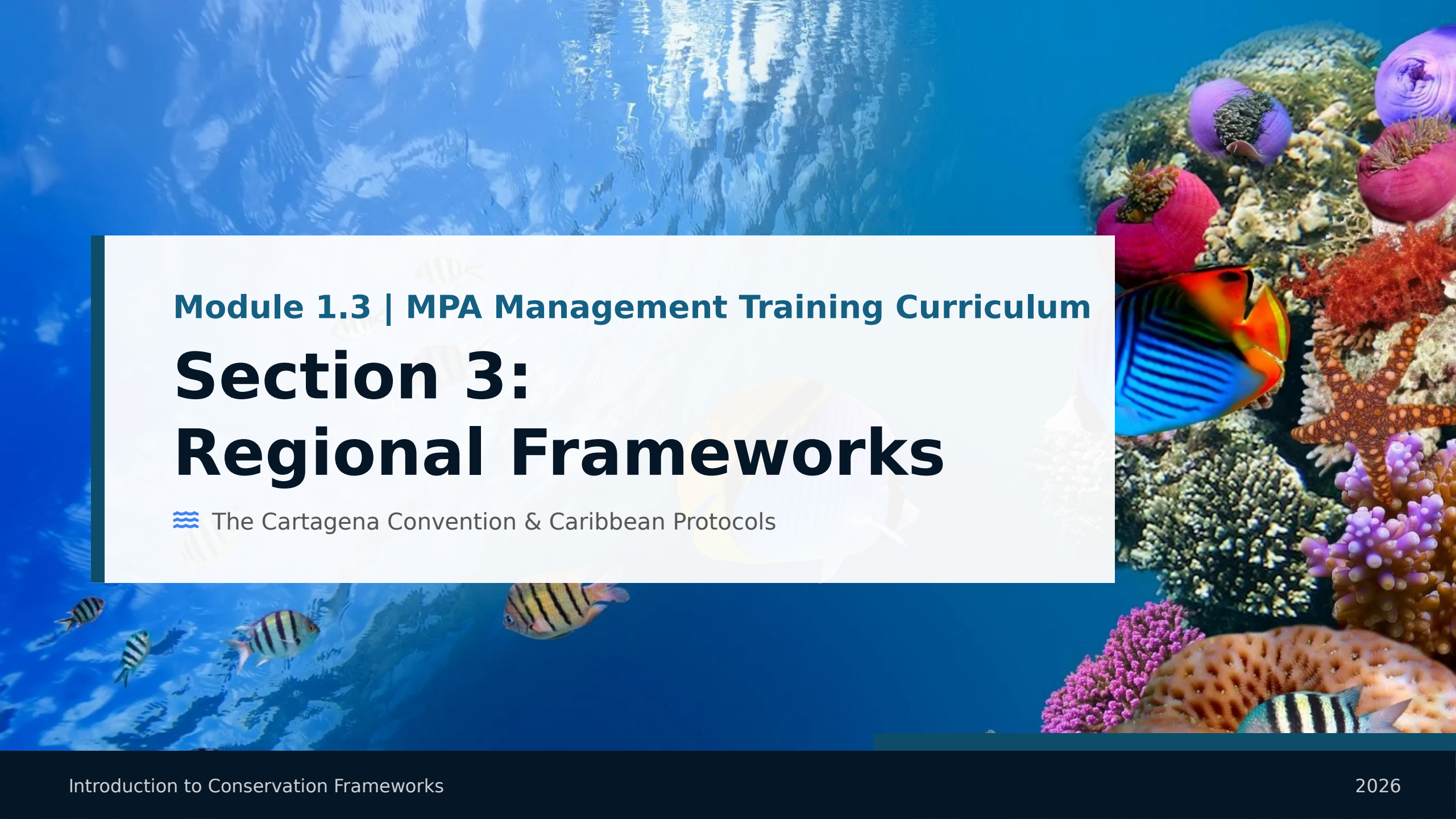


The background of the slide is a vibrant underwater scene. On the right side, there is a detailed view of a coral reef with various types of coral in shades of purple, pink, and orange. A colorful butterflyfish with blue, yellow, and black stripes is swimming near the coral. On the left side, several striped surgeonfish are swimming in the clear blue water. The top of the image shows the surface of the water with light reflecting through the ripples.

