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# **National Report on Developing an All-inclusive and Deliberate Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Ethiopia.**



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## Acronyms

ABC	Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation
ABES	African Blue Economy Strategy
AU-IBAR	African Union InterAfrica Bureau for Animal Resources
BE	Blue Economy
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CIG	Common Interest Group
EM	Environmental Management
GMF	Gender Model Family
GO	Governmental Organization
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSA	Non-State Actors
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

## I. Introduction

The African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is mandated to support and coordinate the utilization of livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and wildlife as resources for human wellbeing and economic development in the member states. Accordingly, the Africa Blue Economy Strategy was developed to guide the development of an inclusive and sustainable blue economy to contribute to the continent's transformation and growth. Following the Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES), Ethiopia became the first to develop a National Blue Economy Strategy among the member state countries of the AU.

To enhance legal frameworks and build institutional capacities of member states to sustainably utilize and conserve aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems in the context of the ABES, the Project on Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in African Blue Economy was designed and is being implemented over three years (2021-2024), with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

A key component of the project is to strengthen gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. In that regard, a continental strategy on gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management has been developed to guide member states to develop all-inclusive and deliberate strategies for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management programmes and initiatives. AU-IBAR is thus providing support to selected Member States to develop their Gender Mainstreaming Strategies in Aquatic Biodiversity under the Project.

The Republic of Ethiopia was selected to receive such support and a consultant was engaged to facilitate the development a strategy that enhances the role of women and youth in inclusive aquatic biodiversity conservation (ABC) and environmental management (EM), through reviewing related legal frameworks of Ethiopia. The report summarizes the consultancy activities to develop the Strategy.

### 1.1. Objectives

The major objective of the consultancy was to conduct a review of legal frameworks related to the environment, aquatic biodiversity, and gender and facilitate a national consultative workshop to develop an all-inclusive and deliberate biodiversity strategy as an important entry point for women and youth to enhance their involvement in inclusive aquatic biodiversity conservation and integrated environmental management for Ethiopia.

## 2. Methodology

The Strategy formulation process comprised of an assessment of gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia, complimented by a National experts' consultation workshop.

### 2.1 *Assessing Gender Inclusivity in ABC and EM in Ethiopia*

The Strategy formulation process started with an assessment on gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia, involving the following State stakeholders engaged in: conservation and management of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity; research and development in fisheries and other aquatic biodiversity; gender mainstreaming and inclusion, and non-state actors and organized groups involved in the aquatic biodiversity utilization and environmental management. A prior appointment was made through phone calls and e-mail communication with the responsible gender heads in the ministerial offices and other organizations. Guiding questions or points of discussion that help to extract relevant information and data were prepared ahead and the center of discussions was focused on these leading questions. Lead executives in each ministerial office and experts working on gender and aquatic biodiversity conservation were appointed and approached to make the discussions.

Group discussions were made with the experts and their heads in Ministries having gender experts. At the end of the discussion, reports and other relevant documents were requested to get information that can enrich the strategy document. The lead executives, experts, and researchers communicated with during the visit provided copies of published materials, and promised to attach a soft copy of the remaining ones which can be used as a reference in the preparation of the strategy document. Having this information, a document analysing the existing situations in Ethiopia was developed. Drawing on the constraints and opportunities identified, a draft strategy on Gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management for Ethiopia was prepared.

### 2.2 *National Experts' Consultative Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in ABC and EM in Ethiopia*

To mainly improve the draft strategy and enhance National ownership, a National experts' consultative workshop on Gender mainstreaming in ABC and EM was organized from 20th to 21st June 2023. The two-day consultative workshop was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the Golden Tulip Hotel in the presence of 34 individuals representing different ministerial and regional government offices, women beneficiary groups, independent consultants, AU-IBAR, and IGAD.





*Family photo taken at the National Experts' Consultation Workshop organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 20-21 June, 2023*

The workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) with the financial support and collaboration from AU-IBAR under the SIDA funded Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation in the Context of Africa Blue Economy Strategy Project. The purpose of the workshop 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 Ethiopia. Specifically, the following objectives were set for the workshop:

- Create awareness on AU-IBAR's continental strategy on Gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management;
- Identify priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in Ethiopia;
- Develop a National Strategy for enhancing gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia;
- Adopt the outcomes and recommendations for further work.

The workshop was facilitated by identifying potential stakeholders and scheduling the time appropriate for all the heads and experts to be able to participate. Letters of endorsement for hosting the workshop and also invitation for the participants were drafted and sent to the responsible organizations.

The workshop combined a mix of methods to achieve its objectives. Technical presentations on various topics including: the Africa Blue Economy Strategy; the Ethiopian Blue Economy Strategy; the Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation in Africa Blue Economy Project; and the Continental Strategy for Gender

Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Africa – were delivered to participants to enhance their understanding of the project and familiarity with the Continental Gender Mainstreaming Strategy.

