ecosystem processes underlying service delivery also require identification, as they are crucial elements in
134 designing conservation action to reduce threats.
135

136 Conditionality is considered the "conceptual core" of a PES (Bladon et al., 2016) and is a key element
137 separating it from "business-as-usual" schemes (Wunder 2013; Ingram et al., 2014). The term refers to the
138 requirement for payments to be made only if the stipulated goals are met. These goals can be either
139 measurements of services (via indicators) or management proxies (accepted by the scientific community to
140 have impacts on service flow). The setting of goals is an important element that should be identified early in
141 the process. In many cases, goals are set based on the degree of technical challenges, such as data collection
142 and the ability to quantify the service, and costs (Sommerville et al., 2009). Proving conditionality is difficult
143 and it is often the un-met criterion of PES (Muradian et al., 2010; Lau 2013) with issues due in part to reliance
144 on continued monitoring from an established baseline.
145

146 Additionality is identified as an advantageous but not critical parameter (Wunder 2005; Muradian et al., 2010).
147 The term refers to the measurement of an intervention's impact, relative to no intervention being made and
148 translates therefore to the added benefit of having a PES (Tacconi 2012). Additionality is another difficult

149 parameter to measure, and requires not only the establishment of baselines, but also counterfactual analysis.
150 Such examination allows for comparison of the impact of a scenario in which there was no PES, to a PES
151 situation, in order to prove increased benefits (Wunder 2005).

152
153 In theory, payments are triggered by evidence of service provision or improvement to the service. However, in
154 reality, such results-based payments are difficult to assess and compounded by time lags between
155 intervention and results, and between monitoring and verification. An alternative is the use of a management
156 proxy, with payments being based on evidence of changes to harmful practices or the implementation of
157 actions proven to assist conservation (Atmodjo et al., 2017). The proxy essentially provides an escape clause,
158 especially for situations where service provision cannot be quantified, whether through lack of data, resources
159 or process.

160
161 All PES schemes provide incentives to those who own (or are responsible for) specific areas to maintain,
162 restore or enhance ecosystem services (Moros et al., 2020). The rationale behind development of the scheme
163 can however determine which elements are most important, for example in those instances where PES is
164 used to reward conservation action (environmental stewardship), additionality is not paramount (Swallow et
165 al., 2009).

166
167 Key requirements for PES schemes are summarised in Table 1.

168
169 Table 1: Summary table of key PES requirements

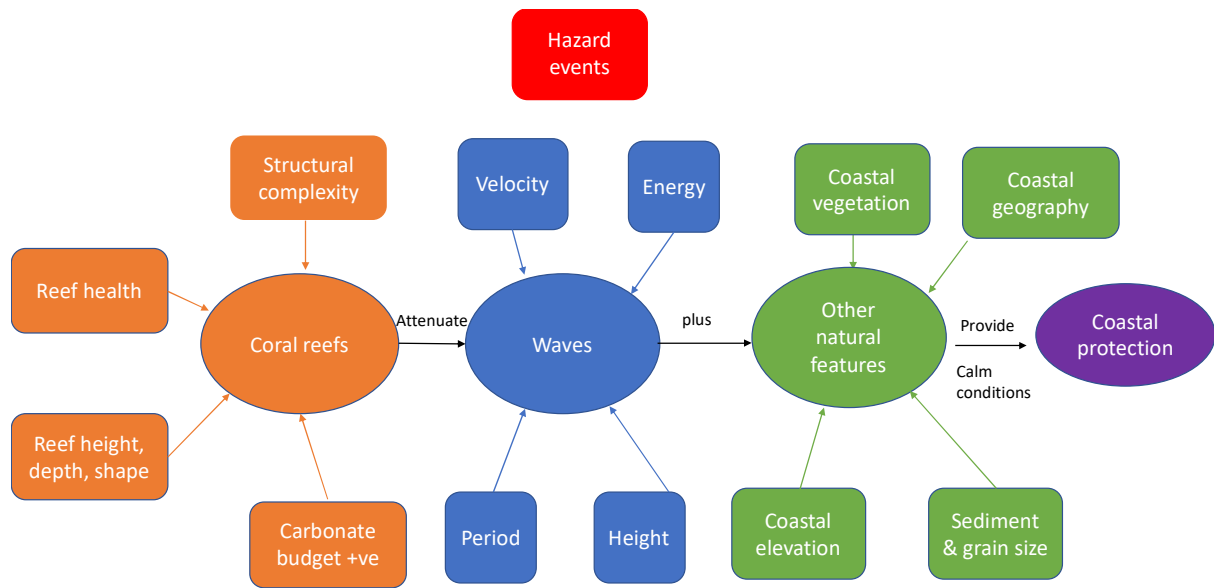
170

Key PES Elements	Status
ES Identification	Required
ES Quantification	Required only in absence of proxy
ES Spatial Boundaries	Required
Proven Management Measures/ Proxy	Required
Conditionality	Required
Additionality	Desired

171 **4 Synthesis of knowledge on the ecological processes of coral reefs involved in**
172 **coastal protection**

173
174 Coastal Protection is a complex ES that depends on coral reefs, acting in concert with a number of other biotic
175 and abiotic factors (Figure 1) (Burke et al., 2008; Elliff and Silva 2017).

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Figure 1: Natural features that interact to deliver coastal protection. Shapes in orange represent coral reefs and their different ecological parameters. Shapes in blue represent waves and their physical processes. Shapes in green represent other biophysical features that can impact service provision. Red represents natural hazards that impact all natural processes.

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Coral reefs are comprised of thin veneers of live corals, growing in decadal timeframes, on top of massive depositions of their calcium carbonate skeletons (Kuffner and Toth 2016). Both living and non-living sections are important to coastal protection, as is described in Sections 4.1 to 4.3. Reefs attenuate wave energy, reducing their height, energy and velocity as they move from deeper to shallower waters (Gourlay and Colleter 2005; Lowe et al., 2007). Morphology across entire reef profiles affects the process (Yao et al., 2019).

Fringing reefs are often responsible for coastal protection (van Zanten et al., 2014) and are also most heavily affected by anthropogenic impacts (Mumby et al., 2014). Their morphology is typically characterized by a forereef slope that terminates at a shallow reef crest and a relatively horizontal reef flat which continues to the coast (Figure 2) (Yao et al., 2019). Variations in species, geology and hydrodynamic conditions result in high variability between different coral reefs and therefore their effectiveness at providing the service (Quataert et al., 2015).

200
201

Figure 2: Cross section of a fringing reef. Image from (U.S. Geological Survey Fact Sheet 025-02). Retrieved September 16th, 2020.

