



**AFRICAN UNION**  
**INTERAFRICAN BUREAU**  
**FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES**



**Sweden**  
**Sverige**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

# **“CONSERVING AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY IN AFRICAN BLUE ECONOMY”**



**OCTOBER 2022**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACRONMYS</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>1. BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overall Objective	2
1.2 Strategic Objectives	2
<b>2 BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 PROGRESS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 Recruitment of staff	4
3.2 Recruitment of short –term consultants:	4
<b>4 PROJECT INCEPTION MEETING</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1. Recommendations from Working Group Discussions on Project Results Areas and Activities:	11
4.1.1 Result area 1: Ratify and/or align relevant international/regional instruments related to blue economy themes (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity –Working Group 1	11
4.1.2 Result area 2: Optimizing conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among blue economy sub-themes -Working Group 2	12
4.1.3 Result Area 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 -Working Group 3	13
4.1.4 Result area 4: Strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management	13
<b>5 PROJECT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (SO), OUTPUTS, ACTIVITIES AND SUB-ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 SO 1: RATIFY AND/OR ALIGN RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO BLUE ECONOMY THEMES (WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY)	15
5.2 SO 2: OPTIMIZING CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY WHILE MINIMIZING CONFLICTS AMONG USERS OF BLUE ECONOMY RESOURCES.	19
5.3 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.	24
5.4 SO4. STRENGTHENING GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT.	27
<b>6 THE 1<sup>ST</sup> PROJECT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1 Participants to the First Project Technical Committee Meeting	31
6.2 Opening Session	32

6.3	<i>Opening remarks by the Director General, Kenya Fisheries and Blue Economy - Mr. Daniel Ndung'u Mungai</i>	32
6.4	<i>Objectives of the 1st Project Technical Committee Meeting</i>	32
6.5	<i>Technical Presentations</i>	33
6.6	<i>Presentations by Partners</i>	33
6.7	<i>Key Outcome:</i>	34
6.8	<i>Recommendations from the PTC</i>	34
<b>7</b>	<b>FIRST PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING</b>	<b>36</b>
7.1	<i>Participants:</i>	36
7.2	<i>Opening Remarks</i>	37
7.2	<i>Official Opening by the Hon. Deputy Minister of Kenya in charge of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Hon. Lawrence Angolo Omuhaka, (CBS).</i>	37
7.3	<i>Objectives of the first Project Steering Committee Meeting:</i>	37
<b>8</b>	<b>PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY</b>	<b>40</b>
9.1	<i>Implementation Status: 15Th October 2021 – 14Th October 2022</i>	40
9.2	<i>Way Forward</i>	41
<b>10</b>	<b>TECHNICAL AND STRATEGIC CHALLENGES</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>43</b>

# ACRONMYS

AFMESI	African Marine Environment Sustainability Initiative
AU-IBAR	African Union–Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources
AWFISHNET	African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network
BCC	Benguela Current Commission
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCLME	Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMHAFAT	Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation Among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EBM	Ecosystem Based Management
ECCAS	Economic Community for Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community for the West African States
EIAs	Environmental Impact Assessments
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IGAD	Inter Governmental Authority for Development
IOC-UNESCO	InterGovernmental Oceanographic Commission/ Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IUU	Illegal unreported unregulated fishing
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NAFIRRI	National Fisheries Resources Research Institute
PRCM	Regional Partnership for the Conservation of the Coastal and Marine Zone
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTC	Project Technical Committee
REC	Regional Economic Community
RFB	Regional Fisheries Body
RSC	Regional Sea Conventions
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEAU	Swedish Emabassy to the African Union
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SP	Spatial Planning
SRI	Specialised Regional Institutions
SWAM	Swedish Agency for Water and Marine management
ToR	Terms of Reference
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UU	Unreported unregulated Fishing
WIOMSA	Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association
WTO	World Trade Organization

# SUMMARY OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS

The implementation of the project effectively commenced on the 15th October 2021, following the signature between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the African Union. Due to the new reform agenda of the African Union Commission, recruitment of fixed term and regular staff is done by the Human Resources Management Directorate at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In addition, any such recruitment must be authorized by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. Thus, in anticipation of delays usually associated with recruitment at headquarters, the Ag. Director of AU-IBAR requested for waiver by the AUC Chairperson for recruitment of project technical staff and administrative staff, including procurement staff, in October 2021. The terms of reference for the technical and administrative were submitted to Headquarters. As of today, no official response has been received from Headquarters and no advertisement has been placed for applications.

In order to mitigate the impact of the delayed recruitment of fixed term staff, permission was sought from the Swedish Embassy to the African Union to recruit the technical staff as short term consultants; this was granted. Going forward, the following progress has been made in the implementation of the project:

- a. An inception workshop was organized involving stakeholders from AU member states (representatives from departments in charge of environment, biodiversity, fisheries, aquaculture), regional economy communities, specialized regional institutions (regional fisheries bodies, Abidjan convention, water basin authorities), academia (universities and research institutes), NON-State Actors including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Private sectors (from mining, Oil industries, Tourisms, NGOs, women and youth organizations etc
- b. The project recruited four consultants as staff (Legal, policy and institutional officer; Aquatic biodiversity specialist, Gender policy and strategy expert and Aquatic ecosystems y expert)
- c. The Aquatic Ecosystems Management Expert is performing the role of the project coordinator (Sustainable Blue Economy Expert). In addition, AU-IBAR Fixed term planning officer is assigned to the project and similarly AU-IBAR fixed staff Senior finance officer is supporting the assigned to the project financial related functions of the project.
- d. The project has recruited an administrative support staff who is performing the functions of Administrative Assistant on the project.
- e. In terms of consultancies to conduct expert studies under the various project result areas, the following achievements have been made:
  - An expert has been recruited to identify the impact of climate change on aquatic ecosystems and formulate continental strategy for climate change mitigation. The study is completed.
  - Two experts have been recruited, to conduct mapping and extent of usage of marine spatial planning in the five regions of the continent, these studies are ongoing.
  - An expert has been recruited to conduct an assessment of transboundary environmental issues affecting biodiversity in selected shared freshwater ecosystems towards formulating harmonized regional strategy for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and joint action plans, the study is ongoing.
  - An expert has been recruited to identify priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining activities, the study is almost complete.

- An expert has been recruited to conduct review of existing Marine Protected Areas in the South-East Regions of Africa. The study is ongoing. The recruitment of another expert to conduct similar studies in the West, Central and Northern Regions of Africa is in process.
  - Two Experts have been recruited to conduct assessment of relevant continental and global biodiversity and environmental instruments to develop priority actions for enhanced ratification and implementation. The studies are ongoing.
  - An expert has been recruited to identify priority issues and actions necessary for strengthening the role of women in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in Africa.
- f. The recruitment of two experts to conduct studies on Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) in the five regions of Africa is in process, it has been a challenge to identify the right experts for these studies. The project staff conducted scoping missions to Uganda, Seychelles, South Africa and Djibouti (in that order) to obtain baseline information on the status of MCS, MPAs, MSP and factors affecting conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environment.
  - g. The project staff participated in ocean conference in Lisbon, Portugal to support AU member states for common positions on issues relating to aquatic biodiversity conservation.
  - h. The project launched online baseline survey for the protection and conservation of aquatic biodiversity project. The aim of the baseline survey was to provide useful information, which will guide the implementation of activities and form the basis for measuring the implementation progress of the project.
  - i. The project held both the 1st Technical and Steering committee meetings (20th -23rd September 2022) in Mombasa-Kenya.
  - j. A Virtual Consultative meeting to review and validate the report on impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity, their environment and proposed mitigation measures, was conducted on 3rd October, 2022; the report was validated and inputs from stakeholders have been incorporated into the final study report.
  - k. Gender Expert Consultative Workshop was held in Naivasha-Kenya to identify priority issues and actions that will enhance the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in AU member states.



# I. BACKGROUND

The African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), with funding support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), is implementing a project on “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy” for a period of three years (October 2021 – October 2024).

This project sets out an agenda for action to “Enhance institutional capacity of African Union Member States and Regional Economic Communities on the utilization, conservation and protection of aquatic biodiversity in the context of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy” The Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) identified environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection as key strategic goals for health ecosystems and sustainable blue economy development. The project is therefore supporting the implementation of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy.