Module 1.3 | MPA Management Training Curriculum

Section 3: Regional Frameworks

🌊 The Cartagena Convention & Caribbean Protocols

Learning Objectives

Section 3: Regional Frameworks



Cartagena Convention Status

Explain the unique legal status of the Cartagena Convention as the only legally binding regional environmental treaty for the Wider Caribbean.



Three Protocols Contrast

Contrast the three technical Protocols: Oil Spills (Emergency), SPAW (Biodiversity), and LBS (Pollution) and their roles.



SPAW Annex Obligations

Analyze SPAW Annexes (I, II, III) and the specific legal obligations they place on countries for protecting endangered flora and fauna.



Regional Activity Centres

Identify the specific technical roles of RACs (SPAW-RAC, RAC-REMPEITC, CIMAB, IMA) in facilitating cooperation.

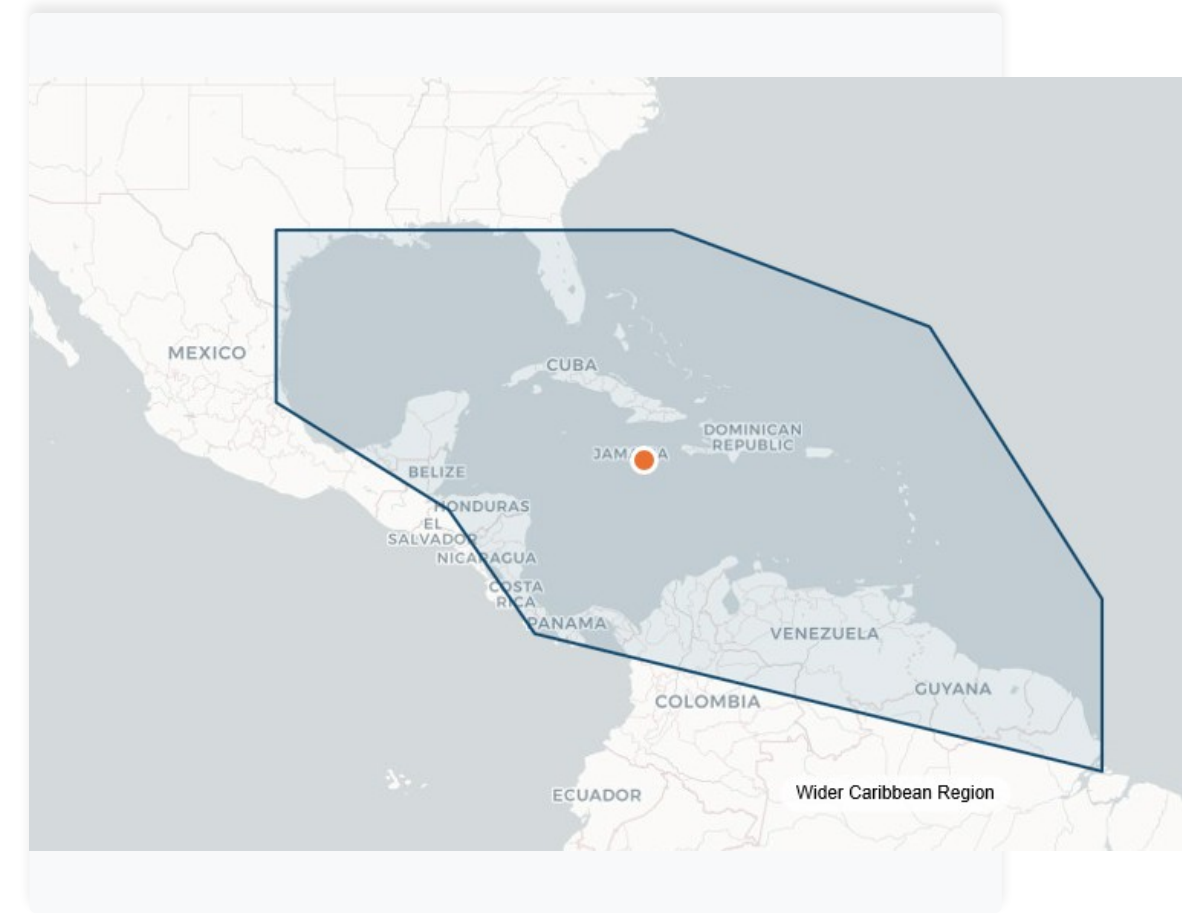


Global Alignment

Describe how regional frameworks support global targets, such as the alignment between SPAW-listed sites and the 30x30 target of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Why Regional Frameworks in the Caribbean?

- **Tailored Implementation:** Translates global ambitions (CBD/GBF) to specific Caribbean ecosystem needs and island economies.
- **Legal Foundation:** The Cartagena Convention is the only legally binding regional environmental treaty for the Wider Caribbean.
