AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

Sweden
Sverige

PROGRESS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
CONSERVING AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY IN AFRICAN BLUE ECONOMY



ANNUAL REPORT
OCTOBER, 2024 - NOVEMBER, 2025

Citition AU-IBAR 2025: Progress of Project Implementation Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy Annual Report October, 2024 - November, 2025

DISCLAIMER
All rights are reserved. Reproduction and/or dissemination of information from this document for educational or other non-commercial purposes are authorized without prior written permission from the copyright holders provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction and dissemination of information in this document for sale or commercial purposes is prohibited unless prior written consent is given by the copyright holders. Applications for such permission should be addressed to:-

The Director
African Union - Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)
Kenindia Business Park
Museum Hill, Westlands Road
P.O. Box 30786
00100, Nairobi, KENYA
e-mail to: ibar.office@au-ibar.org

© AU-IBAR 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	LIST OF ACRONMYS	***v***
1.	***CONTEXT***	***1***
1.1	*Background*	*1*
1.2	*Overall Objective of the Project*	*2*
2.	***KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW (OCTOBER, 2024 – NOVEMBER, 2025)***	***4***
2.1	*Summary: October, 2024 - November, 2025*	*4*
3.	***ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER RESULT AREAS***	***7***
	SO1. Ratify and/or align relevant International/regional Instruments related to Africa's Blue Economy Strategic Areas (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity).	*7*
	SO2: Optimizing conservation and sustainable biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among users of Blue Economy Resources.	*22*
	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 the environment.	*45*
	SO4. Strengthening Gender Inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management	*47*
4.	***PROGRESS ON INDICATORS***	***56***
4.1	*Logframe*	*56*
5.	***MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT***	***60***
6.	***COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY OVERVIEW***	***62***
6.1	*Introduction*	*62*
6.2	*Microsite Maintenance – Impact and Visibility*	*62*
6.3	*Multimedia Visibility and Storytelling*	*63*
6.4	*Knowledge Products and Dissemination*	*64*
6.5	*Social Media Engagement*	*65*
6.6	*Media Engagement*	*66*
6.7	*Branding, Memorabilia and Visibility*	*67*
6.8	*Target Outreach*	*67*
6.9	*Messaging and Key Messages*	*68*
7.	***TECHNICAL PROJECT STAFF:***	***69***
8.	***PARTNERSHIPS AND SYNERGIES:***	***69***

9. CHALLENGES 70

10. DISCUSSIONS 72

11. RECOMMENDATIONS 73

12. PROJECT REPORTS 74

13. KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS 77

LIST OF ACRONMYS

ABES	Africa Blue Economy Strategy
ABNJ	Convention on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
AFDB	African Development Bank
ATLAFCO	Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean
ACS	Abidjan Convention Secretariat
AIS	Automatic Identification System
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
APAC	Aires Protégées Communautaires or Community Protected Areas
ARBE	Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment
AOGS	Africa Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AU-IBAR	African Union - Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency
AU-MSs	African Union Member States
ATLAFCO	Ministerial Conference on fisheries cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean
BBNJ	Convention on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
BRS	Basel Rotterdam Stockholm Convention
BOD	Board of Directors
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Climate Change
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CoEs	Centers of Excellence
COP	Conference of Parties
CORDIO	Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean
COREP	Regional Fisheries Committee for the Gulf of Guinea
COMHAFAT	Ministerial Conference on fisheries Cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO)
CREMA	Community Resource Management Area
DARBE	Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment
DTO	Digital Twin Ocean
EAC	East African Community
EBM	Ecosystem–Based Management
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FCWC	Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea from Ships

FMC	Fisheries Monitoring Centers
GIES	Global Information Exchange System
HF	High Frequency
VHF	Very High Frequency
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOC/UNESCO	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IPMU	Interim Project Management Unit
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing
KMFRI	Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute
LFRPDA	Lakes and Fisheries Resources Protection and Development Agency
LMEs	Large Marine Ecosystems Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat
MARPOL	The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
OMPDA	Media Observatory for Sustainable Fisheries in Africa
MCS	Monitoring Control and Surveillance
MCSCC	MCS Coordination Centre
MDA	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MINEPIA	Cameroon's Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
COMAIP	Moroccan Confederation of Pelagic Fishing Industries
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NMC	Northern Mozambique Channel
OECMs	Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSPESCA	Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of Central America
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RRFV	Regional Register of Fishing Vessels
RFBs	Regional Fisheries Bodies
RMCS-CC	Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordinating Centre
PSMA	"Agreement on Port State Measures" to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SEBE	"Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy" Directorate
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIF	Stop Illegal Fishing
SoME	State of Transboundary Marine Environment
SRFC	Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC);

TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TWG	Technical Working Group
TBCA	Transboundary Marine Conservation Area
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNFSA	United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFA	United Nations Fish Stock Agreement
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOC3	3rd United Nations Ocean Conference
VMS	Vessel Monitoring Systems
WCS	World life Conservation Society
WIO	Western Indian Ocean
WION-SOF	Western Indian Ocean Network for Small-Scale Octopus Fisheries Regional Value Chain
WIOMSA	Western India Ocean Marine Science Association
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature
ZIRA	Zones d'Intersion de Recifs Artificiels/Artificial Reef Immersion Zones
ZPP	Zones de pêche protégée or protected fishing areas

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Background

The Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) was endorsed by the Summit of African Heads of States and Governments in February, 2020, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The ABES envisioned an inclusive and sustainable Blue Economy that significantly contributes to Africa's transformation and growth. The Continental Strategy identified environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection as a 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-MSs) as well as regional institutions (mainly through transboundary interventions). The ABES also underlined regional cooperation and coordination on issues of Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS), Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and as well as the implementation of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as key strategic activities to ensure the effective conservation of aquatic biodiversity. MSP builds upon the key approaches of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and incorporates the key principles of the Ecosystem Approach or Ecosystem–Based Management (EBM).

Of high importance is the fact that regulatory measures to conserve aquatic biodiversity should include awareness enhancement and political buy-in. This can be accomplished through educational programs, enhancing awareness and effective participation in related Global Fora as well as production of knowledge products on key issues relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation, and incentive 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); with a total budget is approximately USD 5.5 million.

The overall goal of this project is to "Enhance the 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 most highly productive Marine ecosystems that include the seven African Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs): 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 support a significant number of biodiversity and ecosystems, which 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 biodiversity, resources, and environmental sustainability.

Aquatic biodiversity is the total assemblage of living resources in aquatic ecosystems, including fish species, shellfish, plants, micro-organisms, and more. Aquatic biodiversity encompasses freshwater systems, Marine (Sea and Oceanic) environments, floodplains, aquaculture ponds, and wetlands. Several factors are threatening aquatic biodiversity in Africa's aquatic ecosystems. These include; overexploitation of living species, pollution from several sources (land-based municipal, oil, gas, and agricultural activities),

uncontrolled introduction of exotic species in aquaculture systems, and 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 the African Blue Economy include the following:

a. Effective role and Adherence to Global initiatives and best practices on issues relating to aquatic biodiversity conservation.
b. Increasing maritime safety, security, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
c. Resilience, climate change, environmental sustainability, and biodiversity protection.
d. Gender inclusivity.
e. Partnerships and transboundary considerations.

The project intervention areas are closely entwined with aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental protection in the five thematic areas of the ABES, indicated below:

i. Fisheries, aquaculture, conservation, and sustainable aquatic ecosystems
ii. Shipping/transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety and Enforcement
iii. Coastal and maritime tourism, climate change, resilience, environment, Infrastructure
iv. Sustainable energy and mineral resources and innovative industries
v. Policies, institutional and governance, employment, job creation and poverty eradication, and innovative financing