The African continent is adjacent to highly productive marine ecosystems including the seven African Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) namely: 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, micro-organisms among others. Aquatic biodiversity encompasses freshwater systems, marine (sea and oceanic) environment, floodplains, aquaculture ponds and wetlands. Several factors are threatening aquatic biodiversity in African aquatic ecosystems. These include overexploitation of living species, pollution from several sources (land-based municipal, oil, gas 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.

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 (EBM). 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 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.

### *1.1 Overall Objective*

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.

### *1.2 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; and,
4. Strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

## 2 BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION:

### **Implementation:**

The Africa Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is coordinating the implementation of the project.

The project is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

### **Project Budget:**

SIDA funding: US Dollars 5,455,463

### **Project Duration:**

36 Months

### **Commencement date:**

15<sup>th</sup> October 2021

### **Fixed term project technical staff:**

- i. Sustainable Blue Economy Expert- project coordinator
- ii. Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist
- iii. Legal and Institutional Officer
- iv. Gender Policy and Strategy Expert –

### **Consultancy position:**

- i. Aquatic Biodiversity Management Expert

### **Administrative and planning staff**

- i. Planning Expert – Mr. Kennedy Oroko
- ii. Administrative support staff - Ms. Mercy Mango

## 3 PROGRESS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:

### 3.1 *Recruitment of staff:*

The African Union Administration and Human Resources Management Directorate is in charge of recruitment of all fixed term positions. However, there is currently an existing ban on recruitment of staff at the African Union Commission (AUC). Thus request for waiver for recruitment of fixed term technical staff should precede any recruitment process. Accordingly, request for waiver for recruitment, of the four fixed technical staff (i-iv) for AU-IBAR was made to the African Union Commission in October 2021. The approval process for waiver is still ongoing at the AUC.

### 3.2 *Recruitment of short –term consultants:*

In a bid to operationalize the project and mitigate the impact of the delay in recruitment of the fixed technical staff by AUC, AU-IBAR requested approval for the recruitment of consultants to temporarily perform functions of the following fixed staff positions. Through competitive recruitment process, the following candidates have been successfully recruited and are currently in posts as short-term consultants along with their terms of reference.

#### **i. Mr. Eric Nadiope – Legal and Institutional Expert – Natural Resources**

- Provide technical support relating to the legal, policy and institutional aspects of the project
- Strengthen capacity for effective participation in continental and global fora on aquatic biodiversity and environmental management
- Drafting of MoUs, Protocols or Agreements for regional cooperation on transboundary issues in shared aquatic ecosystems for biodiversity conservation and environmental management
- Actively coordinate the formulation of policies, strategies, frameworks, regulations in the project to support the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in the context of African blue economy
- Identify and strengthen capacity of negotiators to guide and provide technical support to AU stakeholders for effective participation in continental and global regimes related to aquatic biodiversity and environmental sustainability
- Develop priority issues for enhancing ratification and implementation of continental and global instruments related to aquatic biodiversity and environmental management
- Assist AU member states for review of their national instruments (e.g. policies and legislations) for alignment or coherence with relevant continental and global instruments
- Develop harmonized regional biodiversity frameworks and technical guidance to AU member states to mainstream biodiversity strategies in relevant national instruments.
- Support to AU member states and Regional institutions on regional cooperation on transboundary MSPs and MPAs as well as regional Monitoring Control Surveillance (MCS) systems
- Provide legal and institutional support of formulation national master plans and regional frameworks for sustainable coastal and marine tourisms and, oil, gas exploration and mining activities.

## **ii. Mr. Joel Mokenye – Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist**

- Provide technical support relating to the implementation of the project
- Contribute to development of mechanisms, frameworks, guidelines, strategies on conservation of aquatic biodiversity
- Strengthen capacity for sustainable exploitation, utilization and conservation of aquatic biodiversity in Africa blue economy sector
- Promote mechanisms for restoration of degraded aquatic habitats and depleted aquatic biodiversity
- Promote mechanisms for sustainable regional cooperation on monitoring, control and surveillance systems for exploitation, utilization and protection of aquatic biodiversity in Africa blue economy
- Strengthen institutional capacity on marine spatial planning and in transboundary context
- Strengthen institutional capacity for establishment and governance of marine protect areas as tool for conserving aquatic biodiversity
- Develop measures to enhance continental capacity for mitigating impact of gas, oil exploration and mining on aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems
- Enhance continental awareness on climate impact and mitigating strategies on impacts of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems
- Identification of biodiversity hotspots and support to formulation of regional aquatic biodiversity strategies
- Support capacity development of AU member states and regional institutions on implementation of continental instruments related to aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems conservation.

## **iii. Ms. Alberta Jonah – Gender policy and strategy expert**

- Contribute to identification of gender issues relevant to conservation highlighting the socio-political, economic and cultural aspects of conservation:
- Participate in analysis of, from a gender perspective, existing national, regional and local policies, strategies and action plans and elaborate on the added value of gender mainstreaming into national and regional conservation policies.
- Support to development of a continental strategy for inclusion of gender in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management
- Contribute to identification and mainstreaming of gender related issues across project's activities relevant to aquatic biodiversity and environmental management
- Enhance continental awareness and promote the implementation of nature-based solutions to minimizing impacts of climate change on ecosystems and biodiversity
- Enhance mechanism to promote Private sector and Women's representation in climate change decision-making institutions at national, regional levels and continental levels
- Facilitate mapping of main stakeholders (private sector, NGOs etc.) involved in environmental and biodiversity conservation, including women's networks or groups, and analyze institutional structure and capacities for gender mainstreaming in their activities
- Ensuring mainstreaming of human rights-based approaches to aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management
- Support the integration of social inclusion aspects, including community engagement and adequate participation of vulnerable groups;

- Contribute to the identification and capturing of best practices and lessons learnt on social and gender equality,
- Any other duty as may be assigned by the Project Team Leader

**iv. The AU-IBAR fixed term planning officer, Mr. Kennedy Oroko, was transferred to the project as planning officer on full-time basis**

Term of Reference of the Project Planning and Monitoring Officer:

- Participate in the design, implementation and periodic reviews of project management processes and tools for strategy development, operational planning and budgeting, and results monitoring and reporting;
- Support the project team to achieve strategic alignment and Results-Based approach to project planning, management and monitoring of the through the development of operational annual plans and performance indicators and targets grounded in the overall project work plan;
- Undertake monitoring and evaluation activities to track progress of project implementation and generate evidence-based monitoring reports against performance targets of the project to advice the project team on realization of planned deliverables;
- Design and propose process improvements based on innovative techniques and international best practices to ensure that activities pertaining to the annual planning and reporting cycle are implemented as per the project annual work plan.
- Coordinate the preparation of relevant documents on annual planning and budgeting, and results monitoring and reporting within prescribed timelines for communication with relevant stakeholders.

**v. Aquatic Ecosystem management expert/Coordinating the project as Sustainable Blue Economy Expert (Dr. Mohamed Seisay); recruited by AU-IBAR through competitive process.**

- Support to day to day technical implementation and management of the project
- Strengthen the coordination and promote collaboration among RECs, specialized regional institutions in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity in African blue economy sector
- Provide technical support to the overall implementation of the project on ‘Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy’
- Develop necessary mechanisms to initiate project implementation, including recruitment of project staff, project inception and project related studies
- Support establishment and operationalization of project management structure including the project technical committee and project steering committee
- In collaboration with the Project team, conduct activities relating to aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems restoration, protection and conservation such as establishment of MPAs, strengthening regional MCS systems, implementing nature-based solutions in ecosystems restoration and conservation efforts

- In collaboration with the Project team to promote regional mechanisms on transboundary aquatic ecosystems and environmental governance
- Enhance continental capacity development on ecosystem-based modular approach to management and assessment of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs)
- Facilitate selection of appropriate institutions as African Union Centres of Excellence for research and training on aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems conservation
- Develop database of relevant national and regional institutions with mandates on aquatic biodiversity and environmental management as well as ongoing projects to facilitate linkages among appropriate ministries, departments or agencies in AU member states, regional institutions, environmental-based NGOs
- Collate baseline information on past and ongoing projects or interventions on integrated management of African large marine ecosystems and freshwater ecosystems
- Support to implementation of blue economy and fisheries related projects and programmes at AU-IBAR
- Any other duty as may be assigned by the Director of AU-IBAR

**vi. Ms. Mercy Mango**

The project has recruited an administrative support staff (acting as Administrative Assistant) to support administrative functions of the Project