- **Critical Ecosystems:** Focuses on protecting interconnected coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds essential for fisheries and tourism.
- **SIDS Cooperation:** Enables resource sharing and financing mechanisms vital for Small Island Developing States.



UNEP Regional Seas Programme

The Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) coordinates regional marine environmental protection under the Cartagena Convention framework.



Secretariat

Based in Kingston, Jamaica, the UNEP-CEP facilitates coordination among member countries and oversees program implementation.



Legal Instruments

Comprises the Cartagena Convention (1983) and three technical Protocols: Oil Spills, SPAW, and LBS.



Mechanisms

Operates through Conferences of Parties (COPs), Scientific & Technical Committees, and Regional Activity Centres (RACs).

Cartagena Convention

The Legal Backbone for Caribbean Marine Protection

What is it?

Adopted in 1983, the Cartagena Convention is the only legally binding regional environmental treaty for the Wider Caribbean Region. It serves as the comprehensive framework for protecting the marine environment.

Core Objective

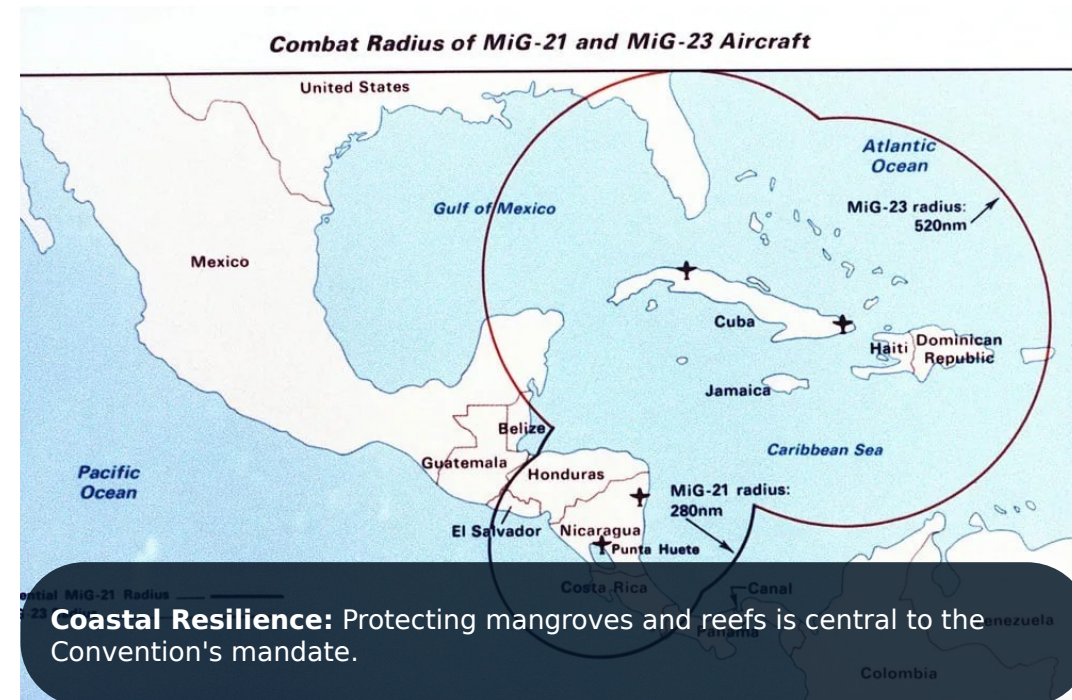
To protect, develop, and manage the marine environment and coastal areas of the Wider Caribbean Region.