Subsequently, the Situational Analysis on Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Ethiopia; and the Draft National Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Ethiopia were presented to guide discussions among the participants. Questions were entertained and comments/ inputs given by the experts were noted.

Participants were then convened in 3 working groups of 10 people each to identify issues, gaps, challenges and priority actions for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia. Each working group presented their main discussion points in plenary and received feedback for input into their final submissions. All the inputs raised on the presented documents and points from the group discussions were noted and incorporated to improve the National Strategy.



*Focus group discussions during the Workshop*

A final draft of the National strategy for Gender mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental management in Ethiopia was developed, incorporating results from the situational analysis and the National workshop. The strategy includes prioritized intervention areas, proposed strategic actions, and implementation mechanisms as well as an action plan.

Core expected outcomes from the Strategy formulation include:

1. Increased awareness on women and youth inclusive and rights-based approaches among institutions,
2. Better allocation of resources and enhanced use of women responsive communication,
3. Balanced recognition of women's knowledge and experience in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management, and
4. Elevated involvement and participation of women in decision making and implementation of aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management agendas



### 3. Overall Results/Outputs

#### 3.1. Gaps identified

Drawing from the assessment and experts' consultation workshop conducted, the following breaches were found in gender mainstreaming in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and related activities in Ethiopia:

1. The relevant Ministries sometimes failed to report the roles that the women play in the use and conservation of aquatic biodiversity, albeit the existence of activities being performed by women on the use of aquatic species. There are plans and targets set to involve women (individually and in groups) in different agricultural development activities and the conservation of soil, and the involvement of women in livestock keeping, WASH programs, and family planning, for instance, are well planned and regularly reported, in contrary to aquatic biodiversity conservation. Better achievement was however, observed in the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute which incorporates women's access to and controls over biodiversity resources and ecosystem services as a target of its strategy. Nevertheless, the progress made towards achieving the target was at an insufficient rate and reported as partially effective. Sample reports were assessed to look at whether the efforts exerted by women were included in different reports. The involvements and achievements performed so far in other agricultural sectors like horticulture production, dairying, poultry keeping, and fattening and the benefit they gained had been reported effectively. But their involvement on fisheries, use of aquatic species for different purposes, and the conservation efforts made by women are seldom reported. A local NGO that engaged in supporting women in fisheries development and related activities has a compiled report explaining all the benefits that the women are gaining and the roles played by the organization in improving women's livelihoods. The published reports extracted from research findings by different research institutions and universities also showed the experiences of women in fisheries development.
2. Some of the Ministries have tried to consider gender and hence the involvement of women in their strategy and other documents. The Ministries observed and consulted during the field mission are seen to have their own plans, evaluation systems, and monitoring mechanisms for mainstreaming gender. Involving women in the green economy and blue economy, efforts to provide technologies, and involving women in income generation activities are all incorporated at least in their 10 years' strategy of ministerial offices and other organizations. The Ministry of Agriculture has gender mainstreaming guidelines that clearly indicated the roles and indigenous knowledge of women in the management and conservation of the biodiversity of the country. The Institute of Biodiversity also indicated women's access to and control over biodiversity resources and ecosystem services in its strategy. However, the gaps between the progress and the need for achieving meaningful results are enormous since the approaches have not been as effective as it has been planned. Despite the incorporation of gender in National plans, the inability to mainstream gender in different big government programs and failure to design mega projects on gender remains a challenge. This can be explained by the allocation of insufficient finance, employing unprofessional experts, the delegation of inappropriate representatives in pieces of training and other empowering efforts, and the lack of appropriate policy framework and enforcement to mainstream gender.

## 3.2. *Challenges (Weaknesses and Threats) in Women inclusion in ABC and EM*

### **a. *Accessibility of aquatic environments and the associated disparity***

Most aquatic resources including rivers, lakes, and reservoirs are located far from residential areas with no road, and hence very difficult for women to access them. Benefiting from the utilization and conservation of aquatic resources is gendered, and women have lower access than men. The scarcity of infrastructures and the ignorance in developing them brought disparity and limited the women to access resourceful aquatic systems in the country. Women inhabiting in accessible and/or nearby waterbodies are actively engaged in utilizing and managing aquatic resources (mainly fish and aquatic plants) and benefitting from the business they are making than others in Ethiopia.

The focus given to organize women group to benefit them from aquatic resources is very small compared to that of men. There exists a large number of men organized groups (cooperatives and enterprises) in fisheries and related activities in many waterbodies, but very few women groups. This impacts the right of women to access the aquatic species and forced them to depend on men. There are women using fish and aquatic plants as their major means of livelihood sources, but no one organized and supported them. The typical examples of such women are the women at Gambella, Lake Tana, and Turkana (in fisheries) and the 'Negede tribe' around Lake Tana (who uses aquatic plants for different uses). Most frequently, almost everywhere, there are efforts to organize men in groups to conserve, protect and utilize the aquatic resources. But, women are individually engaged in the conservation and utilization of aquatic species. The causes for such an inequality or disparity is weak linkage and synergy between institutions, lack of knowledge in getting best practices, scarcity of quality inputs and lack of strong gender sensitive beneficiary group.

