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CONSERVING AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRICA BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY (ABES)

“Enhancing institutional capacity of African Union Member States and Regional Institutions on conservation of aquatic biodiversity in the context of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy”

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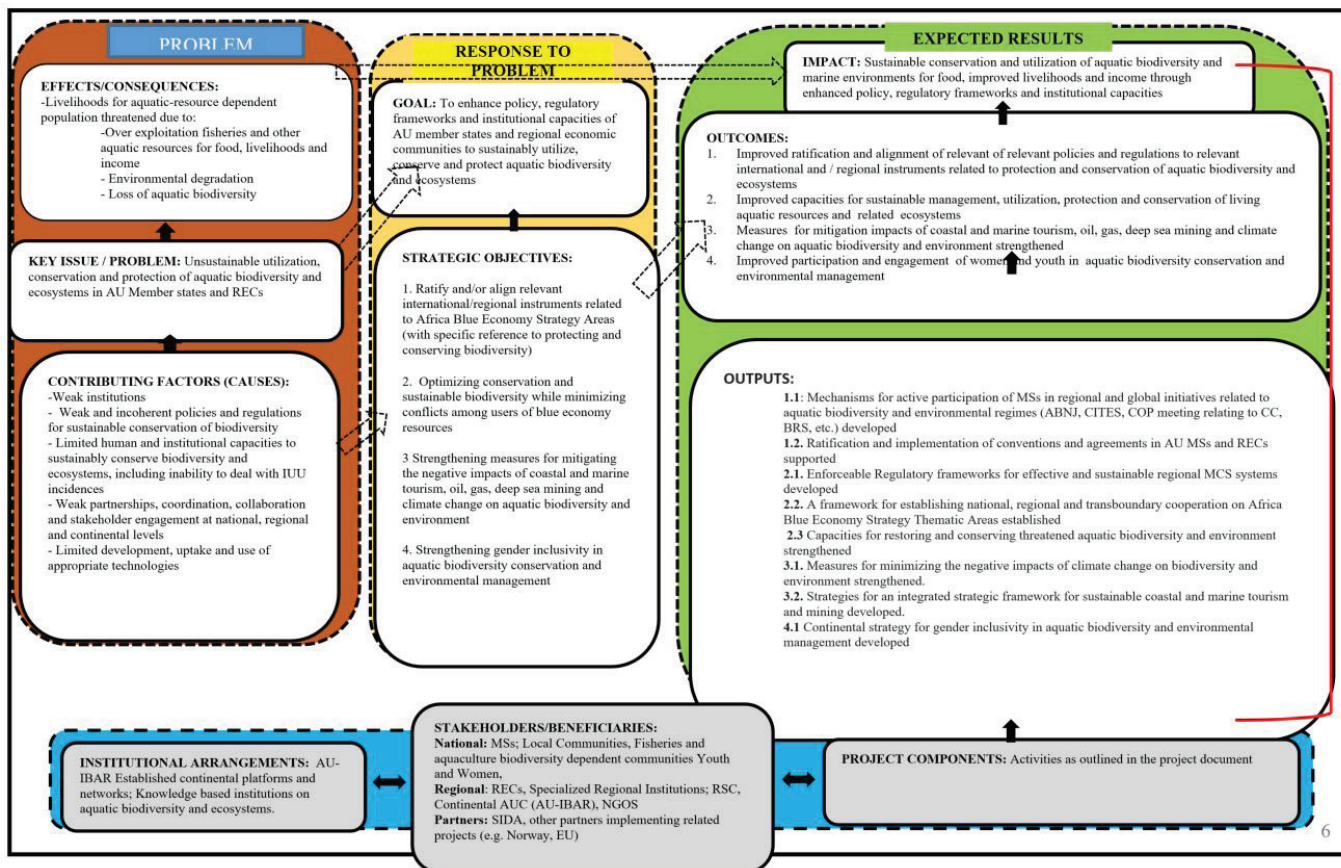
LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABES	Africa Blue Economy Strategy
ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
AIS	Automatic Identification Systems
AFRM	African Fisheries Reform Mechanism
APRIFAAS	Regional Institutions in Fisheries, Aquaculture and aquatic systems
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency-NEPAD
AU MS	African Union Member States
AU-IBAR	African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources
AUC	African Union Commission
BCC	Benguela Current Commission
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Climate Change
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COP	Conference of the Parties
DARBE	Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
IPOA	International Plan of Action
IUU	Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
LME	Large Marine Ecosystems
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MCS	Monitoring Control and Surveillance
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
MSLME	Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystems
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAPA	National Action Plan for Adaptation
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NSAs	Non State Actors
PES	Payments for ecosystem services
PFRS	Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa
PMC	Project Management Committee
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPU	Projects and Programme Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RECs	Regional Economic Communities

REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Land Degradation plus conservation
RFB	Regional Fisheries Body
RFMOs	Regional Fisheries Management Organizations
RSC	Regional Seas Convention
SSB	Single Side Band Radio
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
TEP	Threatened, Endangered and Protected
VIIRS	Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite
VHF	Very High Frequency
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WBC	Water Basin Commissions
WINMAFRICA	Women in Maritime Africa

THEORY OF CHANGE

“Enhancing institutional capacity of African Union Member States and Regional Economic Communities on the conservation of aquatic biodiversity in the context of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy”



1. BACKGROUND

Vision for ABES: The Vision of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy is an inclusive and sustainable Blue economy that significantly contributes to Africa's transformation and growth.

Purpose: The objective of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) is to guide the development of an inclusive and sustainable blue economy that becomes a significant contributor to continental transformation and growth, through advancing knowledge on marine and aquatic biotechnology, environmental sustainability, marine ecosystem utilization, management and conservation and carbon sequestration, the growth of an Africa-wide shipping industry, the development of sea, river and lake transport, the management of fishing activities on these aquatic spaces, and the exploitation and beneficiation of deep sea mineral and other marine resources.

Thematic Areas: The Africa Blue Economy Strategy is consolidated based on the following five thematic technical areas:

1. Fisheries, aquaculture, conservation and sustainable aquatic ecosystems;
2. Shipping/transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement;
3. Coastal and maritime tourism, climate change, resilience, marine ecosystem, environment, infrastructure;
4. Sustainable energy and mineral resources and innovative industries; and,
5. Policies, institutional and governance, employment, job creation and poverty eradication, innovative financing.

2. CONTEXT

The African continent is adjacent to highly productive marine ecosystems including the seven African Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) viz., Agulhas Current LME, Benguela Current LME, Guinea Current LME, Canary current LME, Mediterranean Sea LME, Red Sea LME and Somali Current LME. The continent is also endowed with networks of rivers and lakes. The seas, oceans, lakes and rivers inhabit significant number of biodiversity and the ecosystems provide sources of livelihoods, food security and wealth. These African aquatic ecosystems inhabit living and non-living resources; however the unsustainable exploitation of these resources are threatening the biodiversity, resources and environmental sustainability.

Aquatic biodiversity is the total assemblage of living resources in the aquatic ecosystems, which include fish species, shellfish, plants etc. Aquatic biodiversity encompasses freshwater systems, marine (sea and oceanic) environment, floodplains, aquaculture ponds and wetlands. Several factors are threatening aquatic biodiversity in Africa aquatic ecosystems. These include overexploitation of living species, pollutions from several sources (land-based municipal and agricultural activities), uncontrolled introduction of exotic species in aquaculture systems, effluents from mining activities. Consequently, important aquatic resources are becoming increasingly susceptible to both natural and artificial environmental changes. Thus, conservation strategies to protect and conserve aquatic life are necessary to maintain the balance of nature and support the availability of resources for future generations.