Scope of Application

Addresses pollution control (land-based & oil spills), biodiversity conservation, and emergency response across 28 member countries.

Regional Collaboration

Operates through specialized Protocols, Regional Activity Centres (RACs), and joint national action plans.



28 Contracting Parties (Countries) working together under the Convention to safeguard the Caribbean Sea.

The Three Protocols at a Glance

Operational Pillars of the Cartagena Convention

The Convention is implemented through three technical protocols that address specific regional challenges: emergency response, biodiversity protection, and pollution control.

Protocol	Primary Focus	In Force	Key Actions & Mechanisms
 Adopted 1983	Emergency Preparedness & Response	1986	• National Contingency Plans (NCPs) • Sub-regional cooperation agreements • CARIBPOLREP reporting system
 Adopted 1990	Specially Protected Areas & Wildlife	2000	• Annex I-III species protection (Flora/Fauna) • SPAW-listed sites network (MPAs) • Critical habitat conservation & restoration
 Adopted 1999	Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution	2010	• Domestic wastewater effluent standards • Agricultural runoff (nutrient) control • Watershed & sedimentation management



SPAW Protocol

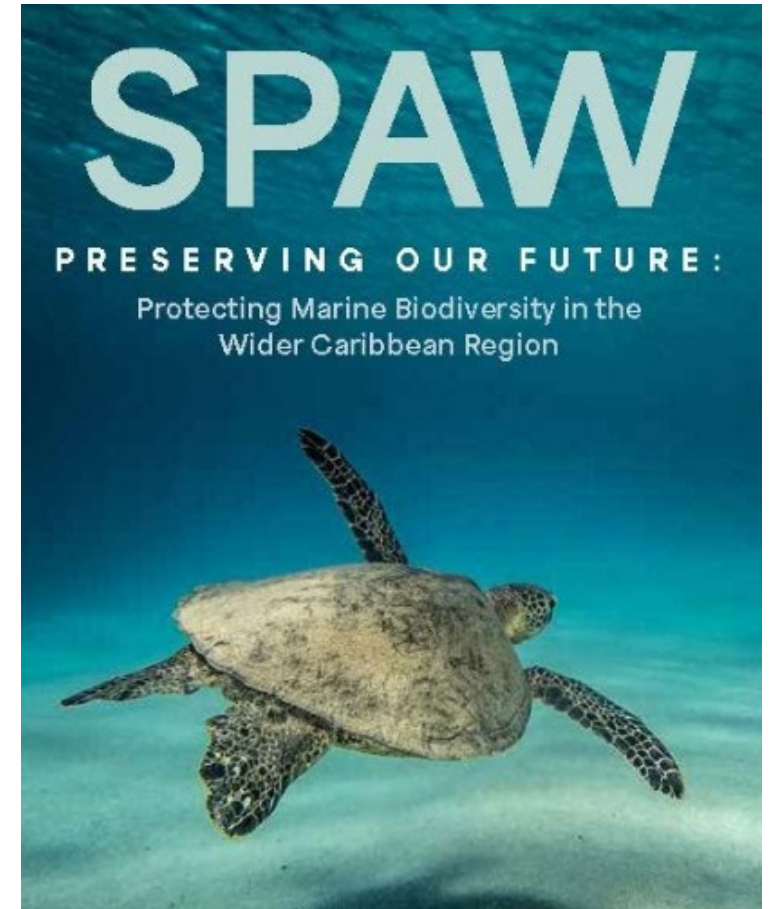
Specially Protected Areas and **Wildlife**

