



# PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

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



## SECOND YEAR REPORT

OCTOBER, 2022 – OCTOBER, 2023

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# Table of Contents

<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>1</b>
Background	1
<b>1. Overall Objective</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Strategic Objectives	3
<b>2. Key Achievements of the Period Under Review (October, 2022 – October, 2023)</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Studies conducted	4
2.2 Piloting the Study Recommendations:	8
<b>3. Strategic Objectives (SO), Outputs, Activities and Sub-Activities</b>	<b>11</b>
SO 1: RATIFY AND/OR ALIGN RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO BLUE ECONOMY THEMES (WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY)	11
SO 2: OPTIMIZING CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY WHILE MINIMIZING CONFLICTS AMONG USERS OF BLUE ECONOMY RESOURCES	25
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.	35
SO4. STRENGTHENING GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	43
<b>4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Project Technical and Steering Committee Meetings</b>	<b>52</b>
4.1 2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Project Technical Committee Meeting	52
4.2 2 <sup>nd</sup> Second Project Steering Committee	53
<b>5. Communications, Visibility &amp; Knowledge Management</b>	<b>55</b>
5.1 Communication Channels and Tools	55
Online Community Spaces & Calendaring	55
Media	55
Social Media	56
Microsite	56
Online repository	56
Documentary on Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the Africa Blue Economy Project	56
Visibility Materials	56
5.2 Key outcomes	57
5.3 Plans to strengthen communications for next implementation phase:	57
<b>6. Progress On Indicators</b>	<b>59</b>
6.1 Logframe	59

<b>7.</b>	<b><i>Technical Project Staff:</i></b>	<b>64</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b><i>Partnerships And Synergies:</i></b>	<b>64</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b><i>Challenges and Emerging Issues</i></b>	<b>64</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b><i>Discussions and Recommendations:</i></b>	<b>65</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b><i>Project Reports and Knowledge Products</i></b>	<b>65</b>

# Acronyms

(ABES)	Africa Blue Economy Strategy
(AU-MS)	African Union Member States
(AU-IBAR)	African Union - Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources
(ACS)	Abidjan Convention Secretariat
(ABNJ)	Convention on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
(EBM)	Ecosystem – Based Management
(BRS)	Basel Rotterdam Stockholm Convention
(CBD)	Convention on Biological Diversity
(CITES)	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
(CC)	Climate Change
(CoEs)	Centers of Excellence
(COP)	Conference of Parties
(CREMA)	Community Resource Management Area
(FCWC)	Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea
(ICZM)	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
(IUCN)	International Union for Conservation of Nature
(KMFRI)	Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute
(MARPOL)	The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
(MSP)	Marine Spatial Planning
(SIDA)	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
(LMEs)	Large Marine Ecosystems
(RAMSAR)	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat
(RECs)	Regional Economic Communities
(SoME)	State of Transboundary Marine Environment
(TBCA)	Transboundary Marine Conservation Area
(UNFCCC)	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
(UNFA)	United Nations Fish Stock Agreement
(WIOMSA)	Western India Ocean Marine Science Association



# Context

## *Background*

The Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) identified environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection as key Strategic goal for healthy ecosystems and sustainable Blue Economy development. The project is therefore supporting the implementation of the ABES in African Union Member States (AU-MS) and Regional institutions (for transboundary interventions). The ABES 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.

To support the implementation of ABES, the African Union - Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), with funding support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), is therefore implementing a project on “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy”, for a period of three years (October, 2021 – October, 2024). The total budget is approximately USD 5.5 million. This overall project goal; of the project is to “Enhance institutional capacity of AU-MS and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the utilization, conservation and protection of aquatic biodiversity in the context of the ABES”

The African Continent is adjacent to some of the highly productive marine ecosystems that include the seven African Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) viz: Agulhas Current LME, Benguela Current LME, Guinea Current LME, Canary current LME, Mediterranean Sea LME, Red Sea LME and Somali Current LME. The Continent is also endowed with networks of Rivers and Lakes. The Seas, Oceans, Lakes and Rivers inhabit significant number of biodiversity and the ecosystems provide sources of livelihoods, food security and wealth. These African aquatic ecosystems inhabit living and non-living resources; however, the unsustainable exploitation of these resources is 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 etc. Aquatic biodiversity encompasses freshwater systems, marine (Sea and Oceanic) environment, floodplains, aquaculture ponds and wetlands. Several factors are threatening aquatic biodiversity in Africa aquatic ecosystems. These include; overexploitation of living species, pollutions from several sources (land-based municipal, 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.

Some of the issues identified in the project that are crucial to aquatic biodiversity conservation in the context of African Blue Economy includes the following:

1. Environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection
2. Climate change
3. Increasing maritime safety, security and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing
4. Gender inclusivity
5. Partnership and transboundary considerations

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

The implementation of the aquatic biodiversity Project commenced in October, 2021 and is now in its third year of implementation.



# I. Overall Objective

The overall objective of the project is to enhance the Policy environment, Regulatory Frameworks and institutional capacities of AU-MS and RECs to sustainably utilize and conserve aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems.

## 1.1 Strategic Objectives

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

The project objectives are being implemented following the approach depicted in figure below.

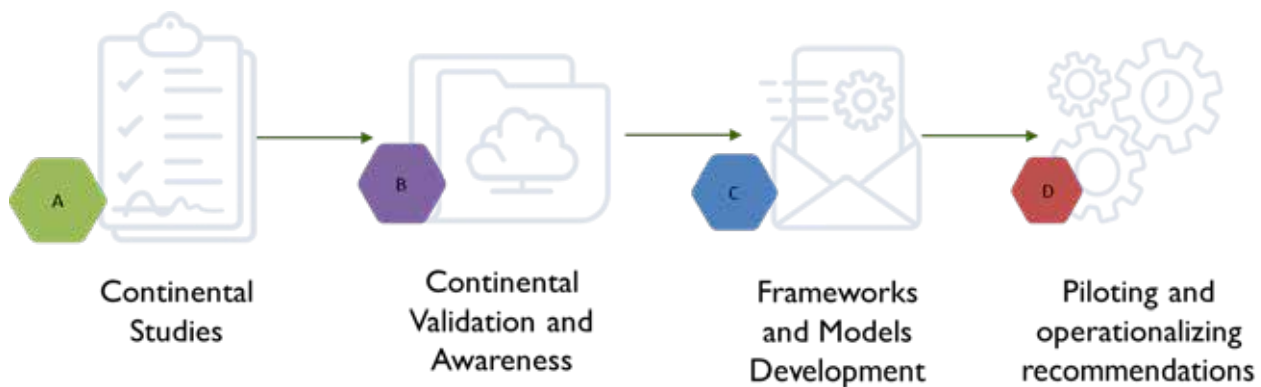


Figure. 1 Approach of project implementation

- a. Undertaking Continental studies (by CoEs or other knowledge-based institutions) – this is done to provide a baseline assessment of the current situation across the continent to lay ground for evidence-based intervention by the project. Study reports are generated to convey the findings of the studies.
- b. Continental validation and awareness enhancing workshops for stakeholders – each study report is validated by the wider African Continental stakeholders. This is done to enhance enrichment of the reports and facilitate participation by a broader stakeholder base and ownership.
- c. Developing frameworks and models—from the validated study reports, knowledge products in the form of Policy Briefs, Policy Notes and Advocacy Notes as well as frameworks and models are developed to guide implementation of the recommendations of the studies
- d. Piloting and operationalizing recommendations—collaboration is sought and support is given to AU-MS, Regional Institutions, as the case may be, to roll out activities related to the study recommendations to achieve the objectives of the project.

## 2. Key Achievements of the Period Under Review (October, 2022 – October, 2023)

### 2.1 Studies conducted

In the first year of implementation, and partly in the second year, the project commissioned various consultancies to conduct studies on different topical areas related to the project as summarized in Table 1. The findings of these studies form the basis for rolling out tailored activities to support AU-MS and Regional Institutions in various aspects of aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in the context of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy.

Table 1: Summary of Studies conducted in the reporting period, status of the studies and major deliverables

No.	Title of Consultancies (Studies)	Status – in terms of progress	Deliverables	Follow-up / Comments
1	Studies to develop a mechanism for enhancing the effective role and participation in Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental related regimes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two consultants were hired to facilitate the studies in two Regional clusters: North-Central-West Africa Regions and in the Eastern-Southern Africa Regions.</li> <li>- The studies were completed</li> <li>- The study reports were validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 study reports for the North-Central-Western Africa Region and the Eastern-Southern Africa Region were developed and published by AU-IBAR.</li> </ul> <p>A Policy Note on mechanism for enhancing the effective role and participation in Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental related regimes was developed and published.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seychelles supported to participate in UN Review Conference on UNFSA for the implementation of UNCLOS</li> </ul>	5 selected AU-MS shall be supported to effectively participate in Global Fora. Preparations to support three AU-MS (Egypt, Kenya and Madagascar) to effectively participate in the UNFCCC in November – December 2023 in  are in advanced stages.
2	Assessment of relevant Continental and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments to develop priority actions for enhanced ratification and implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two consultants were hired to facilitate the studies in two Regional clusters: North-Central-West Africa Regions and in the Eastern-Southern Africa Regions.</li> <li>- The studies were completed</li> <li>- The study reports were validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two study reports for the North-Central-Western Africa Region and the East-Southern Africa Region were developed and published by AU-IBAR.</li> </ul> <p>A Policy Note on Enhancing Ratification, Domestication and Implementation of Global Instruments for Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and Environmental sustainability in Africa was developed and published.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five AU-MS (the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic South Sudan, the Republic of Cameroon, the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Republic of Burkina Faso) were supported to review their National Policies and Regulations and align them with relevant Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments.</li> <li>- Five more AU-MS shall be supported in the next year.</li> </ul>

No.	Title of Consultancies (Studies)	Status – in terms of progress	Deliverables	Follow-up / Comments
3	Assessment of the status of MCS for combating unsustainable practices of fishing and other Blue Economy resources in AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities and develop mechanism to strengthen MCS; identifying capacity strengths and weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The two Regional studies have been completed</li> <li>- The study reports for WCN were validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two MCS study reports developed and submitted to AU-IBAR. The project collaborated with FCWC to enhance capacity of FCWC Member States (Benin, Liberia, Nigeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Togo and Ghana) on MCS systems for combating of IUU fishing, protection of aquatic biodiversity and environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The MCS study for the Eastern and Southern Region of Africa to be validated soon;</li> </ul>
4	Develop a Framework for establishing functional financial and sustainable Regional MCS systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The study for the East and Southern Region has been completed and is due for validation,</li> <li>- The study for the West, Central and North Region of Africa is yet to be conducted once an expert is recruited</li> <li>- AU-IBAR is in the process to recruit the expert for this study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One study report for the East and Southern Region developed,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Re-advertised to select a suitable expert to undertake the study in WCN Africa</li> </ul>
5	Integrated assessment of two identified transboundary aquatic ecosystems to identify critical aquatic environmental issues affecting biodiversity and develop mechanisms for joint management plans and Protocols in shared Blue Economy Resources; towards developing harmonized Regional Frameworks for aquatic biodiversity conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two consultants were hired to facilitate the studies in two identified transboundary aquatic ecosystems – freshwater and marine.</li> <li>- The studies were completed</li> <li>- The study reports were validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two reports were developed and published by AU-IBAR - one on fresh water aquatic ecosystems and the other on Marine aquatic ecosystems.</li> <li>- AU harmonized Regional biodiversity Framework and joint action plan has been developed and published.</li> <li>- Three AU-MS (Republic of Kenya, The United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Uganda) were supported to roll-out their joint management plans and Protocols and the harmonized Regional Frameworks for conserving aquatic biodiversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two other AU-MS Democratic Republic of Congo and Congo Brazzaville are to be supported similarly in the next year.</li> </ul>