- To support preparation of meetings and workshops and other related functions of the project
- To support administrative support to the project
- To support procurement activities, financial issues of the project working in close collaboration with the procurement and finance staff
- Follow-up on progress of studies outsourced to consultants for timely delivery
- Liaising with relevant stakeholders, sector's associations etc. with regards to specific assigned tasks
- Carry functions with regards to follow-up of relevant documentation
- Support to production of meeting documents and other documentations, dissemination to stakeholders and partners
- Any other duty as may be necessary
- Develop comprehensive report at end of assignment

## 4 PROJECT INCEPTION MEETING:

An Inception Workshop to launch the Project was organized from 8 to 10 December 2021 in Naivasha, Kenya. The overall objective of the inception workshop was to create awareness on the project, solicit stakeholders' views, and provide opportunity to the stakeholders and beneficiaries to review the project objectives, activities, and implementation mechanisms. Other objectives were to inform the stakeholders about issues in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and the importance of conserving biodiversity and generate recommendations for effective project management and implementation. The workshop provided space for collaboration, synergy and lesson learning with other ongoing related activities on conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management. The participants, over 65, comprised of representatives of AU Member States from relevant institutions (e.g. departments in charge of environment and biodiversity, tourism industry, mining, and other selected blue economy sectors). The regional economic communities, specialized regional institutions (including Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs), Water-Basin Commission (WBCs) authorities, Large Marine Ecosystems (LME)-based institutions), AU Centres of excellence in fisheries and aquaculture related disciplines, development and technical partners, non-state actors including women, youth and the private sector, lastly AU-IBAR and AUDA-NEPAD staff members were present.



**Fig. 1:** Hon. Lawrence Omuhaka, Chief Administration Secretary (Deputy Cabinet Secretary in charge of Agriculture, fisheries and blue economy in Kenya; he is flanked by Ag. Director, AU-IBAR

### **The meeting among others came up with the following outcomes:**

- i. Information about the project was duly shared with stakeholders as:
  - a. Project background;
  - b. Objectives, activities and Implementation Mechanisms;
  - c. Project Budget;



- d. Communication and Visibility plan for the project;
  - e. The project Theory of Change, Monitoring and Evaluation framework and log-frame;
  - f. Project Yearly Workplan.
- ii. Buy-in and ownership of the project by the participating key stakeholders (particularly AU member states, RECs, Specialized Regional Institutions, and NSAs, including the CSOs, private sector and NGOs) was established.
  - iii. Opportunity was provided to share insights in best practices, experiences and lessons learnt from ongoing projects and synergies generated with other initiatives on Aquatic Biodiversity and Conservation as well as Blue Economy, including the Benguella Current Commission.
  - iv. Detailed stakeholders' inputs were obtained for follow-up implementation based on review of the strategies and activities as outlined in the project document and knowledge of the most up-to-date problem situation gained from feedback initiatives at national, regional and international levels.
  - v. Recommendations were developed on strategic analytical framework for project implementation.
  - vi. The role of the stakeholders in the project were highlighted and awareness enhanced among them on issues and importance of Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in the context of Africa Blue Economy Strategy.



**Fig 2:** Mrs. Catherine Oduor, Senior Finance Officer, AU-IBAR

### Specific recommendations from the inception workshop:

The meeting provided the following recommendations:

- i. Where funds are available AU-IBAR should support at least one Member State in each of the 8 RECs on such issues for participation in global fora, support to review national policies for incorporating relevant global instruments
- ii. AU-IBAR should also endeavour to give consideration to inland water bodies in implementing activities of the Project, including support to Marine Protected Areas, framework for environment governance
- iii. On gender related matters it was recommended that women and youth issues should be reflected across all the Result Areas of the project.
- iv. In supporting Member States to develop their aquatic biodiversity strategy there is the need for AU-IBAR to establish synergy with similar regional initiatives
- v. In implementing Project activities AU-IBAR should work through RECs and Specialized Regional Institutions to the AU Member States.
- vi. Given the limited availability of funds AU-IBAR should adopt more strategic approach in implementing the activities of the project
- vii. AU-BAR should enhance collaboration with NGOs in Aquatic Biodiversity, Conservation and Blue Economy in implementing the project



**Fig 3:** The Ag. Director of AU-IBAR, Dr. Nick Nwankpa welcoming participants





**Fig 4:** The Ag. Director addressing traditional dancers heralding the Inception workshop event.

#### **4.1. Recommendations from Working Group Discussions on Project Results Areas and Activities:**

During the course of the project inception workshop, the project organized working sessions around the project’s results for review and the perspectives of the stakeholders as follows:

##### **4.1.1 Result area I: Ratify and/or align relevant international/regional instruments related to blue economy themes (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity – Working Group I**

The following suggestions were made after working group discussions

- a. How do we support AU MSs to fulfil their responsibilities with regards to implementation or compliance with global instruments?
- b. AU-IBAR should synthesize the key issues relating to the conventions or instruments and AU MS will be informed of what is at stake.
- c. Would International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions and associated agreements be considered? Examples relate to Oil and Gas institutions in the maritime environment, particularly International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA). IPIECA is the global oil and gas association for advancing environmental and social performance across the energy transition as well as IMO.

## Recommendations:

The working group recommended that continental and global biodiversity and environmental instruments relevant to sustainable management of Africa blue economy resources should be identified.



**Fig 5a:** Working Group Discussions in progress

### **4.1.2 Result area 2: Optimizing conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among blue economy sub-themes - Working Group 2**

The following recommendations were made by the working group:

On the study to assess status of Monitoring Control and Surveillance:

- Map the blue economy resources base,
- Identify potential areas of conflicts in blue economy space for effective minimization of resource use.

Support AU MSs in institutionalization of the developed guidelines on Marine Spatial Planning

Continental study should be on both Marine and Inland Protected Areas (e.g. Wetlands, Ramsar sites) in supporting implementation of marine spatial planning

It was noted that climate change issues have not been covered in the entire Result Area (thus Inland ecosystem) and stakeholders recommended that assessment on climate change mitigation and negative impacts need to be conducted on critical aquatic ecosystems (e.g. River. Niger, Lake. Chad and some Wetlands in the River Nile system)

Conduct mapping of the Blue economy (BE) resource base and identify potential areas/issues of conflict in use of BE.



Based on the outcome of the studies on review of existing MPA initiatives, the project should provide technical and direct support to two specialized regional institutions on implementing of transboundary MPA

#### **4.1.3 Result Area 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 - Working Group 3**

##### **Recommendations:**

The following recommendations were made by working group 3:

- a. the project implementation should take into account the lakes, the rivers and streams (freshwater ecosystems)
- b. conduct a strategic environmental assessment with respect to negative impacts of coastal and coastal tourisms, gas exploration and mining activities.
- c. take into account, studies on impact of tourism, oil, mining and gas exploitation and include the social issues in environmental impact studies.

#### **4.1.4 Result area 4: Strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management**

Gender inclusion was noted as a concept that transcends mere equality – Working Group 4 - The working group noted that all services, opportunities, and establishments are open to all people and that male and female stereotypes do not define societal roles and expectations. With the aim of strengthening gender inclusivity especially the women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management and developmental strategies, the group made the following suggestions:



**Fig. 5b:** Working Group Discussions in progress

1. There should be a strategic objective to focus on the vulnerable and marginalized groups including women and youth.
2. Conduct studies to assess the status of inclusion of women and youth in Africa Blue economy management and to identify challenges (to also include mapping of ongoing environmental based NGOs focusing on conserving biodiversity and environment protection conducted).
3. Convene an expert consultative meeting to identify priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of women and youth in African Blue Economy.
4. Convene a virtual continental think tank stakeholder's consultation workshop to adopt and validate strategic interventions identified.
4. Provide technical support to 5 AU MS (to cater for regional distribution) to develop all-inclusive and deliberate biodiversity strategies as important entry points for women and youth empowerment.
5. Provide technical support to environmental based-NGOs to develop or strengthen gender-sensitive workplans to enhance the role of women and youth in biodiversity protection and environmental governance.

## 5 PROJECT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (SO), OUTPUTS, ACTIVITIES AND SUB-ACTIVITIES

### 5.1 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**

**Activity: 1.1.1 Enhancing effective role and participation in continental 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.

The terms of reference for recruitment of a suitable candidate to undertake studies and develop a mechanism for enhancing effective role and participation in regional and global biodiversity and environmental related regimes. There was no successful candidate in the first instance. The terms of reference have been re-advertised.