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203

4.1 Provision of the coastal protection ecosystem service

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Both anecdotal and scientific data support the fact that coral reefs protect shorelines (Wells and Ravilius 2006; Principe et al., 2012; Ferrario et al., 2014). A total of 139 papers were found in the SCOPUS database on this topic, and while only 35 actually assessed the role of the reef in service provision, causality was demonstrated between coral reefs and wave attenuation. The role that coral reefs play in actually delivering the beach protection service was described in 4 of the papers assessed (Wielgus et al., 2010; Kushner et al.,

210 2011; Reguero et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2019), while the role of important reef processes, such as maintaining
211 the calcium carbonate budget, was not made at all.

212
213 The ability of coral reefs to protect beaches is site specific and dependent on the factors indicated in Figure 1
214 among others. Enabling factors for service delivery differ from site to site, with some coral reefs having no
215 impact on beach erosion (Quataert et al., 2015). When coral reefs do offer protection, the literature is clear
216 that while the ecosystem is often not the sole reason for sheltered coastlines, coral reefs, particularly, fringing
217 reefs, are major contributors to wave attenuation. In some cases, they can dissipate greater than 90% wave
218 energy (Kench and Brander 2006; Ferrario et al., 2014).

219
220 Wide, shallow, rugose reefs are reported as most effective at attenuating wave energy, with reef crests
221 reducing >80% of incident wave energy (Sheppard et al., 2005; Kench and Brander 2006; de Alegria-Arzaburu
222 et al., 2013). Coral reefs attenuate waves primarily via wave breaking and bottom friction. Dissipation occurs
223 first as waves break on the shallowest section of the reef followed by additional energy loss via friction as the
224 bottom of the wave moves along the reef towards the shore (Koch et al., 2009; Costa et al., 2016). Various
225 reef attributes (Figure 1) impact both the amount of energy dissipated and its spatial extent, however the two
226 primary reef related factors with major roles in wave attenuation are: (i) reef depth for wave breaking and (ii)
227 roughness of the substrate which causes friction (Gallop et al., 2014; Monismith et al., 2015; Harris et al.,
228 2018).

229 230 4.2 The role of live coral

231
232 The role of the coral reef structure in providing coastal protection is well reported (Section 4.1) however the
233 input of live coral and hence the impact of degrading health to ecosystem service provision has not been as
234 extensively studied (de Alegria-Arzaburu et al., 2013; Ferrario et al., 2014). In this review only 7 of the relevant
235 139 studies spoke to the role of live corals and of these, 5 examined more closely their role in service delivery.
236 While few, these and other related studies, clearly indicate that healthy reefs with high abundances of
237 scleractinian (hard) corals and structural complexity, provide greater coastal protection than degraded reefs.
238 This is in cases of both frequent - daily erosion (Guannel et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2019) and rare – storm events
239 (Ferrario et al., 2014; van Zanten et al., 2014). The function of live coral for coastal protection can be
240 encompassed within two interconnected processes: carbonate budgets and structural complexity, which are
241 both enhanced by the presence of the framework builders *Acropora* spp. and *Orbicella* spp.

242 243 4.2.1 Carbonate budgets: reef growth and maintenance

244
245 Scleractinian corals are a broad taxonomic and morphological group, which form the foundation taxa of coral
246 reefs (Veron 2004). Their generation of huge amounts of calcium carbonate skeleton is crucial to the provision
247 of coastal protection (Guannel et al., 2016). Reef defence functions can only be maintained naturally, if
248 vertical reef accretion allows for the shallow depths required for wave attenuation (Waterman 2008; Beetham
249 et al., 2017; Perry et al., 2018). Within this group, specific species play dominant roles as reef builders and
250 therefore in the delivery of coastal protection.

251
252 Corals grow by accreting calcium carbonate and at the same time erosion (biological and physical) of the
253 skeleton produces sand. For the structure to be maintained, the carbonate budget must be positive (i.e., the
254 rate of growth must exceed that of erosion) (Ryan et al., 2019). If the system switches to a net negative state
255 however (as is caused by large scale coral mortality for example), net erosion can ensue, resulting in
256 deterioration of the reef structure over time (Perry et al., 2013), flattening of the reef (Alvarez-Filip et al.,
257 2009) and a reduction in the structure's ability to attenuate wave energy (Sheppard et al., 2005).

258
259 Hard coral cover is a predictor of carbonate production, with the abundance of historical, framework builders
260 such *Acropora* spp. and *Orbicella* spp. being especially important to the maintenance of carbonate budgets

261 (Perry et al., 2018; Estrada-Saldívar et al., 2019). A significant reshaping of Caribbean coral reefs has already
262 taken place, with a decline in reef builders and an influx of “weedy” species such as *Agaricia* spp. and *Porites*
263 *astreoides* colonising their spaces. Such corals have neither fast growth rates nor the ability to generate the
264 quantities of carbonate required for significant reef building (Pandolfi and Jackson 2006; Alvarez-Filip et al.,
265 2013; Perry et al., 2013). Major events, such as these have been reported as primary reasons for the shifts in
266 carbonate budgets in the Caribbean, from strongly net positive (5 kg CaCO₃ m⁻²y⁻¹) to less so (2.6 kg CaCO₃ m⁻²
267 y⁻¹) between the 1960s and 1990s (Kennedy et al., 2013).

268
269 Maintenance of the carbonate budget is therefore essential to sustaining reef function, including coastal
270 protection (Lange et al., 2020) and the presence of live coral crucial. Timescales for this deterioration/erosion
271 of reefs are not well understood (World Bank 2016) and while a figure of 6mm per year has been suggested as
272 an approximation of the rate by which dead reefs will erode, it is also acknowledged that rates differ
273 dramatically between reefs and even at different locations on the same reef (Hutchings 1986; Eakin 1996). For
274 example, on Australia’s Great Barrier Reef, dense coral colonies in some inshore areas were lost over 50-100
275 years (Hoegh-Guldberg et al., 2007), while Uva reef in Panama, was reduced to almost the same level as the
276 surrounding sediment in approximately 15 years (Eakin 2001). In the Indian Ocean, bioerosion on Chagos reef
277 reduced the structure to rubble within 3 years (Sheppard et al., 2002).

278
279 A shift into a net negative phase is reported for situations where live coral cover on Caribbean reefs reaches
280 10% (Perry et al., 2013). In a more recent study, this concept was refined further to 10% cover of structurally
281 important species only and considered as precautionary threshold (Darling et al., 2019). Nonetheless, these
282 are targets that should be aimed for.

283 284 4.2.2 Structural complexity

285
286 Structural or topographical complexity of reefs refers to their three-dimensional form or layout on all spatial
287 scales (Zawada and Brock 2009), and plays an important role in wave dissipation (Lugo-Fernandez et al.,
288 1998). Complexity is primarily defined by the morpho-functional characteristics (size and shape) of dominant
289 and foundation corals (Veron 2002; Alvarez-Filip et al., 2011). It is measured via rugosity (on one spatial scale)
290 and roughness (range of spatial scales) (Zawada and Brock 2009) and so both terms are used.