No doubt, in Africa, overexploitation of aquatic organisms for food and income remains a potent threat to resources sustainability in Africa aquatic environments. Thus the need to strengthen capacity of AU member states and regional institutions for protection and sustainable exploitation of living resources within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) is identified as priority in preserving aquatic biodiversity to ensure sustainable contribution to food security, livelihoods and wealth creation. Other threats to aquatic biodiversity include urban development and resource-based industries, such as mining, coastal tourism activities, coastal infrastructure development that destroy or reduce natural habitats. In addition, air and water pollution, sedimentation and erosion, and climate change also pose threats to aquatic biodiversity. Also of significance is the threat to women's livelihoods and the imperative need to safeguard the vulnerable and marginalized groups, implement adequate compensation systems. The exposure of women to climate and weather risks is a key contributing factor to vicious cycle of poverty in communities, especially in fisheries and aquaculture, touristic locations. The question is 'How do we empower women, as agents of change and frontrunners, to build new pathways or accelerate transition to sustainability?' Women need to be equally and actively involved in processes to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity because they play critical roles as primary land managers and resource users, and they face disproportionate impacts both from biodiversity loss and gender-blind conservation measures. There is therefore the need for change at every level to improve the participation of women and girls in biodiversity conservation processes.

The Africa Blue Economy Strategy identified regional cooperation and coordination as well as implementation of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as key strategic activities to ensure conservation of aquatic biodiversity. MSP is building upon the key approaches of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and solely based on the key principles of Ecosystem Approach or Ecosystem based management. Of importance is the fact that regulatory measures to conserve aquatic diversity should include awareness enhancing and political buy-in. This can be accomplished through educational programs, enhancing awareness and effective participation in related global fora as well as knowledge on relevant regional and global instruments, incentive programs, developed or strengthened mechanisms or regulatory frameworks for rehabilitation of degraded aquatic habitats, restoration or recovery of depleted species (living) and implementation of environmental monitoring programs.

The Implementation Plan for the Africa Blue Economy will be extensively utilized to respectively enhance or strengthen policies of national and regional policies of AU member states and RECs in biodiversity and environment conservation. The Implementation Plan will be complemented by the Pan African Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa (utilizing its Guide) as well as biodiversity and environments related global instruments and frameworks (CBD, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).

Through the support of Kingdom of Norway, the AU-IBAR initiated the implementation of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy. Within the framework of this support, awareness was enhanced among stakeholders on the continent on blue governance concept. Significantly an Implementation plan for the Africa Blue Economy Strategy as well as the Blue Governance Coordination mechanism were developed. The next

phase is to support AU MS and RECs to develop respective national and regional blue economy strategies largely based on the implementation plan. There will therefore be nexus for collaboration between the Norwegian support and activities by Swedish project on supporting AU MS and RECs to develop their national and regional biodiversity and environmental strategies; this critical aspect (aquatic biodiversity conservation) will be reinforced in the development of the national and regional blue economy strategies.

The Norway Embassy has also supported the formulation of a framework for Blue Governance Coordination Mechanism for implementation at national, regional and continental levels. Utilizing this framework, the AU member states and RECs will be supported to establish national and regional blue governance coordination mechanism involving key sectors. The Swedish proposals will leverage on this process in implementing the activity on facilitating the cross-sectoral leadership alliance for sustainable development of African maritime zones, regional cooperation on transboundary issues on blue economy resources. The presence of RECs will be leveraged upon with the framework of their mandate on regional integration.

The RECs will be both beneficiaries as well as partners in the implementation of this project. The capacity of the RECs will be strengthened in aquatic biodiversity conservation, environmental management, climate resilience, sustainable coastal tourism and infrastructure development etc. The RECs will act as an interface or conduit in delivery support to the AU member states. In view of their role in facilitating regional integration, the identified activities shall be undertaken with the involvement of the RECs, including implementation of activities on Marine Spatial Planning, regional environmental monitoring programmes, regional strategies on coastal tourism, climate smart and resilient coastal infrastructure, regional strategies on women empowerment and effective engagement in biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.

To enhance preparedness against and mitigate natural disasters, including climate change (CC), flooding and landslide that would impinge on aquatic diversity, member states and RECs would be supported to develop Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also help AU member states adapt to the impacts of climate change. Nature-based solutions would be encouraged that would mainly involve protecting, restoring and sustainably managing ecosystems to address society's challenges and promote human well-being; the actions would include conserving and restoration of mangroves, wetlands, protecting coral reefs as safe havens for biodiversity. This activity would be underpinned by intensive awareness campaign and capacity on the role of communities on DRR, combating CC, intensifying carbon sink or CO₂ (carbon Dioxide) sequestration. This activity would further include payment for ecosystems services; importance of preserving mangroves as safe havens for breeding, nursery ecosystems for living organisms and protecting flooding of community locations. The protection of coral reefs as a climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy would be strongly underscored in this project.

Partnership collaboration

The project will establish strong partnerships and collaboration with national, regional and continental projects to minimize duplications and generate synergies in interventions. This would partly be achieved by participating in the steering committees and other's events of related projects. Also, within the framework of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM), periodic consultations will be organized under the Africa Platform for Regional Institutions in Fisheries, Aquaculture and aquatic systems (APRIFAAS) for

information sharing on activities and workplans. These consultations would significantly involve, among others, Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs), LMEs secretariats and other partners to generate synergies in the implementation of activities.

The project would work through regional economic communities that have the mandate for regional integrations. The eight recognized regional communities by African Union are:

- Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD)
- East African Community (EAC)
- Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- Southern African Development Community (SADC)

However, there are specialized regional institutions that are inter-governmental institutions with mandates for various aspects of blue economy growth including water resources, fisheries and aquaculture, environment etc. Examples include:

- Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO)
- Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA)
- Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC)
- Sub Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC)
- Regional Fisheries Commission for the Gulf of Guinea (COREP)
- The Nairobi Convention
- The Abidjan Convention
- The Fisheries Committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC)

There are also environmental based NGOs supporting conservation efforts in various regions of the continent. The project would collaborate with these various organizations for the implementation of project activities especially at regional levels.

Lessons learning and best practices

The project would identify ongoing initiatives on aquatic biodiversity and environmental related interventions in AU member states and at regional levels and develop collaboration for sharing information for synergies and complementarities. As an example, there are already ongoing initiatives on MSP, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in few AU member states including Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Namibia, Cote D'Ivoire, Cape Verde etc. The project would establish linkages with these countries so that lessons and best practices would be packaged for dissemination.

The large marine ecosystems projects, with World Bank funded, including the Guinea Current, the Canary currents, the Benguela current, Agulhas and Somali currents generated huge amount of information related to environmental and biodiversity conservation. The project would leverage on these projects for learning and best practices in the implementation of aquatic biodiversity projects.

3. ISSUES OF BIODIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF AFRICA BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY

Environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection

Africa recognizes a number of conventions (e.g. Convention of Biodiversity Diversity (CBD), MARPOL, Regional Sea Conventions, United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea, Water Basin Authorities) that make adaptation investments with significant mitigation and carbon sequestration dynamics including implementing Ecosystem Approach management that accounts for ecological interactions including by-catches, increasing and enhancing carbon sinks through restoration of wetlands, mangroves, and seagrass. Conservation investments will be increased in the future to contribute to enhancing the carbon sink function of the watersheds and water catchment resources as well as improving the pollution status of African coasts regarding chemicals and plastics. Healthy blue ecosystems that are linked to environmental management and biodiversity protection will benefit from these measures. Capacities of various national ministries and regional institutions to undertake projects across the country and region on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Land Degradation plus conservation (REDD+) will further contribute to the enhancement of blue ecosystems. It is also important to appropriately identify knowledge-based institutions within the continent for continuous capacity building on aquatic environmental, biodiversity and climate sciences as Centres of Excellence recognized by the African Union policy organs as well as regional policy institutions (RECs). The sustainable development of coastal, marine tourism as well as mining activities would be promoted that took due consideration for environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation.