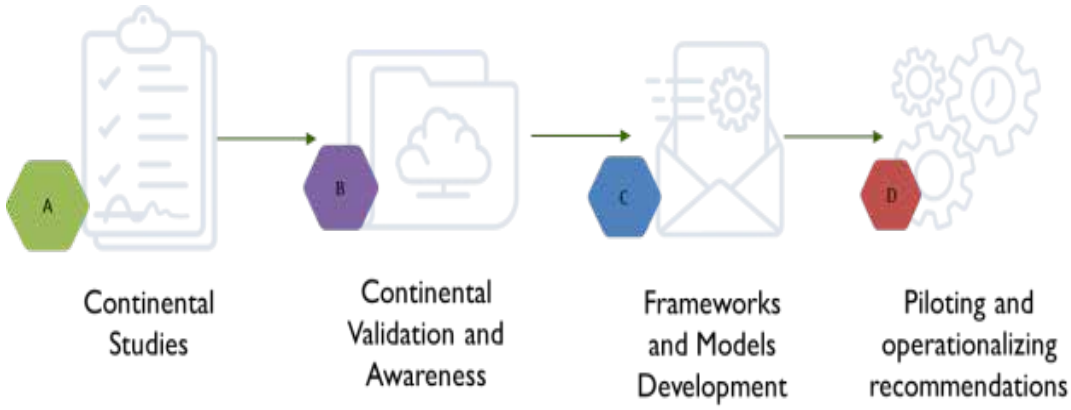
1.2 Overall Objective of the Project

The overarching objective of the project was to enhance the Policy environment, Regulatory frameworks, and institutional capacities of African Union Member States (AU-MSs) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to sustainably utilize and conserve aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems.

1.2.1 Strategic Objectives

a. Ratify and/or align relevant International/Regional Instruments related to Blue Economy themes (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity).
b. Optimize conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among Blue Economy sub-themes.
c. Strengthen measures for mitigating the negative impacts of Coastal and Marine tourism, oil, gas, deep Sea mining, and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and the environment.
d. Strengthen Gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

Project activities were implemented following the approach depicted below:



a. Undertaking Regional or Continental studies: These studies were done to provide a baseline assessment of the current situation across the Continent to lay the ground for evidence-based intervention by the project. Study reports were generated to convey the findings of the studies.
b. Regional or Continental consultative validation and awareness-enhancing workshops for stakeholders: Each study report was validated by the wider African Continental or regional stakeholders. This process aimed to enrich the reports, create awareness of the subject matter (also in the form of capacity building), facilitate participation by a broader stakeholder base, generate synergies with ongoing initiatives, and promote ownership.
c. Developing frameworks. models and knowledge products: Based on the validated study reports, knowledge products such as Policy Briefs, Policy Notes, Information Notes, and Advocacy Notes as well as frameworks and models, were developed to guide and fast-track the implementation of the study recommendations.
d. Piloting, partnerships and operationalizing recommendations: In most cases, in order to minimize duplication and to generate synergies with ongoing related initiatives, collaboration was sought with partners, and support was given to AU-MS, Regional Institutions, and communities (in this case) to roll out activities related to the study recommendations, and subsequently achieve the objectives of the project.

2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW (OCTOBER, 2024 – NOVEMBER, 2025)

2.1 Summary: October, 2024 - November, 2025

a. The project strengthened the National Regulatory frameworks of the Kingdom of Lesotho for effective aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental management., through support to alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments

b. Guided by the AU Policy Organ endorsed Continental Mechanism for effective participation in Continental and Global fora, the Project contributed to effective participation and consolidated African position in Continental and global fora relating to aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. African Union Member States (AU-MS) were supported to participate effectively in the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, France in an effort to support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the Oceans, Seas and Marine resources for sustainable development". In addition, AU-MS were supported at the UN Ocean Conference to highlight Africa's priorities on investment into Blue Economy Sectors, strengthened food systems, resilient livelihoods, youth empowerment, Gender-responsive Blue Economy, ecosystem-based fisheries management, sustainable aquaculture development, climate adaptation, scientific capacity building and equitable benefit-sharing of Marine Genetic Resources.

c. The project participated at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC CoP29) and engaged AU-MS for technical guidance for articulation of common position on Continental Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Baku – Azerbaijan – November, 2024.