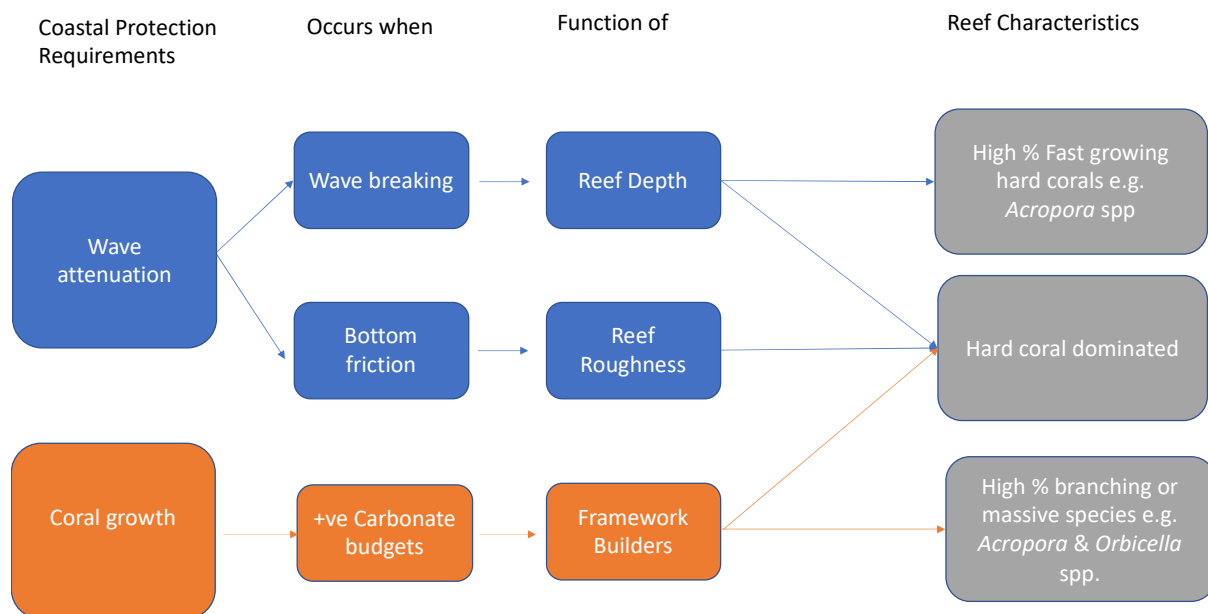
291
292 In terms of wave attenuation, live or just dead corals provide roughness, which reduces wave energy (Harris
293 et al., 2018; Reguero et al., 2018). Roughness is influenced by the type and size of substrate, with sand
294 offering little and large, branching coral creating the most friction and therefore the greatest impact on wave
295 attenuation (Sheppard et al., 2005; van Zanten et al., 2014). Reefs can be categorized according to their
296 rugosity index, with the flattest reefs having an index of less than 1.5. Approximately 75% of Caribbean reefs
297 fall into this category, with reefs exhibiting an index higher than 2 (complex reefs) being extremely rare.
298 (Alvarez-Filip et al., 2009).

299
300 While structural complexity increases with coral cover and species richness, massive growth forms (e.g.,
301 *Orbicella* spp) and fast growers (e.g., *Acropora* spp.) are thought to contribute the most to the structure
302 (Alvarez-Filip et al., 2011; Kuffner and Toth 2016) and hence to wave dissipation. A significant decline in coral
303 cover and hence structural complexity results in crumbling of the reef and a change from a more varied
304 topographical surface to a flatter surface, with less ability to reduce wave heights (Alvarez-Filip et al., 2009;
305 Osorio-Cano et al., 2019).

306 307 4.3 Summary of knowledge on service provision and the role of live coral for coastal protection

308
309 The importance of living reefs and therefore reef health to service delivery is shown in Figure 3. Living reefs
310 contribute to service delivery in the short term via wave attenuation and in the long term via the ability of the
311 reef to grow (accrete) and therefore maintain their structures. Reef degradation affects both carbonate

312 production and structural complexity (Alvarez-Filip et al., 2011; Perry et al., 2013). Reef requirements can
 313 therefore be summarised as healthy reefs, dominated by framework builders. These attributes are
 314 interlinked, as the same coral species, (i.e., large framework builders) are largely responsible for both
 315 (Graham and Nash 2013; Harris et al., 2018).
 316



317
 318
 319 Figure 3: Summary of key coastal protection requirements and primary coral reef characteristics for their
 320 provision

321 5 Synthesis of knowledge on management for coastal protection

322
 323 Coral reefs are extremely complex ecosystems with high levels of genetic, species and habitat diversity,
 324 leading to a vast variety of interactions involving many different species (Moberg and Folke 1999; Dikou
 325 2010). The major stressors are well known, however understanding ecosystem responses to them can be
 326 challenging, due to this complexity (Pandolfi 2015; Steneck et al., 2018). It is however clear that effective reef
 327 protection will require management that can mitigate the effects of at least the dominant stressors, under
 328 existing and future scenarios of global climate change (Weijerman et al., 2018; Brandl et al., 2019). Coral reefs
 329 have been described as the most studied marine ecosystems with scientific consensus on the range of
 330 stressors and appropriate management measures (Mumby and Steneck 2008). The aforementioned authors
 331 carried out a comprehensive review of coral reef management and conservation and no attempt was made
 332 here to conduct yet another. We used this as our seminal paper, and also referred to relevant references and
 333 more current research for specific elements.

334
 335 Management can be categorised as either passive or active. Passive management operates on the basis of
 336 allowing nature to heal itself with limited human interference (e.g., reducing impacts, enforcement) while
 337 active management takes the form of human intervention, such as in the growing and planting of coral
 338 (Rinkevich 2008). Knowledge of the way in which the trophic structure, biodiversity resistance (to impacts)
 339 and resilience (ability to recover from impact) of coral reefs respond to human impact, is key to determining
 340 conservation strategies (Bellwood et al., 2004; Côté and Darling 2010). Management action must encompass
 341 both ecological parameters and social enabling factors, working in tandem to be effective (Gill et al., 2017),
 342 however in the paper our focus is on the ecological characteristics.
 343

344 Coral reefs are impacted by a range of local and global stressors. Local management has however been
 345 reported as providing a buffering effect on coral degradation under climate change scenarios (Hughes 2003;
 346 Weijerman et al., 2018; Beatty et al., 2019). Dominant, local stressors on Caribbean reefs, as well as primary
 347 impacts and management strategies, are outlined in Table 2. The most significant impact is considered to be
 348 macroalgal abundance caused by anthropogenic nutrients, and unsustainable fishing (Jackson et al., 2014;
 349 Harborne et al., 2017; Bruno et al., 2019). Excessive levels of macroalgae, are responsible for overgrowing and
 350 shading adult corals, inhibiting recruitment of juveniles corals and harbouring disease (Idjadi et al., 2010;
 351 Rasher and Hay 2010), which promote conditions for declining reef health. Key here is that a reef in a negative
 352 feedback loop, might be unable to recover even if the disturbance is removed, as processes drive the system
 353 towards macroalgal abundance (Mumby et al., 2014). Action aimed at reducing macroalgal growth, is
 354 therefore one of the crucial factors to be controlled in conservation, and managing herbivores and improving
 355 water quality are priority conservation actions (Mumby and Steneck 2008; Jackson et al., 2014; Steneck et al.,
 356 2019).