Climate change

Climate change and climate variability are already impacting Africa's aquatic systems and food production overall. Member States need to be supported in order to initiate activities for building resilience and reducing the vulnerability of the communities, including women and youth, to climate change and variability to ensure sustainable food systems and livelihoods security. For instance, ecosystem services must be integrated into the National Action Plan for Adaptation (NAPA), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) within the Paris Agreement Climate Change Actions. The Member States should be encouraged to work in collaboration with regional and international partners and specialized institutions (e.g. Regional Sea Conventions) for synergies and complementarity. Healthy ecosystems are critically important for living aquatic resources to survive. In that regard, appropriate and environmental deep-sea mining, oil and gas and energy production should be developed following a rigorous scheme in place (avoid, reduce, compensate). Furthermore, the capacity of countries should be enhanced to adhere to national, regional and international pollution instruments, standards and best practices, especially regarding chemical products and plastics that threaten biodiversity. The project would develop strategies for mitigating climate change impacts include restoration of degraded ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrass, protection of coral reefs etc.

Increasing maritime safety, security and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing

The security of EEZs of African Member States of paramount importance to develop and guarantee the sustainability of the Blue Economy, which affects different maritime sectors including fisheries, tourism, transport, trade, offshore exploitation and many others. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

is a serious challenge in Africa, both to inland and marine ecosystems with significant threats to food security, sustainability of environment, biodiversity and livelihoods.

4. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The concern and actions towards the protection and conservation of aquatic biodiversity is embedded in the five thematic areas of Africa Blue Economy Strategy with the thematic number five (governance) dedicated to ensuring the overall coherence and coordination of all measures taken and implemented. More specifically, thematic areas 1 (Fishery and Aquaculture), 2 (shipping and maritime trade), 3 (Climate change and environment) and 4 (Energy and mining) have a set of protection and conservation actions for aquatic biodiversity and environmental sustainability.

The overall objective of the project is to enhance the policy environment, regulatory frameworks and institutional capacities of AU member states and regional economic communities to sustainably utilize and conserve aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems

4.1 Strategic Objectives

1. Ratify and/or align relevant international/regional instruments related to blue economy themes (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity)
2. Optimizing conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among blue economy sub-themes
3. Strengthening measures for mitigating the negative impacts of coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas, deep sea mining and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment
4. Strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management

4.2 Inception workshop

In advance of full implementation of the project, an inception workshop would be organized to apprise and raise awareness among the stakeholders on the objectives, activities and their role in the implementation of the project. A presentation of the project rationale, activities and implementation plans would be made. Also, proven experts and institutions in aquatic environmental management and biodiversity conservation would be invited to do presentation on issues and status of conservation of African aquatic biodiversity and environmental and management sustainability, including the role of women and youth as well as the private sector.

The participants would comprise mainly of representatives of AU Member States from relevant institution (e.g. departments in charge of environment, tourism industry, mining, biodiversity, and other selected blue economy sectors). The Regional economic communities, specialized regional institutions (e.g. Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), Regional Sea Conventions), LMEs representatives, Non-state actors including women and youth as well as the private sector, will be invited to the inception workshop. The inception report would provide opportunity to the stakeholders and beneficiaries to review the proposed project

activities, objectives and implementation mechanisms and provided informed opinion and strategic guidance. The stakeholders would also be informed of the issues in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and the importance of conserving biodiversity. The expected results of the inception workshop would be the following:

- a. Stakeholders are informed of the objectives, activities and implementation mechanisms
- b. The activities are reviewed and refined and endorsed by the stakeholders
- c. The role of the stakeholders are highlighted in the project
- d. Awareness enhanced among stakeholders on issues and importance of conserving aquatic biodiversity and Ecosystems in the context of Africa Blue Economy Strategy.

An exit strategy would be developed that would identify suitable mechanism for seamless phasing out of the project that would ensure the sustainability of the achievements.

At the end of implementation of the project, a closure workshop would also be organized to inform relevant policy makers (including representatives of relevant Hon. Ministers from AU member states), Non State Actors (NSAs) etc. on the outcomes of the results to ensure buy-in and concurrence for sustainability of project outcomes.

The first year of project implementation would be considered as an inception period and to undertake baseline studies. The outcome of the studies might refine the follow up activities resulting in a narrow and focused interventions.

SO 1: RATIFY AND/OR ALIGN RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO BLUE ECONOMY THEMES (WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY)

Output 1.1: Mechanisms for active participation of MSs in continental and global initiatives related to aquatic biodiversity and environmental regimes (ABNJ, CITES, CBD, COP meeting relating to CC, BRS, etc.) developed

1.1.1. Enhancing effective role in regional and global aquatic biodiversity and environmental related regimes

The generally weak participation of AU MS in global fora on ocean governance regimes has been a cause for concern. There is therefore need to strengthen coherent Africa or common African positions on biodiversity, environmentally related global fora. The project would conduct studies and develop a mechanism for enhancing effective role in regional and global biodiversity and environmental related regimes.

A pool of African experts would be trained in negotiation skills and techniques and establish a mechanism for providing technical support to AU Member States for effective participation in these fora. Some of these fora include the following:

- i. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES),
- ii. Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)
- iii. Regional sea conventions (Nairobi Convention, Abidjan Convention and Jeddah convention) for joint capacity of AU member states for effective participation and implementation of resolutions relating to

environment and biodiversity. This would therefore the need to strengthen effective participation and of AU member states in these environmental conventions. The project would therefore develop strong partnership with these conventions.

- iv. Foster strong partnership between ecosystem-based organizations e.g. Benguela Current Convention (BCC), Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystems (MSLME) and AU member states.
- v. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- vi. Climate change (e.g. Conference of parties meetings (COP)
- vii. The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS); Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

The project would enhance awareness and build capacity among stakeholders on the importance of the various regimes, relevant provisions, challenges and mechanisms for effective role and participation in these global regimes. The project would conduct a training workshop on Train of Trainer (ToT) for the identified Negotiators to technically support AU MSs in global negotiations and also facilitate the participation of selected AU MSs, along with identified negotiators, in relevant aquatic biodiversity and environmental related fora.

Output 1.2. Ratification and implementation of conventions and agreements related to conservation of aquatic biodiversity from perspectives of ABES thematic areas in AU MSs and RECs supported

There are several biodiversity and environmentally related global instruments which are yet to be fully ratified by appreciable numbers of countries in Africa or are fully ratified but there are challenges in their implementation. The project would conduct assessment of relevant global aquatic biodiversity and environmental instruments to identify challenges and develop priority actions to enhance implementation and ratifications. Awareness would be created and continental knowledge enhanced on identified key biodiversity and environmentally related continental and global instruments underlining key provisions and benefits. Some of these instruments include the following:

- i. Convention on Biological Diversity in the context of Blue Economy
- ii. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
- iii. Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS)
- iv. The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
- v. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- vi. International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)
- vii. International Plan of Action (IPOA) for Conservation of sharks
- viii. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- ix. United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
- x. Lomé Charter

1.2.1. Identify continental and global biodiversity and environmental instruments relevant to sustainable management of Africa blue economy resources

As UNCLOS provides the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, including for the conservation and sustainable management of marine living resources, marine

biological diversity and the protection and the preservation of the marine environment, the proposal would conduct intensive awareness raising programmes on the key provisions of UNCLOS relating to biodiversity among AU member states and regional institutions.

In addition to the Inception Workshop. The project would conduct assessment of relevant continental and global biodiversity and environmental instruments to develop priority actions to support AU member states for informed decision making for enhanced ratification and implementation. These would be followed by two virtual regional workshop for validating and enhancing awareness on priority actions including key provisions and benefits. In the context of fisheries and aquaculture, within the framework of Fisheries Governance project Phase I (FishGov I), regional assessments were conducted to document challenges and priority actions to fast-track implementation of relevant global instruments impinging on fisheries and aquaculture. Similar studies would be replicated regionally to firstly identify regional and global instruments relevant to aquatic biodiversity and make recommendations for their implementation.