In the meantime, the project supported the participation of two project staff: Mr. Eric Nadiope (Legal and Institutional expert) and Mr. Joel Mokenye (Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist to the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal from 28th June to 1st July 2022. The UN Ocean conference builds up on the concept of sustainability and recognizing the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 14: Life below water). The project staff interacted with Member States during various side-events relevant to the project including marine and aquatic biodiversity, blue economy, and climate change.





**Fig. 6:** The project team and some of the AU-MS representatives at the Lisbon Ocean conference. This was near FAO booth where AU-IBAR also had her display of the interventions being undertaken to conserve aquatic biodiversity.



**Fig. 7.** The project team with H.E. Amb. Yosefa Sacko and AUC Staff at the Lisbon Ocean conference.

The UN Ocean Conference, discussed key issues affecting and threatening aquatic biodiversity conservation.

Key issues:

- Rampant, Indiscriminate use of illegal gears and over fishing as well as fishing in biodiversity hot spots;
- Abandoned fishing gear that are posing a challenge to the fisheries as they continue ghost fishing even in biodiversity hot spots, as well as hampering transportation by way of destroying of transport vessels;
- Illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing including the challenge of transshipment;
- Oil spills from transport vessels and other forms of pollution, and;
- Social economic challenges especially declining fish catch, gender vulnerability and climate change variabilities and threats;

Strategies for addressing the negative impacts were also discussed and resolutions were identified which included “scaling up Ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions.”

Through some of the following actions:

- Mapping all the Oceans;
- Addressing the issue of IUU fishing and transshipment;
- Working on the social economic challenges i.e. bolstering the declining fish stocks that are affecting catches, addressing gender vulnerabilities and climate change threats by instituting response measures, and;
- Increasing the MPA's by at least 30% minimum and also using the concept of Other effective area based conservation measures (OECMs) which brings in a more inclusive approach to conserving aquatic biodiversity among others.

Recommendations from the UN Ocean Conference

- i. Countries were encouraged to take up more commitments and targets considered under SDG-14 implementation beyond 30% for Marine Protected Areas by the year 2030.
- ii. There was strong appeal to get the youth sponsored to fully participate in UN Ocean conference with particular focus on Blue Economy undertakings. The youth are the future and Blue Economy is about the preservation, protection, conservation, and management of the marine and aquatic biodiversity for future generations.
- iii. There is need to streamline Multilateral Development Agencies (MDAs) responsible for coordinating the Blue Economy and to ensure that inclusivity and participatory approaches are adequately addressed.
- iv. There is need to continue with organization of meetings through webinar information platforms such as Zoom, google, MS Teams among others to bring stakeholders together to clarify on issues relating to blue economy and different institutions to synergize and to deliver on the identified strategies, and action plans.
- v. There is need to explore, catalyze interest and sensitize Member States on the Other Effective Area-based Conservations Measures (OECM) and to encourage them to scale up on the establishment of MPAs to the recommended minimum of at least 30%. The OECM can supplement on the MPAs for increased conservation.

- vi. There is need for innovative funds to be made available by Banks and international entrepreneurs to increase funding opportunities for innovative science, research, and development to build necessary capacity required towards saving oceans.
- vii. There is need to create number of coalitions on major thematic areas of ocean protection through management of the high seas and Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ).
- viii. There is need to increase information and data storage and sharing for enhanced science-based ocean management.
- ix. There is need to put a moratorium on exploitation and underwater exploration and deep-sea mining in order to enhance management, protection and conservation of deep-sea ecosystems and marine biodiversity hotspots.
- x. There is need for the introduction of “Other Effective Area-based Conservations Measures” (OECM) that will support conservation efforts especially towards achieving 30% Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- xi. Global transport companies in the maritime sector should put in place measures to decarbonize the sector; this will contribute to achieving blue economy, environment, and climate change benefits.
- xii. There is need to harmonize, synergize Conventions and Treaties for an integrated approach towards managing, protecting and conserving the oceans.

## **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**

### **Activity: 1.2.1. Identify continental and global biodiversity and environmental instruments relevant to sustainable management of Africa Blue Economy Resources.**

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 has identified two experts to conduct studies within two regional clusters for assessment of relevant continental and global biodiversity and environmental instruments to develop priority actions for enhanced ratifications of these instruments by AU Member States and regional institutions. The assessments are conducted in the;

(i). South-Eastern regions of the continent and the (ii). West, Central and Northern regions of the continent by the respective experts.

1. Prof. Wilson Waiswa Mwanja conducted assessments in the southern and eastern regions of Africa.
2. Prof. Frambo Martin Tambinyuo conducted assessments in the west, central and northern regions of Africa.

Th consultants have completed their studies and have submitted their first draft which is being reviewed and comments will be forwarded for inclusion into the final draft reports. A validation meeting is being



organized and thereafter, we shall pilot a ratification, domestication and implementation of the Port state measures Agreement (PSMA) in Tanzania and others that shall be identified for other member states.

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

**Output 2.1: Enforceable Regulatory frameworks for effective and sustainable regional MCS systems developed.**

### 2.1.1 Enhancing Sustainable Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) Systems for conservation and protection of biodiversity:

There is an ongoing process to recruit suitable experts to conduct assessment of the status of MCS for combating unsustainable practices (including (IUU fishing, degradation of aquatic habitats, threats ecosystems etc) in AU member states and regional economic communities and develop mechanism to strengthen MCS as well as to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. The advertisements to recruit suitable has been launched with success in identifying experts. Meanwhile the project staff conducted scoping missions to selected African states (Seychelles, South Africa, Djibouti and Uganda) to assess the status of ongoing initiatives on MCS with view of identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for collaboration with the project. The following were the outcomes for missions in Seychelles included the following:



**Fig. 8:** Project team in Seychelles on scoping missions. The Hon. Minister in charge of fisheries, aquaculture and blue economy, Hon. Jean-Francois Ferrri in the middle (with tie).

## Outcome and recommendations of the scoping mission in Seychelles and South Africa

- The project to leverage on current capacity in Seychelles and South Africa to scale up operations of MCS in the Western, Southern and Eastern Indian Marine Surveillance Systems;
- The project to provide support to Seychelles to acquire modern technology to enhance effectiveness for the ongoing MCS activities;
- The project to facilitate exchange programs within AU member states to cooperate and benefit on information sharing on MCS and MPA initiatives
- MoUs to be developed for breaking language barriers that exist in the SADC region to enhance cooperation and collaboration in aquatic biodiversity conservation programs within the region;



**Fig. 9:** Project team in Uganda with fisheries technical officers at the Directorate of Fisheries Resources - Entebbe on scoping missions.

## Findings on issues with regards to Policy, Legal and Institutional status during Ugandan Mission

The fisheries and aquaculture policy was amended and passed in 2018, a new Fisheries and aquaculture Bill was also drafted and has been passed by Parliament now awaiting signature by the President as per the procedural Processes;

- At the regional level, the EAC Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy was harmonized;
- A statutory instrument for the protection of breeding and nursery areas has been instituted only awaiting the signing of the passed fisheries and Aquaculture Law by the President so that it is operationalized.
- The Sanitary Phytosanitary measures were also harmonized, a desk office has been established in the Directorate of Fisheries resources to coordinate the implementation;
- Harmonization of the fisheries laws was also undertaken and there is a harmonized guideline for conducting Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) on Lake Victoria;
- On the transboundary collaboration between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, a memorandum of understanding that establishes cooperation to manage and develop the fisheries and

aquaculture resources of Lakes Edward and Albert basin was signed, the MOU establishes a secretariat based in Uganda and it is being operationalized;

- The Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy highlights the efforts that have been undertaken by the Government of Uganda to ratify some of the International and Continental Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation however, operationalization and implementation is still a challenge and needs to be worked on;
- Some of the International Biodiversity Instruments that have been ratified as indicated by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy 2018 include; Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), The Convention on the International trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), RAMSAR Convention among others;
- A need to support the operationalization and implementation of the International Instruments was highlighted as well as the need to participated in those instruments was noted as key.

### **Mission to Djibouti**

Lastly, Djibouti is in the process of developing its national blue economy (BE) strategy to guide all activities related to aquatic biodiversity conservation. With support from IGAD; the regional development body, all other IGAD member states are closely working with IGAD to secure both financial and capacity training support to develop their respective BE strategies. Important to note is that Djibouti has beautiful mangroves, corals and different fish species within its EEZ which is why BE will accelerate their protection and conservation. Also; Djibouti's future is depended on ports & fisheries since the terrestrial environment is dry hence economy is derived from the sea; BE is the future for energy in Djibouti and thus the need for technical assistance to develop BE and before the end of 2022; Djibouti undertakes to delimit the MPAs through the support of the maritime agency with key focus on:

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

The terms of reference to develop cost-effective mechanisms and sustainable financial arrangements for effective regional cooperation on MCS are being developed. This activity should ideally be accomplished after identification of regional MCS mechanisms.