Conserving coastal and marine biodiversity across the Wider Caribbean

SPAW Protocol - Purpose and Scope

- **Critical Habitat Protection:** Mandates conservation of fragile ecosystems including coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds essential for biodiversity.
- **Sustainable Use Framework:** Balances strict protection with regulated sustainable use of resources, supporting local livelihoods like fisheries.
- **Standardized Listing:** Enables the creation of a regional network of protected areas and species with shared management standards.

"Conserving the Wider Caribbean's unique biodiversity through regional cooperation and binding commitments."



SPAW Protocol Annexes

Categorizing Caribbean Biodiversity for Legal Protection

Annex I

Endangered Flora (Plants)

 **Strict Protection**

Highest level of protection. Parties must prohibit the picking, gathering, uprooting, or destruction of these species. Trade and possession are banned.

Examples

-  **Pillar Coral (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*)**
-  **Lignum Vitae (*Guaiacum sanctum*)**
-  **Turks & Caicos Rock Iguana (*Cyclura carinata*) - habitat flora**

Annex II

Endangered Fauna (Animals)

 **Strict Protection**

Highest level of protection. Taking, possession, killing, and commercial trade are strictly prohibited. Disturbance of these species is also banned.

Examples

-  **West Indian Manatee**
-  **All 6 Caribbean Sea Turtle Species**
-  **Smalltooth Sawfish**

Annex III

Regulated Use Species

 **Managed Use**

Species may be utilized, but parties must adopt management plans to ensure sustainable use and prevent them from becoming endangered.

Examples

-  **Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*)**
-  **Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*)**
-  **Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*)**

SPAW-RAC Guadeloupe: Technical Support Hub



Technical Coordination

Supports implementation of SPAW Protocol through scientific guidance, managing species lists, and evaluating protected area nominations.



Capacity Building

Organizes training workshops for MPA managers on best practices, monitoring protocols, and effective management strategies across the region.



Data & Monitoring

Centralizes regional biodiversity data and coordinates action plans for priority species (marine mammals, sea turtles) and emerging threats like Sargassum.



SPAW-RAC facilitates regional workshops to strengthen MPA network management capacity

35+

Years Active

37

Listed Sites

Guadeloupe

Headquarters



SPAW Protected Areas Network

Conserving Critical Caribbean Marine Ecosystems

The SPAW Protocol establishes a regional network of protected areas to conserve biodiversity and sustain natural resources. These sites are crucial for achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework's 30x30 target.

37+
Listed Sites

GBF
Target 3 Alignment



Coral Reefs

Biodiversity hotspots providing habitat for thousands of species and coastal protection.



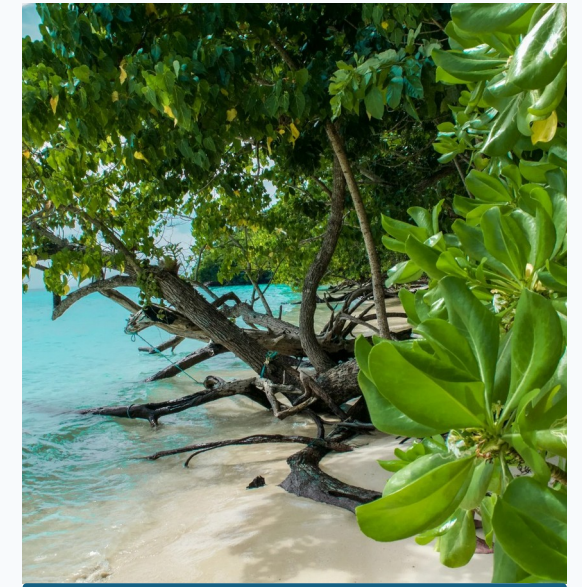
Mangroves

Critical nurseries for fisheries and effective carbon sinks ("Blue Carbon").