357
 358 Table 2: Prominent documented local stressors, impacts and passive management action on Caribbean coral
 359 reefs.

Reef Threat	Primary Impact	Management Action
Eutrophication^a		
Agriculture	Macroalgae	Watershed Management
Sewage	Macroalgae	Treatment Plants, Watershed Management
Hurricanes^b		
Industry	Outright Mortality	Policy - Water Quality Standards
Coastal Construction	Outright Mortality	Policy - Integrated Coastal Zone Management
Unsustainable Fishing^c		
	Macroalgae	MPAs - no take zones
	Outright mortality	
Invasive Species^d		
Lionfish	Trophic Pathway disruption	Culling
Harmful Orgs. Ballast Water	Disease	Policy - Ballast Water Treatment Protocols
Disease^e		
of Keystone Species	Macroalgae	Removal of diseased colonies
of Corals	Outright Mortality	Barriers to disease progression Application of chemicals to kill microbes
Physical Damage^f		
Anchors		Permanent Moorings
Divers	Outright Mortality	ELE*
Hurricanes		Rapid Repair

360
 361 *ELE - Education, Legislation and Enforcement are cross cutting management actions and are only indicated when they are the only
 362 action identified.

363
 364 ^a(Weil and Rogers 2011; Mumby et al., 2014) ^b(Maragos 1993; Richmond 1993), ^c(Sandin et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2014), ^d(Green et al.,
 365 2012; Galil et al., 2019), ^e(Hunte and Younglao 1988; Sutherland and Ritchie 2004), ^f(Lewis 1984; Hawkins and Roberts 1994; Barker and
 366 Roberts 2004).

367

368 It is important to note that to date, no conservation or restoration management measures have resulted in
369 reefs recovering to pre-stress state (Mumby et al., 2014; McWilliam et al., 2020). However, strategies aimed at
370 reducing some key stressors have yielded specific successes, that have aided in recovery of reefs, as is
371 outlined in the remaining sections.
372

373 5.1 Passive management: increase herbivory

374
375 Herbivory is a critical trophic interaction on tropical coral reefs, and declines in herbivore abundance, result in
376 a proliferation of macroalgae (Hunte and Younglao 1988; Ladd and Shantz 2020). Increasing the abundance
377 of herbivores leads to reduced macroalgal cover via trophic cascades, or top down control (Hughes et al.,
378 2007; Burkepile and Hay 2008; Steneck et al., 2019; McClure et al., 2020), which is expected to eventually
379 result in increased coral cover. While this final step has not been strongly made, research by Jackson et al.
380 (2014) recorded a significantly higher abundance of coral on Caribbean reefs with more parrotfish (*Scaridae*
381 spp.). Additionally, research from both Australia (Hughes et al., 2007) and the Bahamas (Mumby and
382 Harborne 2010) provided some evidence of increasing numbers of herbivores supporting reef health by
383 increasing coral recruitment. While coral reef recovery to pre-stress levels was not observed in these studies,
384 coral recruitment is the first step in such a recovery. It is important to note though, that the dominant recruits
385 reported in the Bahamas were *Porites astreoides* and *Agaricia* spp, which, as was shown in Section 4.2.1.
386 cannot provide the same ecosystem services as framework builders.
387

388 Management of herbivores is commonly dealt with within an MPAs framework (Section 5.1.4) and/or via a
389 complete ban of primary herbivores such as parrotfish in Belize (Cox 2014) and Bermuda (O'Farrell et al.,
390 2016).
391

392 5.2 Passive management: reducing land based sources of marine pollution

393
394 Activities on land produce excessive flows of nutrients (primarily nitrogen and phosphorous) and sediments
395 onto coral reefs, which have proven detrimental to their health (Bellwood et al., 2004; Burke et al., 2011;
396 Eberhard et al., 2017). Elevated nutrient levels from fertilizer and sewage (both humans and farm animals)
397 promote the growth of macroalgae on small scales, such as the west coast of Barbados (Tomascik and Sander
398 1985) and large scales, such as the entire Great Barrier Reef of Australia (De'ath and Fabricius 2010). Coastal
399 development and riverine run off also produce elevated quantities of sedimentation, which interrupt coral
400 processes (such as feeding), leading to mortality and/or reduced growth (Weber et al., 2012; Bartley et al.,
401 2014). Coral reefs with excessive sedimentation have been shown to have reduced diversity, lower coral
402 abundance and lower accretion rates (Rogers 1990). Improving water quality around reefs is troublesome, as
403 the sources often originate on land and are some distance away from where impact occurs on coral reefs.
404 However, holistic management frameworks, which incorporate actions taken from the source of pollution to
405 impact sites have been demonstrated to improve water quality around reefs. Land management measures
406 that reduce nutrients and sediments (e.g., agricultural practices and watershed restoration) (Fillols et al.,
407 2020) have resulted in water quality improvements around reef areas, which have been further demonstrated
408 to improve coral cover (Jokiel and Brown 2004; Fabricius et al., 2014; Shelton III and Richmond 2016), even if
409 not to pre-stress levels (Wenger et al., 2017).
410

411 5.3 Active management: reef restoration

412
413 Coral restoration's importance is emerging with the reported inability of passive management measures to
414 restore reefs to pre-stress levels (Rinkevich 2008). This active management tool focuses on repairing reefs in
415 order to facilitate their recovery and restore ecosystem integrity (Basconi et al., 2020). It often takes the form
416 of coral gardening which is divided into 2 activities: nursery phase for rearing coral recruits and out-planting to
417 the reef (Boström-Einarsson et al., 2018). Of specific interest to coastal protection, is that the fast growing

418 framework builder (*Acropora* spp.) and massive, framework builder (*Orbicella* spp) are the two species
419 primarily selected for restoration, with survival rates of >60% being reported (Boström-Einarsson et al., 2020).
420

421 While there are few reports of active reef restoration resulting in long term ecological recovery (Fox et al.,
422 2019) and concerns raised over survival and fitness of transplants and cost effectiveness of operations
423 (Bayraktarov et al., 2016); there have been many promising advances made within the last decade, such as
424 selective breeding and assisted evolution (Baums et al., 2010; Drury and Lirman 2017; Basconi et al., 2020)
425 that are cause for optimism. Restoration of marine ecosystems is still in its nascent phase, however it has
426 been predicted to be the most dominant discipline in environmental science in the 21st century (Hobbs and
427 Harris 2001), and there have been increased calls for active restoration to be added to the tools of watershed
428 and fisheries management for coral reefs (Rinkevich 2008; Basconi et al., 2020; Boström-Einarsson et al.,
429 2020). Reef Restoration has therefore been included as a priority conservation action.
430