d. During the period under review, in collaboration with the Regional Fisheries Commission for the Gulf of Guinea (COREP), the project trained 14 personnel (from the fisheries and environmental departments) from seven (7) Coastal States in the Central African region (Gabon, Cameroon, DR Congo, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, and Angola) on effective Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) related effective techniques (including use and interpretation of VMS, AIS; judicial process) to combat IUU fishing and measures for protection of aquatic biodiversity and environment (including Marine Protected Areas, closed areas, combating pollution etc)

e. The project collaborated with SADC Secretariat to establish and strengthen the institutional framework for operationalization of the SADC Fisheries Monitoring, Control, Surveillance Coordination Centre for effective combat of IUU fishing, protection of aquatic biodiversity and environment;

f. In a bid to control and mitigate the impact of plastic pollution on aquatic biodiversity, especially fish stocks, the project developed a Continental Strategy for the control and mitigation of the impact of plastic pollution on aquatic biodiversity and environment to guide AU Member State and Regional Institutions for the development of respective National and Continental strategies. This strategy is submitted to the STC-ARDWE for consideration for adoption.

g. To strengthen the community driven approach for aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration that would bring socio-economic benefit to communities in Coastal areas besides conservation goals, the project developed a Continental strategy for Nature-based Solutions for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management. This Strategy has been submitted

to STC-ARDWE for consideration for adoption.

h. To enhance Continental capacity building (and also promote sustainability) in aquatic biodiversity conservation, the project achieved major milestones through the endorsement of three institutions on the Continent as African Union Centres of Excellence for training and research in aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management. These institutions are the University of Ghana, Pwani University in Kenya, University of Nairobi, Kenya

i. The Project enhanced governance of Marine Protected Areas (MPA), to strengthen aquatic biodiversity conservation, by providing technical assistance to Gabon, Madagascar and Senegal. This support contributed significantly to strengthening National efforts towards effective governance of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems;

j. The operationalization of AU Policy Endorsed Continental Strategy for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management was given a major boost by the development of implementation of an implementation plan to promote Continent-wide operationalization of the Continental strategy.

k. The project provided technical support to 2 AU MS (Egypt and Cameroon) to develop all-inclusive and deliberate biodiversity strategies as important entry points for enhancing the role of women and youth in inclusive aquatic biodiversity and integrated environmental management;

l. The project developed mechanisms for strengthening regional blue value chains in small-scale Octopus fisheries towards strengthening Gender dimensions, Climate Change and Environmental considerations in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation in East Africa and South-West Indian Ocean.

m. A regional Network of small-scale Octopus fisheries in the WIO region was established (WION-SOF) with main aim of improving sustainable small-scale fisheries regional value chain

n. During the period under review the project developed the following six (6) knowledge products to enhance utilization of the project's outcomes by African Union Member States for the reform of the sector relating to aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management;

   i. Technical Guidelines for Best Practices on Strengthening Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Systems for Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Protection in Africa;

   ii. Introducing the Continental Strategy for the Control & Mitigating the Impact of Plastic Pollution on Aquatic Biodiversity & Environment in Africa

   iii. Policy brief on Key emerging issues in selected AU Member States for domestication of Global Instruments

   iv. Policy Brief - An Insight into the Continental Strategy on Nature-Based Solutions for the Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa: Mitigating Climate change, aquatic biodiversity loss and Securing livelihoods

   v. Policy Brief - Small-Scale Octopus Fisheries in the Western Indian Ocean: Strengthening Gender Inclusivity, Climate Resilience and Sustainable Blue Value Chains

   vi. Policy Note – Strengthening environmental and climate change consideration on mitigation efforts in Seaweed Farming towards Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation: A Case Study of Zanzibar

o. Through cooperation and collaboration, the project participated in an MSP dialogue organized by SWAM in collaboration with Nairobi Convention Secretariat at UNEP Complex in Nairobi. A presentation of interventions undertaken by the project to support transboundary MSP processes e.g. between Benin

and Togo and the support towards advancing the MSP process in the NMC in the WIO region in collaboration with NC and WWF was made. The dialogue created a platform for partners International Training Programme (ITP) participating WIO Member States to share the status of MSP in their respective Member States and also to reflect on joint experiences and to plan the future development of the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) processes in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. Partners as well shared their ongoing interventions on MSP in the Continent thus pulling towards implementation of MSP as a tool for aquatic biodiversity conservation in Africa as enshrined in ABES.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER RESULT AREAS

SO1. Ratify and/or align relevant International/regional Instruments related to Africa's Blue Economy Strategic Areas (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity).

Output 1.1 Mechanisms for active participation of Member States (MSs) in regional and Global initiatives related to aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental regimes – Convention on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Conference of Parties UNFCCC COP29) meeting relating to Blue Economy Sectors) etc.) developed.