No.	Title of Consultancies (Studies)	Status – in terms of progress	Deliverables	Follow-up / Comments
6	Conduct an assessment 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two regional studies (North-Central-West Africa and Eastern-Southern Africa) completed.</li> <li>- The study reports were validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 study reports on MSP (East &amp; Southern; &amp; WCN Africa) were developed and published by AU-IBAR.</li> <li>- A Policy Note on Continental Guidelines on Marine Spatial Planning for conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa was developed and published</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following the MSP study recommendations, the project developed mechanisms for collaborating with Abidjan Convention to support ongoing MSP initiatives between Benin and Togo;</li> <li>- A second initiative is envisioned to be supported in the next year.</li> </ul>
7	Conduct a Continental review of existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), document lessons, best practices and formulate guidelines for their sustainable implementation and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two consultants were hired to facilitate the studies in two Regional clusters: East &amp; Southern Africa and WCN Africa.</li> <li>- The studies were completed</li> <li>- The study report for the East-Southern Africa Region was validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop</li> <li>- The second study report for the North-Central-West Africa Regions was validated on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023. Following validation of the report, it will be finalized and published by AU-IBAR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A study report on MPAs for the Eastern-Southern Africa Region was developed and published by AU-IBAR.</li> <li>- A Policy Note on MPA framework and guidelines for conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa was developed and published based on the study for the E &amp; S Africa.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following the MPA study recommendations, the project developed mechanisms for collaborating with WIOMSA to support ongoing transboundary MPA initiative in the East-Southern Africa Region (transboundary conservation area between Kenya and Tanzania);</li> <li>- A second initiative is envisioned to be supported in the next year.</li> </ul>
8	Support the establishment of two Continental Centres of Excellence on aquatic biodiversity; This activity is supporting the implementation of 2014 Ministerial Decision to identify Centres of Excellence in relevant aquatic fields including biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adverts were placed and bids received from applicant Centers of Excellence in Africa;</li> <li>- External experts were recruited and are currently evaluating the bids submitted by prospective CoE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awaiting the selected CoE</li> </ul>	<p>Once selection is completed, the selected CoE will be presented to the STC -ARDWE for endorsement AU Centre of Excellence to support capacity building in aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems management as well as support project especially on technical studies among other engagements</p>

No.	Title of Consultancies (Studies)	Status – in terms of progress	Deliverables	Follow-up / Comments
9	Conduct studies on the negative impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment and recommend mitigation strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A Consultant was hired to conduct the Climate Change studies for the African Continent.</li> <li>- The studies were completed.</li> <li>- The study report developed was validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A study report was developed and published by AU-IBAR.</li> <li>- A Policy Note on impacts of Climate Change on aquatic biodiversity in the African Continent was developed and published.</li> </ul>	Based on the recommendations of the study, the project established collaboration with KMFRI to support climate resilient interventions (nature-based solutions on CC mitigation) under the Mikoko Pamoja project in South coast of Kenya.
10	Conduct studies to identify priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environment protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two consultants were hired to facilitate the studies in two Regional clusters: West-Central-North Africa Regions and in the East-Southern Africa Regions.</li> <li>- The studies were completed and reports submitted to AU-IBAR.</li> <li>- The study reports were validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two study reports for the two regions (East &amp; South and WCN Africa) were developed and published by AU-IBAR.</li> <li>- Masterplans for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities towards conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection in Kenya, Gabon and Nigeria were developed and published.</li> <li>- Policy measures to strengthen Regulatory frameworks for sustainable Coastal and marine tourism, and mining activities towards aquatic biodiversity and environmental conservation in Kenya, Gabon and Nigeria were developed and published.</li> </ul>	Following the recommendations of the Continental study, 3 AU-MS (Kenya, Gabon and Nigeria) were supported to draft National Masterplans for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining activities towards conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection.

No.	Title of Consultancies (Studies)	Status – in terms of progress	Deliverables	Follow-up / Comments
11	Convene an Expert Consultative meeting to identify priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management; hire facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A Consultant was hired to conduct studies on the priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.</li> <li>- The study was completed.</li> <li>- The study report was validated at an expert stakeholder consultative workshop (held in Naivasha, Kenya – 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2022) conducted to augment the studies and a Continental strategy on gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management was drafted.</li> <li>- The Continental strategy was validated by the wider Continental Stakeholders on the African Continent in a virtual workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A study report on priority issues and actions necessary for strengthening the role of women in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in Africa was developed and published by AU-IBAR.</li> <li>- A Continental strategy for gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Africa was developed.</li> <li>- A Policy brief titled, “Unlocking the potential for strengthening the role of women in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in Africa” was developed and published.</li> <li>- National Strategies for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management drafted for the Republics of Malawi and Ethiopia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In rolling out the Continental Strategy, 2 AU-MS (Ethiopia and Malawi) were supported to develop gender mainstreaming strategies in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management at the National level;</li> <li>- 1 more AU-MS is envisioned to be supported similarly in the next year.</li> <li>- The project developed mechanisms for collaborating with IUCN to support selected environmental based NGO in Ghana to develop gender sensitive workplans to govern their activities.</li> <li>- A second NGO is envisioned to be supported in the next year.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Piloting the Study Recommendations:

Support to AU-MS, RECs and Ongoing NGO Initiatives to Promote Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management

### a. **Effective role and participation of AU-MS in Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental related regimes:**

The project is supporting Kenya and Togo to participate in the International Climate Change Conference (COP 28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to be held in United Arab Emirates, November – December, 2023. This is in line with actions designed by the project to support AU-MS to participate and play effective roles in Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental related regimes. At the conference, the selected Countries will be supported to contribute to discussions on Africa’s common position on climate change and aquatic biodiversity conservation.

**b. *Alignment of National Instruments with relevant Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments:***

Five AU-MS (the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic South Sudan, the Republic of Cameroon, the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Republic of Burkina Faso) were supported to review their National Policies and Regulations and align them with relevant Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments. During National stakeholders' consultative workshops organized by the Project in collaboration with relevant Ministries in charge of Fisheries / Environment / Blue Economy in the various Countries, each of the AU-MSs identified and developed priority actions for enhancing ratification and implementation of identified biodiversity and environmental Global Instruments.

**c. *Strengthening Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) for combating unsustainable practices of fishing and other Blue Economy resources:***

The Project developed mechanisms for collaborating with the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) to support MCS initiatives in West and Central Africa. Under this collaboration, a scoping mission was conducted in three of the FCWC Countries (Liberia, Nigeria & Benin) to assess the status of MCS, aquatic biodiversity conservation and identification of capacity gaps in the Region. Additionally, a training workshop was organized for MCS experts from the six FCWC Countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo) to build their capacity in MCS. The project is also in the process of procuring MCS equipment (Cameras, GPS, HF & VHF Radios, PPEs etc.) for FCWC to accentuate its activities.

**d. *Developing mechanisms for joint management plans and Protocols in shared Blue Economy Resources towards developing harmonized Regional Frameworks for aquatic biodiversity conservation:***

In collaboration with the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization, three AU-MS (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) were supported to develop harmonized Policy guidelines and Regulatory frameworks for consolidated National strategies on conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management of transboundary freshwater ecosystems.

**e. *Institutionalizing Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) at National and Regional levels:***

The Project developed mechanisms for collaborating with the Abidjan Convention Secretariat (ABC) to support ongoing MSP initiatives in the West and Central Africa Region. Under this collaboration, ABC is being supported to advance the initiative on transboundary MSP between Benin and Togo. In the light of that, 2 National meetings were organized in Benin and Togo to validate the State of Transboundary Marine Environment (SoME) report which is a key stage in actualizing the transboundary MSP initiative between Benin and Togo.

**f. *Sustainable implementation and governance of Marine Protected Areas (MPA):***

The project developed mechanisms for collaborating with the Western India Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) to support ongoing transboundary MPA initiative in the East-Southern Africa Region. Under the collaboration, WIOMSA is being supported on activities leading to the establishment of a transboundary conservation area between Kenya and Tanzania. Consequently, 2 National meetings

were organized in Tanzania and Kenya respectively to develop roadmaps towards the establishment of the proposed Transboundary Marine Conservation Area (TBCA).

**g. *Mitigating the negative impacts of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment:***

The project established collaboration with KMFRI to support climate resilient interventions (nature-based solutions on climate change mitigation) under the Mikoko Pamoja project in South coast of Kenya. In line with this collaboration, the project is supporting implementation of the project on “Strengthening Restoration and Protection of Blue Carbon Ecosystems for Community Benefits and Environmental Sustainability” in the Gazi Bay. A training workshop on nature-based enterprises was organized for community members in the Gazi Bay, equipping them with knowledge and skills on carbon trading, mangrove ecotourism, aquaculture farming and bee-keeping, as a means of developing alternative livelihoods and reducing overdependence on mangrove resources.

**h. *Sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining activities for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environment protection:***

Three AU-MS (Kenya, Gabon and Nigeria) were supported to draft National Masterplans for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining activities towards conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection. National stakeholders’ consultative workshops were organized in each of the Countries in collaboration with relevant Ministries to identify Policy measures and draft Masterplans to strengthen Regulatory frameworks for sustainable Coastal and marine tourism, and mining activities towards aquatic biodiversity and environmental.

**i. *Mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management:***

Two AU-MS (Ethiopia and Malawi) were supported to develop gender mainstreaming strategies in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management at the National level. National stakeholders’ workshops were organized in each of the Countries in collaboration with relevant Ministries to support the drafting of National strategies for gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management, as entry points for women’s empowerment.

The project also established collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to support selected environmental based NGO initiative to develop gender sensitive workplans to govern their activities. Under this collaboration, the project supported IUCN activities to establish the Dusornu Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) mechanism in the Anlo-Keta Landscape, aimed at enhancing governance and empowerment of communities to protect mangrove resources within the landscape. The project supported the election of executives for the CREMA and training of the executives on effective governance and management practices for inclusive and sustainable management of the CREMA.



### 3. Strategic Objectives (SO), Outputs, Activities and Sub-Activities

#### 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 (Convention on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Conference of Parties (COP) meeting relating to Climate Change (CC), Basel Rotterdam Stockholm (BRS) Convention, etc.) developed

1.1.1 Enhancing effective role and participation in Continental and Global aquatic biodiversity and environmental related regimes.

1.1.1.1 Undertake studies and develop a mechanism for enhancing effective role and participation in Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental related regimes.

Studies to develop a mechanism for enhancing the effective role and participation in Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental related regimes were commissioned. Two consultants were hired to facilitate the studies in two Regional clusters: North – Central-West Africa Regions and in the Eastern – Southern Africa Regions.

The studies were completed and the reports were validated by the wider Continental Stake-holders on the African Continent and published by AU-IBAR.

A Policy Note on mechanism for enhancing the effective role and participation in Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental related regimes was developed and published.

1.1.1.2 Organize Continental validation and awareness enhancing workshop among stakeholders on the relevant provisions, challenges and mechanisms for effective role and participation in these Global regimes.

A Continental awareness enhancing and validation workshop on relevant provisions, challenges and mechanisms for effective role and participation in Global regimes was held in Dar es Salaam – Tanzania from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

The participants invited were from selected AU-MS and other stakeholder including private sector, Women representative, RECs, specialized Regional institutions (e.g. Abidjan Convention). The reviewed draft report was circulated to the wider stakeholders to enable them to internalize the draft reports and enrich the reports.



Figure 2: above Stakeholders' consultative workshop to validate the framework for monitoring progress of implementation of Global Instruments in Fisheries and Aquaculture and effective African participation, coordinated positions and voice in Global Fora relating to conservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems and environmental management. 2-5 May, 2023, Dar Es Salaam

### 1.1.1.3 Conduct a workshop for identified negotiators (10) to technically support AU MSs in Global negotiations e.g. CC COP meetings, CITES

A training workshop, involving 9 participants from selected AU-MS was conducted on negotiation skilling to enhance effective role and participation of AU-MS in Global Aquatic Biodiversity, Climate Change sustainability and Environmental management Fora was organized in Seychelles from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2023. Two resource persons were identified that facilitated the training workshop. Overall, the workshop improved awareness and built capacity among stakeholders on the importance of the various regimes, relevant provisions, challenges and mechanisms for effective role and participation in Global regimes.

The AU-MS trained included Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda and Gabon; as well as 4 AU Small Island Developing States (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles). Capacities of the pre-identified negotiators were enhanced through an articulated training package covering International negotiations, simulation and interactive sessions.