Seagrass Beds

Essential grazing grounds for sea turtles and manatees, filtering coastal waters.



Marine Sanctuaries

Designated zones managing human activity to replenish fish stocks and protect species.

LBS

Protocol

Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities

Tackling the main drivers of coastal degradation in the Caribbean.



LBS Protocol Overview

Combating Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution

Pollution Control Framework

The LBS Protocol (1999/2010) is the Caribbean's primary legal instrument for addressing marine pollution from land-based activities, focusing on the "Big Three": sewage, agricultural runoff, and sedimentation.



Effluent Limitations

Establishes strict regional standards for domestic wastewater discharge into marine environments to reduce pathogen and nutrient loading.



Runoff Management

Mandates best management practices to control agricultural non-point sources, minimizing fertilizer and pesticide runoff that causes algal blooms.



Sediment Control

Requires watershed management plans to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation that smother critical coral reef and seagrass habitats.



Integrated Management: Combining wastewater treatment with watershed protection.



Regional Activity Centres (RACs)

CIMAB

Havana, Cuba

Center of Engineering and
Environmental Management of
Bays and Coasts

IMA

Trinidad & Tobago

Institute of Marine Affairs - Water
Quality & Research

The Big Three Pollutants

LBS Protocol Targets: Impacts & Solutions



Domestic Wastewater

Untreated Sewage Discharge

Key Impacts

- 🦠 **Eutrophication:** Excessive nutrients cause algal blooms that smother reefs.
- ⚠️ **Public Health:** Pathogens contaminate bathing waters and seafood.

Solutions

- ✅ Upgrade WWTPs to secondary/tertiary treatment.
- ✅ Implement decentralized systems for rural areas.



Agricultural Runoff

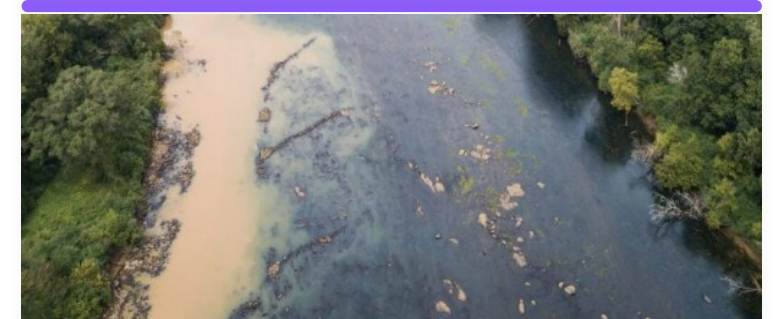
Nutrients & Pesticides

Key Impacts

- ☠️ **HABs:** Triggers Harmful Algal Blooms (Red Tides).
- 🐟 **Dead Zones:** Hypoxic conditions kill marine life.

Solutions

- ✅ Establish vegetated buffer strips along waterways.
- ✅ Precision fertilizer application & organic farming.



Sedimentation

Erosion & Construction

Key Impacts

- ⚠️ **Smothering:** Covers coral polyps and seagrass beds, blocking light.
- 🌊 **Turbidity:** Reduces water clarity, affecting photosynthesis.

Solutions

- ✅ Reforestation of hillsides & mangroves.
- ✅ Erosion control barriers at construction sites (BMPs).

Oil Spills Protocol

Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region.

Preparedness

Strengthening regional emergency response capabilities and national contingency planning for maritime incidents.

Cooperation

Facilitating rapid information exchange and mutual assistance among Caribbean nations during oil spill emergencies.

Technical Support

Supported by RAC-REMPEITC-Caribe to provide training, exercises, and technical expertise to member states.