431 5.4 Management proxy: marine protected areas

432

433 Reef management within an Marine Protected Area (MPA)¹ framework, is one of the most extensively used
434 tools for conservation (Toropova et al., 2010; Claudet et al., 2011). MPAs work by managing human activity,
435 within specific boundaries, with the expectation that with reduced impact, recovery will occur (Day et al.,
436 2012). With effective management, which encompasses: adequate compliance, participatory decision
437 making, empowerment and education of local communities (Hughes et al., 2010) MPAs can play important
438 roles in restoring ecosystem structure and function (Mumby and Steneck 2008; Laffoley et al., 2019).
439

440 Well managed MPAs have proven effective in the reduction of many stressors. They are responsible for:
441 reducing unsustainable fishing (Bellwood et al., 2004) leading to increases in the size and biomass of fish
442 species (Johnson and Sandell 2014; Sciberras et al., 2015; Leenhardt et al., 2017); improving herbivory (Selig
443 and Bruno 2010; Possingham et al., 2015) and promoting coral recovery after disturbances (Mumby and
444 Harborne 2010; Perry et al., 2013). Importantly, reefs with protection for parrotfish, have also demonstrated
445 the ability to delay loss of architectural complexity, which is a key component of coastal erosion (Bozec et al.,
446 2015). By reducing some effects of local stressors, MPA's have also been shown to buffer global impacts (e.g.,
447 high temperatures). Further to the passive management measures outlined, active management, such as reef
448 restoration, is recommended to be carried out within effectively managed MPAs, where efforts are most
449 likely to result in success (Shaver and Silliman 2017; Basconi et al., 2020).
450

451 MPAs are however not "silver bullets" and even when well-managed, have not always resulted in increases in
452 coral cover (Cox et al., 2017). Most MPAs are susceptible to impacts that originate outside of their boundaries
453 such as anthropogenic pollutants (e.g., sewage, heavy metals), invasive species and disease (Hughes et al.,
454 2010). Mumby and Steneck (2008) in an extensive review of the causes and consequences of reef decline,
455 documented the status of knowledge of the ability of MPAs to meet management goals. They found clear
456 successes in terms of increasing fish populations within the protected spaces, however the expected results of
457 increased coral recruitment and hard coral abundance were less widely documented. Modelling has shown
458 that with an objective of increasing coral cover (as is required for coastal protection) reduction of land based
459 sources of pollution is more effective than on site MPA activities (Weijerman et al., 2018). MPA action
460 therefore would have to encompass land based sources of pollution and be part of a broader programme of
461 Watershed Management within an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)² (Belfiore et al., 2004; Cicin-

¹ An all-encompassing term that includes reserves and multiuse zones

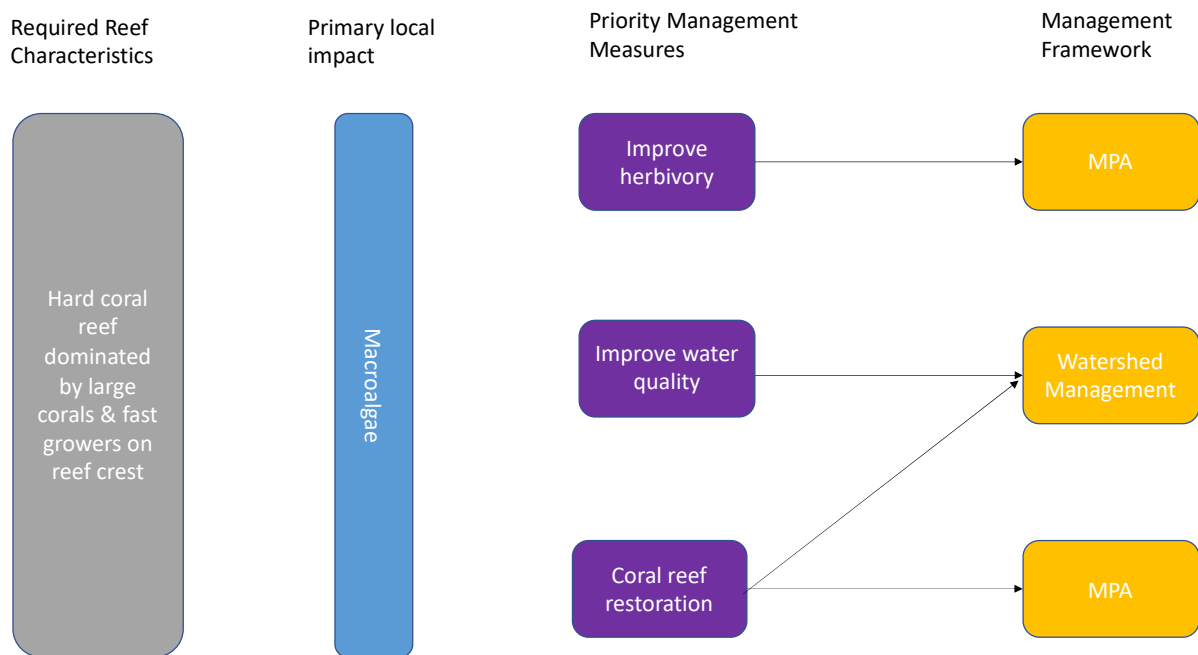
² ICZM is a resource management system following an integrative, holistic approach and an interactive planning process in addressing the complex management issues in the coastal area Thia-Eng, C. (1993). Essential elements of integrated coastal zone management. Ocean & Coastal Management 21 (1-3), 81-108.

462 Sain and Belfiore 2005). This is demonstrated on the Great Barrier Reef where an important policy and
 463 management focus for marine park managers is on nutrients and pesticides from agricultural practices
 464 outside of their boundaries (Kroon et al., 2016).

465
 466 Increasing coral reef health resilience within an MPA framework that includes watershed management can
 467 therefore can be taken as a proxy; a means of ensuring the likelihood of the continuance of the ES by reducing
 468 threats to coral reefs (World Bank 2016; Mcleod et al., 2019).

470 5.5 Summary of knowledge on management for coastal protection

471
 472 Management for coastal protection, equates to providing a hard coral reef, dominated by framework builders.
 473 Priority measures as well as the primary impact and management frameworks are outlined in Figure 4.



475
 476
 477 Figure 4: Summary of primary impact, priority management measures and management frameworks to
 478 deliver positive outcomes for coastal protection

479 6 Coastal protection and PES

480
 481 To date PES has not been extensively considered for coral reef coastal protection. Only 4 peer reviewed
 482 articles were found, in which PES for coastal protection was considered, and in none of these was a PES
 483 scheme actually developed (Lau 2013; Castaño-Isaza et al., 2015; Pascal et al., 2016; Elliff and Silva 2017). One
 484 report was identified in which a PES scheme for coastal protection in San Andres, Colombia was considered
 485 (Lau 2012), however this never came to fruition due to the departure of one of the key local stakeholders (T.
 486 Agardy 2019, pers. comm.).