Preamble:

During the second year of project implementation, a mechanism for effective participation in Global fora related to aquatic biodiversity and environmental management was developed. The mechanism was endorsed by the Summit of African Heads of States and Governments in 2024. The project also trained resource persons to support effective participation of AU Member States and other stakeholders in relevant Global fora.





1.1.1. Support participation of AU Member States to Continental and Global meetings for coordinated Africa Voice on issues relating to aquatic biodiversity and environment

Guided by the endorsed AU Policy Organ mechanism, the project supported articulation of effective African positions as follows:

1. Support to AU-MS and other stakeholders to effectively participate in the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice, France from 9th – 13th June, 2025 towards Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the Oceans, Seas and Marine resources for sustainable development"

The African Union organized the side event on "Accelerating Action to meet Africa's Sustainable Blue Economy Aspirations". The objective of the side event was to serve as a platform for African stakeholders and partners to reflect on sustainable Blue Economy development in the Continent and to agree on actions to amplify progress in harnessing Africa's Blue Economy potential and engagement with the SDG

targets as well as those of Agenda 2063. This session aligned with UNOC3's theme of "Scaling up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation".

Representing the Director of AU-IBAR, the Project gave a presentation on the topic "Supporting MS in Aquatic Biodiversity conservation and fisheries governance for meeting Global commitments" during a panel discussion under the theme "Framing Africa's Blue Economy Progress and Priorities Focused insights aligned with the UNOC3 Action Themes". During the panel I discussion, the meeting was informed, among others, of the support by the SIDA project to 10 AU Member States towards domestication of Global Instruments relating to aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management; the support given to 3 AU Member States and regional institutions in enhancing institutional capacity for implementation and effective governance of Marine Protected Areas; also the role of the project in strengthening capacity of Marine and Coastal communities, including women and youth Kenya, Ghana and Tanzania (Zanzibar), in advancing Nature-Based Solutions for conservation, restoration of aquatic ecosystems, aquatic biodiversity and hence poverty reduction.

The outcome of the side event contributed immensely to supporting the articulation of a coordinated position of African Union at the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, France from 9th – 13th June, 2025. The discussions underscored the Continent's unwavering commitment to healthy Oceans, sustainable Blue Economy and equitable Ocean governance. The event was chaired by H.E. Commissioner Moses Vilakati, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE). Participants to the side event included AU Member States, Ministers for Sierra Leone, Senegal, Madagascar, Regional Economic Communities, Non-State Actors, Experts, Partners.



Figure 2. *The Flier for the AU organized Side Event at the Ocean Conference, Nice, France, 2025*

Table 1: *Agenda of the side event that was organized by AUC at the UN Ocean Conference, Nice, France, 2025*

13:05 – 13:15	**Technical Discussants: Framing Africa's Blue Economy Progress and Priorities Focused insights aligned with the UNOC3 Action Themes.**
	• **Dr. Harsen Nyambe Nyambe -** Director, Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (AUC) – Governance and policy frameworks for Africa's Sustainable Blue Economy Development • **Mrs Estherine Fotabong,** Director, Agriculture, Food Systems & Environmental Sustainability (AUDA-NEPAD) – Aquatic Food priorities in CAADP Kampala to strengthen Africa's Agri-food systems • **Dr. Huyam Salih,** Director AU-IBAR (represented by Mr. Eric Nadiope, the Legal and Institutional Officer, Aquatic Biodiversity Project) – Supporting MS in Aquatic Biodiversity conservation and fisheries governance for meeting global commitments • **Dr Eshete Dejen,** Environment Programme Manager, IGAD– Regional action for Blue Economy development



Figure 3: *H.E. Moses Vilakati, the Commissioner DARBE, giving an address during the side event at the United Nations Ocean Conference in NICE, France, 2025*



Figure 4: *Above Photo: The AUC, AU-IBAR, AUDA-NEPAD and IGAD technical team at the high-level side event titled "Accelerating Action to Achieve Africa's Blue Economy Aspirations"*



Figure 5: *Above Photo the delegates from the African Union Commission including the Regional Economic Communities, AUDA-NEPAD and AU-IBAR technical team*



Figure 6: *Plenary session at the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference in NICE France.*

Achievements from the mission participate at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference

The dynamic 75-minute session, co-organized by the AUC (SEBE) and AUDA-NEPAD, with collaboration from IGAD and AU-IBAR, brought together African Ministers, regional bodies, development partners, private sector innovators, and civil society champions to spotlight Africa's progress towards SDG 14 and Agenda 2063 and highlight concrete pathways for scaling Blue Economy investments and impact.