A mechanism to coordinate African common positions and enhanced African voice at Global Fora was developed for the following: aquatic biodiversity conservation; environmental; sustainability and climate change sustainability; fisheries and aquaculture management and related regimes; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) meetings; Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES); The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL); Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (RAMSAR) Convention. The mechanism was presented to experts during the training session which was organized to build capacity of AU-MS on negotiation skills for their participation in International Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic biodiversity and Environmental management Fora.



Figure 3 above Family photo taken at a training workshop on negotiation skills for the participation of AU-MS in International Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic biodiversity and Environmental management Fora in Seychelles 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.



Figure 4 Representatives of the Small Island Developing States at a Negotiation training workshop

*1.1.1.4. Support the participation of 5 AU-MSs in relevant aquatic biodiversity and environmental Fora and 2 selected negotiators to 2 events per year for 2 years (two selected negotiators to accompany the 5 AU MSs to provide technical guidance*

A representative of Seychelles was supported to attend the UN Review Conference of UNFSA for implementation of UNCLOS in New York, USA.

**Outstanding activities for 1.1.1**

The project has developed a proposal to sponsor the participation of three AU Member States the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Madagascar together with a trained negotiator

to meeting of UNFCCC in November-December 2023 in Abu Dhabi with Members of the Conference of Party on Climate Change. The project would also be supporting two AU Member States and a resource person to the MSP Forum in November, 2023; organized by UNESCO with AU-IBAR as co-organizer.

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

*1.2.1. Identify Continental and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments relevant to sustainable management of Africa Blue Economy Resources.*

*1.2.1.1 Conduct assessment of relevant Continental and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments to develop priority actions for enhanced ratification and implementation.*

Assessments of relevant Continental and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments to develop priority actions for enhanced ratification and implementation was conducted by two consultants; one consultant handled the West, Central and the North while the other consultant handled the East and Southern Africa Regions.

The study for the West, Central and North Africa Regional cluster was conducted by Prof. Frambo Martin Tambinyuo and that of the East and Southern Africa Regional cluster was conducted by Prof. Wilson Waiswa Mwanja.

The studies were completed and the reports validated at a Continental virtual workshop and the reports were published by AU-IBAR.

A Policy Note on Enhancing Ratification, Domestication and Implementation of Global Instruments for Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and Environmental Sustainability in Africa was developed and it was published.

*1.2.1.2 Conduct two virtual validation and Regional awareness enhancing workshops on identified documents including key provisions and benefits.*

A virtual validation and awareness enhancing workshop was conducted on 10<sup>th</sup>, November, 2022 to sensitize stakeholders from across the Continent on relevant Continental and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, and engage them to validate the study report. The workshop participants recommended the need to domesticate Global Instruments relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change sustainability and environmental management.

*1.2.1.3 Support 10 AU Member States to review National Policies, Regulations and align National Instruments with relevant Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments.*

Five AU Member States (the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic South Sudan, the Republic of Cameroon, the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Republic of Burkina Faso) were supported this year (October, 2022 – October, 2023) to review their National Policies and Regulations and align them with relevant Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments. The selection took into consideration Regional

balance as well as the needs of the Countries. Also, MS were selected based on their commitment towards aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management and their identified challenges. National consultative workshops were organized in each of the 5 selected AU-MS as follows:

**a. National Workshop for the Republic of Burkina Faso**

From 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 a National workshop was organized in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso to support alignment of National Instruments with relevant Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments. The workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries and convened 32 participants from the following institutions; Ministry responsible for Fisheries and aquaculture, Ministry responsible for Conservation and sustainable aquatic ecosystems, the Ministry responsible for transportation, trade, the Ministry responsible for Ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement, the Ministry responsible for tourism, the Ministry responsible for Climate change, resilience, environment, infrastructure, the Ministry responsible for Sustainable Water and energy and the Ministry responsible for Mineral resources, oil and gas and innovative industries, other participants included; University representatives, Private sector, Women representative, Non-State Actors, National and International NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, the National Consultant and AU-IBAR staff.



Figure 5 ABOVE Family photo taken during the National workshop to support the Republic of Burkina Faso to domesticate relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental management



Figure 6 ABOVE Workshop participants in the group discussion session during the National workshop to support the Republic of Burkina Faso to domesticate relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental management

## EMERGING ISSUES FROM DISCUSSIONS

During open discussions after the technical presentations, several issues were raised as follows:

- Adoption and implementation of International Conventions is insufficient because of lack of clarity, lack of financial resources, lack of technical capacity. (challenges related to the means of implementation including (Capacity building for stakeholders - Technology transfer – and Financial support);
- At the National level, gaps were observed in implementation process and re-enforcement mechanisms that are constrained by institutional and administrative challenges;
- In addition, there is Insufficient data and information on resources for Burkina Faso and challenges in data collection, monitoring and surveillance especially genetic profiling, taxonomy and valuation is an indication of inadequate enforcement; and,
- The Laws are not up to date in various sectors related to Blue Economy.

### **Recommendations to the Republic of Burkina Faso**

- Carry out a study on the National status with regard to the ratification, adoption and implementation of the various key International Instruments ;
- Establish a Regional or sub-regional unit to liaise with custodians on behalf of AU Member States ; and,
- Establish a platform for resource mobilisation and coordination of ratification and implementation.

### **Recommendations to AU-IBAR**

- Provide guidance and technical support to Burkina Faso for the ratification, adoption and implementation of key Instruments;
- Support the National, sub-regional and Regional harmonization of the roles of the various actors in order to foster collaboration and the creation of a platform to support the ratification, adoption and implementation of the various Instruments;
- Establish a mechanism and resource mobilization framework to support the ratification, adoption and implementation of aquatic biodiversity similar to the operation of the UN Global Environment Facility; and;
- Provide technical and financial support to Burkina Faso for capacity building on the identified priority Instruments.

#### **b. National Workshop for the Republic of Cameroon**

The National workshop organized for the Republic of Cameroon to support the alignment of National Instruments with relevant Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental Instruments took place from 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 in Yaoundé – Cameroon. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Ministry for Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries of the Republic of Cameroon and was attended by 28 participants who were drawn from the Ministry responsible for Fisheries and aquaculture, Ministry responsible for Conservation and sustainable aquatic ecosystems, the Ministry responsible for Shipping/ transportation, trade, the Ministry responsible for Ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement, the Ministry responsible for Coastal and maritime tourism, the Ministry responsible for Climate change, resilience, environment, infrastructure, the Ministry responsible for Sustainable Water and energy and the Ministry responsible for Mineral resources, oil and gas and innovative industries, the National Consultant,

University representatives, Private sector, women representative, Non-State Actors, National and International NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, and AU-IBAR staff.



Figure 7 above Family Photo taken during the National workshop to support the Republic of Cameroon to domesticate relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental management.



Figure 8 above Opening speech by Mr. Eric NADIOPE, AU-IBAR Consultant (left photo) and Mrs. Beyene ATEBA, President of AWFISHNET (right photo)



Figure 9 above Address by Dr. KEMGANG Serges Henry, Representative of the Minister in charge of Fisheries - Cameroon

## **EMERGING ISSUES FROM MEETING**

### ***During open discussions after the technical presentations, several issues were raised as follows:***

- Adoption and implementation of International Conventions is insufficient because of lack of clarity, lack of financial resources, lack of technical capacity. (challenges related to the means of implementation including (Capacity building for stakeholders - Technology transfer – and Financial support);
- At the National level, gaps were observed in implementation process and re-enforcement mechanisms that are constrained by institutional and administrative challenges;
- In addition, there is Insufficient data and information on resources for Cameroon and challenges in data collection, monitoring and surveillance especially genetic profiling, taxonomy and valuation is an indication of inadequate enforcement; and,
- The Laws are not up to date in various sectors related to Blue Economy.

### ***Recommendations were provided to address emerging issues as follows:***

- Support the Republic of Cameroon in the process to ratify the relevant International Policies and legal Instruments on biodiversity conservation and environmental management Aircraft/Missile Maintenance Compression Report (Aircraft/Missile Maintenance Compression Report (AMREP), The Australian Network of University Planners (ANUP), Member of Legislative Council (MLC), C188, Straddling stocks and highly migratory species, etc.);



- Support Republic of Cameroon in the process to internalize relevant International Policies and legal Instruments relating to biodiversity conservation and environmental management (The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), MINAMATA Convention, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), etc.);
- Support Republic of Cameroon in the process to implement the relevant International Policies and legal Instruments on biodiversity conservation and environmental management (The International Commission for the Congo-Ubangi-Sangha Basin (CICOS), Aircraft/Missile Maintenance Compression Report (AMREP), United Nations Fish Stock Agreement (UNFA), Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC), Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) (C188), Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), MINAMATA Convention, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), etc.);
- Draw up a National Strategy for the development of the Blue Economy;
- Strengthen the capacity of the platform for coordinating Government action at Sea and existing platforms in relation to issues linked to the development of the Blue Economy;
- Set up a project bank for biodiversity conservation and environmental management as part of the development of the Blue Economy and mobilize funds;
- Promote collaboration between the different Ministries, the private sector and other stakeholders concerned with biodiversity conservation and environmental management;
- Encourage the transfer of technology and skills in the implementation of International Blue Economy Policies and Instruments, and;
- Carry out periodic studies on the internalization and implementation of Policies and Legal Instruments relating to the Blue Economy.

c. ***Support a National Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop for the Kingdom of Eswatini***

In the Kingdom of Eswatini, a National workshop was organized from 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2023, in Mbabane – Eswatini. The workshop, which was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture convened 25 stakeholders from the following institutions; the Kingdom of Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC); Ministry of Agriculture (Fisheries section, Economic Planning Section, Land Use Department and Legal Office), Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (Department of water Affairs and Energy Department), Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Eswatini Environment Authority, Joint River Basin Authorities–Project Board, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and AU–IBAR, Non-State Actors– the Kingdom of Eswatini Aquaculture Association, WaterAid, Aquaculture Feed suppliers.



Figure 10 above Family Photos taken at the National workshop to support the Kingdom of Eswatini to domesticate relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental management.



Figure 11 Mr. Eric Nadiupe – Policy, Legal and Institutional Expert - AU-IBAR delivering a closing speech on behalf the Director - AU-IBAR

## REQUESTS

The following general requests were made by the workshop participants:

1. AU-IBAR to consider the support to Eswatini for preparation and development of the National Blue Economy Strategy and leverage on lessons and case studies from supported RECs and National Blue Economy Strategies supported thus far;
2. AU-IBAR to consider support to Eswatini with a base line on the aquatic and biodiversity resources; and,
  - a. AU-IBAR to consider supporting Government of Eswatini to establish a cross sectoral coordination mechanism for the implementation of Global Instruments. The meeting outlined key recommendations for addressing emerging issues as follows: There is need to align National Policy and Regulatory Frameworks with International Instruments;
  - b. There is need to establish and strengthen institutional arrangements to enhance coordination mechanisms at cross-sectoral level i.e. Government, to ensure effective institutional coordination for implementation of activities, projects and programs necessary for domesticating International and Regional Instruments at National level;
  - c. There is need to establish a multi-sectoral technical coordination committee under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture taking into consideration of the existing other similar committees;
  - d. There is need to enhance implementation of climate change and environmental National Policies, Regulations and Legislation to ensure sustainable utilization of aquatic and biodiversity resources;

d. ***Support a National Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop for the Arab Republic of Egypt***

The Lake and Fish Resources Protection and Development Agency (LFRPDA), the Arab Republic of Egypt hosted the National stakeholder's consultative workshop with the objective to support the domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic Biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and Environmental management. The workshop, which took place from 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 in Cairo - Egypt, was attended by 32 participants drawn from the following institutions; Lake and Fish Resources Protection and Development Agency (LFRPDA), Ministry of International Cooperation (MoIC), Agriculture Research Centre (Central Laboratory for Aquaculture Research)/Wildlife, Environmental affairs Agency, Blue Economy Sectors, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Central Laboratory for Aquaculture Research (CLAR), Private Sector, National Institute of Oceanography & Fisheries (NIO&F), the National Consultant and AU-IBAR staff.