487
 488 The ability of coral reefs to meet each PES requirement (Section 3) is discussed in this section. Requirements
 489 are as follows: the ES must be identified, spatial boundaries defined, management measures linked to specific
 490 outcomes known and conditionality satisfied. It is important to note that if quantification of the service is not

491 possible, a management proxy can be used to satisfy conditionality. Additionality is desired and is discussed
 492 with conditionality, as its basic requirements are the same.

493
 494 The ability of coral reefs to meet each PES requirement is described and displayed via the use of tables 5-7.
 495 Analyses were based on outputs of the syntheses of knowledge (Sections 4 and 5). Measurement Indicators
 496 were categorised as: N – Not Documented (No assessed papers documented the output); E – Expected result,
 497 but confirmed by less than 5 studies and C – Confirmed. The Management Proxy status (Section 6.3) was
 498 based on knowledge of the ability of the identified system to produce the desired output.
 499

500 **6.1 ES identification, quantification and spatial boundaries**

501 Coastal Protection can be defined and measured by different indicators, which include: the biophysical
 502 processes responsible for providing the service, the service itself and the social benefits derived by humans
 503 (Guerry et al., 2015). Principe et al (2012) quantified at least 57 different indicators that can be clearly
 504 calculated and replicated (as is required for PES) and a sub set of those deemed most relevant is shown in
 505 Table 3.
 506

507 Table 3: Examples of ecosystem measures and indicators used to quantify coastal protection
 508

509

Measures	Indicators	Citation
Biophysical Processes	Physical	Harris et al 2018, Yao et al 2019
	Wave energy, height, velocity	
	Biological	
	Reef rugosity	Monnismith et 2015, Lowe et al 2005
Ecosystem Service	Fish abundance	Wainger and Boyd 2009
	Beach Erosion	Reguero et al 2018, Kushner et al 2011
	Coastal Inundation	Beck et al 2018, Ferrario et al 2014
Socioeconomic	Avoided damages	Storlazzi et al 2019, vanZanten et al 2014
	Property values	Burke et al 2008, Pascal et al 2016
	Breakwater replacement costs	Ferrario et al 2014, Beck et al 2019

510 Indicators of measurement vary in their direct relevance to human well-being (Wainger and Boyd 2009), with
 511 biophysical processes requiring some means of translation into either ecosystem service or socioeconomic
 512 measurements, for the benefits to humans to be made clear. Storlazzi et al (2019) for example used wave
 513 processes and reef health indicators (biophysical processes), to determine the protection offered by coral
 514 reefs against flooding (ecosystem service measurement). This was then calculated in terms of avoided
 515 damages (socioeconomic measurement). Here, we consider only the biophysical elements - processes and the
 516 service as outlined in our objectives.
 517

518 The measurements of indicators for the biophysical processes (e.g., wave heights and hard coral abundance)
 519 and the service (beach erosion) are well established in literature (Principe et al., 2012). The height of waves in
 520 back reefs for example is indicative of wave energy which will impact the shoreline. The measure is widely
 521 used in engineering studies which examine the impact of reefs on shorelines
 522 (Ferrario et al., 2014; Quataert et al., 2015; Guannel et al., 2016; Storlazzi et al., 2019).
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Coral reef health is most often indicated by the variable of hard coral cover (Obura et al., 2019). This metric, as well as hard coral species diversity, fish abundance and fish diversity are standard parameters in many established monitoring programmes such as the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Programme (GCRMP) (Hill and Wilkinson 2004); the Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment (AGRRA) (Lang et al., 2010) and Reef Check (Reef Check Instruction Manual 2006). Rugosity, the more commonly utilised metric for structural complexity in coral reefs, is less often included in monitoring programmes but there are clear methods established for quantification, ranging from low tech “chain and tape” to remote sensing (Figueira et al., 2015). This parameter, as well as the previously mentioned hard coral and fish metrics, are identified as key indicators in determining reef health (Flower et al., 2017) and as important in the determination of coastal protection (Beck et al 2018). The carbonate budget is not a commonly measured metric, but could be used as a proxy measurement for maintenance and reef function is carbonate budgets (Lange et al., 2020).

Defining boundaries is not simple for coastal protection, due in part to the diffuse and interconnected nature of water (Bladon et al., 2016). Additionally, benefits are provided and impacts can originate some distance away from the coral reef, which increases this complexity. However, while no standard methods exist for determining where the service is provided, (i.e., what reefs protect what beaches/properties/lives) (van Zanten et al., 2014), the literature is replete with examples of methods used. They include both high and low tech, at different levels of specificity and range from complex simulation models (Reguero et al., 2018; Storlazzi et al., 2019) to a simple reliance on the distance from the reef to the shore (Burke et al., 2008; Silver et al., 2019).

A summary of the ability of coastal protection to meet the first three PES requirements – ES identification, quantification and spatial boundaries is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of the ability of coastal protection to meet PES requirements – ES identification, quantification and geographical boundaries

PES Requirement	Possible Coastal Protection Parameters	Measurement	Status	Explanatory Notes
ES Identification & Quantification	Wave height	m	C	Back reefs wave heights are important indicators of wave energy
	Reef state - 1. Hard coral abundance	% cover	C	Health of reef, related to its ability to attenuate wave energy and to accrete
	Reef state - 2. Carbonate budgets	kg CaCO ₃ m ⁻² yr ⁻¹	C	Indicator of the rate at which the reef produces and accumulates CaCO ₃
	Reef state - 3. Parrotfish density	#/m ²	C	Keystone species on Caribbean reefs and indicators of overall health
	Beach erosion	m/yr	C	Sand lost from the beach due to wave energy
Geographical boundary	Area of beach protected	m	C	Index methods, numerical and physical models can indicate spatial boundaries

Key: N – Not Documented, E – Expected result but confirmed by less than 5 studies and C – Confirmed.