### **b. *Limited involvement in the process of decision making***

Gender equality and women's empowerment have been central to building resilience due to the relevance of women's traditional and local ecological knowledge in management strategies (UNEP, 2020). At the very beginning, the existing legal frameworks in Ethiopia are not in a position to recognize the special roles of women in biodiversity conservation and management and do not provide a technique(s) to disaggregate and differentiate whether women impact the aquatic biodiversity or are impacted by biodiversity conservation and management. The existing strategies hardly make provision for affirmative action on women's role and participation in decision making concerning ABC and EM.

Involvement and engagement of women in conserving aquatic resources is restricted mainly due to persistent gender norms. Norms that ascribe women to a day-to-day household and reproductive activity limit them to make a business and improve their lives from the aquatic resources. Gender norms often define what men and women should do, and contribute to under representation of women in decision making processes (Baker-Médard, 2017). Conservation and management of aquatic environments is considered as men's role and often ignored the involvement of women. In practice, women are also interacting with aquatic ecosystems and engaged in the conservation and utilization of aquatic species. Women from the "Negede" tribe around Lake Tana are making very important traditional food baskets like, Agelgil, Mosseb, and others using papyrus and other aquatic plants for several decades. They know at what stage they have to cut a papyrus plant to make that home equipment. Women are involving in fisheries and assisting fishermen

in processing fish. Apart from making a fillet out of a fish, women understand and know how to collect and manage the fish leftover and waste in an environment friendly way which indicates the importance of incorporating women's knowledge and skill in aquatic environments management. Nevertheless, women involved in using and managing aquatic species are not participating in any of the decision-making process.

Women's understanding of their local environment and the roles they play in custody of local knowledge could have relevance in designing resilience and adaptation strategies in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management (FAO, 2021). Women interact with the environment equally with men and hence very important to avoid ignorance, change norms and consider their value in conservation initiatives.

#### **c. Weaknesses in institutionalizing and financing gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation**

Gender inequality remains a challenge in most sectors in Ethiopia and any institution, irrespective of social, political, economic and environmental affiliation, should make efforts to effectively mainstream gender in its programs and projects. This will promote equal benefits among women and men and remove disparities. Almost all institutions in Ethiopia incorporate gender mainstreaming in their policies, strategies, regulations, programs or projects, but their performances often fail to meet the set targets, whilst there is near-none gender targets set for aquatic biodiversity conservation. One major reason is the designation of inappropriate staff (allocation of nonrelated experts) and unbalanced finance allocation.

Women are better empowered, financed and institutionalized (organized in groups) in many agricultural sectors like dairy keeping, poultry rearing, horticulture production, soil conservation, nursery, and terrestrial environment management. The situation is very different in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and aquatic environments management. Even though women are involved in the productive activities, almost no producer group is organized in the utilization and conservation of aquatic species and management of the aquatic environments.

#### **d. Degradation and Alteration of aquatic environments and their impact on women**

Deleterious effects and disasters on the aquatic environment and degradation of its resources in Ethiopia is challenging the involvement of women and halting them from benefitting out of the aquatic ecosystems compared to men. Most aquatic environments are being employed for other activities like urbanization, industrialization, rural settlement, agriculture, mining, and etc. The coastal areas of most lakes are changed into agricultural land and women and youth cannot access them. The use of agricultural inputs like fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides and other inorganic chemicals are nitrifying the lake, creating conducive environment for alien species, including the water hyacinth, to invade and multiply. The invasive species are replacing the indigenous aquatic species and hence women and youth, who have been using the indigenous species for different uses, cannot do the same. The aquatic species, mainly fish and aquatic plants, are increasingly declined and women are not getting them easily like the time before some years. The decline in this aquatic species in turn increases women's vulnerability to risky occupations and unwanted exploitations for accessing aquatic species. The development of infrastructure and government mega projects in the country overlooks their impacts on the aquatic ecosystems and denies the involvement and role of women and hence intimidating their livelihoods.

**e. *Lack of Institutional Linkage and Integration of gender in ABC***

The Beijing platform for action (1995) recognized that the responsibility of all government agencies for supporting equality objectives through their policies and programs should ensure gender considerations. Governments and other actors are envisioned to promote an active and visible policy for mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policies and programs so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis should be made the effects on women and men (1995). Institutions in Ethiopia poorly recognized the role of women and men in aquatic biodiversity conservation, fails to integrate and link gender between different institutions and departments within an institution, and lacks routine and integrated assessment on its progresses.