Figure 12 above Family photo taken during the National workshop to support the Arab Republic of Egypt to domesticate relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic Biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and Environmental management



Figure 13 above Key Note Speakers addressing participants of the Workshop during the Opening Session: Mrs. Doa, General Manager, International Cooperation - Lake and Fish Resources Protection and Development Agency (LFRPDA), the Arab Republic of Egypt (left), Mrs. Hellen Guebama, Fisheries Officer AU-IBAR (centre), and Dr. Patrick Karani, Environmental Expert AU-IBAR (right)

## EMERGING ISSUES FROM DISCUSSIONS

During open discussions after the technical presentations, several issues were raised as follows:

- Adoption and implementation of international conventions is low because of lack of clarity, lack of financial resources, lack of technical capacity. (challenges related to the means of implementation including (Capacity building for stakeholders - Technology transfer - Financial support)) and the need of establishing of Global biodiversity fund (GBF);
- At the National level gaps are observed in implementation process and reinforcement mechanisms that are constrained by institutional and administrative challenges. The absence of fisheries management plans in the previous law is a clear indication of institutional inability to implement required policies. In addition, challenges in data collection, monitoring and surveillance of IUU fishing is an indication of inadequate enforcement. In addition, according to this law all relevant stakeholders with three

experts are gathered in the broad of directors for fisheries and lake development which supports the integration of national efforts, plans and decisions;

- The conflicting laws in fisheries and aquaculture posed challenges to implementation and enforcement capabilities. However, new laws provide clarity, guidance and directions on fisheries management plans and enforcement;
- The preparation of projects needs to integrate capacity building of relevant stakeholders and awareness raising of local communities based on socio-economic studies;
- Some lessons can be drawn from the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) established for each cross-cutting sector in relation to fisheries & aquaculture, climate change, environment, biodiversity, energy, marine tourism, Blue Economy among others; and,
- There is lack of clarity on what to conserve, how to conserve, when to conserve drawing lessons and practices from the MDGs and SDGs, and the right of land locked countries to benefit from the Blue Economy that seems to be heavily correlated to marine and coastal resources.

Recommendations were provided to address emerging issues as follows:

1. There is need to build and enhance technical capability necessary for interpretation, ratification, domestication, implementation, and enforcement of the International Conventions;
2. Need for exchange of best practices and success stories through Regional, Continental and International cooperation and projects;
3. The issue of IUU fishing requires International cooperation for the purposes of certification and traceability with effective data collection, monitoring, surveillance and enforcement;
4. The support of Research and Development is necessary to enhance integration, coordination and cooperation among key stakeholders and institutions working on cross-cutting issues in particular the Blue Economy;
5. There is need to establish a Blue Economy Committee at the level of Prime Minister's Office to spearhead and coordinate all the Blue Economy activities in the Country;
6. There is need for the harmonization of the International Standards in view of enhancing Regulatory mechanisms for the marine tourism/Marine Spatial Planning, Marine protected Areas, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance;
7. Marine Oil Spill Combating Centers are key in addressing the issue of oil spills and marine pollution affecting biodiversity and wildlife. The centers need to be equipped with modern technology for detection of oil spills, monitoring and surveillance of marine pollution; and,
8. Update of the Republic of Egypt's National action plan for biodiversity is needed according to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), that focus on marine biodiversity and sustainable Blue Economy.

e. **National Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop for the Republic of South Sudan**

The AU-IBAR through the project conserving aquatic biodiversity collaborated with the Ministry of Fisheries of the Republic of South Sudan to organize the National workshop to support the domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic Biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and Adaptation and environmental management. The workshop was organized from the 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2023, in Juba, South Sudan. 31 participants attended the workshop from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies including; the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of

Water Resources and Irrigation, Private Sector – President of AWFISHNET South Sudan Chapter, Ministry of Transport, Petroleum Authority, Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, Ministry of Dams and Electricity, Planning and Investment Authority, Ministry of Petroleum, Individual Consultants and AU-IBAR Technical and Administrative support staff.



Figure 14 above Family Photo taken at the National workshop to support the Republic of South Sudan to Domesticate relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic Biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and Adaptation and environmental management



Figure 15 above AU-IBAR Project Team with the National consultant and Director of Livestock, Fisheries and Blue economy, evaluating the workshop proceedings after Day 1

The following recommendations were outlined by stakeholders during the workshop:

- There is the need to have support on improving National Policies and Regulatory framework and increase efforts towards domesticating global instruments in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management;

- A need for capacity development in aquatic biodiversity conservation and Blue Economy including: training to identify roles of gender in biodiversity conservation and Blue Economy, transboundary management of water resources, wastewater treatment facilities, and fish stock assessment;
- The need to increase efforts towards mobilizing National, Regional and Global financial and other resources towards implementing aquatic biodiversity and blue economy;
- There is the need for a technical working group on Blue Economy and biodiversity conservation with clear terms of reference to network and advocate for the sectors; and,
- The meeting resolved that the Ministries, Departments and Agencies represented at this workshop will constitute the platform for adoption, ratification and implementation of the relevant Global, Continental and Regional Instruments on biodiversity conservation and Blue Economy.

*1.2.1.4 Conduct National level validation workshops to validate the reviewed Policies.*

This assignment is to be conducted after completion of Sub-activity: 1.2.1.3.

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

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

**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*

*2.1.1.1 Conduct a study to assess the status of MCS for combating unsustainable practices of fishing and other Blue Economy Resources in AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities and develop mechanism to strengthen MCS; identifying capacity strengths and weaknesses.*

The project had a provision for two MCS studies; one in the West, Central and Northern (WCN) Regions of Africa and the other in the East and Southern Regions of Africa.

Two MCS experts; Mr. Makane Ndiaye and Mr. Stanley Ndara were recruited to conduct the studies in the west, central and north and East & Southern Regions of Africa respectively. The two studies were completed and reports submitted to AU-IBAR. A continent-wide stakeholders virtual meeting was organized to validate the study report for WCN Africa. The MCS study report for eastern and southern region of Africa is yet to be validated in a continental virtual meeting.

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

*2.1.2.1 Develop Framework for establishing functional financial and sustainable Regional MCS systems.*

The project has completed a study on the development of a framework for establishing innovative, cost-effective financial mechanisms (funding systems) for sustainable monitoring, control, surveillance (MCS), and enforcement systems for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection for the eastern and southern region of Africa and the reported submitted to AU-IBAR pending validation by wider stakeholders.

AU-IBAR has launched a re-advertisement for the third time to identify a suitable expert to conduct similar study in the West, Central and North regions of Africa. The evaluation of applications to start soon.

*2.1.2.2 Organize two virtual Regional workshops to validate findings and recommendations of the studies in 2.1.1.1. and 2.1.2.1*

Virtual meeting to validate the study report for the WCN regions of Africa was completed and the report validated. AU-IBAR will in the coming days organize a virtual meeting to validate the MCS study report for the east and southern region of Africa.

*2.1.2.3 Pilot and operationalize the recommendations (in 2.1.1.1. and 2.1.2.1.) in 2 Regional institutions; piloting should aim at strengthening capacity.*

Consistent with the recommendations by the MCS consultant for the west, central and north Africa, AU-IBAR is currently collaborating with the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) to support MCS initiatives in West and Central Africa. Under this collaboration, a scoping mission was conducted in three FCWC countries (Liberia, Nigeria & Benin) to assess the status of MCS initiatives, measures for aquatic biodiversity conservation and identify capacity gaps thereof in the Region.



Figure 16 Training of MCS experts from FCWC Member States on VMS and AIS, at the FCC Regional MCS Centre in Temam, June, 2023.





Figure 17 The Deputy Director-General of Technical Services (DDG/TS) of NaFAA, Liberia, explaining a point to participants during the scoping mission meeting organized at his office.

Additionally, a training workshop was organized for MCS experts from the six FCWC countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo) to build their capacity in MCS. The project is also in the process of procuring MCS equipment (Cameras, GPS, HF & VHF Radios, PPEs etc.) for FCWC to accentuate its activities.



Figure 18 above Family photo taken during the MCS training workshop in Tema, Ghana, 28th – 30th June, 2023.

#### 2.1.2.4 *Support to implementation of cost-effective sustainable financial systems.*

This activity will be conducted in 2024 once the studies are conducted and recommendations obtained.

Key outcomes under this outcome:

- Validated MCS study report for the west, central and north region of Africa.
- Collaboration between AU-IBAR and FCWC on MCS initiatives
  - o Training of FCWC member states MCS Experts;
  - o Scoping mission to three FCWC member states.

Outstanding activities

- Validation of financial mechanisms MCS study report for the East and Southern Region of Africa;
- Publishing the MCS study reports
- Development of knowledge product i.e. Policy Note on MCS

**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.*

*2.2.1.1 Conduct integrated assessment of two identified transboundary aquatic ecosystems to identify critical aquatic environmental issues affecting biodiversity and develop mechanisms for joint management plans and Protocols in shared Blue Economy Resources; towards developing harmonized Regional Frameworks for aquatic biodiversity conservation.*

- Integrated assessments of two identified transboundary aquatic ecosystems (Freshwater and Marine ecosystems) were conducted. The study on freshwater systems was conducted by Dr. Asmah Ruby and the study on marine systems was conducted by Dr. Hashali Hamukuaya. The assessments identified critical aquatic environmental issues affecting aquatic biodiversity conservation in the two ecosystems and developed mechanisms for joint management plans and Protocols in the shared ecosystems. Both studies were completed and validated in a continent-wide stakeholders virtual meeting.
- A Framework for harmonized Regional strategy on aquatic biodiversity conservation and a joint action plan were developed.

*2.2.1.2 Conduct two virtual validation and awareness enhancing workshops on critical environmental issues in 2 transboundary ecosystems and the draft harmonized Regional Frameworks for aquatic biodiversity conservation.*

A continent-wide virtual stakeholder Workshop was organized held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to validate the study report on “Transboundary Environmental Issues Affecting Biodiversity in Selected Shared Freshwater Ecosystems towards Formulating Harmonized Regional Framework for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity”.

### 2.2.1.3 Support to provide technical assistance to five AU Member States to rollout their joint management plans and Protocols and the harmonized Regional Frameworks for conserving aquatic biodiversity

A stakeholders' workshop was organized on the 23rd and 24th March, 2023 at the Hotel Africana in Kampala – Uganda, to rollout the joint management plans and Protocols and the harmonization of National Frameworks for Regional harmonization for conserving aquatic biodiversity. Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania were supported to develop National harmonized Strategies and Protocols for conserving aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in shared freshwater ecosystems. Participants of the workshop were drawn from the Republic of Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Uganda together with RECs Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), East African Community (EAC) and specialized Institutions NaFiRRI, TaFiRRI and KMFRI.



Figure 19 above Family Photo taken at the workshop to roll out the joint management plans and Protocols and the harmonized National and Regional Frameworks for conserving aquatic biodiversity in Kampala-Uganda.

#### Key outcomes of the meeting

- a. The meeting discussed and developed a draft outline for development of Policy guidelines and Regulatory Frameworks for the harmonized National Strategy on conservation of aquatic biodiversity, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and environmental management in transboundary freshwater ecosystems for the three Countries the Republic of Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Uganda;
- b. Policy options and Regulatory Frameworks for harmonized Strategies for environmental management and conservation of aquatic biodiversity in transboundary freshwater ecosystems were developed;
- c. the meeting enhanced awareness among three EAC AU Member States on the outcomes and recommendations of the consultancy report as discussed below:
  - An outline of the critical transboundary issues in conservation of aquatic biodiversity, climate change sustainability and environmental management in freshwater ecosystems was developed,
  - Challenges relating to the identified in conservation of aquatic biodiversity were highlighted and,
  - Priority actions for to aquatic biodiversity conservation especially for transboundary management were identified;

- d. The Meeting enhanced awareness and built capacity among stakeholders on the importance of “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy”; the meeting provided technical assistance to AU Member States for revision of existing National Instruments to align with and or mainstream the consultancy report on harmonized Regional biodiversity frameworks, the joint management plans and protocols for conserving aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in shared aquatic ecosystems

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. the need to come up with a Regional Spatial Plan for Lake Victoria to curb uncoordinated development within the catchment and basin around Lake Victoria, as result of increased population and the effects of unprecedented climate change variability, that have affected the livelihood of humanity;
- b. the need to identify Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaption and environmental management, ratify, domesticate and implement these Global Instruments as well as awareness enhancing among stakeholders and resource users;
- c. the need to undertake continuous professional development and capacity building across the various levels of stakeholders;
- d. the need to benchmark the good Policy and practice on Marine litter / plastic and adoption was emphasized;
- e. there is need to establish a knowledge platform and information sharing and (i) have a Regional Repository for data and information sharing to facilitate research and conservation; (ii) designate biodiversity offsets after mapping all freshwater key biodiversity areas; (iii) establish the National red list in each Member State as the benchmark for conservation and development planning processes; (iv) establish a fund for biodiversity studies to address glaring data gaps that impede biodiversity assessment and robust conservation planning;
- f. the need to identify common/similar Policy objectives amongst the three Countries for joint implementation;
- g. the need to review, update to the current situation, and harmonize Policies and Laws within the Region to speak to each other; and,
- h. The need to work together with all the Blue Economy related MDAs and establish platforms Nationally and Regionally.