#### **Output 2.2. A framework for establishing national, regional and transboundary cooperation on Africa Blue Economy Strategy 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.**

Terms of reference were developed to seek applications from suitable experts to conduct integrated assessment of two identified transboundary aquatic ecosystems. The activity is aimed at identifying critical aquatic environmental issues affecting biodiversity and to develop mechanisms for joint management plans and protocols in shared blue economy resources. The key output from these assessments is development of harmonized regional frameworks for aquatic biodiversity conservation.



The project has identified an expert Dr. Ruby Asmah, to conduct the assessment in freshwater ecosystems and develop a proposal for establishing regional cooperation on transboundary freshwater ecosystems; the assessment is currently ongoing.

A call for proposal has been launched for identification of a suitable expert to conduct integrated assessment of environmental issues in identified transboundary marine ecosystems.



**Fig. 10:** Mission team on arrival at the South African Ministry for Environmental Affairs.



**Fig. 11:** Mission to South Africa. The team with the Director of Environment in South Africa



**Key findings were that there is a charter the was entered into by the SADC Partner states and this requires to be implemented;**

South Africa raised an issue of the need to increase collaboration and coordination with Mozambique on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and noted a challenge of language barrier between South Africa and Mozambique.

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

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.

In this regard the project has recruited two consultants to respectively conduct assessments to map MSPs in Africa, document lessons, best practices and develop guidelines for their institutionalization at national and regional levels.; current management strategies and identification of elements pertinent for the regional MSP in marine and freshwater ecosystems. The following consultants have been identified: Dr. Joseph Ansong – (to conduct the MSP assessment in the West, Central and Northern Regions of Africa) - The studies are ongoing, the consultant to submit his first draft report before the end of October 2022.

Dr. Chrispine Nyamwera (to conduct MSP assessment in the South and Eastern Regions of Africa) - The consultant has submitted a first draft report which is under review by the project team at AU-IBAR.

Meanwhile scoping missions were conducted by the project staff to Seychelles for discussions on ongoing initiatives on marine spatial planning and to explore potential areas of collaboration with the Project. The mission's outcome established that Seychelles had advanced its MSP initiative which was government driven as a debt -to- nature swap initiative. Currently supporting a number of sectors, MSP program in Seychelles was an all-inclusive intervention that took the views and opinions of all the stakeholders in the sectors involved (e.g. Maritime, Fisheries, tourism, energy & environment).

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

#### **Activity: 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 these is a technical challenge on concept, establishment and governance of MPAs. The following expert has been identified to conduct a review of existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), document lessons, best practices and formulate guidelines for their sustainable implementation and

governance in the south-eastern regions of Africa.

Ms. Nathalie Maissonneuve – (MPA Consultant to conduct review of existing MPAs in South and Eastern regions of Africa). The consultant has undertaken desktop review, conducted field missions in the South and Eastern regions of Africa and is now compiling her draft report which is due for submission before the end of October 2022.

The process of identifying another expert to conduct similar studies in the West, Central and Northern regions of Africa is ongoing.

### **2.3.2 Establish Continental Centres of Excellence for capacity building on aquatic biodiversity**

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.

The Project team has developed terms of reference for the identification of institutions as AU Centres of Excellence for capacity building in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management. This activity is scheduled for year 2 (which begun on 15th October 2022) but the preliminary work is in process to identify suitable institutions as Centres of Excellence in aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems management.

## **5.3 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 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. 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.



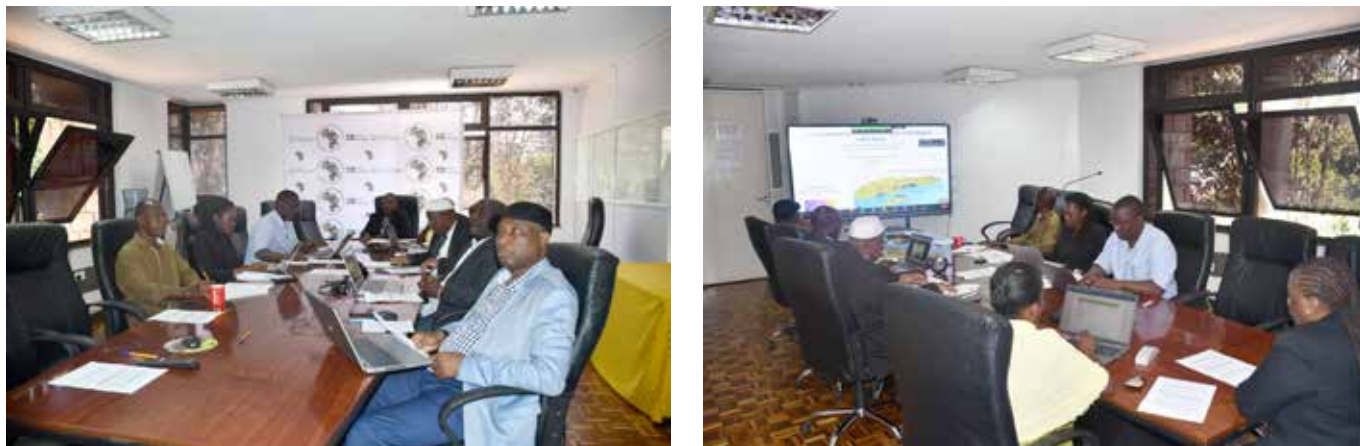
**Fig. 12:** Scoping Mission to The National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NAFIRRI) in Jinja, Uganda; the team with the Dr. Winnie Nkalubo, the Director of NAFIRRI

The mission team was briefed on the interventions the fisheries research institute in Jinja–Uganda are undertaking regarding conservation of aquatic biodiversity and addressing the negative impacts and these included;

- i. Mapping the whole Lake Victoria in regards to transportation where all the transport routes have been mapped Kisumu to Jinja and Kampala port bell and well as Mwanza,
- ii. Biodiversity hot spots have also been mapped and the areas suitable for concentrated aquaculture have also been identified and mapped;
- iii. In addition, areas that are suitable for tourism development and fish breeding and nursery areas have been identified and gazetted only awaiting to be marked.

In the above regards, the project has recruited international expert to conduct studies on the impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment and to recommend mitigation strategies. The recruited expert is as follows:

- Mr. Giorgio BRANDOLINI – The consultant has completed the studies and submitted a final report which incorporated comments/inputs from stakeholders at the virtual consultative workshop that was conducted to review and validate the study report.



**Fig. 13:** AU-IBAR team following proceedings during the virtual consultative and validation meeting on Climate Change report

### **NEXT STEPS:**

- i. Publish the study report/findings;
- ii. Develop an advocacy note based on the study findings;
- iii. Finally, 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.

### **OUTPUT 3.2. Strategies for an integrated strategic framework for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining developed.**

#### **Activity: 3.2.1. Identify priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining activities on aquatic biodiversity and environment and develop guidelines.**

Marine and coastal ecosystems are increasingly threatened, degraded and destroyed by marine - and land-based human activities. Tourism stimulates infrastructure development accelerating economic growth by increasing the number of available jobs in a tourism sector, both directly and indirectly. Tourism development however needs to be regulated to minimize impact on aquatic biodiversity, environment and coastal communities.

The project recruited an expert to conduct studies to identify priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environment protection. The expert is as follows:

Adetola Jenyo-Oni Ph.D (Professor of Coastal Wetland Biodiversity and Fisheries Ecology, Head of Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries Management, Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources of the University of Ibadan Nigeria).

The consultant has submitted her draft report which is under review by the project team.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

- i. The consultant will incorporate the comments/input from the review by AU-IBAR project team and re-submit;
- ii. AU-IBAR to organize five national consultative workshops in selected AU MS to develop master plans to guide the coastal and marine tourism operations in AU MS.

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

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

An important area which the project would be addressing is promoting gender mainstreaming in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management to address and remove gender-based barriers, that are most often experienced disproportionately by women and strengthen gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in AU member states.