**f. *Impact of climate change on ABC and the associated impact on Women and Youth***

Climate change is highly affecting the aquatic environment and the biota in the ecosystem. The case is escalated on wetlands, as many of them are dried up and changed to farm lands. Some of the biodiversity in these aquatic systems are extinct to the point that the new generation are being informed about times when hippopotamus and other fish species used to be found in certain areas where they exist no more. Typical examples are the drying of a big wetland around Jimma town and the Lake Haramaya in Harar, which resulted in the loss of several biodiversity. Many rivers are dried up just immediately after the rainy season which was not the case before. Women and youth are the most affected in these areas since they fail to get water for home use and also for their livestock. They struggle to find aquatic species to sustain their businesses which used to be vibrant prior to the notable changes in the climate.

### ***3.3. Opportunities and Strengths on gender/women inclusions in ABC & EM***

**a. *Attitudinal changes of the public towards gender equality***

Albeit the existence of norms, the mind-set of the people towards the equality of women to that of men is changing and a woman around the waterbodies started to involve directly or indirectly on the utilization and conservation of aquatic species without any discrimination. In most part of Ethiopia, women are involved in using fish as source of food and making business out of it. They are also free to make goods and utensils using aquatic plants irrespective of any disparity. In addition, women are also invited equally with men and participating in conserving the aquatic biota and the environment. The participation of women in removing alien species in Lake Tana, farming fish at their back yard and its role playing in minimizing the pressure of fishing on natural waters, clearing old aquatic plants and making products out of it gives space for newly emerging ones, and tethering their animals to protect wetlands from degradation.

**b. *Blue economy strategy is on board in Ethiopia***

In order to make the best use of the aquatic and related resources, Ethiopia developed BE strategy to set the stage for implementation. The strategy is designed for an integrated employment of aquatic resources for several purposes and managing the environments for sustainable use. The most important BE sectors involved in using, conserving and managing aquatic biodiversity are Aquaculture and fisheries, Maritime, hydroelectric, mining, and ecotourism, Gender is crosscutting issue which, in this strategy, can be mainstreamed at different sectors.

**c. Existence of Academic institutions**

Ethiopia has many universities and campuses so that students can be graduated in degrees (under graduate or postgraduate) specifically in gender and related field of studies. The universities can also establish centres that can provide give appropriate training courses (short and medium term) on gender mainstreaming in conserving aquatic Biodiversity and managing the environment. These arrangement enables the academic institutions a room to conduct research in various issues of gender including mainstreaming it to ABC and EM.

Universities in Ethiopia does not have gender departments who specifically offer at graduate level or does not incorporated a course on other departments. There is no specific training institution who can at least give short- and medium-term trainings for those working in gender departments and empowering women at their respective institution.

**d. Enabling government programs**

The responsibility of undertaking programs for Gender Mainstreaming at an organizational level lies on many individuals ranging from the top decision maker to the direct implementer down at community levels. With respect to the involvement of stakeholders; it may include other GOs and NGOs at national and international levels, CBOs and UN organizations, as it requires the concerted efforts of all. Although not specifically on ABC and EM, new government programs come to exist with contemporary ideas that consider the inclusion of women. These programs might initiate the creation and co-creation of relevant beneficiary and working groups arise from those having similar understanding and interest like Common Interest Groups (CIGs), Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and cooperatives. Large number of youth group are organized and engaged in different agricultural sectors to improve their livelihood. The same will work in conservation and wise utilization of aquatic resources.

**e. Better understanding on the exploitation and conservation of aquatic biodiversity**

The importance of aquatic biodiversity and the environment as means to secure food, improve nutritional status and livelihood of the people were not visible like the terrestrial environment. Practically, the aquatic system is observed to sustain the lives of thousands of people around the waterbodies in particular and millions of Ethiopians in General. The exploitation level of aquatic species and their environments increases in time and the driving force is the awareness of people towards the benefit of aquatic species for different purposes. For instance, fish was considered as poor and/or marginalized people's food before three decades. Now, it is becoming a wealthy people food due to the awareness created on the health benefit of fish than other meat sources. The interest of women and youth to get involved and organized themselves in to groups on the wise utilization of fish and other aquatic species is increasing.

**f. Presence of Gender department/team in all institutions at all levels**

Gender is mainstreamed almost in all sectors at all levels starting from Federal (higher) level to woreda (lower) level in Ethiopia. Each Institution has a Gender team to address the gender mainstreaming efforts in their respective intuition. At federal level, Gender is under Women and Social Affairs department. Having the department or team for gender mainstreaming in an institution can facilitate mainstreaming efforts of aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

**g. Aquatic species are the focus areas for women**

Having very big diversity of fish around the waterbodies (mainly rivers and lakes), women are engaged in fisheries activity. The major involvement of women common in many parts of Ethiopia is mainly on processing and marketing. This is an incentive to promote women inclusiveness in programmes and initiatives to conserve these resources.