SO 2: OPTIMIZING CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY WHILE MINIMIZING CONFLICTS AMONG USERS OF BLUE ECONOMY RESOURCES

The IUU (Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported) fishing activities in Africa are diverse and include the participation of both foreign and local actors. They include unauthorized fishing in closed areas/seasons, illegal fishing by foreign vessels (distance water fleets), fishing with forged and fraudulent licenses or vessel registrations, unreported and misreported catches, fishing Threatened, Endangered and Protected (TEP) species, catching undersized fish, taking fish in excess of quota, prohibited gear and methods, illegal transshipment, landing in unauthorized ports, fishing without an observer on-board and failing to operate a vessel monitoring system. Africa's annual share of the global IUU catch has recently been estimated at 4.7 million tons of fish at a conservatively estimated value of \$10 billion, some 80% of reported catches. Weak governance, including weak monitoring, control and surveillance systems, is a major factor responsible for IUU fishing in coastal states. Despite many international instruments, numerous studies, recommendations and action plans, hundreds of conferences and workshops on the topic, IUU fishing in Africa is growing, with far reaching and devastating social, environmental and economic consequences.

A conservative estimate of lost opportunities and the cost of stock rehabilitation for target species since 1980 is \$326 billion for Africa as a whole (AU-IBAR, 2016¹).

- Central Africa: \$24.9 billion
- Eastern Africa: \$19.3 billion
- Northern Africa: \$81.2 billion
- Southern Africa: \$62.8 billion
- Western Africa: \$137.9 billion

Therefore a key strategic goal in the Africa Blue Economy Strategy for ensuring aquatic and ecosystems conservation is the optimization of conservation and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture resources use while minimizing conflicts with other blue economy sub-themes. The aim is to promote efficient utilization of coastal and marine ecosystems, conservation, and sustainable management of aquatic resources.

¹ AU-IBAR 2016. *Economic, Social and Environmental impact of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in Africa.* AU-IBAR Reports

Output: 2.1 Enforceable regulatory frameworks for effective and sustainable regional Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) systems developed

2.1.1 Enhancing Sustainable Monitoring Control and Surveillance systems for conservation and protection of biodiversity

The project would commission a study to assess the status of MCS for combating unsustainable practices of fishing and other activities (e.g. piracy) on other blue economy resources in AU member states and regional levels and develop mechanism to strengthen MCS. Weak MCS systems have contributed to increased incidences of unsustainable practices and reduction in aquatic biodiversity in African large marine ecosystems and inland waters. Poor financing or lack of sustainable financing mechanism for MCS systems, especially at regional levels is a major hindrance to deterring illegal practices in Africa exclusive economic zones. Weak enforcement and lack of compliance with existing regulations for protected areas for conservation of biodiversity, for breeding and maturing grounds, mangrove ecosystems etc. are common place in Africa ecosystems. Prevalent trawling and use of destructive fishing practices have contributed to gradual loss of biodiversity among the living aquatic resources in both freshwater and marine ecosystems. In most cases the current MCS systems are weak and require institutional strengthen. There is a therefore a need to conduct assessment of MCS systems to identify national and regional priorities and capacities. Since issues of illegal fishing and other obnoxious practices are, usually transboundary in nature, these unsustainable practices cannot be adequately addressed by single states' solutions, it is also critical to design a regional institutional arrangement for effectively combating illegal and destructive practices that are threats to biodiversity and environments in Africa aquatic ecosystems.

There are various interest groups in the governance of coastal and marine ecosystems in Africa. These include the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) with mandates usually for high seas (these include the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC); International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT); Regional fisheries bodies as well as water basin commissions; Regional and continental maritime organizations (including boat owners and women groups, WINMAFRICA), Regional Sea Conventions (including the UNEP bodies, the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions) for aquatic environmental and biodiversity issues; Large Marine Ecosystems organizations (e.g. Benguela Current Commission (BCC) based in Namibia; FAO Canary Current LME in West Africa). For effective governance of the marine and inland water ecosystems, the regional MCS collaborative framework would provide opportunities for inter-agency cooperation for these various entities to ensure sustainability of blue economy resources that would contribute to conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environment.

There are existing regional MCS initiatives in West Africa. These include the regional MCS centre in Banjul, the Gambia, constituted by the 7 seven countries of the Subregional Fisheries Commission (SFRC). The countries include (Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, the Gambia and Sierra Leone). There is also another MSC regional centre, based in Ghana, constituted by the six countries of the Fisheries Committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC). The countries are Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Ghana. Similarly there are ongoing regional MCS initiatives in the SADC region etc.

Based on the outcomes of the studies on status of MCS systems, the gaps identified, the project would complement 2 identified ongoing regional MCS initiatives by providing needed support in the form of

equipment (including VMS, AIS, GPS, SSB long range radios, VHF radios, etc.) for effective monitoring, Control and Surveillances of the EEZs of AU member states. The support also entail facilitating stakeholder's engagement, capacity strengthening of inspectors or observers, on issues such as existing regulations, who are normally frontline staff in combating illegal practices.

2.1.2. Support the establishment of cost-effective and sustainable financial arrangements for effective regional cooperation on MCS and enforcement in selected regions

Most MCS systems for monitoring, control and protection of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) in Africa have not been effective and sustainable due primarily to financing issues. The project would conduct studies to propose a framework for establishing sustainable financing mechanisms for regional MCS systems for effective financial commitment for protection of aquatic biodiversity in Africa territorial waters. The project would support two regional institutions to implement the recommendations from the studies on MCS status and those of the needs assessment studies for establishing sustainable financing mechanisms for regional MCS. The support would facilitate the RECs or appropriately specialized regional institutions to convene stakeholders' consultative think tank meeting on the operationalization of the recommendations.

The project support the rolling-out of the recommendations from the studies on sustainable financial mechanisms. The support would be geared towards, depending on the findings of the studies, incorporating costs-effective mechanism in existing regional protocols or agreements for innovative, cost-effective financing of sustainable MCS systems or initiatives. The support may include revision of existing regional protocols of MCS financing by constituted AU member states for the regional institutions.

Based on outcomes of the studies, the support to RECs would go towards strengthening regional MCS Centres or initiatives. The support would include providing essential items for putting in place effective regional MCS systems

1. Complete VMS units and accessories (Vessel Monitoring System), installation by service providers, transmission costs for stipulated years;
2. Complete AIS Unit and accessories (Automatic Identification Systems),
3. VIIRS (Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite); radar surveillance of the seas, and pollution tracking mechanisms; Long-range SSB radio, handheld VHF radio; GPS, computers
4. Small inshore patrol crafts (8 to 10 man) for launching joint patrols in the EEZs or in transboundary waters
5. Strengthening regional protocols and arrangements
6. Capacity development of inspectors or observers, including relevant departments, fisheries, environments, Navy, Judicial Officers etc. etc.
7. Strengthening (renovating) infrastructures for housing all Units (VMS, AIS Units) within appropriate conducive facilities.

The regional MCS centres would work directly with the MCS Units in the various AU member states for effective surveillance, planning and information sharing. Thus the use of the long range SSB Radios would facilitate communications between the regional MCS centres and the MCS Units of the AU member states within each REC.

AU-IBAR has in the past worked with Member States and RECs in implementing donor funded activities. AU-IBAR being the Contracting Authority, will ensure that proper measures are put in place so that funds are well accounted for and also ensure there is no delay in implementing the activities.

In the past various mechanisms have been used in implementing activities. These include AU-IBAR coordinating the activities while working hand in hand with the RECS and Member States, with the RECs

and Member States handling everything on the ground. When AU-IBAR confirms everything is okay, proper procedures are followed, then payments would be made from AU-IBAR. This is to avoid ineligibles in the event proper procedures are not followed.

There is also an option of signing sub delegation agreement with the partner institution. This entails conducting institutional assessment of a partner to check if their systems are sound before deciding to sign an agreement and transfer funds. In the past this has been a challenge, however, where an institution qualifies this could be an option.

Hence AU-IBAR will assess which is the best mechanism to use, since AU-IBAR takes full responsibility of funds sent by donor.

Output 2.2. A framework for establishing national, regional and transboundary cooperation in the blue economy thematic areas established

2.2.1. Establish regional cooperation on transboundary issues in shared aquatic ecosystems towards formulating harmonized regional frameworks on aquatic biodiversity conservation.