### Outstanding activities

- AU-IBAR, within the framework of the Project, is going to support two AU Member States that are sharing the Gulf of Guinea Large Marine transboundary ecosystems namely; Republic of Congo Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo. AU-IBAR is keen on collaboration with Regional Institutions i.e. the Regional Fisheries Commission of the Gulf of Guinea (COREP) in the implementation of activities to roll-out the outcomes of this Study in the three Countries; this is premised on the consideration that (COREP) is the specialized Regional Institution with the mandate for Regional management of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems in ECCAS. The the Gulf of Guinea being one of the Large Marine Ecosystems of Africa from which millions of Citizens derive their livelihoods.

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

### *2.2.2.1 Conduct an assessment to map MSPs in Africa, document lessons, best practices and develop guidelines for their institutionalization at National and Regional levels.*

Two MSP experts were recruited under a competitive exercise to undertake the MSP studies in the two Regional clusters. The studies were clustered in the East and Southern Regions of Africa which was conducted by Dr. Chrispine Nyamweya and the other in the West, Central and Northern Regions of Africa, conducted by Dr. Joseph Kofi Ansong. Both studies were completed and reports submitted to AU-IBAR. Additionally, based on the reports, a continental guideline for implementing and governance of transboundary MSP was developed as a policy note.

### *2.2.2.2 Convene two virtual Regional Think Tank meetings on MSP implementation and governance to validate the findings of the consultants in 2.2.3.1 and make recommendations*

A Continent-wide stakeholders virtual meeting was held to validate the MSP study reports of the two clusters on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2022. The validation exercise was successful and the consultants incorporated the comments from stakeholders to finalize the reports.



Figure 20 above AU-IBAR Team following the MSP virtual workshop proceeding. AU-IBAR office, 24/11/2022

### *2.2.2.3 Support to specialized Regional institutions to strengthen identified transboundary MSPs; integrating best practices including elements such as conservation and recovery of degraded ecosystems, resilience to climate change impacts; improve current management strategies in the Regional Protocols, control and monitoring systems or Agreement;*

A mechanism for collaborating with the Abidjan Convention Secretariat was developed to support ongoing MSP initiatives in the West and Central Africa Region. The transboundary MSP initiative between Benin and Togo was identified. Two national meetings were organized in Benin and Togo to validate the State of

Transboundary Marine Environment (SoME) report which is a critical stage in actualizing the transboundary MSP initiative for the two Countries.



Figure 21 above Participants Group Photo, in Lome-Togo during the transboundary MSP State of transboundary marine environment (SoME) report validation meeting.



Figure 22 above Participants Group Photo, in Lome-Togo during the transboundary MSP State of transboundary marine environment (SoME) report validation meeting.

#### Key Outcomes:

- Two consultancy reports produced
- Policy Note on MSP Guidelines for use in Africa developed
- Mechanism for collaboration on transboundary MSP established between AU-IBAR and Abidjan Convention developed
- National meetings (Benin & Togo) validated the SoME report

#### Outstanding activities:

- Joint meeting between Benin and Togo to finalize validation of the SoME report
- Signing of the SoME report by Ministers of the two Countries anchor the transboundary MSP initiative on law

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

*2.3.1 Support rehabilitation of depleted aquatic biodiversity and habitats*

*2.3.1.1 Conduct a Continental review of existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), document lessons, best practices and formulate Guidelines for their sustainable implementation and governance;*

- An International expert, Ms. Nathalie Maisonneuve, was recruited to conduct a study on “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”;
- Dr. Rodrigue Pelebe was also recruited to conduct similar study in the West, Central and Northern Regions of Africa. Both studies were completed and final reports which incorporated comments/inputs from stakeholders at a virtual consultative workshop were submitted; and,
- The two Regional studies have been completed and reports submitted to AU-IBAR.

*2.3.1.2 Convene two virtual Regional Think Tank meetings on MPA implementation and governance to validate the findings of the consultancies 2.3.1.1. and develop recommendations;*

- A Continent-wide stakeholders virtual validation workshop was organized to validate the MPA study report for the East and Southern Regions of Africa on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2022 whereas the on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023, the MPA study report for the West, Central and Northern Regions of Africa was also validated by stakeholders in a virtual workshop; and,
- Both validation exercises were successful and the consultants incorporated the comments given by stakeholders into the reports before re-submitting the final drafts to AU-IBAR.

*2.3.1.3 Based on the outcomes of the studies on review of existing MPA initiatives, the project would provide technical and direct support to two specialized Regional institutions*

Currently, AU-IBAR is collaborating with WIOMSA, a Regional research-based organization within the Western Indian Ocean on transboundary MPA initiative. This is in-line with the study recommendation that the project supports a transboundary MPA initiative between Kenya and Tanzania. In East Africa, Kenya and Tanzania have agreed under the Nairobi Convention to explore the possibility of establishing a transboundary conservation area (TBCA) along Kenya and Tanzania’s shared border. To support Kenya and Tanzania complete the process of establishing and managing the proposed TBCA, AU-IBAR with partners (WIOMSA and the Nairobi Convention) is supporting bilateral processes for establishing and managing the proposed TBCA. The Bilateral engagements are expected to yield the following outcomes:

- The Governments of Kenya and Tanzania appoint a joint TBCA planning committee;
- Develop a spatial plan for the TBCA;
- Support or facilitate the collaboration between Kenya Wildlife Service and MPRU in the management of the transboundary marine area as the TBCA process continues; and,
- Develop a TBCA management plan;

Following the framework for this collaboration, AU-IBAR has so far supported two (2) National meetings in Tanzania and Kenya respectively to develop roadmaps towards the establishment of the proposed transboundary marine conservation area (TBCA).



Figure 23 Group Photo: Participants during the National meeting to develop a roadmap towards the establishment of the proposed transboundary marine conservation area (TBCA) in Daresalaam-TZ.



Figure 24 Group Photo: Participants during the National meeting to develop a roadmap towards the establishment of the proposed transboundary marine conservation area (TBCA), in Mombasa-Kenya.

**Key outcomes:**

- Two regional MPA study reports developed;
- Validated MPA study reports for the two Regions of Africa;
- Formal collaboration between AU-IBAR and WIOMSA on transboundary marine conservation area (TBCA) between Kenya and Tanzania.
- Policy note on guidelines for MPA establishment and governance for the East and Southern Region of Africa developed.
- Roadmap towards the establishment of TBCA – Kenya and Tanzania established



### **Outstanding activities:**

- Joint meetings for Kenya and Tanzania on actualizing the TBCA process.

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

*2.3.2.1 Support the establishment of two Continental Centres of Excellence on aquatic biodiversity; this activity is supporting the implementation of 2014 Ministerial Decision to identify Centres of Excellence in relevant aquatic fields including biodiversity*

- the advertisements launched by AU-IBAR to request for expression of interest as Centers of Excellence by African Universities and other research institutions with expertise in aquatic biodiversity conservation; external experts were identified and are currently conducting evaluation of bids submitted from prospective African Universities and research institutions for selection as Centres of Excellence in the following: i. Aquatic biodiversity conservation and ii. Aquatic ecology and ecosystems management

*2.3.2.2 Strengthen capacity of two identified Centres of Excellence - based on identified gaps (equipment and training materials);*

- This activity will be implemented once the centers of excellence are recruited.

### **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*

*3.1.1.1 Conduct studies on the negative impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment and recommend mitigation strategies.*

This activity was completed in the first year of project implementation

*3.1.1.2 Conduct a virtual Continental validation workshop on the studies on impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity, their environment and develop recommendations.*

This activity was completed in the first year of project implementation.

*3.1.1.3 The project would support to strengthen conservation and climate change impact mitigation efforts for identified ongoing initiatives on ecosystems restoration (mangroves, Sea grass etc.) on mitigation of climate change impact (increasing carbon sink).*

The project formalized collaboration with the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) to provide support for restoration of the functionality of Blue Carbon Ecosystems for community development and environmental sustainability in the Gazi bay of Kenya. Under its Mangrove Research Program, KMFRI with support from AU-IBAR is implementing the project on “Strengthening Conservation and Restoration of Blue Carbon Ecosystems for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptations”. As part of

activities being rolled out to implement this project, a training workshop on nature-based enterprises was organized for community members in the Gazi Bay, equipping them with knowledge and skills on carbon trading, mangrove ecotourism, aquaculture farming and bee keeping, as a means of developing alternative livelihoods and reducing overdependence on mangrove resources.



Figure 25 above Family photo taken during the Community Training on Nature-based Enterprises. 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2023. Gazi bay, Kenya



Figure. 26 above Facilitators of various topics on Nature-based enterprises while conducting training of Community members in Gazi Bay, Kenya



Figure 27 above Community members being taken through various topics on Nature-based enterprises. Gazi Bay, Kenya

**Key outcomes:**

- Continental study completed and validated;
- Policy brief developed from the study to guide mitigation of the negative impacts of climate change on aquatic biodiversity in Africa; and,
- Formal collaboration established between AU-IBAR and KMFRI for implementing the project on “Strengthening Conservation and Restoration of Blue Carbon Ecosystems for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptations”.

**Outstanding activities (AU-IBAR to support the following activities):**

**1. Under the AU-IBAR / KMFRI collaboration, the following activities are outstanding:**

*Activity 2.2: Mangrove nursery establishment, maintenance and tree planting.*

*Activity 2.3: Site preparations and boundary delineations of designated restoration sites*

*Activity 2.4: County level workshops to share processes and outcomes of ecological mangrove restoration as nature-based solutions*

*Activity 3.1: Procurement of appropriate tree seedlings for community woodlots*

*Activity 3.2: Establishment of community woodlots*

*Activity 3.3: Fencing of community woodlots and orchards*

*Activity 3.4: Preparations of a monitoring plan*

*Activity 4.1: Build capacity for local-level governance of nature-based enterprises involving mangroves and associated ecosystems*

*Activity 4.2: Gender mainstreaming in community-based mangrove conservation in line with Kenya’s Constitution (2010).*

**2. A second initiative is to be identified and supported in the next project implementation year, as provided by the project.**

**OUTPUT 3.2.** *Strategies for an integrated Strategic Framework for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining developed.*

**3.2.1.** *Identify priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining activities on aquatic*

*biodiversity and environment and develop guidelines.*

*3.2.1.1 Conduct studies to identify priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environment protection.*

- An International consultant, Prof. Adetola Jenyo-Oni (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) was recruited 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 consultant completed and submitted the report to AU-IBAR for validation by an Africa-wide stakeholder base.

*3.2.1.2 The studies would be followed by five National stakeholder's consultations to develop National Master Plans on sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining development for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection; the private sector would be part of the sector holder's workshop.*

- Three out of 5 National stakeholder's consultation meetings provided for under this activity in the project, have been conducted in the second year (2023) of the project implementation plan and two will be conducted in the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) year (2024) of project implementation. So far, the three National stakeholder's consultation meetings conducted include; Nigeria, Gabon and Kenya. The three Countries have been supported to develop National Master Plans on sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining development for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. Further, the Countries were able to develop Policies and Regulatory frameworks to guide the development of coastal and marine tourism, oil and gas and mineral mining sectors in their respective Countries.