### **3.4 Proposed Intervention areas and strategic actions for Women inclusion in ABC & EM**

**a. Institutionalizing and financing gender mainstreaming in ABC & EM**

Strategic Actions:

- Strengthen existing institutions and conduct research and academic/training for innovative technologies
- Improving institutional linkage and integration of gender in ABC and EM
- Mobilizing and arrangement of financial resources
- Allocation of appropriate finance and arrangement of financial institutions for both private and public institutions

**b. Capacity building and empowerment**

Strategic Actions:

- Advancement of communication means and development of systems
- Improve the stakeholders' engagement and commitment
- Formation of public awareness creation techniques to mainstream gender in ABC & EM
- Design an effective and integrated monitoring and evaluation method that can ensure the ABC and EM and mainstreaming gender
- Adjusting regular Meeting with stakeholder formation of public awareness creation techniques to mainstream gender in ABC & EM. Monitoring the progress of gender mainstreaming activities, document good practices and successes

**c. Reforming Legal Frameworks**

Strategic Actions:

- Improve the involvement of women in the process of decision making
- Enforcing the national, regional and international regulations on gender mainstreaming in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environments
- Reduce the vulnerability of women through protecting aquatic biodiversity and the environment from different impacts

**d. Implementing Gender Transformative Approaches**

Strategic Actions;

- Adopting Gender Model Family (GMF) approach among stakeholders involved in ABC and EM.
- Establish well-coordinated and assisted women's Common Interest Group (CIG).
- Link women with rural financial institutions for loan and/or any other support mechanism like revolving fund or any other relevant system to conserve aquatic biodiversity and manage the ecosystem.



**e. Empowering women and youth engaged in ABC and EM**

Strategic Actions:

- Support the women and youth to get them involved in decision making, project designing and implementation on ABC and EM
- Conduct follow up and supervision of the activities on the action plan, whether implemented as planned
- Strengthen women to get themselves involved in political power and Administrative works.
- Mobilize resources that can bring real and inclusive benefit for woman through conserving aquatic biodiversity, adapting/mitigating climate change, and fostering risk averting mechanisms.

## Annexes

### *Annex 1: Field Assessment for Conducting Situational Analysis on Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Ethiopia*

#### **Field Mission Report**

#### **1. Introduction**

A field mission was arranged to engage relevant stakeholders in Ethiopia to assess the state of gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia. Visits to the various institutions identified for the mission were successful and discussions were made effectively on issues towards the involvement of women on the conservation of aquatic biodiversity. From 3 ministerial offices, 2 institutes and one local NGO, a total of 15 people who are directly involved in gender and/or aquatic biodiversity conservation were consulted. The visits were planned for 3 days but took 4 days as the offices visited were sparsely distributed and an institute was located at the outskirts of Addis Ababa. The travel detail and overall itinerary is presented in Table 1.

##### **1.1. Objective**

The overall objectives of the field mission were:

- to identify the potential stakeholders that will be invited for the National experts' consultation workshop,
- to conduct preliminary discussions with relevant organizations on mainstream gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation for identification of gaps and opportunities for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management activities in Ethiopia.

#### **2. Methods and approaches**

Meeting appointments were scheduled through phone calls and e-mails to the relevant gender heads in identified ministerial offices and other organizations. Guiding questions or points of discussions that help to extract relevant information and data were prepared ahead of the visits and shared with the heads of the institutions. Lead executives in each ministerial office and experts working on gender and aquatic biodiversity conservation were involved in the discussions. At the end of the discussions, reports and other relevant documents were requested to get secondary information that can enrich the strategy document being prepared. The lead executives, experts and researchers communicated during the visit provided copies of published materials and promised to attach the soft copy of the remaining ones which can be used as a reference in the preparation of the strategy document.

### **3. Outputs /findings**

#### **3.1. Gaps identified**

During the discussions, it was noted that there exist several breaches in efforts to incorporate the roles and responsibilities of women, specifically in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and related activities, in their plans. The Ministries sometimes failed to report the roles that the women are playing on the use and the conservation of aquatic biodiversity, albeit the existence of activities being performed by women on the use of aquatic species. There are plans and targets set to involve women, individually and in group, on different agricultural development activities and conservation of soil. Women involvement in livestock keeping, WASH programs and family planning, for instance, are well planned and regularly reported. Better achievement was observed on the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute which incorporates the women's access to and control over biodiversity resources and ecosystem services as a target on its strategy. The progress made towards achieving the target was in an insufficient rate and reported as partially effective.

#### **3.2. Policy issues**

Some of the Ministries have tried to consider gender and hence the involvement of women on their strategy and other documents. The ministry of agriculture has gender mainstreaming guideline which clearly indicated the roles and indigenous knowledge of women in the management and conservation of the biodiversity of the country. The Institute of Biodiversity also indicated women's access to and control over biodiversity resources and ecosystem services on its strategy. However, the gaps between the progress and the need for achieving meaningful results remains to be enormous since the approaches have not been as effective as it has been planned.