**Cartagena
Convention |
Oil Spills**

Oil Spills - Response Architecture

Regional Cooperation & Preparedness Mechanisms



National Contingency Plans

Foundation of preparedness. Every country establishes legal authority, operational procedures, and equipment inventories for spill response.



CARIBPOLREP System

Standardized regional reporting mechanism. Ensures rapid alert and information exchange between island nations during incidents.



Sub-Regional Response

Activated when national capacity is overwhelmed. Neighboring states mobilize assets under Island States cooperation agreements.



RAC-REMPEITC-Caribe (Curaçao)

The Regional Activity Centre dedicated to training, technology cooperation, and implementation. Supports countries with the **RETOS™** tool to assess oil spill planning gaps.

*2026 Focus: Managing risks from offshore energy expansion in Guyana & Suriname.

RETOS

Assessment Tool

IMO

Partner Agency

Regional Cooperation Case Study

2026 Scenario: Multi-Threat Response Coordination

⚠️ April 2026 Incident Scenario

A chemical fire on a vessel off St. Lucia coincides with a landfill breach during heavy rains. Toxic plume threatens a SPAW-listed marine reserve in St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

1 Activation & Alert

Trigger CARIBPOLREP system for standardized incident reporting. Notify RAC-REMPEITC-Caribe (Curacao) for oil/chemical spill response coordination.

2 Biodiversity Protection

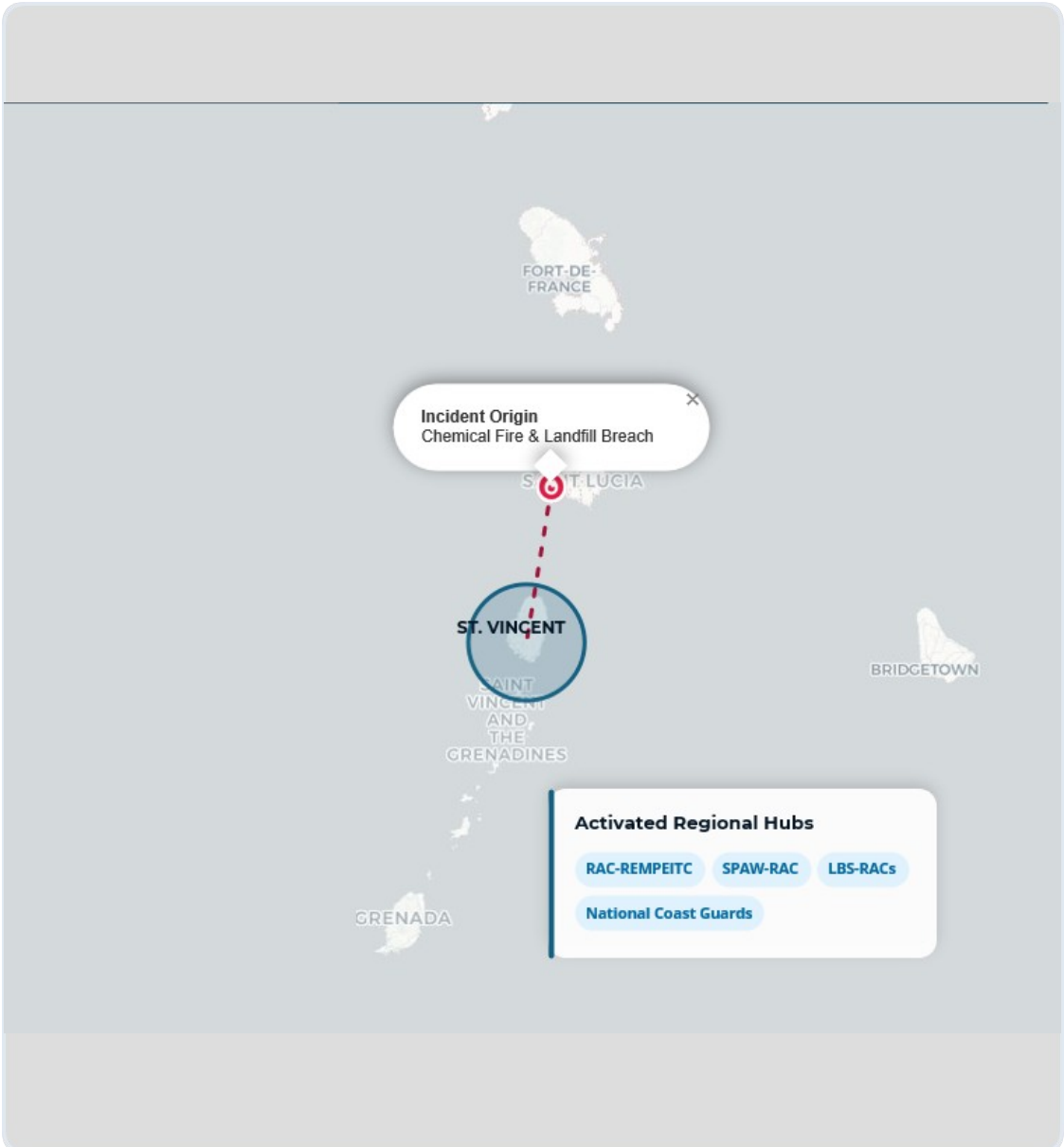
SPAW-RAC (Guadeloupe) alerts MPA managers. Deploy protective booms around critical habitats identified in SPAW Annexes.

