

What is the RSAP and how will it benefit civil society?

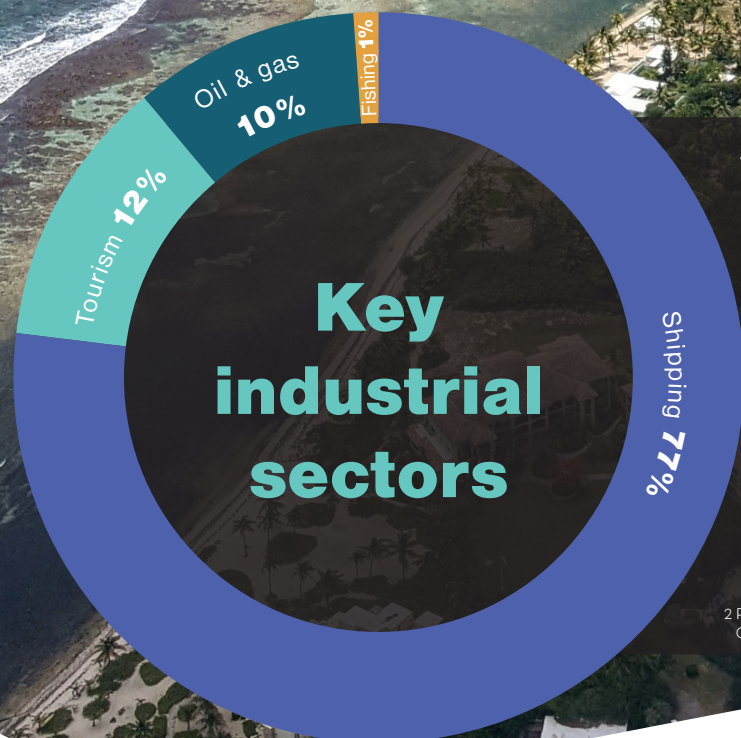
If you live or work in a coastal community, you would have observed firsthand that the health of marine and coastal habitats, such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds, has been deteriorating. You would also have experienced or witnessed the devastating impact these changes are having on livelihoods and wellbeing.

The **Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 – 2030** (RSAP)¹ was developed to address the continued deterioration of marine resources. It provides strategic direction, practical solutions, and specific actions to conserve and restore these vital habitats.

Urgent implementation of the RSAP is a critical next step to protect these vital resources and the people dependent upon them. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have a key role to play in implementing the RSAP.

Successful implementation of the RSAP will require active, collective, and collaborative participation of civil society/CSOs, the private sector, policy makers and researchers, including local, national, sub-regional, regional, and intergovernmental stakeholders. CSOs can play a critical role in ensuring the engagement of local communities, particularly giving voice to vulnerable or historically under-represented stakeholders.