**a. Support to the Republic of Nigeria**

The first National consultative meeting was held in Abuja-Nigeria from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2023, to develop a National Masterplan for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities as well as strengthen Regulatory Frameworks towards aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management. The National consultative workshop was organized by AU-IBAR in collaboration with the federal Ministry of Fisheries of Nigeria.



Figure 28 above Stakeholder consultation on National Masterplan and Regulatory Frameworks for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining Activities for Nigeria.

**b. Support to the Republic of Kenya**

The second National consultative meeting was held in Nairobi-Kenya from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2023. The meeting was co-organized by AU-IBAR and hosted by the Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime affairs in Nairobi, Kenya.



Figure 29 above Family photo for National stakeholders during the National consultative meeting to develop a Master Plan for CMT & Mining activities, 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2023; Nairobi-Kenya



Figure 30 above Prof. Adetola Jenyo-Oni – CMT consultant, delivering a presentation on the findings of the study on Priority Issues and Actions for Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism, and Mining activities.



Figure 31 above Stakeholders involved in group discussions during the working session of workshop

### c. Support to the Republic of Gabon

The third National consultative meeting was held in Libreville – Gabon from 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2023. Led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, stakeholders were engaged to develop a National Masterplan for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining activities, as well as strengthen Regulatory Frameworks towards aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management.



Figure 32 above Family photo for National stakeholders during the National consultative meeting to develop a National Master Plan for CMT & Mining activities, 29th – 31th March, 2023; Libreville-Gabon.



Figure 33 above From Left: Mr. Philippe Ouedraogo-AU-IBAR – delivering Opening remarks on behalf of the Ag. Director AU-IBAR; His Excellence Hon. Minister for Transport Gabon; His Excellence, Hon. Pascal HOUANGNI AMBOUROUET, Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy – during the opening ceremony; & Dr. Baschirou Moussa Demsa representative of ECCAS.



Figure 34 above Mr. Joel Mokenye, Aquatic Biodiversity specialist at AU-IBAR facilitating group discussion during the National consultative meeting to develop a Master plan for Kenya, 22nd – 24th March, 2023.

3.2.1.3 Based on the identified priority issues in the National Master plan, the project would support development or (strengthening), monitoring and regulatory Frameworks in 5 AU Member States for sustainable coastal and marine tourisms and mining for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.

- This activity is planned for the third year of project implementation.

**Key outcomes:**

- Report on studies to identify priority issues and actions for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environment protection developed;
- Master plans for three AU-MS on sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining development for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection developed; and,
- Policy and Regulatory Guidelines for strengthening the existing sector Policies formulated;

**Outstanding activities:**

- To support development or strengthening, monitoring and Regulatory Frameworks in 5 AU Member States for sustainable coastal and marine tourisms and mining for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.



## 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

4.1.1. Support development of a Continental Strategy for inclusion of gender in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management

4.1.1.1 Convene an Expert Consultative meeting to identify priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of Women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management.

From 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, the project organized a Gender experts' consultative meeting 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. The workshop was attended by 28 participants drawn from the following AU MS: Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Algeria; Regional Sea Conventions: Abidjan Convention; Regional Economic Communities: Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA); Non State Actors: representatives of African Marine Environment Sustainability Initiative (AFMESI), African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET), Zanzibar Seaweed Cluster Initiative; AU Centers of Excellence: Central Laboratory for Aquaculture Research (CLAR); Independent Experts from the University of Sierra Leone, the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and PRCM; SIDA, AUDA-NEPAD and AU-IBAR



Figure 35 above Family photo taken during the Gender Experts' Consultative Meeting at Naivasha, Kenya.



Figure 36 Dr. Senait Regassa, Representative of SIDA, delivering a speech at the workshop (left); Mrs. Patricia Lumba, Snr. Knowledge Management Officer, AU-IBAR, delivering the welcome address at the workshop on behalf of the Director of AU-IBAR (right)

This was preceded by a Continental study on “Priority Issues and Actions Necessary for Strengthening the Role of Women in Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management in Africa”, conducted by Dr. Mastewal Yami, a gender consultant engaged by AU-IBAR.



Figure 37 Dr. Mastewal Yami – Gender consultant, delivering a presentation on the findings of the Continental gender studies conducted.

The workshop brought experts together to share relevant insights towards formulation of a Continental Strategy for inclusion of gender in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management.

**Key Outcomes:**

- 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.



*Figure 38 Working session to discuss priority issues for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Africa.*

#### 4.1.1.2 Convene a virtual Continental think tank stakeholder's consultation workshop on identified priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of women in biodiversity and environmental management.

Following the gender experts' consultative meeting, the Project organized a virtual Continental stakeholder consultative workshop on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2022, to validate priority areas and strategic actions to be covered in the Continental Strategy on mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. The virtual workshop was attended by 80 participants, including representatives from: Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Specialized Regional Institutions; Blue Economy Sectors from the various African Union Member States; African Union Centres of Excellence; Gender consultants and experts; and Non-state actors from across the African Continent. At the workshop, the Continental Strategy was validated for rolling out in the various AU Member States.



Figure 39 AU-IBAR Project team following the virtual validation workshop proceedings

Key Outcomes:

- Priority issues/actions for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management assessed and validated.
- Continental Strategy on gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management assessed and validated.

4.1.1.3 Technical support would be given to 3 AU-MS to develop all-inclusive and deliberate biodiversity Strategies as important entry points for Women’s empowerment.

To roll out the Continental Strategy on Gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management, the project envisions to support 3 AU-MS to develop all-inclusive and deliberate strategies for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. In the reporting year (2023), 2 AU-MS were supported (Malawi and Ethiopia).

**a. Support to the Republic of Malawi**

In collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change in Malawi, the project organized a National Stakeholders’ Consultative Workshop in Lilongwe, Malawi, from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a platform for stakeholders to explore ways of 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 Malawi.

The workshop was attended by 35 participants comprising of representatives from: Ministry of Natural Resources & Climate Change; Association of Environmental Journalists; Lilongwe District Council; Environmental Affairs Department; Lake Malawi National Park; National Youth Network on Climate Change (NYNCC); Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR); Department of Forestry; Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare; Department of Fisheries; Green Girls Platform; Department of National Parks and Wildlife; Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Land

Resource Conservation; Malawi University of Science and Technology; IUCN; SADC Secretariat; Southern Africa Youth Forum; AWFISHNET – Malawi Chapter; Department of Agricultural Extension Services; and AU-IBAR Technical and Administrative staff.



Figure 40 above Family photo taken during the National Consultative Stakeholders' Workshop to develop all-inclusive and deliberate strategies for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Malawi. Lilongwe, Malawi. 3rd – 4th May, 2023.



Figure 41 above Focus group discussions at the National Gender Workshop in Malawi

The following recommendations were made by stakeholders at the workshop

- a. As the strategy is still under development, there is the need for involvement of relevant experts to enhance development of an all-inclusive strategy.
  - b. AU-IBAR is requested to continue supporting Malawi to develop a National Blue Economy Strategy.
  - c. There is the need for further consultation of the draft strategy once completed at various levels.
  - d. There is a need to validate the strategy for ownership.
  - e. SADC proposed a policy brief developed for the Strategy as a means to popularize it.
- b. Support to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

The Ministry of Agriculture in Ethiopia hosted the National Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 2023. The workshop was attended by 34 participants comprising of representatives from: Ministry of Women and Social Affairs; Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute;

Gambella Regional Livestock & Fishery Development Bureau; Gambella Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resource; Oromia Region Bureau of Agriculture; Ministry of Agriculture; Organization of Ethiopia Cooperative Commission; Ethiopian Fisheries and Aquatic Science Association (EFASA); Women Fish Processors Cooperation; Ethiopian Environmental Authority; Amhara Regional Animal & Fish Resource Development Bureau; Independent Consultants on Gender; SNNP Regional Bureau of Agriculture; LFSD Project; SNNPRS Bureau of Agricultural and Natural Resource Development; Ministry of Tourism; IGAD; and AU-IBAR.



Figure 42 above Family photo taken during the National Consultative Stakeholders' Workshop to develop all-inclusive and deliberate strategies for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 14th – 15th June, 2023.



Figure 43 above Focus group discussions at the National Gender Workshop in Ethiopia

The following recommendations were made by stakeholders at the workshop:

- Mechanism for implementing the Strategy should take into consideration implementation of existing policies related to aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.
- The Project should assist with enforcement of regulations on aquatic biodiversity conservation

- Incentive mechanisms to reduce plastic pollution in Ethiopia.
- Broaden the engagement of stakeholders in activities related to gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.
- There should be a joint initiative between AU-IBAR and IGAD to support the implementation of the National Strategy in Ethiopia.

**Key Outcomes:**

Two AU-MS supported to develop their National Strategies on Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Aquatic Biodiversity

**Outstanding Activities:**

Third AU-MS to be supported to develop an all-inclusive and deliberate strategy for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

*4.1.1.4 Mapping of ongoing environmental based-NGOs focusing on conserving biodiversity and environment protection would be conducted and technical support provided by the project to develop or strengthen gender-sensitive workplans to enhance the role of women and youth in biodiversity protection and environmental governance (NGOs include Non-State Actors, CSOs, Private sector involved in environmental management).*

A database of ongoing environmental based-NGOs focusing on conserving biodiversity and environmental protection was generated through the continuous engagement with stakeholders on the project. Subsequently, 2 ongoing initiatives were selected for support under the project to develop gender-sensitive workplans to enhance the role of women and youth in biodiversity protection and environmental governance. In the year of reporting (2023), AU-IBAR established collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to support one ongoing NGO initiative in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

**a. AU-IBAR collaboration with IUCN to support the Dusornu CREMA**

The collaboration between AU-IBAR and IUCN is aimed at contributing to enhancement of effective governance of the Dusornu Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) established to protect mangrove resources within the Anglo-Keta landscape in the Volta Region of Ghana. As part of activities designed for this support, the project supported the election of executives for the CREMA on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2023; and training of the executives on effective governance and management practices for inclusive and sustainable management of the CREMA on 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2023.



Figure 44 Community members in the Anglo-Keta landscape who engaged in the voting exercise for the Dusornu CREMA Executives



Figure 45 above Elected Community Resource Management Committee (CRMC) for the Dusornu CREMA



Figure 46 above Presentations from partners during the training of elected CREMA executives (left: IUCN, middle: Forestry Commission, right: AU-IBAR)





Figure 47 above Group exercises to discuss engagement of women in mangrove use and management during the training workshop for the elected CREMA executives

**Key Outcome:**

Formal collaboration established between AU-IBAR and IUCN for implementing the project on “Integrated Protection of Fragile Ecosystems”

**Outstanding Activities (AU-IBAR to support the following activities):**

1. **Under the AU-IBAR / IUCN collaboration, the following activities are outstanding:**
  - Co-fund the drafting of a clear gender disaggregated roles management plan for the CREMA;
  - Provide funding for some gender-specific livelihoods activities in the management plan;
  - Co-fund the socio-economic study to ensure equal representation of gender from the district assemblies and communities at the meetings;
  - Support for subsequent management committee meetings; and,
  - Co-fund the trainings of the CREMA Executive Committee (CEC) and Community Resource Management Committee (CRMC) to build their capacities on gender roles in decision making.
  
2. **A second initiative is to be supported in the next project implementation year, as provided by the project.**

## 4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Project Technical and Steering Committee Meetings

### 4.1 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL PROJECT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

AU-IBAR, with support from the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation (SIDA), organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Project Technical Committee (PTC) meeting of the project on ‘Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy’ from 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 in Naivasha-Kenya.

The meeting was attended by 33 participants drawn from the following: Selected AU MS – Cote d’Ivoire, Tanzania and Kenya; Regional Economic Communities – EAC & ECCAS; Regional Sea Convention – Abidjan Convention; CCLME; Partner Institutions – FAO, SwAM, IOC/UNESCO, IUCN, FCWC, KMFRI, WIOMSA, LVFO; Centres of Excellence – ACECoR; NSAs – AWFISHNET; Experts and AU – IBAR.