#### **3.3. Reporting system**

Sample reports were assessed to look whether the efforts exerted by women were included on different reports. The involvements and achievements performed so far on other agricultural sectors like on horticulture production, dairying, poultry keeping, and fattening and the benefit they gained had been reported effectively. But their involvement on fisheries, use of aquatic species for different purposes and the conservation efforts made by women seldom reported. A local NGO who engaged in supporting women on fisheries development and related activities has a compiled report explaining all the benefits that the women are gaining and the roles played by the organization in improving women livelihoods. The published reports extracted from research finding by different research institutions and universities also showed experiences of women on fisheries development.

### **4. Opportunities and challenges**

The ministries observed and consulted during the field mission were seen to have well designed plans and evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to mainstream gender. Involving women in green economy and blue economy, efforts to provide up-to-date technologies, involving women in income generation activities are all incorporated at least in their 10 years strategy of ministerial offices and other organization.

Unable to mainstream gender on different government programs and fail to design own mega projects on gender are still challenges. This can be explained by the allocation of insufficient finance, employing unprofessional experts, delegation of inappropriate representatives in trainings and other empowering efforts, and lack of appropriate policy and enforcements to mainstream gender.

## Itinerary

**Table 1.** *The travel and activities performed during the field mission*

Date	Event	Detail
03-04-2023	Travel to Addis Ababa	Arrived at 7:30 pm, and visited fish shops and restaurants at 3 different places
	Visiting fish shops and looking people engaged there	
04-04-2023	Potential stakeholders were listed with the host institution representatives, mainly with women and social affairs lead executive. A discussion was made together with director of aquaculture and fisheries department and experts working on gender.	W/ro Tigist Sisay Tel. +251 912198784 E-mail: tigista@gmail.com
	Head of Blue Economy under the Ministry of Transport and Logistics was consulted. This ministry has a blue strategy prepared in 2022 and plans to implement different gender focused activities that can benefit the women.	W/ro Anenie Kejela Tel. +251 E-mail:
05-04-2023	Discussion was made with Women Empowerment Lead Executive under the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs. The ministry is coordinating and evaluating all the activities with regards to Gender in every ministry	W/ro Woinshet Tel. +251 916185916 E-mail: woinzeni@gmail.com
06-04-2023	Visited the Biodiversity Institute of Ethiopia and discussed with Women and social affairs lead executive and experts working on conservation of biodiversity	W/ro Almaz Kebede Tel. +251 911173444 E-mail: Almazkeb4@gmail.com
	Discussions held with national fisheries and aquatic resources research center. Relevant research staff and director of the research center was consulted	Dr. Aschalew Lakew Tel. +251 913 033838 E-mail: aschalew
07-04-2023	Return back home (Bahir Dar)	Arrived at 5:00 pm

## Annex 2: List of participants at the National Experts' Consultation Workshop

	Institution or organization represented	The department delegated the expert
African Union	1. InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources	1. Gender, Policy & Strategy Expert, 2. Fisheries & Aquaculture Officer 3. Administrative Assistant 4. Assistant Finance Officer 5. Consultant
	2. Intergovernmental Authority on Development, AED	6. Sustainable Environment Unit
Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	1. Ministry of Women and Social Affairs	7. Mainstreaming Implementation Monitoring and Ensuring Accountability
	2. Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute	8. Fisheries Biologist (Researcher) and National Coordinator (NBSAP)
	3. Ministry of Tourism	9. Senior Expert
	4. Ministry of Agriculture	10. Advisory to the state minister
		11. Fishery & Aquaculture Development Desk
		12. Aquaculture expert
		13. Fisheries Management Expert
		14. Senior Gender Mainstreaming Expert
		15. National Coordinator for LFSD Project
		16. Fishery & Aquaculture Expert, LFSDP
17. Gender Issue Team, Leader		
18. Strategic chief Affairs Executive officer		
19. Fishery Resource Technology Expert		
20. Environment & climate change expert		
5. Ethiopian Maritime Authority	21. National Focal Person for Blue Economy	
6. Environmental protection Authority of Ethiopia	22. Project preparation and monitoring and evaluation expert	
7. Ethiopia cooperative commission	23. Women and Social Affairs Executive	
8. Ethiopian Fisheries & Aquatic Science Association(EFASA)	24. Board President	
Regional Bureaus	1. Amhara Animal & Fish Resources Dev't Bureau	25. Fishery expert
		26. Women Fish Processor Cooperation
	2. Gambella Region	27. Fisheries Expert, Region Livestock and Fishery Development Bureau
		28. Gender expert, Agriculture & natural resources
	3. Oromia Bureau of Agriculture	29. Regional Fishery Technology Expert
		30. Gender, Children, and Youth Mainstreaming Team Leader
4. SNNP Bureau of Agricultural & Natural Resource	31. Fishery coordination unit	
	32. Gender Expert	
Private	1. Consultants	33. National consultant of Gender mainstreaming in ABC and EM
		34. Independent