¹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/36347>



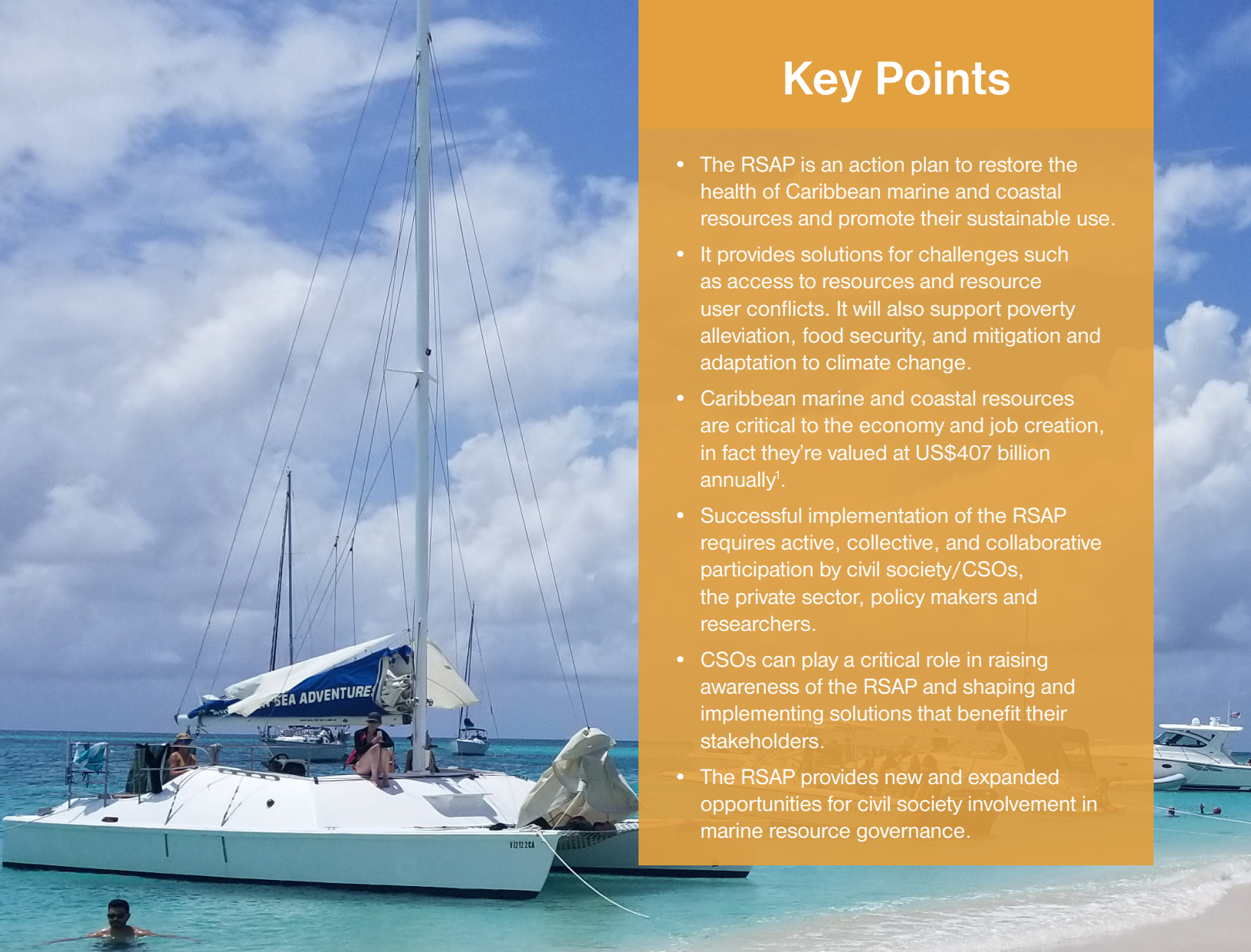
The economic and social wellbeing of more than **134 million people** across the wider Caribbean depends on the health of these habitats. The economic value of the Caribbean Sea to the region is estimated conservatively at **US\$407 billion** annually, with **US\$54.55 billion** directly linked to the marine and coastal habitats² (see breakdown by key industrial sectors).

Shipping US\$311.32 billion	Tourism US\$47.1 billion
Oil & gas US\$39.89 billion	Fishing US\$4.99 billion
Aquaculture US\$1.9 billion	Coastal protection & carbon sequestration US\$1.56 billion
Desalination US\$0.23 billion	

² Patil, P.G., Virdin, J., Diez, S.M., Roberts, J. and Singh, A. (2016). Toward A Blue Economy: A Promise for Sustainable Growth in the Caribbean; An Overview. Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

Key Points

- The RSAP is an action plan to restore the health of Caribbean marine and coastal resources and promote their sustainable use.
- It provides solutions for challenges such as access to resources and resource user conflicts. It will also support poverty alleviation, food security, and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- Caribbean marine and coastal resources are critical to the economy and job creation, in fact they're valued at US\$407 billion annually¹.
- Successful implementation of the RSAP requires active, collective, and collaborative participation by civil society/CSOs, the private sector, policy makers and researchers.
- CSOs can play a critical role in raising awareness of the RSAP and shaping and implementing solutions that benefit their stakeholders.
- The RSAP provides new and expanded opportunities for civil society involvement in marine resource governance.



What civil society can do now

- Develop a communication strategy designed to promote awareness of the RSAP among their members, networks, and partners, so they can collectively advocate (e.g., to policy makers and the private sector) for rapid RSAP implementation.
- Mainstream RSAP solutions and actions into their programmes and consult with their stakeholders to ensure that these accurately represent stakeholder priorities and needs.
- Secure grants and/or other sources of funding to support the identified programmes and projects.
- Actively participate in collaborative, multi-stakeholder opportunities to help shape and accelerate protection of corals, mangroves, and seagrasses.
- Stimulate collaboration between local, national, and regional CSOs, e.g., through the establishment of short- or long-term partnerships and collective advocacy campaigns.