There are several entities with various interests playing active or passive roles blue economy development. These include institutions in charge of trade (maritime trade, trade links in inland waterways), Navy, shipping, fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, offshore energy, mining, forest (agriculture), NSAs etc. The operations of these institutions can impinge on the sustainability of aquatic biodiversity and the environment without, for example, joint management plans for aquatic ecosystems and their biodiversity.

A joint management plans and protocols, involving all the blue economy actors as well as other stakeholders including private sector, women and youth) for inclusivity, will be developed that would provide space for all entities within the framework of conservation of aquatic biodiversity and the environmental sustainability. The joint management plans and protocols would partly be underscored by international conventions and treaties on environment and natural resources such as Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) that are available under international law to provide framework for countries to collaborate on a broad range of global environmental challenges (regional groupings). Amongst the global environmental issues that MEAs are designed to respond to include: loss of biological diversity, adverse impacts of Climate Change, depletion of the ozone layer, hazardous waste, organic pollutants, plastics, marine pollution, trade in endangered species, destruction of wetlands and critical habitats for significant number of biodiversity etc.

In the above regards the project would conduct integrated assessment of selected two transboundary aquatic ecosystems to identify critical aquatic environmental issues affecting biodiversity and make appropriate recommendations. The project would develop/strengthen mechanisms for joint management plans and protocols to foster regional cooperation in shared blue economy resources (two shared ecosystems) and develop harmonized regional aquatic biodiversity frameworks.

The project would provide technical assistance to five AU member states (preferably each from each of the five regions of the continent) to align or mainstream existing policy environmental instruments or

regulations or develop national aquatic biodiversity conservation frameworks coherent with the regional frameworks

2.2.2. Formulate mechanisms to institutionalize Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) at national and regional levels

The declining health of marine ecosystems around the world is evident that current piecemeal governance is inadequate to successfully support healthy coastal and ocean ecosystems and sustain human uses of the ocean. One proposed solution to this problem is ecosystem-based marine spatial planning (MSP), which is a process that informs the spatial distribution of activities in the ocean so that existing and emerging uses can be maintained, use conflicts reduced, and ecosystem health and services protected and sustained for future generations.

Due to multiple users of the aquatic ecosystems, there is bound to be conflict between the various users for space and resources. The MSP will be an appropriate practical tool for resolving issues of regional conflicts and strengthening mechanisms for cross-cutting and trans-boundary conservation and natural resource management. Aquatic planning (that embraces both maritime and inland waters) is key to define on a long-term basis the aquatic space occupation and allows stakeholders and investors to have long term views necessary for involvement and investments.

Presently only limited number of countries have established or at advanced stage of establishing MSP (e.g. Seychelles, South Africa, Namibia). There are however several ongoing initiatives in AU member states and at regional levels towards establishing MSPs (including transboundary MSPs). The challenge remains inadequate capacity on the concept, implementation mechanism and governance. The project would conduct an assessment of existing MSP in Africa, document lessons, best practices and develop guidelines or mechanisms for their institutionalization at national and regional levels, underscoring conservation values, socio-economy benefits and develop recommendations. Examples would be drawn on lessons and best practices on functional MSPs from within the African continent and beyond. The operationalization of framework for implementation of MSP guidelines would be supported and piloted in five selected AU member states and two shared transboundary ecosystems.

Based on recommendations or outcomes of the studies, support to specialized regional institutions (e.g. Water basin Commission, Regional Fisheries Bodies, Regional environmental bodies that are inter-governmental bodies) would be towards initiatives or ongoing efforts at establishing and/or strengthening identified transboundary MSP; integrating best practices including elements such as conservation and recovery of degraded ecosystems, resilience to climate change impacts; improve current management strategies in the existing joint regional protocols or management frameworks; control and monitoring systems or agreement; review of demarcations,

Output 2.3. Capacities for restoring and conserving threatened aquatic biodiversity and environment strengthened.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) describes an MPA as “a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated, and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

2.3.1 Support rehabilitation of depleted aquatic biodiversity and habitats

Marine Protected Areas are effective tools for conservation and protection of vulnerable living resources in aquatic ecosystems. There are few established MPAs in Africa's (e.g. South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania) aquatic ecosystems as there is a technical challenge on concept, establishment and governance of MPAs. The project would address these challenges through continuing review of existing MPAs. The scope would include not only fish species but other living aquatic blue resources (e.g. mangrove vegetation).

The need for effective governance of the marine protected areas in African countries is underscored by the significant territorial stakes raised by their extensive maritime domain. It is therefore necessary to develop an analytical framework to study the governance of MPAs. The study would commence with desk studies to assess existing MPAs (national or transboundary) in Africa, document lessons on their establishment, best practices and formulate guidelines for their sustainable implementation and governance. The assessment would be followed by stakeholder's consultation to validate framework for sustainable implementation of MPAs and make recommendations.

Based on the outcomes of the studies on review of existing MPA initiatives, the project would provide technical and direct support to complement two specialized regional institutions (water basin commission, regional environmental bodies or regional fisheries bodies); to establish or strengthen climate resilient transboundary MPA including delineation of boundaries redesigning, support with groundtruthing (GIS); review regional protocols; review management plans, zoning and regulation; conservation and monitoring and compensation mechanisms; and stakeholders' consultations

2.3.2 Establish Continental Centers of Excellence (CoEs) for capacity building on aquatic biodiversity

There is a dire need of strengthening human capacity in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in Africa to ensure increased sustainable contribution of aquatic biodiversity to food security, poverty alleviation and economic growth. The establishment of the African Centres of Excellence aligns and contributes directly to the objectives of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) through advancing knowledge on aquatic environmental sustainability, ecosystem utilization, management and conservation. The proposed centers of excellence would contribute immensely to the production or supply of a critical mass of expertise in aquatic biodiversity that would impact positively on the sustainable environmental and ecosystem management along the blue economy thematic areas.

The project would support and implement the decision of the Joint Conference of African Ministers for agriculture, rural development, fisheries and aquaculture in May 2014, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), for recognizing the need for capacity development in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and requesting 'The AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD and RECs to establish African Centres of Excellence for aquaculture, capture fisheries, biodiversity studies and oceanography to enhance capacity for fisheries and aquaculture research.' During the implementation of FishGov I project, eight AU centres of excellence endorsed by the STC-ARDWE in 2019.

Based on past experience, the project would adopt similar procedure used in the identification of current African Union recognized Centres of Excellence in fisheries and aquaculture. The procedure would commission expert assessment of existing institutions on the continent for identification of 2 technically

qualified institutions in Centres of Excellence in aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems management. The two selected Centres would be submitted to the African Union political organs (in this case specialized technical committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (STC-ARDWE) and the AU Executive Council for official endorsement of the two institutions as AU recognized Centres of Excellence.

Based on capacity gap identified for full effective capacity of AU member states, the project would provide support to the two selected Centres for acquisition of identified equipment to support research and training in biodiversity and ecosystem conservations. Following the endorsement a formal MOU will be signed between the endorsed Centres and the African Union Commission through the AU Office of Legal Counsel.

SO3. STRENGTHENING MEASURES FOR MITIGATING THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF COASTAL AND MARINE TOURISM, OIL, GAS, DEEP SEA MINING AND CLIMATE CHANGE ON AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Output 3.1. Measures for minimizing the negative impacts of climate change on biodiversity and environment strengthened and implemented

Marine and coastal ecosystems, which include natural assets such as marine living resources and a range of important habitats or features, such as mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass beds, coastal tidal marshes, seamounts, thermal vents and cold water corals, are crucial for human well-being and sustainable development. Marine and coastal ecosystems are increasingly threatened, degraded and destroyed by marine- and land-based human activities. Major adverse impacts to ecosystems stem from climate change, unsustainable extraction of marine resources, physical alteration and destruction of marine and coastal habitats and landscapes and marine pollution. Tourism stimulates infrastructure development accelerating economic growth by increasing the number of available jobs in a tourism sector, both directly and indirectly. The sector needs to be climate resilient and environmentally friendly.