The project recognized that women and youth have potential to play crucial role and perform critical functions in managing biological resources. It is also recognized that women and youth are often seriously affected by the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The fourth strategic objective is dedicated to strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. The following activities have been conducted towards achieving this objective:

#### **i. Recruitment of Gender Consultant**

The project has hired the services of a gender consultant, Dr. Mastewal Yami, to conduct studies on the priority and actions for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management, with the ultimate goal of developing a continental strategy on gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management. The study is ongoing. Due to delays in the process of hiring the consultant, the study could not be completed prior to the expert consultative workshop. However, the consultant participated in the workshop to interact with relevant stakeholders and gather initial information key to the study.

#### **ii. Gender Expert Consultative Workshop**

To identify priority issues and actions that will enhance the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in AU member states, the project organized an expert consultative workshop for the purpose of convening experts to share relevant insights to effectively address the objective towards formulating continental strategy for inclusion of gender in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management. The workshop took place in Naivash, Kenya from 5th – 7th October, 2022. The hired consultant co-facilitated the workshop together with the project's gender expert, Dr. Alberta Sagoe.





**Fig. 14:** Participants at the Gender Expert Consultative Workshop in Naivasha, Kenya.



**Fig. 15:** Opening session at the Gender Expert Consultative Workshop.

Mr. Daniel Mungai, representing the Hon.Minister in charge of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Blue Economy in the Republic of Kenya, opened the meeting which was attended by 28 participants drawn from African Union member states, Regional Sea Conventions, Regional Economic Communities, Academic institutions and Non-State Actors. Mr. Mungai was supported by Mrs Patricia Mweene Lumba – AU-IBAR, Dr. Bernice McLean – AUDA-NEPAD and Dr Senait Regassa – the Head of Regional Development Cooperation in Africa at the Swedish Embassy to the African Union, to conduct the opening session of the meeting.





**Fig. 16:** Opening session at the Gender Expert Consultative Workshop.

A series of technical presentations were delivered by experts on various topics related to gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. This was complimented by group discussions and presentation to identify priority issues and actions that will enhance the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in AU member states.

Consequently, the following priority issues were identified by the meeting:

1. Capacity development and empowerment to enhance gender mainstreaming among environmental management institutions and promote women's equal access to resources.
2. Communication and stakeholder engagement which involves the establishment of a gender working group on aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management to promote gender-responsive communication strategies, and design instruments for involvement of private sector in supporting gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.
3. Domestication of gender-responsive international protocols/policies in national laws and strengthening of institutions to allocate resources for policy adaptation and implementation.
4. Promoting gender-responsive research and innovation approaches and also involving women in research and innovation.
5. Value addition to extractive aquatic resources to reduce post-harvest losses.

The main outcome of the meeting was a summary of the key issues and actions to be considered for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management as specified by the experts. Also, the following achievements were made:

- Existing continental, regional and national policies for including gender perspectives in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management identified.
- Policy considerations for enhancing the role of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management outlined.



- Ongoing initiatives / projects on aquatic biodiversity and environmental management with focus on gender inclusivity in some AU-MS identified.
- Initiatives that are implementing nature-based solutions to minimizing impacts of climate change on ecosystems and biodiversity and the role women play in the initiatives outlined.
- Pathways to promote Private sector and Women's representation in climate change decision-making institutions at national, regional levels and continental levels examined.
- Priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management documented.
- Key priority areas for intervention and collaboration by the project documented.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- i. Consultant to follow up with experts and stakeholders to finalize the continental report on gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in African Union member states;
- ii. AU-IBAR to organize a virtual validation workshop to validate the final report.

## 6 THE 1<sup>ST</sup> PROJECT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The first Project Technical Committee meeting was held in Mombasa, Kenya on the 20th – 21st September 2022. The meeting was organized by AU-IBAR with funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The meeting was blended in hybrid mode, where participants attended both virtually and in-person.



**Fig. 17:** First Project Technical Committee Meeting “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blueeconomy” 20 - 21 September 2022, Mombasa-Kenya

### 6.1 Participants to the First Project Technical Committee Meeting

A total of 33 participants representing various institutions were present in the meeting. They include; ministers from four African Union Member States that included: the Government of the Republic of Kenya; the Government of the Republic of Uganda; the Government of the Republic of Gabon and the Arab Republic of Egypt. In addition, two Regional Economic Communities (RECs) attended and these included; the Inter Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The meeting was also attended by Five regional fisheries bodies (The Abidjan Convention, The Nairobi Convention, The Inter Governmental Oceanographic Commission of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO), the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation Among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT), and the Benguela Current Convention (BCC)). Also in attendance were three non-state actors which included; the African Marine Environment Sustainability Initiative (AFMESI), the African Women Fish Processors and

Traders Network (AWFISHNET), and the Regional Partnership for the Conservation of the Coastal and Marine Zone (PRCM). Others included the West Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) a research institute, the African Union Centre of Excellence-the Rhodes University, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Swedish Embassy to the African Union (SE-AU); the Swedish Agency for Water and Marine management (SWAM), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Experts recruited by the project and currently conducting studies and the African Union-InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) staff.

## 6.2 Opening Session

The AU-IBAR Ag. Director, Dr. Nick Nwankpa, gave the welcome remarks. He conveyed gratitude from H.E Ambassador Yosefa Sacko to the Kenyan Government for accepting to host the meeting in Mombasa. He expressed appreciation to the Swedish Government for funding the project, 'Conserving aquatic biodiversity in African Blue economy', which is also supporting implementation of the African Blue Economy Strategy and finally acknowledged the presence of the FAO Representative, the Regional Economic Communities and also welcomed all participants and thanked them for their time to participate in the meeting. He then welcomed the representative of the Government of the Republic of Kenya to officially open the 1st Project Technical Committee meeting.

## 6.3 Opening remarks by the Director General, Kenya Fisheries and Blue Economy - Mr. Daniel Ndung'u Mungai

Mr. Daniel Mungai, representing the Hon. Minister in charge of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Blue Economy in the Republic of Kenya, officially opened the meeting, in his comments, the Director re-affirmed the importance of the fisheries sector and its contribution to the economic development regarding food security, nutritional value, and employment. He indicated that Kenya's fisheries sector plays a significant role in employment and income generation, supporting about 1.2 million people directly and indirectly, working as fishers, traders, processors, suppliers and merchants of fishing accessories and employees and their dependents. Mr. Mungai recounted the various efforts made by the Kenyan government towards conservation of aquatic biodiversity at the National level. He thanked AU-IBAR for implementing the aquatic biodiversity conservation project and also expressed gratitude to the Swedish government for supporting the project to ultimately achieve the objectives of the African Blue Economy Strategy.

## 6.4 Objectives of the 1st Project Technical Committee Meeting

The Overall objective of the 1st Project Technical Committee Meeting was to review and validate the terms of reference for the project technical committee and share information on the progress of project implementation since inception.

The specific objectives were to:

- i. Review and adopt the Project Technical Committee (PTC) Terms of Reference (ToR);
- ii. Disseminate project information on ongoing and planned activities;

- iii. Share information on ongoing and planned activities by partners;
- iv. Map-out ongoing initiatives and identify areas of potential collaboration between the project and other initiatives;
- v. Develop complementarities and minimize duplication in implementation of activities; and,
- vi. Develop recommendations for consideration by the project Steering Committee Meeting.

## 6.5 Technical Presentations

In this session, the following experts contracted to undertake various studies presented their study findings:

1. Assessment of Regional, Continental and Global Conventions and Agreements related to Environmental and Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation to facilitate their ratification, adoption and implementation (Southern and Eastern regions of Africa) - By Prof. Waiswa Wilson Mwanja - Busitema University Maritime Institute.
2. Studies on the impact of climate change on the aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity and proposal of mitigation measures - By Dr. Giorgio Vincenzo Alberto Brandolini, Climate change Expert.
3. Assessment to Map the Extent of usage of Marine Spatial Planning (MSPs) in Africa as a Management Tool for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and ecosystems - Western, Central and Northern Regions of Africa - By Dr. Joseph Kofi Ansong – Consultant, Howell Marine Consulting/University of Liverpool.
4. Studies to Identify Priority Issues and Actions for Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism and Mining Activities - By Prof. Adetola Jenyo-Oni – Head of Department, Coastal and marine resources, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
5. Continental review of existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), document lessons, best practices and formulate guidelines for their sustainable implementation and governance in conservation of aquatic biodiversity resources within the African Union member states (AU MS) and regional levels - By Ms. Nathalie Maisonneuve, MPAs Expert
6. Assessment of Transboundary Environmental Issues Affecting Biodiversity in Selected Shared Freshwater Ecosystems Towards Formulating Harmonized Regional Strategy for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Joint Action Plans - By Dr. Ruby Asmah, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

## 6.6 Presentations by Partners

Part of the technical session offered project partners the opportunity to present their current or planned interventions on issues relating to conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental governance as follows:

- a. IOC/UNESCO by Dr. Mika Odido
- b. PRCM by Dr. Khady Sané Diouf
- c. Nairobi Convention by Mr. Bonface Mutisya
- d. Benguel Current Convention (Virtual Presentation) by Mr. Xolela WELLEM
- e. AFMESI by Dr. Chaimaka Mogo



## 6.7 Key Outcome:

- i. The Technical Committee endorsed terms of reference of the Project Technical Committee (PTC) and thus, it was formally established.
- ii. The PTC approved the recommendations as outlined below for consideration by the Project Steering Committee (PSC).