## Annex 3: Agenda for National Experts' Consultative Workshop

### AGENDA

National Consultative Workshop to Develop an All-Inclusive and Deliberate Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Ethiopia. 20th - 21st June, 2023

Date\Time	Activity	Responsibility
<b>DAY 1: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Tuesday</b>		
<b>SESSION 1: Opening Session</b> <b>Moderated by: Dr. Fasil Dawit, Head, Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Desk, MOA</b>		
8:30-10:00	Registration	AU-IBAR
	Welcoming Remark:	Ms Tigist Ayele, Implementation Executive, Women and Social Affairs
	Opening Remarks	Dr. Eshete Dejen, Program Manager, AED-Sustainable Environment Unit
	Opening Remark	Ag. Director AU-IBAR or Representative
	Official Opening Remark	HE Dr. Fikru Regassa, State Minister, MoA) (Tentative or Delegate
	Introduction of Participants	All Participants
	Workshop Objective	Dr. Alberta Ama Sagoe, AU-IBAR
<b>10:00-10:20</b>	<b>Health Break and Family Photo</b>	<b>AU-IBAR</b>
<b>SESSION 2: Speech and Overview Session</b> <b>Moderated by: Mrs. Hellen Moepi-Guebama, AU-IBAR</b>		
10:20-10:35	Overview of the African Blue Economy Strategy	Dr. Patrick Karani, AU-IBAR
10:35-10:50	Ethiopian Blue Economy and Gender Mainstreaming	Ms Anene Kejela, NBE Focal Person and WOMESA President
10:50-11:05	Overview of the AU-IBAR Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation in African Blue Economy Project	Dr. Alberta Ama Sagoe, AU-IBAR
11:05 – 11:25	Q & A	All participants
11:25-11:40	Continental Strategy on Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management	Dr. Alberta Ama Sagoe, AU-IBAR
11:40-12:20	Situational analysis on gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia	Dr. Alayu Yalew, National Consultant
12:20-13:00	Reaction on Presented Documents	Participants
<b>Lunch Break (1:00-2:00)</b>		
<b>SESSION 3: Working Group Sessions</b> <b>Moderated by: Dr. Alayu Yalew, National Consultant</b>		
02:00- 02:15	TORs for Working Groups, arrangements and allocation of participants	Dr. Alayu Yalew, National Consultant
02:55-04:30	Group Evaluation and Discussion with Working Tea	All Participants
<b>DAY 2: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023 Wednesday:</b>		
<b>SESSION 4:</b> <b>Moderated by: Dr. Miskir Tessema, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute</b>		
8:30-9:30	Group Presentations	Rapporteurs of the working groups
9:30 – 10:30	Feedback to the Group Discussions	All Participants
<b>Health Break (10:30-10:50)</b>		



Date\Time	Activity	Responsibility
10:50-12:30		
	Bridging the Gaps in the Strategy	
<b>Lunch Break (12:30-2:00)</b>		
<b>SESSION 5: Closing Session Moderated by: Dr. Patraick Karani, AU-IBAR</b>		
02:00-03:00	Adoption of Communique	
03:00 – 03:30	Wrap-up and closing	

## **COMMUNIQUÉ**

**“CONSERVING AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRICA BLUE ECONOMY” PROJECT  
NATIONAL WORKSHOP TO DEVELOP AN ALL-INCLUSIVE AND DELIBERATE STRATEGY  
FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN ETHIOPIA**

**20-21 June, 2023 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

AU-IBAR in collaboration with the Republic of Ethiopia, through the Ministry of Agriculture, organized a two-day National stakeholder consultative workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to develop an all-inclusive and deliberate strategy for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia. The workshop was organized to roll out the Continental Strategy developed for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management under AU-IBAR's Project on “Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy” being implemented with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

#### **1.1 Objectives**

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 in Ethiopia.

Specifically, the workshop achieved the following Outcomes:

- Awareness on AU-IBAR's continental strategy on Gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management created;
- Priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in Ethiopia identified;
- A National Strategy for enhancing gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Ethiopia developed;
- Outcomes and recommendations for further work adopted.

#### **1.2 Participants**

The National 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; Organisation 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

### 1.3. Methodology

The workshop adopted a participatory and interactive approach. A series of technical presentations were delivered to set the scene for participatory discussions on the subject of Blue economy, Aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management, and gender mainstreaming. Following the presentations, participants were convened in 3 working groups to identify issues, gaps, challenges and priority actions for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management programmes and initiatives in Ethiopia. Each working group presented their main discussion points in plenary and received feedback which were incorporated in the main Strategy document. A communiqué for the workshop was drafted and presented in a plenary for the participants to review, make input and adopt. The communiqué was then shared in soft copy to all the participants.