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6.2 Management measures linked to specific outcomes and MPA proxy

556 Restoring coral reefs will not occur with a single management tool. Rather, a combination of marine and
 557 terrestrial management actions, as is possible within an ICZM³ framework, and coupled with a reduction in
 558 carbon dioxide emissions (Weijerman et al., 2018). Priority management measures aimed at delivering
 559 increased hard coral cover, were identified as, improving herbivory, water quality and reef restoration
 560 (Section 5). However, the ability of these measures to increase and sustain hard coral cover populations, while
 561 expected, have not been convincingly demonstrated in the literature (Table 5).
 562

563 Table 5: Table of management frameworks for priority management action and indications of success for
 564 improving coral health

565

PES Requirement	Management Framework	Status	Explanatory Notes	
	Improve herbivory	MPA	E	Increased numbers of parrotfish is documented in MPAs and linked in a few cases to minimal increases in hard coral
Management measures required for increased abundance hard corals & framework builders	Reef restoration	MPA	E	Methods for gardening <i>Acropora</i> spp and <i>Orbicella</i> spp have proven successful in increasing hard coral abundance. Issues remain with post-transplantation reproductive ability and survivability.
	Improve water quality	Watershed	E	Reducing terrestrial nutrients is documented in few cases to increase hard coral abundance

566

567

568 Key: N – Not Documented, E – Expected result but confirmed by less than 5 studies and C – Confirmed.

569

570

571 6.3 Conditionality and additionality

572

573 In PES schemes, payments should be based on either service flows or conservation action. If the outcomes
 574 identified by the conditions are unmet, then payments are not triggered. This further implies that the effect
 575 of conservation action must be observed in the short term and during the life of the PES.
 576

577

578 In order for buyers to ensure that the environmental actions they have paid for have: (i) the desired impact
 579 (conditionality) and (ii) a beneficial impact greater than what is occurring at present (additionality), there
 580 needs to be some form of verification of the sellers' actions and impacts. Therefore, baseline conditions,
 581 measured by specific indicators that can be replicated are required (Lau 2013) and these were identified in
 582 Section 6.1. Proving both conditionality and additionality will depend on the indicators chosen and how well
 583 these are monitored. The difficulty here appears to be more related to the practical issues (such as expense)
 584 involved in establishing baselines and monitoring over time (Bladon et al., 2016), rather than the ability to
 585 measure. As the ecological requirements for additionality are the same for those of conditionality, only the
 latter will be considered in the assessment.

³ ICZM is a resource management system that includes a participatory and holistic approach to addressing the complex coastal management issues *ibid.*, Saffache, P. and P. Angelelli (2010). Integrated Coastal Zone Management in small islands: A comparative outline of some islands of the Lesser Antilles. *Revista de Gestão Costeira Integrada-Journal of Integrated Coastal Zone Management* 10 (3), 255-279.

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Table 6 lays out some indicators of coastal protection (identified in Section 6.1). For each indicator, examples of conditions and an indication of the ability of priority management actions (Section 5) to deliver these outcomes, are identified. Outputs are based on conclusions/evidence drawn from Sections 4 and 5. For example, the condition for 1a is that wave heights do not exceed baseline measurements. There are no indications in the literature that increasing herbivory (H) will result in this effect, hence not documented (N) is the output.

594
595

Table 6: Coastal protection indicators, possible conditions and an assessment of the ability of priority management actions to be able to meet each condition.

Indicators		Possible Conditions	Management Actions				Explanatory Notes
			H	WQ	AR	MPA	
Measurements	1. Physical	(a) Wave heights do not exceed baseline under normal conditions.	N	N	N	N	No documented relationship between passive management actions and condition. Active Restoration is expected to ultimately result in reduced wave heights, but has not been demonstrated.
	2. Biological	(a) Hard coral cover is equal to or exceeds 10%.	E	E	E	E	Few cases documented where management actions result in increases in hard coral cover and not to 10%.
		(b) Framework builder cover is equal to or exceeds 10%.	N	N	E	N	No cases documented where passive management actions result in increases in framework builders and not to 10%. Active Restoration has been documented to increase abundance of <i>Acropora</i> spp. (framework builders and fast growers). However, not to 10% and additional concerns re survival and fitness in the long term.
		(c) Carbonate budget is positive.	N	N	N	N	Expected that improving conditions for reef health will result in positive carbonate budgets, but not documented for management actions.
		(d) Rugosity index is equal to or higher than 2.	N	N	N	N	Expected that improving conditions will result in higher rugosity index, but not documented for management actions.

		(e) Parrotfish abundance is equal to or greater than baseline.	C	N	N	C	H & MPA - Measures aimed at reducing fishing pressure of parrotfish both within and outside MPAs have been documented to result in increased abundance of these herbivores. AR & WQ - Improvements to water quality and active restoration have no documented impacts on parrotfish abundance.
	3- Service	(a) Beach widths remain at baseline.	N	N	N	N	Expected that improving conditions for reef health will result in stable beaches, but not documented for management actions.
Proxy	4- MPA	METT management efficiency score of 80% or greater.	C	C	C	C	All management actions carried out will increase METT scores.

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Management Actions Key: H – Improving herbivory, WQ – Improving water quality, AR – active restoration, MPA – A variety of management actions carried out and linked to watershed management; N – Not Documented (No papers documented the output), E – Expected result but confirmed by less than 5 studies and C – Confirmed

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6.3.1 Conditionality via service flows

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For measurements of service flow, the only condition that can be fully met by the management measures outlined is 2e - Parrotfish abundance is equal to or greater than the baseline. Actions aimed at improving herbivory both inside and outside of MPAs have been demonstrated to increase parrotfish abundance. For Conditions 2a and 2b, management actions have been documented to increase hard coral cover and structural builders, however these studies are few and increases have not been recorded to pre-stress levels (or to 10%). Neither physical nor service indicators measurements can meet the conditionality requirement, as none of the aforementioned management actions will have a foreseeable impact on wave heights or beach width in the short term. Therefore, these measures are not suitable for PES.

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6.3.2 Conditionality via environmental action/proxy

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Using MPAs as a management proxy of environmental action is the strongest means of fulfilling conditionality. A system of monitoring the effectiveness of MPAs such as the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) can be used. This tracking tool allows one to monitor progress in improving management effectiveness via a system of scoring (Stolton et al., 2007). Priority management actions and stipulations such as being linked to broader Watershed or ICZM programmes, can be appended.

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6.4 Other PES considerations

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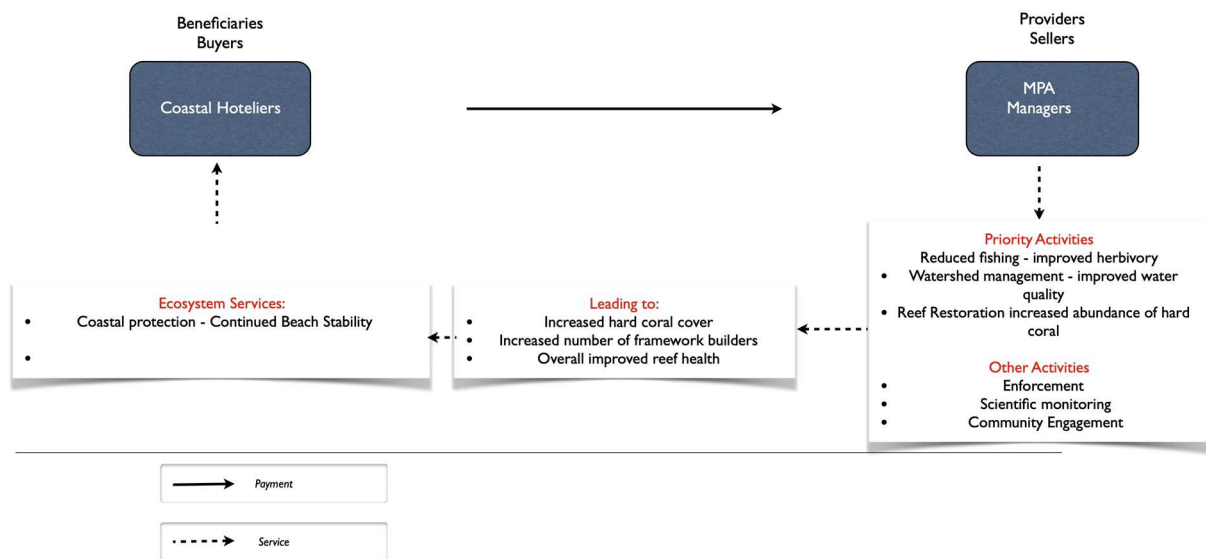
In addition to meeting the aforementioned requirements, the suitability of PES will be driven by the specific situation. Knowledge on whether the specified beach is eroding or stable is important. For an eroding beach, even if the situation is due to coral decline, no existing management measures can ensure that corals grow to attain the adequate depth and rugosity required to attenuate waves and ensure stable beaches in the short term. In such cases, most hoteliers opt for the more established grey infrastructure such as breakwaters (Silver et al., 2019). For a stable beach, however, where a decline in reef health can cause a concomitant decline in service provision (Kushner et al., 2011; Monismith et al., 2015), payments can be made for better