## 6.8 Recommendations from the PTC

- The Director of AU-IBAR should be the chair of the project technical committee
- Protection, conservation and management of both Marine and Inland water bodies should be considered as priority in the Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Project, and the project should explore synergies with existing initiatives by BCC, SADC, Abidjan Convention, Nairobi Convention, IOC/UNESCO, PRCM, FAO, AFMESI, among other initiatives.
- There is need to support Research, Innovation and Education within the AU Africa Blue Economy Strategy. There is need to mobilize financial resources needed to support implementation of the Blue Economy thematic areas in particular, component on Research and Education – Building knowledge base and platforms; and Supporting adequate research in partnership with pharmaceuticals and biotech companies that will contribute to bridging capacity gaps.
- The Regional Blue Economy Strategies should be aligned to the AU Africa Blue Economy Strategy and cascaded down to AU-MS that will support institutionalization and domestication of country needs and priorities within the blue economy.
- Regional Economic Communities, Regional Fisheries Bodies, Regional Seas Conventions among others need to seek and promote collaboration that is necessary to leverage on available resources, complement and supplement each other to cut down on research, operation and management cost.
- Communities, Non-state actors, Private sector need to be sensitized on blue economy initiatives and benefits. There is need to develop tools that are required to address environmental issues. The tools could utilize EIA, SEA, Health Safeguards, among others to ensure sustainability of the blue economy growth. There is need to scale up knowledge platforms including involvement of local and coastal community participation.
- Some AU-MS need to be supported to collect data and identify existing data on institutional abilities and individual technical capabilities that will carry out MSPs.
- AU-IBAR should fast track experts needed to carry out assignment on MCS to avoid further delays in implementing the project.
- There is need to support Cost Benefit Analysis research required to determine the benefits of MSPs and contribute to strategic interventions for financing of MSPs as useful planning tools for regional entities.
- There is need to establish mechanisms for collaboration with partner institutions for implementation of the aquatic biodiversity project. For example, Nairobi convention, Abidjan Convention, BCC, SADC among others.
- There is need to expand the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) to engage relevant ministries and actors in charge of aquatic environmental management.

- There is need to prioritize IUU with heightened awareness on the UU.
- There is need to build capacity of communities to support the government agencies and enhance MCSs (on a basis of co-management). In addition, build capacity of the AU-MS to develop inland water and aquatic institutions for Spatial Plannings (SPs), and AU-MS should consider using land-sea interface management tools for inclusive capacity building. And AU-IBAR should identify details of WTO commitment for capacity building on IUU fishing.
- The AU-IBAR in partnership with IGAD, among other institutions should create a knowledge sharing mechanism with possibility of linking up databases to enhance sharing and dissemination of information. In addition, develop knowledge sharing platform on inland blue economy to bridge the knowledge gap.
- There is need to recognize that the conservation of the biodiversity in the blue economy is underpinned by some sound taxonomic studies which are required for SPs, MSPs, MPAs, EIAs, among others.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The following next steps were agreed on at the meeting:

- Set up institutional roles, responsibilities, and timeframes for the activities of the above recommendations for actions and implementation;
- Prioritize recommendations;
- The recommendations were then adopted and approved for the Steering Committee consideration.

# 7 FIRST PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The first meeting of the Project Steering Committee was held in Mombasa, Kenya from the 22nd to 23rd September 2022. This meeting was organized by AU-IBAR with funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The meeting was in hybrid mode, where participants attended both virtually and in-person.



**Fig. 18:** First Project Steering Committee Meeting “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blueeconomy” 22 - 23 September 2022, Mombasa-Kenya

## 7.1 Participants:

The meeting was attended by 34 participants drawn from 19 institutions comprising of: Four (4) Ministers or their representatives in charge of Fisheries and Blue Economy from the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Gabon, the Republic of Cote D’Ivoire and the Arab Republic of Egypt; Regional Sea Conventions (RSC): Abidjan Convention and Nairobi Convention. African Large Marine Ecosystem: Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME); Regional Economic Communities (RECs): Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community for the West African States (ECOWAS) and Inter Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD); Specialised Regional institutions: Fisheries Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation Among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT); Technical Partner: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); AU Centers of Excellence: the Rhodes University, Non State Actors: African Marine Environment Sustainability Initiative (AFMESI), African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET) and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA); and the Swedish Embassy to the African

Union Commission (SEAU)/Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the hosts, the African Union–Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) staff members.

## 7.2 Opening Remarks

Welcoming remarks by Her Excellency, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment were delivered by the Director of AU-IBAR, Dr. Nick Nwankpa on behalf of. He conveyed compliments from H.E Ambassador Sacko and thanked the Government of the Republic of Kenya for hosting the organisation, and commending the Government of Kenya as a dependable collaborating partner. He wished the participants fruitful deliberations in the PSC meeting on conserving aquatic biodiversity in Africa Blue Economy project.

Other opening statements were delivered by the following:

1. The Head of Regional Development Cooperation in Africa at the Swedish Embassy to the African Union;
2. The Hon. Minister for Fisheries and Blue Economy in Gabon, Hon. Oswald Severin Mayounou;
3. The Hon. Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture in Egypt, Prof. Dr. Refaat Mohammed Ali El Gamal;
4. The Hon. Representative of the Ministry of Fisheries in Cote D'Ivoire, N'gandi Jean-Serge Kouadio

### *7.2 Official Opening by the Hon. Deputy Minister of Kenya in charge of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Hon. Lawrence Angolo Omuhaka, (CBS).*

The Hon. Deputy Minister of Kenya in charge of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Hon. Lawrence Angolo Omuhaka, Chief of the Burning Spear (CBS) in his opening remarks pledged assurance of the Government of the Republic of Kenya towards security and thanked the participants for their prayers as the Country had just come out of a peaceful electioneering. The Minister emphasized the importance of transboundary cooperation as our valued aquatic resources are highly migratory and therefore trans-boundary management can improve on the management. He highlighted the strategic importance of the fisheries sector and its contribution to the economic development regarding food security, nutritional value, and employment. He informed the meeting that Kenya is committed to ensuring that the blue economy sectors are managed sustainably. The meeting was informed that Kenya had ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and has already developed CBD strategy for 2019-2030. The hon. Minister officially declared the meeting open.

### *7.3 Objectives of the first Project Steering Committee Meeting:*

The Overall objective of the first project steering committee was to review and adopt the draft terms of reference, and formally establish the Project Steering Committee (PSC).

Specific objectives were:

- To review and adopt the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the PSC, Chairperson and the Secretariat;



- Create awareness among PSC members on the project implementation;
- Disseminate information on the status of project information, including progress on implementation of activities and challenges;
- Share information on planned and ongoing activities by relevant partners; and,
- Develop recommendations for strategic direction of the project.

#### 7.4 TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

The Technical Presentations were Delivered by the Following:

1. Presentation of the Draft Terms of Reference for the PSC by Mrs. Hellen Moepi-Guebama, Fisheries and Aquaculture Officer, AU-IBAR;
2. Presentation of the Theory of Change by Mr. Kennedy Oroko (Planning Expert);
3. Presentation of the project “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the African Blue Economy” by Dr. Mohamed Seisay, Senior Fisheries Management officer/Expert of AU-IBAR;

Since some studies were already commissioned, consultants were offered an opportunity to share their findings. The experts who presented include:

- a. Studies on impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and mitigation strategies – Mr. Giorgio Brandolini, Climate Change consultant.
- b. Mapping Marine Spatial Planning MSPs in Africa, document lessons, best practices; case studies in West, Central and Northern Africa by – Dr. Joseph Ansong, MSP consultant
- c. Studies to identify priority issues and actions for sustainable Coastal and Marine tourism, oil and gas exploration for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environment protection by – Prof. Adetola Jenyo-Oni, Sustainable coastal and marine tourism consultant
- d. Assessment of transboundary environmental issues affecting biodiversity in selected shared freshwater ecosystems by – Dr. Ruby Asmah, Transboundary aquatic environmental consultant
- e. Review of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), document lessons and best practices – case studies in East and Southern Africa by – Ms. Nathalie Maisonneuve, MPA consultant.
- f. Global instruments related to conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environment sustainability – case studies in the East and Southern African regions by – Prof. Wilson Mwanja, on Global instruments related to environmental governance consultant.

