Trinidad and Tobago has declared various maritime zones consistent with the provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The uses of these zones are extensive ranging from trade-related to recreational activities. Monitoring such a wide range of users is a challenge for many States and requires a comprehensive regulatory regime capable of empowering the relevant authorities with the means for its effective implementation. While the domestic legal and institutional framework governing marine environmental protection and conservation lags far behind that of the international arena, thereby rendering many of the applicable international laws non-operational, there are various institutions that are involved in protecting and conserving the marine environment as part of their general mandate. These institutions include the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Maritime Services Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Marine Interdiction Unit, Customs Division of the Ministry of Finance. This poster presents a critical analysis of the roles and functions of the various institutions involved in marine surveillance and legislation prescribing their respective powers. General recommendations for improving the existing legal and regulatory regime are outlined.

Legal and Institutional Framework

Cabinet

Works and Transport

Environment

National Security

Finance

MALMR

MSD

DMA

EMA

TTDF

Customs and Excise

Fisheries Division

TTR

TTCG

MIU

Squadron

Airwing

General Conclusions & Recommendations

• Inadequate and antiquated resources available to the implementing agencies.

• Greater coordination between agencies needed to facilitate policy implementation.

• Need to eliminate maritime routes as a significant trafficking mode through seizures, disruption and displacement.

• Coast Guard Cutters, boats and aircrafts should increase routine law enforcement patrols and special operations throughout the maritime area.

• Increase TTCG drug interdiction budget.

• Need for greater integration among existing coast guards in the region.

• Dedicated & Joint Regional Fisheries Patrol Operations.

• Increased budgetary allocations for maintenance of existing surveillance assets.

• Need to educate and sensitize the public on the importance of their roles as an informal surveillance mechanism (perhaps implementing a reward and incentive programme for information).