Mitigating the impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity, the project would conduct a study to document the negative impacts of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment and recommend mitigation strategies.

The project would support to complement conservation and climate change impact mitigation efforts of identified ongoing initiatives on ecosystems restoration (mangroves, sea grass etc.) on mitigation of climate change impact (increasing carbon sink); including projects on protection of coral reefs; The support would mainly be towards nature-based solutions: including but not limited to purchase of seedlings, tree planting, fencing protected sites, reducing soil erosion, for combating climate change; payment for ecosystems services mainly involving women and youth; strengthening regulatory framework for conserving coral reefs;

Output 3.2. Strategies for an integrated strategic framework for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining developed

3.2.1. Identify priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining on aquatic biodiversity and environment and develop guidelines

The project would conduct studies to conduct the impact of coastal and marine tourism development as well as mining activities on biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. The studies would be followed by five national stakeholder's consultation to develop national master plans on coastal and marine tourism and mining development with reference to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. The studies would also encompass the impact of oil and gas exploration on biodiversity which is becoming critical in areas where oil deposits have been discovered in highly productive water bodies (e.g. shrimp fishing grounds).

Based on the identified priority issues in the national master plan, the project would support development or (strengthening), monitoring and regulatory frameworks in 5 AU member states for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection; taking due cognizance of water and energy saving measures, waste minimization, use of environmentally friendly material; recycling materials and reuse initiative (e.g. plastics). Also, reducing land use to minimize soil erosion; livelihoods of communities - noting negative economic impact by employing local people; utilizing local materials;

SO4. STRENGTHENING GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The project recognized women and youth have the potential to play crucial role and perform critical functions in managing biological resources. It is also recognized women and youth are often seriously affected by the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. An appropriate expert (preferably a woman) in gender policy and strategy, within the discipline of sustainable environmental management, will be recruited and charged with the responsibilities of mainstreaming gender issues right across the projects' results areas. The expert would provide appropriate advice to the project's coordinator in terms of identifying, developing, and conducting innovative activities focused on women's empowerment, specifically economic, livelihoods, social welfare, within the context of aquatic biodiversity conservation, environmental sustainability and mitigating CC all of which can adversely affect women in disproportionate manner.

Output 4.1 Continental strategy for gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management developed

The project will support development of regional and national strategies for inclusion of gender in Blue Economy and enhance their role in restoration of degraded habitats, depleted ecosystems e.g. fauna and flora including mangroves, coral reefs, marine mammals (e.g. Manatees) other fish stocks,

4.1.1. Support development of a continental strategy for inclusion of gender in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management

The project, through promotion of environmentally sustainable blue economy growth, will promote the integration of women, youth and indigenous communities that will contribute to the sustainable development of aquatic resources for the benefit of communities who rely on them for their livelihoods and food security. The integration of gender dimensions in the project, will contribute to maximization of economic and social benefits while minimizing environmental degradation from activities within the fisheries and aquaculture sector as well as other blue economic sectors.

Through stakeholders' consultative mechanism, the project will develop continental strategy for empowerment and effective engagement of women in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management programmes.

Technical assistance would be provided to 3 AU MS to develop all-inclusive and deliberate biodiversity strategies as important entry points for women's empowerment; for enhancing the role of women and youth in inclusive aquatic biodiversity conservation and integrated environmental management ; .opportunities to build on women's specific roles and capacities in biodiversity and environmental management; Mapping of ongoing environmental based-NGOs focusing on conserving biodiversity and environment protection would be conducted and technical support provided by the project to develop or strengthen gender-sensitive workplans to enhance the role of women and youth in biodiversity protection and environmental governance (NGOs include Non-State Actors, CSOs, Private sector involved in environmental management)

5. PROJECT COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

5.1. Project management

5.1.1. Organizational set-up and responsibilities

The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) will be responsible for the overall management and coordination of the project, under the political leadership of the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) who will provide political leadership. AU-IBAR will be responsible for grant management, sub granting arrangements (this is not expected in this project) and reporting to the Funding Partners. In order to dispense its functions effectively a project management unit shall be established.

5.1.2. Project Management Unit (PMU)

A project management unit shall be established to enable efficient management and coordination of the project. The PMU shall be responsible for managing the day to day implementation of the project. The PMU should have the following staff:

- a. Project Coordinator (Sustainable Blue Economy Expert) who reports to the Director of AU-IBAR
- b. Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist
- c. Aquatic Ecosystems Management Expert (Consultant)
- d. Gender Policy and Strategy Expert – Aquatic Environmental Management

- e. Legal, Institutional Officer - Natural Resources and Environmental law
- f. Project Planning and Monitoring Officer
- g. Procurement Assistant
- h. Assistant Administrative Officer
- 9. Finance Officer

The PMU shall be responsible for monitoring implementation of the project and for making recommendations for adaptation of the project to its environment. The PMU shall coordinate Project Planning, execution and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) functions and also manage project finances. The PMU will also coordinate reporting on project implementation. AU-IBAR will further support the project management unit through provision of knowledge management and communication support from the experts already in regular employment at with AU – IBAR.

5.1.3. Project Steering Committee (PSC)

A project steering committee shall be established oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project including adoption of annual work-plans and related implementation reports. This committee shall be composed of project implementing partners. The project implementation partners will comprise of AU-IBAR, and will act as the project planning, monitoring and coordination platform. It shall ordinarily meet twice a year to advise project management on overall strategy; review and approve annual workplans and endorse periodic reports. The composition shall include: Representatives from AUC; Representatives of funding Partners; Representatives of implementing Partners, including AU-IBAR; Representative AU member states and Regional Economic Communities, specialized regional institutions including water-basin commissions, regional sea conventions among others. Other institutions, co-opted experts will be invited peer-basis as observers to the project steering committee

5.1.4. Project Technical Committee (PTC)

A Project Technical Committee shall be established to ensure coherence in the implementation of activities by the implementing partners and other institutions. Here the project management shall comprise of AU-IBAR, representatives of AU-MSs, RECs, specialized regional institutions (e.g. Water-basin Commissions, Regional Seas Conventions), Co-opted experts, (from academia), Non-State Actors. The committee. The project technical committee shall meeting twice and would discuss and technical issues and support informed decision-making by the project steering committee.

It shall be chaired by the Director, AU-IBAR with relevant technical staff of the project as members; and shall report to the Project Steering Committee.

5.1.6. Performance and Results monitoring and reporting

Day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this Project will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partners' responsibilities. To this end, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the Project and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the Action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree

of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using the logframe matrix as reference.

An M&E framework that would serve as a guide for project monitoring and evaluation shall be developed. It shall contain among other things the project theory of change and logframe that will clearly outline the impact pathway and the preconditions necessary for the realization of desired results; the results framework, key indicators, targets and milestones to be tracked and reported on; Key tools and templates to be used; and data collection; processing and reporting systems. AU-IBAR has adopted Results based Management as standard for implementation of all its projects and has a Projects and Programmes Unit (PPU) which shall provide technical support in terms of planning, monitoring and evaluation support to the project as appropriate.

6. EVALUATION

Besides an internal M&E evaluation, the Project will engage external evaluation to undertake periodic evaluations of the project implementation, efficiency and effectiveness and propose recommendations for enhanced project performance.

- **Baseline Studies:** In order to establish the prevailing situation at the inception of the project detailed baseline studies shall be carried out using existing secondary data sources. Primary data shall be collected analyzed and processed in situations where secondary data are inadequate. This will form the basis of measurement of change attributable to project implementation.
- The final evaluation shall be carried out to take stock of key achievements and accountability for accountability and learning purposes. The lessons drawn will inform future projects and intervention in the domain.

7. AUDIT

Annual audits will be conducted by an external agency (independent auditors). In addition, verifications may be carried out by the funding partners as may be deemed necessary. The relevant expenditures are catered for under “Evaluations and Audits”.