629 management, aimed at maintaining or improving services from an existing healthy reef (Beck et al., 2018; Iyer
 630 et al., 2018). Causality has been demonstrated in the literature between a toolbox of conservation action (as is
 631 carried out within MPA frameworks) and some improved reef health parameters and between reef health and
 632 greater beach protection. This is therefore a more feasible option. A PES scheme, with a goal of rewarding
 633 such environmental stewardship allows for potential PES schemes to be developed.

635 Social parameters must also be taken into consideration and while not being the focus of this paper,
 636 knowledge of potential beneficiaries (buyers) and providers (sellers) of the ES are required to showcase an
 637 example of a PES scheme. A variety of stakeholders would benefit from coastal protection, however, for most
 638 Caribbean Islands with the importance of tourism and its strong relationship to coastal protection, the most
 639 obvious beneficiaries are coastal hoteliers, who desire beach presence as a selling point for their businesses
 640 (Uyarra et al., 2005; Pascal et al., 2018), as well as governments. Sellers of the service for the MPA Proxy, will
 641 most likely be MPA Managers, who, while not owning the marine space, are designated by governments to
 642 manage them.

644 A PES could be carried out with a hotelier as the buyer and MPA managers as sellers of a range of
 645 environmental actions (both ecological and social) that would enhance beach stability (Figure 5). Payments
 646 could be conditional on the measurement of indicators, such as achieving 10% hard coral cover, or delivery of
 647 an MPA workplan, or METT scores. The goal must be clear; forestalling potential loss in revenue from beach
 648 erosion, by investing in environmental stewardship of reefs that actively protect beaches.

Potential PES Scheme for Coastal Protection



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 652 Figure 5: Potential PES Scheme between buyers (coastal hoteliers) and sellers (MPA managers) of coastal
 653 protection

654

7 Conclusions

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 657 PES is a multifaceted approach, with specific ecological requirements, which can be met by the coastal
 658 protection ecosystem service.

659

660 An analysis of literature, indicates that the scientific knowledge behind the ability of coral reefs to provide
661 coastal protection, is adequate for the development of a PES scheme, under certain conditions. The service is
662 complex, with different factors, both reef and non-reef related, contributing to reducing beach erosion. Not
663 all fringing reefs protect beaches, but some, within specific contexts, are largely responsible for wave
664 attenuation and therefore can play major roles in reducing beach erosion. Studies measuring the impact of
665 coral reef parameters on waves are well reported. However, those demonstrating causality between coral
666 health parameters (e.g., coral cover, rugosity, fish abundance) and the service itself (e.g., decreased erosion)
667 are rarer, possibly due to the complexity of coral reefs and coastal processes (Reguero et al., 2018).

668

669 A range of methods exist in the literature to identify, quantify and define geographical boundaries of coastal
670 protection delivery, as required for a PES. Our limited ability to prove causality between management action
671 and ecosystem service delivery causes some difficulty, though not insurmountable, in fulfilling the
672 conditionality requirement. In some very specific cases, such as increasing the number of herbivores,
673 management measures have been shown to be successful for coral reef health and a PES can be designed
674 around this. However, since increasing herbivore abundance has not been strongly demonstrated to have
675 impacts on beach erosion, it is highly unlikely that a PES would be successful. Instead, a PES scheme can be
676 developed with payments triggered by specified conservation action or management proxy.

677

678 MPAs cannot solve all issues, however, once effectively managed, they provide a framework within which a
679 range of management measures can be effectively carried out. This toolbox of measures has been
680 demonstrated to improve coral reef health and increase hard coral cover under some conditions. Such
681 interventions therefore remain our best tool at improving overall reef health (Roberts et al., 2017; Sala et al.,
682 2018). MPAs, linked to a broader programme of watershed management and/or under an ICZM programme,
683 are expected to significantly strengthen health outcomes (Cicin-Sain and Belfiore 2005), and therefore
684 present a sensible management proxy for PES.

685

686 It is clear that even with passive conservation measures promoting reef health, some sort of active
687 management would be required to attain the reef depth and rugosity parameters required for reefs that have
688 lost their ability to attenuate wave energy in the short term. In order to achieve optimal outcomes, a
689 combination of active (e.g., reef gardening) and passive (e.g., habitat protection) actions should be utilised
690 (Possingham et al., 2015).

691

692 We suggest utilising PES in cases where the beach is stable with a goal of ensuring continued and even
693 improved stability. Consideration of gray-green solutions such as reef augmentation, a concept that
694 integrates nature into the building process (Waterman 2008) might be a means of creating short term
695 improvements specifically for coastal protection, while allowing for the longer term benefits of overall reef
696 protection. The potential of using PES for such innovative concepts should be explored further, but it is
697 outside of the scope of this paper. Future research should concentrate on the most effective means of reef
698 augmentation to promote service flow.

699

700 It should be noted that average coral cover on Caribbean reefs (reported at the last regional census in 2012)
701 was 14.3% with coral cover declining at 75% of the 88 sites (Jackson et al., 2014). If the trajectory continues, as
702 is expected with the impending threats of global climate change, the ability of reefs in this region to attenuate
703 wave energy and maintain themselves will be severely diminished. Coral health will therefore become even
704 more important.

705

706 PES could play a stronger role in coral reef conservation for this ES, especially if this service was bundled with
707 other more clearly defined and quantified services, such as aesthetics and fish biomass.

Knowledge gaps must be admitted up front to the buyers of the service and the goal must be clear; forestalling potential loss in revenue from beach erosion, by investing in environmental stewardship of reefs that actively protect beaches.

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