The overall objective of the 2<sup>nd</sup> PTC meeting was to inform and update the PTC members on current status and progress of implementation of project activities from the first PTC meeting as well as receive stakeholder recommendations on ongoing initiatives.

#### **Specific Objectives**

1. To brief the Project Technical Committee (PTC) members on progress of implementation of recommendations from the first PTC meeting;
2. To apprise (PTC) members on progress of implementation of the 2022 – 2023 work plan approved by the first PTC, achievements, challenges and emerging issues;
3. Disseminate information on current status of collaboration and partnerships that were developed for complementarities and to minimize duplications in implementation of activities;
4. Convey stakeholders’ demand for next steps;
5. To present the 2023 – 2024 project work plan for discussion and approval; and,
6. To develop recommendations for consideration by the Second Project Steering Committee members.



Figure 48 above Group Family Photo: Participants of the 2nd PTC meeting held in Naivasha, Kenya

## **KEY OUTCOMES OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL PROJECT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING:**

- The PTC endorsed all presentations delivered at the meeting.
- The PTC commended AU – IBAR for the impressive progress made so far on project implementation.
- The PTC approved the recommendations herewith provided below for consideration by the PSC.
- The PTC expressed gratitude to the Swedish Government for supporting implementation of the Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Project.
- The PTC endorsed a no-cost extension for the Project.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SECOND PROJECT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

1. The PTC recommended a no-cost extension to allow the project to implement the remaining activities and address identified emerging issues;
2. The project should continue drawing synergies with existing projects and initiate new partnerships (e.g. on MCS including the ACeCOR-UCC, GMES project – University of Ghana, etc);
3. AU-IBAR should expand the scope of the ongoing initiative on transboundary MPA between Kenya and Tanzania to Southern Africa;
4. The Project to consider expanding the scope of MSP to other identified transboundary areas;
5. AU-IBAR should strengthen the capacity for Regional MCS systems in Central Africa in the no-cost extension phase;
6. The project to support additional Member States to mainstream all-inclusive gender strategies;
7. Capacity building for media to enhance their capacity for adequate reporting, including new tools of communication for the wider stakeholders in the no-cost phase of the project; and,
8. Establish a communication task force to improve local reporting and coherence of messages on aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management and dissemination.

## **4.2 2<sup>ND</sup> SECOND PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE**

AU-IBAR, with support from the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation (SIDA), organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Project Steering Committee (PTC) meeting of the project on “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy’ on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 in Naivasha-Kenya.

The Second Project Steering Committee meeting was attended by 34 participants comprising of: Ministers/ Representatives of Ministries of Fisheries and Blue Economy from selected AU MS – Republic of Cote d’Ivoire, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania. Other participants included; Regional Economic Communities – Representative from East Africa Community (EAC); Regional Sea Convention: Representative from Abidjan Convention Secretariat; Large Marine Ecosystem: Representative from Benguela Current Convention (BCC); Technical Partner institutions: Representatives from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC); Centres of Excellence: Representative from the Africa Centre of Excellence in Coastal Resilience (ACECoR)-University of Cape Coast; Non State Actor: Representatives from the African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET) and

Private sector; Technical Experts; Representative of the Swedish Embassy to the African Union/ Sweden's government agency for development cooperation (SIDA) and Staff of AU-IBAR

**The objectives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC meeting were to.**

- Brief the PSC members on progress of implementation of the 2022 – 2023 project work plan and emerging issues;
- Share information on 2023 – 2024 project work plan activities;
- Review and adopt the recommendations from the 2<sup>nd</sup> PTC meeting;
- Share information on strategic collaboration and partnership in the implementation of the project; and,
- Provide recommendations on strategic direction in project implementation.



Figure 49 Group Photo: Participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC meeting held in Naivasha, Kenya

**OUTCOMES OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC MEETING:**

The PSC adopted the recommendations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> PTC meeting with amendment;

- The PSC members were duly briefed on the status of implementation of the project and emerging issues;
- The PSC members were briefed on strategic collaborations and partnerships established by the project for effective implementation;
- The PSC endorsed the project's third year workplan activities and budget; and,
- The PSC provided recommendations for the strategic direction of the project implementation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC MEETING**

The following recommendations were made by members of the PSC:

- e. No-cost-extension requested by the PTC should be accompanied by a narrative, budget and workplan for consideration by SIDA;
- f. Project outcomes should be communicated effectively at the community level;
- g. The yearly project implementation should be presented in a format that captures planned, achieved, outstanding activities and challenges;
- h. The project should strengthen the capacities of AWFISHNET on the Blue Economy concepts;
- i. A need to consider flexibility to accommodate new initiatives (such as MCS, aquaculture - pollution) in the no-cost-extension; and,
- j. The project should engage the private sector and showcase activities implemented.

## 5. Communications, Visibility & Knowledge Management

Throughout the reporting period, several communication endeavors were executed with the aim of raising consciousness regarding the primary interventions of the Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the Africa Blue Economy Project. The activities are in accordance with the project's communication Strategy, which seeks to: (i) enhance public understanding of the significance of aquatic biodiversity by providing actionable insights to various societal stakeholders; (ii) enhance coherence and collaboration in biodiversity initiatives across the continent via the exchange of knowledge.

### 5.1 Communication Channels and Tools

#### **Online Community Spaces & Calendaring**

Throughout the reporting period, it was observed that a sum of eighty-nine stakeholders had registered on the online community platform, Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity, as well as the Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Blue Economy online space. These individuals utilized these platforms to access pertinent project-related information, such as digital photo albums, PowerPoint presentations, and media coverage. A digital schedule of events is consistently managed to inform stakeholders of the project's ongoing activities. <https://networks.au-ibar.org/show/fisheries-3/calendar> .

#### **Media**

The project employs a network of media experts to provide coverage of events and to engage on social media as required. Throughout the reporting period, various news articles were produced by a number of media outlets, including but not limited to Standard Media Group, KBC Media, the Nation, Com & Click, Seychelles News Agency, TrendsNAfrica, BlueLifeHUB, and the Guardian.

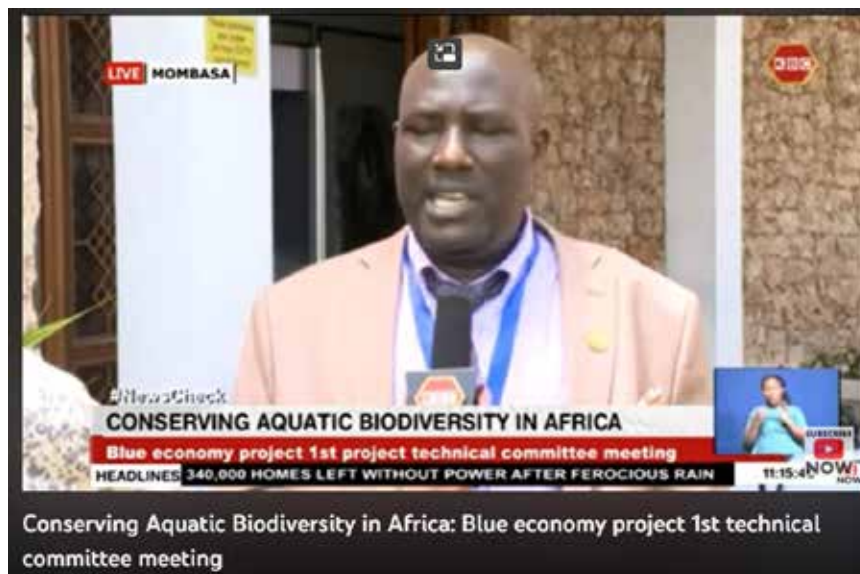


Figure 50 Conserving aquatic biodiversity in Africa Blue Economy project 1<sup>st</sup> technical Committee meeting

Articles regarding the project events were written and distributed through various news media outlets (television, radio, print, and online platforms). The articles include gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management, the first Steering and Technical Committee

Meetings of the Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity Project, training in International negotiations for Small Island Developing States, and the Kenya event aimed at enhancing Regulatory Frameworks for aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems.

The local media engagement presented a prospect to additionally distribute information in Regional dialects, such as Swahili and French in Mombasa and Mauritius, respectively. The online community platform of AU-IBAR is utilized by journalists to upload articles and provide coverage in addition to what is sent to mainstream media outlets. <https://networks.au-ibar.org/show/media-sharing-stories/blog>

### **Social Media**

The visibility of the project is enhanced by means of social media postings (on Twitter and LinkedIn) that are interlinked with the Project Microsite. A significant number of media professionals on Twitter have demonstrated active involvement with AU-IBAR.

### **Microsite**

**The maintenance of the project microsite has involved the regular posting of key events and their corresponding outcomes and communique.** <https://www.au-ibar.org/au-ibar-projects/conserving-aquatic-biodiversity-african-blue-economy>

### **Online repository**

The peer-reviewed research outputs of the project have been uploaded to the Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Blue Economy Collection in the AU-IBAR repository collection: <http://repository.au-ibar.org/handle/123456789/1169>. Efforts are currently underway to standardize deposited documents and ensure their compliance with publication standards.

### **Documentary on Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the Africa Blue Economy Project**

During the month of February in the year 2023, a professional videographer was commissioned to produce two videos, one of which is a condensed version, and to capture photographic images of sites dedicated to the preservation of aquatic environments. The objective of these media productions is to increase awareness about the crucial need to protect aquatic ecosystems, the factors that drive their changes, and the difficulties and possibilities related to their administration, through the interventions of the Project. A key objective of this initiative has been the promotion of civic engagement among adjacent communities.

### **Visibility Materials**

To raise awareness on the Project existence, and funders among stakeholders, several memorabilia were distributed at stakeholder meetings held during this reporting period (October, 2022 – October, 2023).

Descriptions	Quantity
Executive Box (Water bottle, Pen, Flash drive and Power bank) (with 3 logos)	10
Executive Leather Folder	10
Branded Jute Bags (with 3 logos)	60
Branded Water Bottles (with 3 logos)	60
Branded USB flash drives (8GB) (with 3 logos)	60
Project Flyer	200 (English 120 French 80)
Conserving Aquatic – Popular version	200 (English 120 French 80)
Branded Polo T- shirts	50
Branded Hats	50
Pull up banners	12
Flex Banners	4
Meeting Folders	260
Notebooks	260
Branded Switch Pens	260

## 5.2 Key outcomes

One significant result is the utilization of a varied array of communication tools to effectively disseminate essential messages to a wide spectrum of stakeholders, encompassing:

- Local and Regional entities: Ministries of Environment; Regional Economic Communities; Regional Fisheries Management Organizations; and Regional Fisheries Body
- International Organizations
- Research collaborators and academic users (Centres of Excellence)
- Project partners and other projects
- Citizen engagement: by engaging with local communities and the general public

Simultaneously, the assortment of communication channels employed has expanded and transitioned from predominantly conventional print media to digital and social media reinforced by visual and audiovisual elements. Multiple project partners and other initiatives possess pre-existing communication and social media tools that serve as both a means of communication and a research tool. Additionally, a number of stakeholders have initiated the process of linking to online resources provided by AU-IBAR, and vice versa. The employment of these dissemination channels is being implemented within the Framework of augmenting the diffusion of project communication.

## 5.3 Plans to strengthen communications for next implementation phase:

As per the specifications outlined in the Project Communication Plan, the forthcoming reporting period will involve the execution of the following tasks:

- Dissemination of key messages and awareness of project deliverables through the repository, as well as the creation of links between the aquatic biodiversity collection and additional online repositories;

- Dissemination of findings and products of research at the forthcoming Knowledge share Fair to be held in June, 2023;
- Maintain analytics regarding the utilization or citation of existing knowledge products;
- Dissemination of videos or multimedia products at stakeholder meetings, on television and social media platforms;
- Translation of research results by condensing results into fact papers/sheets and briefs for easier use by the general public and the media; and,
- Creation of a newsletter to disseminate project-related information.