8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

AU-IBAR has a Senior Knowledge Management Officer, who will be at the service of the Project. This Project shall contain communication and visibility measures for enhanced communication and visibility of project and the activities as well as and raise awareness on the key issues addressed by the project among all stakeholders and beneficiaries, while assuring effective communication with the management and funding agency and with other relevant actors outside the project management. It is also intended to contribute to knowledge creation, policy and decision-making, and inform stakeholders about the project activities and outcomes.

9. WHAT IS THE LEGAL STATUS OF AU-IBAR IN RELATION TO AU – INDEPENDENCE OF FINANCING?

The African Union (AU) is an intergovernmental organization responsible for promoting Africa's growth and economic development by championing citizen inclusion and increased cooperation and integration of the 55 African states. Recognized by its Constitutive Act, the AU has a number of organs and offices, with clear mandates to engage on specific roles and responsibilities.

Among the Organs of the AU is the African Union Commission (AUC), which serves as AU's secretariat and undertakes the day to day activities of the Union. The AUC comprises of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and six Commissioners with responsibility to implement all decisions, policies and programmes relating to their portfolios. Led by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) leads the efforts to initiate, develop and promote continental policies, frameworks and programs that will contribute to agricultural transformation, rural development, blue economy and sustainable environment in line with Agenda 2063.

The African Union- Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is a specialized technical office of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) of the African Union Commission (AUC), mandated to support and coordinate the utilization of livestock, fisheries and wildlife as resources for both human wellbeing and economic development in the Member States of the African Union (AU).

AU-IBAR implements its mandate and core functions through various and complementary business processes, among them:

- Developing policy frameworks and strategies in consultation with partners, RECs and MSs;
- In consultation with the MSs, RECs and other stakeholders, developing programs and projects to address issues of continental importance and mobilize resources to support implementation;
- Convening multi-stakeholders to build consensus on issues related to Animal Resources (including livestock, bees, fisheries, aquaculture and the animal component of wildlife) and improve harmonization of interventions;
- Assembling high level decisions makers and private sectors to raise awareness and build consensus on challenges related to Animal Resources;
- Commissioning and guiding research agenda to generate evidence to guide decision making processes;
- Documenting and sharing success stories and lessons learnt to guide decisions making processes;
- Developing modalities for effective partnership and cooperation with Development Partners and Technical Partners and establish institutional mechanisms for coordination;
- Developing and facilitating development frameworks and decision making tools and guidelines;
- Creating synergy and complementarity with past and on-going initiatives;
- Facilitating the establishment of systems and capacity for data, information and knowledge management; and,
- Organizing and participating in seminars, trainings, workshops and retreats to enhance in-house and clients' capacity, operations and governance.

AU IBAR spearheaded the specific task of formulating the African Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) and has also coordinated the development of the ABES Implementation Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation framework, and its Coordination framework. It is intended that these frameworks will form the basis for development of similar frameworks at Continental, Regional and Member States levels, which AU-IBAR is currently supporting.

AU-IBAR has capacity to engage with development and other partners and enter into AU Legal Counsel-cleared contracts and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); and has an impressive track record of engagement in, and management of large multi-period contracts and MoUs with development partners. The office implements its actions by means of AU Member State (MS) funding and with the support of development partners who provide financial and technical support. It has a fully-fledged finance office that operates within AU Financial Rules and Regulations; and is accountable to AU member states. AU-IBAR is also directly accountable to Development Partners or through the AUC.

10. RECENT DONOR PROJECTS SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED BY AU-IBAR

In 2015, AU-IBAR passed The EU Pillars Assessment and was found compliant in all areas assessed for USAID funding. Since 2008, AU-IBAR has been engaged in managing 20 partner funded projects with a total funding portfolio of USD 146,370,346, and achieved an average execution rate 95%.

The office is currently implementing the following partner funded projects: follows:

1. *Enhancing sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development in Africa: A programme for accelerated reform of the sector (Fisheries Governance Project Phase II - FishGov 2)*

As a follow-up to the first phase of the EU funded Fisheries Governance project (FishGov I), implemented by AU-IBAR from 2014 to 2018, the second phase (FishGov 2), also EU funded project, is currently implemented by AU-IBAR with support from the AUDA NEPAD Agency. The implementation officially started on the 1st January 2021 for period of 54 months. The total EU funding is EUR 12000000.

The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), a specialized technical office of DREA, will be responsible for the overall management and coordination of the Action.

The overall objective of the Action is to improve food security, livelihoods and wealth creation in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, aligned with AU Agenda 2063.

The specific objectives are the following:

1. African Union decisions on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture policies are evidence based
2. Fisheries and aquaculture policies in Africa are coherent with the PFRS and other AU priorities and coordinated at continental, regional and national levels
3. Africa is adequately represented and effectively participates in international fisheries and aquaculture fora and ably domesticates relevant global instruments

2. Implementation of Africa Blue Economy Strategy

AU-IBAR, with support from the Kingdom of Norway, through the Embassy of Norway to the African Union, is implementing the Africa Blue Economy Strategy with total funding of about USD 720000 since the adoption of the document in 2019. By the STC-ARDWE. The aim of the Norwegian support is to initiate the implementation of Africa Blue Economy Strategy.

Through this support, AU-IBAR has conducted awareness enhancing workshop on blue economy concept as well as Africa Blue Economy Strategy involving the five regions of the African continent (West, Central, East, Southern and Northern Africa). The support also facilitated the development of the Implementation Plan as well as the Blue Governance Coordination framework to support AU member states and Regional economy communities towards the implementation of the Strategy.

3. Live2Africa

Implemented by the African Union-InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), the Sustainable Development of Livestock for Livelihoods (Live2Africa) project is a European Union supported EUR 20 Million, 5-year funding, effective December 2017, to operationalize implementation of the Livestock Development Strategy (LiDeSA), through a Value Chain Approach. It responds to identified constraints bedeviling Africa's Livestock sector, which include deficiencies in policy, legislative and institutional frameworks as well as the inadequate application of available technologies, knowledge and skills in breeds; production capacities. Other challenges are productivity; availability of quality land; feed and water resources; animal health services and disease control measures; input supply and service delivery; value addition; market information and market infrastructure, competitiveness of African livestock products and in the application of and compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

Furthermore, implementation of Live2Africa seeks to strengthen systemic capacity of continental, regional and national Livestock Sector stakeholders for economic, environmental and social transformation of Africa's livestock sector. It aligns with the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and AU Agenda 2063, and contributes to level 3 of the CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme) Result Framework 2015-2025 by "strengthening systemic capacity to deliver results" in the Livestock sector.

The Live2Africa project intends to: increase investments in livestock value chains (LVCs); improve animal health delivery services; enhance animal production, productivity and ecosystem management; strengthen resilience of livestock production systems; increase Technology adoption in the livestock value chains; increase access to inputs, services, markets and value addition; and strengthen AU-IBAR capacities for project coordination.

4. International Outreach in Enhancing the Participation of African Countries in Codex

This is a 5-year project funded by the USDA's Codex Office to the tune of USD 3,500,000 for the period 2020 to 2024 with the objective of enhancing the participation of African countries in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). The CAC is an inter-governmental organization of the United Nations system that adopts international food standards that protect the health of consumers

and promote fair trade practices. Countries have an incentive to follow Codex standards, because they are based on science, usually adopted by consensus, and are recognized by the WTO as reference for international trade in food. About a dozen committees meet over the course of a year to develop draft standards for the Commission to consider for adoption at the annual meeting of the Commission. The scope of Codex issues, the complexity of these issues, and the relatively frequent meetings of Codex committees create technical and administrative challenges for many member countries including several African countries to participate effectively in Codex work.

To address these technical and administrative challenges, the project focuses on the following three strategic areas:

1. Increase understanding of the food safety objectives and global trade consequences of decisions made by the CAC.
2. Improve coordination of national Codex activities by building efficient work management practices.
3. Common interests in science-based standard-setting by Codex enhanced through partnerships.