## 2 OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MEETING

facilitated by **Dr. Fasil Dawit**, Head of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia



### 2.1 Welcome Remarks

**Mr. Samson Adane Mersa**, Senior Gender Expert at the Ministry of Agriculture welcomed all participants to the workshop on behalf Mrs. Tigist Ayele, Implementation Executive, Women and Social Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture.

**Dr. Eshete Dejen**, Program Manager, AED-Sustainable Environment Unit, IGAD also welcomed all the participants to the workshop and thanked them for honoring the invitation by AU-IBAR. He expressed gratitude to AU-IBAR for selecting the Republic of Ethiopia for support to develop a strategy for gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

Following suite, Mrs. Hellen Moepi-Guebama, Fisheries Officer at AU-IBAR also welcomed all participants on behalf of the Ag. Director, AU-IBAR, and expressed appreciation to all stakeholders who contributed to the successful organization of the workshop.

## **2.2 Opening Remarks**

**Dr. Alemayehu Mekonen**, on behalf of H.E. Dr. Fikru Regassa, State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, officially opened the workshop, inviting participants to engage fully in the activities lined up for the workshop.

Dr. Alberta Sagoe, Gender Policy and Strategy Expert at AU-IBAR, then provided the background information on the project and outlined the objectives of the national consultative workshop to the participants.

## **3 TECHNICAL SESSION**

Facilitated by **Mrs Hellen Moepi-Guebama, Fisheries Officer, AU-IBAR**

Technical Presentations made to set the scene for deliberations were:

- a. Overview of the African Blue Economy Strategy – Dr. Patrick Karani, Environmental Expert, AU-IBAR
- b. The Ethiopian Blue Economy Strategy and Gender Mainstreaming – Ms. Anene Kejela, NBE Focal Person and WOMESA President
- c. Overview of the AU-IBAR Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation in the context of the African Blue Economy Strategy Project – Dr. Alberta Sagoe, Gender Policy and Strategy Expert, AU-IBAR
- d. Overview of the Continental Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Management in Africa - Dr. Alberta Sagoe, Gender Policy and Strategy Expert, AU-IBAR
- e. Situational Analysis on Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Ethiopia – Dr. Alayu Yalew, National Consultant
- f. Draft of the National Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management – Dr. Alayu Yalew, National Consultant

### **3.1 Issues Raised and Recommendations from the Technical Session:**

1. There is a need to create public awareness and communication on the importance of conserving aquatic biodiversity and their potential for economic development, since it is relatively new to many people in the public domain (especially in the rural communities).
2. The role of women in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management should be clearly laid out in the Strategy for achieving the objectives of the National Blue Economy Strategy.
3. The issue of plastic pollution is a menace and a threat to aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems that need to be addressed. Measures to promote the role of women in managing plastic pollution should be addressed in the Strategy

4. It is important to involve both men and women in efforts towards mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.
5. Accessibility to natural resources (rivers) by women is a challenge due to lack of infrastructure (roads, transport etc.)
6. Gender disaggregated data to facilitate gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation is lacking.
7. Gender mainstreaming activities are usually restricted to gender experts. There is the need to involve other stakeholders to broaden the scope of interventions.
8. There is the need to capitalize on private sector involvement in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management to strengthen Public-Private-Partnerships.
9. There is the need to promote understanding of Gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation.
10. Ethiopia has existing National frameworks on biodiversity, gender, blue economy. It is important to align the strategy on gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity to these frameworks.
11. Include the issues of Agency, Relation (including social norms and diversity) and Structure in the National Gender Strategy.
12. There is the need for developing an implementation plan with timeframes and responsibilities for the Strategy.

#### 4 WORKING GROUP SESSIONS

Facilitated by **Dr. Alayu Yalew, National Consultant**

Three working groups were created to deliberate on different issues after which results were presented at a plenary by the rapporteurs of the groups:

**Group 1:** Identification of more gaps/issues and priority areas for the National Strategy

**Group 2:** Detailed action plan (short term and medium term) for Implementing the Strategy

**Group 3:** Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implementation of the Strategy

Results from the working groups were consolidated to be incorporated in the draft National Strategy for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

#### 5. WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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.

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

- a. Comprehensive draft on the National Strategy for gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management to be shared with participants. (30/06/23)
- b. Workshop report to be prepared and shared with participants (30/06/23).
- c. Communique to be completed and finalized with participants (26/06/23).

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The national delegates expressed appreciation to the AU-IBAR for the laudable initiative and on the same note, urged the organization to ensure activities are implemented to ensure sustainability of the program.

## **8. ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNIQUE**

The Communique was endorsed by Dr. Mastewal Yami, independent gender consultant, and seconded by Mr. Minyamir Yitayih, Ethiopian Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.





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