3 Pollution Monitoring

IMA (Trinidad) and CIMAB (Cuba) mobilize water quality monitoring teams to track LBS pollutants from landfill breach.

4 Cross-Border Coordination

Joint task force activation between St. Lucia and St. Vincent under Cartagena Convention framework.



Key Takeaways

Summary of Regional Frameworks & Next Steps



Legal Backbone

The Cartagena Convention is the only legally binding regional environmental treaty, essential for Caribbean marine governance.



Three Operational Pillars

Protocols for Oil Spills (Response), SPAW (Biodiversity), and LBS (Pollution) translate broad goals into specific actions.



Technical Engines

RACs (SPAW-RAC, REMPEITC, CIMAB, IMA) provide critical data, training, and coordination for implementation.



Global Alignment

Regional efforts directly support global targets like the GBF 30x30 goal and national climate commitments (NDCs).

Priority Next Steps

- 01** Invest in wastewater infrastructure to reduce pollution loads.
- 02** Expand SPAW-listed sites to meet 30x30 conservation targets.
- 03** Practice joint oil spill drills for enhanced regional readiness.
- 04** Scale up Sargassum management strategies across borders.

"Effective regional cooperation is not just an option, but a necessity for the survival of Caribbean marine ecosystems."

Further Reading & Resources

Essential References for Section 3: Regional Frameworks

UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme

 **UNEP-CEP Official Website:** The central hub for the Cartagena Convention, meeting reports, and protocol updates.

 **Cartagena Convention Text:** Full legal text of the Convention and its three Protocols (Oil Spills, SPAW, LBS).

 **State of the Convention Area (SOCAR) Report:** Comprehensive assessment of marine pollution in the Wider Caribbean.

SPAW Protocol Resources

 **SPAW-RAC Website:** Technical reports, species identification guides, and protected area management tools.

 **SPAW Listed Sites Database:** Map and details of the 37+ protected areas in the network.

Pollution & Response (LBS/Oil Spills)

 **RAC-REMPEITC-Caribe:** Resources on oil spill contingency planning, maritime safety, and the RETOS tool.

 **CIMAB & IMA Portals:** Technical data on land-based pollution monitoring and water quality standards.

Capacity Building

 **CampAM Network:** Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum for practitioner exchange.

 **Webinar Series:** Recorded sessions on Sargassum management, coral restoration, and wastewater treatment.

Recommended 2026 Reading

Review the "**2026 Caribbean Regional Ocean Strategy**" and the "**SPAW-RAC Strategic Plan (2026-2030)**" for the latest targets aligning with the Global Biodiversity Framework.