11. RISK TABLE AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Risk	Risk level	Mitigation strategy
Poor commitment and cooperation by the Regional Economic Communities and Specialized Regional Institutions in the project implementation.	Low	Institution of strong inclusive consultative processes in project implementation including the inception meeting, awareness creation and validation workshops. The fact that RECs and Regional institutions are beneficiaries in transboundary initiatives implemented under the project (MCS, MSP, and MPA) renders this risk very low.
Poor commitment of AU Member States for implementation of projects' outcomes or recommendations at national levels due to paucity of capacity and / or lack of willingness to participate	Low	The consultative mechanisms and awareness enhancing (capacity building) activities incorporated in almost project's activities will promote ownership of the project by AU member states. The two level approach of establishing Project technical committee mainly involving experts and the project steering committee involving high level project makers would contribute immensely to engendering ownership and implementation of the projects' recommendations by AU member states. The participation of policy makers (ministers in charge of environment and biodiversity) in project's closure meeting and steering committee meetings is also an effective strategy to enhance ownership and buy-ins of project's outcomes in AU member states.
Non-compliance by the stakeholders (Non-State Actors including private sector, NGOs, CSOs, women and youth groups) in project implementation process and also weak capacities by these organizations for effective participation.	Medium	The mitigation strategy include encouraging participation of non-State actors including women and youth groups in all projects activities including decision making on issues such as MPAs, MSPs, enhancing their role in mitigating climate change impacts. Incorporating the role of women, youth and private sector in biodiversity conservation and environmental management is an effective mitigating strategy for this risk.

Risk	Risk level	Mitigation strategy
Externalities including unpredictable events such as environmental pollution, degradation of habitats, climate change phenomenon and other natural disasters as well as uncontrolled and unsustainable -made activities and piracy may undermine project implementation and outcomes	Generally low with possible high risk in limited areas, countries or regions	The mitigation strategy will be establishing or strengthening regional collaborative mechanisms between AU member states on tools such as MCS, climate change mitigating strategies, including early warning systems, promoting establishment of climate-resilient MSP and MPAs.
Political instability is likely to affect implementation in some AU Member States	High	The active participation of RECS, inter-governmental specialization regional institutions would mitigate this risk. The RECs have conflict resolution mechanisms
Activity slow / shut down and movement restrictions due to the COVID 19 Pandemic or other pandemic	High	Adopt use of technologies, for instance meetings can be virtual to mitigate the impact. Encourage key stakeholders to embrace vaccination

12. SUSTAINABILITY MECHANISMS: FOR THE PROJECT OUTCOMES

The sustainability would be addressed by:

- Creating a space for soliciting inputs by stakeholders, including organizing all inclusive inception workshop so that stakeholders would have opportunities to review the activities
- Intensive stakeholder's consultations, involving technical and highly relevant public institutions, ongoing related projects at national and regional levels, in the implementation of project activities
- Integrating capacity building activities for stakeholders on conservation of aquatic biodiversity, including development of knowledge-products (publication, policy briefs, information notes)
- Collaboration with RECs and specialized regional bodies and enhance and strengthen linkages between RECs and specialised regional institutions to ensure sustainability
- The support to actualization or practical demonstration of projects' recommendations such as MSP, MPAS, climate change mitigation strategies
- Engaging and empowering grassroots or frontline actors, stakeholders, including NGOs, women and youth in project related activities
- Support to implementation of Decisions of AU policy organs on issues such as establishing Centres of Excellence on aquatic biodiversity (2014 Joint Ministerial) for production of critical mass of experts in biodiversity and environmental conservation

13. LOGFRAME

LOGFRAME for the “Enhancing institutional capacity of African Union Member States and Regional Economic Communities on the conservation of aquatic biodiversity in the context of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy”

RESULTS CHAIN / DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS	BASELINES	TARGETS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Impact: Sustainable conservation and utilization of aquatic biodiversity and marine environments for food and income through improved policy, regulatory frameworks and institutional capacities.	Change in reported IUU incidences (Used as a proxy for overexploitation of resources)	A study / Survey will be conducted working with RFBs and RECs to establish the current number of incidence reported in each region	Reduction 30%	AU-IBAR Reports	Political will and corporation from Regional and National authorities on development and enforcement of relevant Legal Frameworks
	# of RECs (or specialized regional institutions) and MSs whose institutional capacities on conservation and utilization of aquatic biodiversity were enhanced	0	4 RECs 15 MSs	AU-IBAR Reports	
Outcomes					
I. Improved ratification and alignment of relevant of relevant policies and regulations to relevant international and / regional instruments related to protection and conservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems	Ratification rates of relevant legal instruments (Disaggregated by instrument)	A study is planned to determine the relevant instruments and their baseline ratification rates	%	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	

RESULTS CHAIN / DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS	BASELINES	TARGETS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
2. Improved participation and engagement of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management	# of MSs and RECs (or specialized regional institutions) and specialized institutions) implementing the ecosystems approach to managing marine and coastal ecosystems	A baseline survey will be conducted	15	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
3. Measures for mitigation impacts of coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas, deep sea mining and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment strengthened	# of RECs and MSs in which the recommendations on mitigating the negative impacts of climate change are piloted	0	10 MSs	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
4. Improved participation and engagement of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management	# of RECs and MSs in which measures to enhance participation of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management are implemented	0	5 MSs (including other organizations)		
Outputs:					
I.1: Mechanisms for active participation of MSs in regional and global initiatives related to aquatic biodiversity and environmental regimes (ABNJ, CITES, COP meeting relating to CC, BRS, etc.) developed	# of mechanisms for enhancing effective participation of Africa in global negotiations developed/	0	1	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	Corporation and willingness to learn by key stakeholders involves since BE transcend different sectors
	# of AU MSs supported to participate in relevant aquatic biodiversity and environmental fora	0	5	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	Timely availability of financial, human and material resources Innovative technologies are used to facilitate implementation in lite of Covid 19 induced restrictions
I.2. Ratification and implementation of conventions and agreements related to conservation of biodiversity in AU MSs and RECs supported	# of MSs and RECs supported to review and align national policies and instruments with relevant regional and global instruments	0	10MSs	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	

RESULTS CHAIN / DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS	BASELINES	TARGETS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
2.1. Enforceable Regulatory frameworks for effective and sustainable regional MCS systems developed	<i>A continental framework for sustainable financing mechanisms of fisheries and aquaculture resources and related ecosystems developed</i>	0	1	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	Timely availability of financial, human and material resources Innovative technologies are used to facilitate implementation in lite of Covid 19 induced restrictions
2.2 A framework for establishing national, regional and transboundary cooperation on Africa Blue Economy Strategy Thematic Areas established	# of Regional institutions in which the recommendation and lessons on MSP are implemented	0	2	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
2.3 Capacities for restoring and conserving threatened aquatic biodiversity and environment strengthened	<i># of shared transboundary ecosystems in which MPA guidelines are piloted</i>	0	2	AU – IBAR Reports	
	# of aquatic centres of excellence established and strengthened	0	2		
3.1. Measures for minimizing the negative impacts of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment strengthened and implemented	A study on the negative impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment conducted	0	1	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
3.2. Strategies for an integrated strategic framework for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining developed	# of MSs supported to pilot guidelines on sustainable marine and coastal tourism and mining to ensure biodiversity and environmental conservation	0	5	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
4.1 Continental strategy for gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management developed	# of AU MS supported to implement regional strategy for enhancing the role of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity and integrated environmental management	0	5	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	

RESULTS CHAIN / DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS	BASELINES	TARGETS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
	# of environmental based NGOs supported to implement gender sensitive workplans	0	2	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	



African Union – Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources
(AU-IBAR)

Kenindia Business Park
Museum Hill, Westlands Road
PO Box 30786
00100 Nairobi
Kenya
Tel: +254 (20) 3674 000
Fax: +254 (20) 3674 341 / 3674 342
Email: ibar.office@au-ibar.org
Website: www.au-ibar.org