Table 2: Sample Usage Statistics

Title	No. of Views as at 16/04/2023	No. of Downloads as at 16/04/2023	Top 5 Viewer Countries / Out of 10	Month document uploaded in Repository
Transboundary Environmental Issues Affecting Biodiversity in Selected Shared Freshwater Ecosystems: Towards Formulating Harmonized Regional Strategy for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Joint Action Plans	38	35	China; United States; Malaysia, Ethiopia; Netherlands.  Other African Countries Viewed (lower end): Nil (0)	March 2023
Impact of Climate Change on Africa Aquatic Ecosystems and Biodiversity and Proposed Mitigation Measures	86	19	China; Egypt, United States; Italy; Kenya  Other African Countries Viewed (Lower End): Ethiopia	January 2023
Policy Framework Reform Strategy	70	210	United States; Kenya; Uganda; China; Nigeria Other African Countries Viewed: Malawi, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia	August 2022
Africa Blue Economy Strategy	397	88	United States; France; Kenya; Germany; United Kingdom  Other African Countries Viewed: Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana, Namibia, Ethiopia	August 2022
Policy Note on Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning towards supporting Implementation of the African Union Blue Economy Strategy	239	74	United States, Kenya, United Kingdom, South Africa, Switzerland.  Other African Countries Viewed: Morocco	October, 2022



## 6. Progress On Indicators

### 6.1 LOGFRAME

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

RESULTS CHAIN /DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS	BASELINES	TARGETS	Progress / Comments	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Impact: Sustainable conservation and utilization of aquatic biodiversity and marine environments for food and income through improved Policy, Regulatory Frameworks and institutional capacities.	Change in reported IUU incidences (Used as a proxy for overexploitation of resources)	A study / Survey will be conducted working with RFBs and RECs to establish the current number of incidences reported in each Region	Reduction 30%		AU-IBAR Reports	Political will and corporation from Regional and National authorities on development and enforcement of relevant Legal Frameworks
	# of RECs (or specialized Regional institutions) and MSs whose institutional capacities on conservation and utilization of aquatic biodiversity were enhanced	0	4 RECs 15 MSs		AU-IBAR Reports	
<b>Outcomes</b>						
Improved ratification and alignment of relevant Policies and Regulations to key International and / Regional Instruments related to protection and conservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems	Ratification rates of relevant legal Instruments (Disaggregated by Instrument)	A study is planned to determine the relevant Instruments and their baseline ratification rates	%		AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
Improved capacities for sustainable management, utilization, protection and conservation of living aquatic resources and related ecosystems	# of MSs and RECs (or specialized Regional institutions) and specialized institutions) implementing the ecosystems approach to managing marine and coastal ecosystems	A baseline survey will be conducted	15		AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	

RESULTS CHAIN /DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS	BASELINES	TARGETS	Progress / Comments	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Measures for mitigation impacts of coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas, deep Sea mining and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment strengthened	# of RECs or specialized institutions or AU Member States (AU MS) in which the recommendations on mitigating the negative impacts of climate change are piloted	0	2	3 AU MS Done this year (Nigeria, Gabon and Kenya) for coastal and marine and tourism and mining Working with KEMFRI to pilot CC mitigation Strategies this year	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
Improved participation and engagement of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management	# of RECs and MSs in which measures to enhance participation of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management are implemented	0	5 MSs (including other organizations)	Support for Malawi and Ethiopia in May and May to mainstream women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. Preparations in advance to collaborate with IUCN mainstreaming women and youth.		
<b>Outputs:</b>						
1.1: Mechanisms for active participation of MSs in Regional and Global initiatives related to aquatic biodiversity and environmental regimes (ABNJ, CITES, COP meeting relating to CC, BRS, etc.) developed	# of mechanisms for enhancing effective participation of Africa in Global negotiations developed/	0	1	2 (two) mechanisms developed and validated; one mechanism for studies conducted West, Central and Northern Regions; another for studies conducted in the South and Eastern Regions.	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	Corporation and willingness to learn by key stakeholders involves since BE transcend different sectors  Timely availability of financial, human and material resources  Innovative technologies are used to facilitate implementation in lite of Covid 19 induced restrictions

RESULTS CHAIN /DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS	BASELINES	TARGETS	Progress / Comments	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
	# of AU MSs supported to participate in relevant aquatic biodiversity and environmental Fora	0	5	2 AU MS (Madagascar and Cape Verde and Resource person) to be supported to participate in CC Conference in Bonn, Germany in June, 2023:  Seychelles to be supported to participate in UN Review Conference on UN Fish Stocks Agreement in New York, UNSA in May, 2023.	AU - IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
1.2. Ratification and implementation of Conventions and Agreements related to conservation of biodiversity in AU MSs and RECs supported	# of MSs and RECs supported to review and align National Policies and Instruments with relevant Regional and Global Instruments	0	10MSs	South Sudan and Egypt to be supported to review domestic relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity and environment.	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
2.1. Enforceable Regulatory Frameworks for effective and sustainable Regional MCS systems developed	A Continental Framework for sustainable financing mechanisms of fisheries and aquaculture resources and related ecosystems developed	0	1	The study is ongoing in the South-Eastern Regions.	AU - IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
2.2 A Framework for establishing National, Regional and transboundary cooperation on Africa Blue Economy Strategy Thematic Areas established	# of Regional institutions in which the recommendation and lessons on MSP are implemented	0	2	In discussion with Abidjan Convention for collaboration on ongoing initiatives.	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
	# of transboundary aquatic ecosystems Frameworks developed for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management	0	2	2 developed: 1 for freshwater ecosystems and 1 for marine ecosystems		

RESULTS CHAIN /DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS	BASELINES	TARGETS	Progress / Comments	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
	# of AU MS supported to develop a harmonized Strategy or Policies for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management	0	5	3 AU MS supported to developed National Strategy or Policy Instruments for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management: Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi		
2.3 Capacities for restoring and conserving threatened aquatic biodiversity and environment strengthened	# of shared transboundary ecosystems in which MPA guidelines are piloted	0	2	Currently in discussions with WIOMSA for collaboration to pilot MPA studies on ongoing initiatives	AU – IBAR Reports	
	# of aquatic Centres of Excellence established and strengthened	0	2	Selection process on going to recruit experts to evaluation applications from institutions for selection as Centre's of Excellence on 1. aquatic ecology and biodiversity and 2. Aquatic ecosystems management		
3.1. Measures for minimizing the negative impacts of climate change on biodiversity and environment strengthened and implemented	A study on the negative impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment conducted	0	1	1 study conducted	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
3.2. Strategies for an integrated Strategic Framework for sustainable coastal and marine tourism and mining developed	# of MSs supported to pilot guidelines on sustainable marine and coastal tourism and mining to ensure biodiversity and environmental conservation	0	5	Gabon, Kenya and Nigeria supported	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	

<b>RESULTS CHAIN /DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>BASELINES</b>	<b>TARGETS</b>	<b>Progress / Comments</b>	<b>MEANS OF VERIFICATION</b>	<b>ASSUMPTIONS</b>
4.1 Continental strategy for gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management developed	# of AU MS supported to implement Regional Strategy for enhancing the role of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity and integrated environmental management	0	5	Malawi and Ethiopia to be supported	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
	# of environmental based NGOs supported to implement gender sensitive workplans	0	2	Collaborating with IUCN to support communities in Ghana	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	

## 7. Technical Project Staff:

- a. Dr. Mohamed Seisay – Sustainable Blue Economy Expert and Project Coordinator
- b. Mr. Eric Nadiope - Legal, Policy and institutional Expert
- c. Mr. Joel Mokenye – Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist
- d. Dr. Alberta Sagoe – Gender Policy and Strategy Expert
- e. Mr. Oroko Kennedy – Planning and Monitoring Officer

## 8. Partnerships And Synergies:

In the course of implementation of the project, the project has forged partnerships with various organizers including the following:

- a. Abidjan Convention
- b. Nairobi Convention
- c. WIOMSA
- d. KMFRI
- e. IUCN
- f. RECs
- g. Specialized Regional Fisheries Bodies e.g. LVFO, FCWC, SRFC

## 9. Challenges and Emerging Issues

The implementation of the project continues accordingly to the workplan for the second year. However due to the delays experienced in the first year in recruitment of experts to conduct studies, these activities spilled over to the second year of project implementation. In any case, most of the outstanding expert studies have been completed or are being completed.

Consistent with the Project second year workplan, a major focus of interventions, following conclusion of selected studies, is stakeholders' consultation to finalize draft reports and rolling-out the outcomes and recommendations from the study reports. The implementation of these recommendations has taken the form of direct support to AU Member States as well as Regional institutions. The support by the project to AU Member States has generated considerable enthusiasm among other AU Member States that have not benefitted. This ongoing support to AU Member States to strengthen their institutional capacity and Policy environment for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management has been overwhelmingly welcomed and has engendered political ownerships, of the outcomes, as evidenced by the presence of high-level personnel in most of the National workshops.

In most cases, due to the limitation of budget, the envisaged support has been premised on leveraging ongoing activities, especially with regards to the MCS, MSP, MPA, Gender, Climate change mitigation etc. However, in few cases or instances, the expectation from few partners is for the project to fund new initiatives that have perhaps been in the pipeline rather than contributing to ongoing activities relevant to the project. This misconception has, in some case, led to lack of commitment for collaboration.

As the numerous study reports are being finalized, there has been increasing call and request for production of physical copies to ensure wider dissemination among stakeholders, in particular the knowledge products (Policy Notes/Briefs, Advocacy Notes, Information Notes, Guidelines etc.). These requests were not foreseen in the project since dedicated budgets line were not created for production of reports.

## 10. Discussions and Recommendations:

The implementation of the project on the overall, is on course to achieving the stated overall goals and Strategic objectives. What has become clear or emerging (as issue) is the overwhelming enthusiasm in the AU Member States or Regional institutions where project's outcomes are being piloted. These have created recurring requests for supports from other AU Members States or other Regional institutions, which the project cannot now handle due to the available budgets allocated.

Another important emerging observation is that, through Member States are being assisted to develop Strategies, Frameworks or domesticate prioritized Instruments, there is a need to much broader stakeholders' consultations, which current allocated funds in the project cannot afford.

The preliminary results of the project has engendered enormous interests and created momentum amongst AU Member States and Regional institutions on promoting or establishing relatively emerging concepts such as Marine Spatial Planning, coastal and marine tourism, gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity for promoting sustainable blue growth in Africa Aquatic ecosystems.; so much so that even in the second year of project, there has been clarion calls for project continuation beyond its present scheduled expiry date.

## 11. Project Reports and Knowledge Products

The following reports have been generated by the project so far:

1. Report on Mechanism for enhancing effective role and participation in Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental related regimes;
2. Report on the Assessment of the Status of Ratification, Domestication and Implementation of key Continental and Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental management in the East and Southern African Union Member States;
3. Report on Status of MCS in the West, North and Central Africa;
4. Report on Lessons and Best practices for implementing MSP and Guidelines for institutionalization at National and Regional levels (transboundary);
5. Report on Transboundary issues in conservation and of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in fresh and marine ecosystems and Frameworks for Regional Protocol and Strategy;
6. Report on Lessons and Best practices for implementing MPA and Guidelines for implementation and governance;
7. Report on Impact of climate change and mitigation measures in Africa;
8. Report on Priority actions for sustainable coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas and mineral exploration;

9. A Continental Strategy for gender mainstreaming in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management;
10. A framework for establishing innovative, cost-effective financial mechanisms (funding systems) for sustainable monitoring, control, surveillance (MCS), and enforcement systems for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection in shared African aquatic ecosystems for the east and southern regions of Africa;
11. Report on the status of MCS in the East and Southern Region of Africa; and,
12. A report on the 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 in the West, central and north Africa.

***Knowledge products generated by the project include:***

- a. Advocacy Note Mitigating measures for impact of climate change in aquatic ecosystems of Africa;
- b. Advocacy Note on Mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of African Union Member States in Regional, Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora or regimes (North, West and Central Africa);
- c. Continental guidelines for institutionalizing MSP in Africa;
- d. Policy Note on Enhancing Ratification, Domestication and Implementation of Global Instruments for Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and Environmental Sustainability in Africa;
- e. Policy Note on sustainable coastal and marine tourism for conservation of aquatic ecosystems and environment;
- f. Policy Note on unlocking the potential for strengthening the role of Women in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in Africa; and,
- g. Video documentary on the project, “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the context of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy”





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