## 8 PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

During the period under review, the project work plan covering the entire project period as well as the detailed annual work plan for the first year of the project were developed. These work plans were presented to the inception meeting participants who adopted them. Project implementation commenced with procurement of consultants and experts to coordinate project roles, develop frameworks and conduct various studies and assessments; as per approved annual workplan. As project implementation progresses, there will be need to review and update baselines and targets to provide a better basis of measuring progress towards achievement of project milestones.

The project launched a baseline survey aimed at obtaining useful information, which will guide the implementation of activities and form the basis for measuring the progress of implementation of the project. The questionnaire was intended to collect information on the current status with regards to protection and conservation of aquatic biodiversity at national and regional levels of the African continent. The baseline information will be critical for tracking the impact of the protection and conservation of aquatic biodiversity project implemented by AU-IBAR and funded by SIDA.

## 9 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

### 9.1 Implementation Status: 15Th October 2021 – 14Th October 2022

The communication and visibility component of the Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity project is anchored on the communications strategy. The major awareness took place during the project launch in December 2021; in the form of:

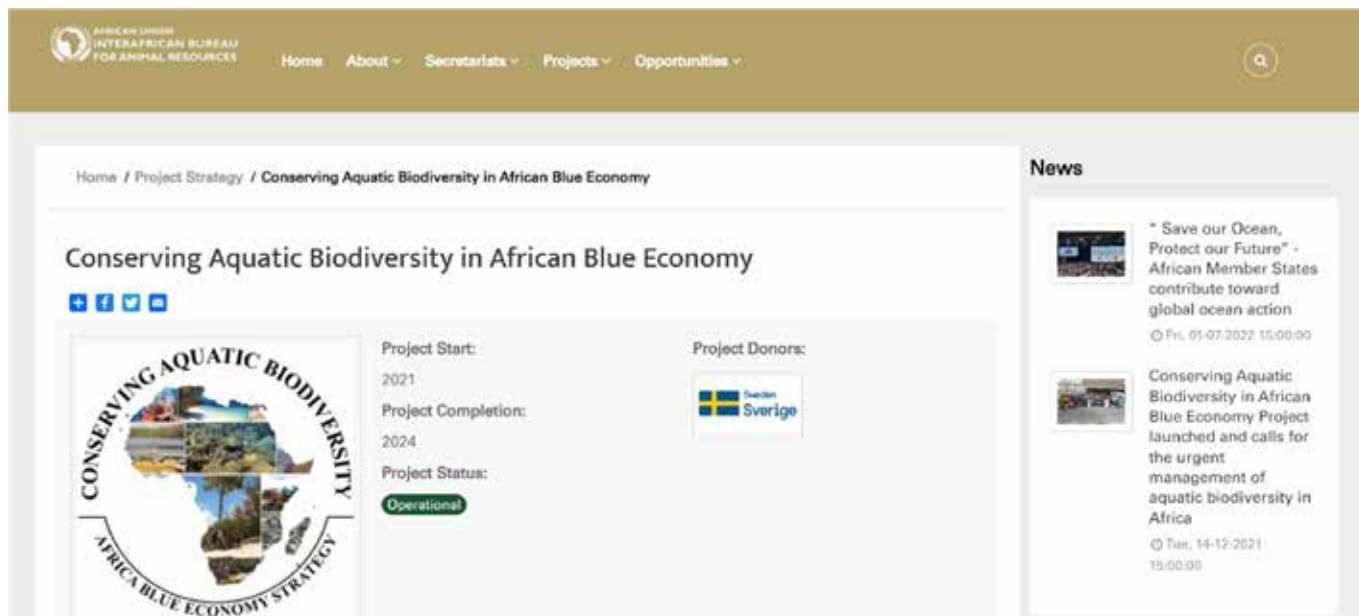
- Media coverage to create awareness of the project. The coverage was on national television, and radio. Interviews of key stakeholders were also captured further disseminated on YouTube, Twitter and FaceBook for greater audience outreach.

To date, other activities undertaken include:

- Several memorabilia and visibility materials were bought/developed (notebooks; bottles; memory sticks; folders; and banners). There is need to replenish the items and maintain distribution list for event distribution.
- A micro-site on the project is maintained to provide visibility on project outputs and outcomes. There is need to update, based on recent events. The URL <https://www.au-ibar.org/au-ibar-projects/conserving-aquatic-biodiversity-african-blue-economy>
- An online platform has been developed to promote knowledge sharing and engagement on issues surrounding bio-diversity, and capture events being held by stakeholders and AU-IBAR. The platform also acts as a mailing list to capture details of key stakeholders. The platform currently has 90 registered members.
- A document repository is in place to store all project documents and research outputs. It is available via: <http://repository.au-ibar.org/handle/123456789/1130>



Above: Snapshot of Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity Community Platform: <https://networks.au-ibar.org/show/conserving-aquatic-biodiversity-in-african-blue-economy/wiki>



Above: Snapshot of project microsite: <https://www.au-ibar.org/au-ibar-projects/conserving-aquatic-biodiversity-african-blue-economy>

## 9.2 Way Forward

- Develop an implementation plan (quarterly) on advocacy activities and awareness to disseminate messages through podcasts, and social media, based on findings from current studies; and commemorative events.
- Engage media to interview staff, experts and stakeholders on key issues and interventions on aquatic biodiversity challenges and interventions.
- Curate project reports; coverage on various information tools for the project.



## 10 TECHNICAL AND STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

The project was designed to conduct studies mainly in the first year of implementation. However, the implementation of the project started slowly due in part to the delayed in procurement of appropriate expert expertise to commence the various studies. Also, though, the recruitment of the fixed project staff was initiated early, the recruitment of fixed staff by the project has remained a challenge and the process is still ongoing at the AUC.

The identification of appropriate staff in tools such as MCS, MSP MPAs and Transboundary environmental issues proved a challenge. The adverts have to be relaunched twice or thrice seeking for qualified and experienced persons.

Also, the demands by the stakeholders on the project have been excessive, most often from highly-placed personalities from AU member states. The project is modelled to conduct studies and to pilot the outcomes of the studies mostly in few selected regions. However, the anticipation from the project is becoming huge, sometimes demand being outside the remit of the projects' activities.

The project has started producing reports from various studies e.g. on climate change, MSP, sustainable coastal and marine tourism etc, these reports are huge for utilization by target beneficiaries (RECS, member states, specialized regional institutions etc) to effect policy change. A key strategic approach to overcome this problem is to synthesize these reports into knowledge products (e.g policy briefs, advocate note, information paper etc). The challenge is that there was no provision in the project to hire editors to produce these knowledge products.

## II RECOMMENDATIONS:

Following the gradual identification of suitable experts for the various studies in the project, the position is now perfectly repositioned for the activities to be fully rolled out in the second year. The challenge at headquarters with regards to recruitment of fixed term project staff remains but the mitigating measures or initiatives adopted to hire short term experts has energized the implementation of the project. This is crucial since the lifespan of the project is 3 years.

In light of the challenges faced in recruitment of fixed term staff at the AUC and the advertisements have not yet been announced, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. To increase the contract periods for the short-term staff from three months to six monthly renewable basis
  - a. Legal and institutional officer;
  - b. Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist
  - c. Gender expert, as well as
  - d. The Admin support staff
2. Dr. Mohamed Seisay should also continue in his role as Sustainable Blue Economy Expert and Project Coordinator;
3. Due to the challenge in identifying a suitable MCS consultant through advertisement, we are recommending an expert consultative workshop involving proven knowledgeable experts in fisheries management to identify status of regional MCS initiatives, challenges, and sustainable financial mechanisms; that is if the challenge continues.
4. To create provision in the project for hiring of editors to produce knowledge products on the project outcomes for easy implementation by stakeholders.



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