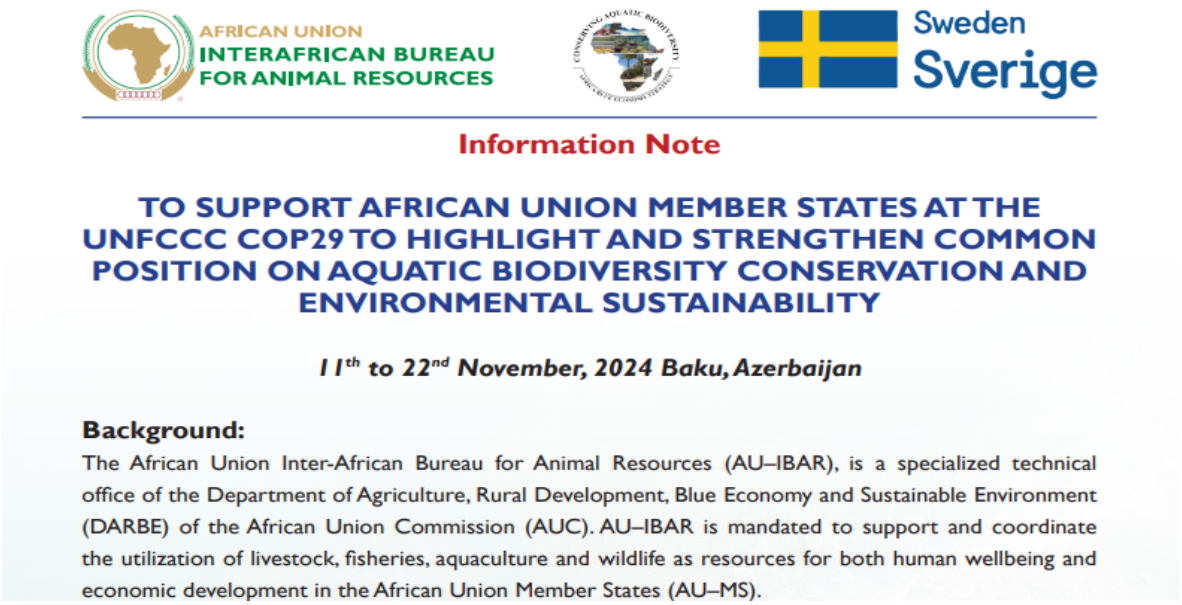
The event culminated in a collective Call to Action that crystallized three major achievements: the identification of blended-finance pathways and partnership models to unlock new investment; the launch or renewal of voluntary Ocean commitments by AU bodies, RECs and development partners; and the

establishment of clear follow-up actions to translate commitments into impact on the ground.

2. Also, a mission was undertaken to support AU-MS to effectively participate at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC CoP29) and supporting AU-MS in articulation of a common position on Continental Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Baku – Azerbaijan 18th – 22nd November, 2024

Interventions towards this support included the following:

a. Formulation of Information Note on the Conference Agenda items:


AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

Sweden
Sverige

Information Note

TO SUPPORT AFRICAN UNION MEMBER STATES AT THE UNFCCC COP29 TO HIGHLIGHT AND STRENGTHEN COMMON POSITION ON AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

11th to 22nd November, 2024 Baku, Azerbaijan

Background:

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

Figure 7: *AU-IBAR developed Information Note that highlighted the issues for negotiation at the UNFCCC COP29 in English and French and disseminated widely during the conference. Towards guiding the effective participation of AU Member States and other stakeholders, the Information Note provided brief synthesis of the agenda items of the Conference in the context of priorities of the African Union, especially regarding aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems.*



Figure 8: *QR Code, was developed, with all the reports concerning the interventions of AU-IBAR towards aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation and it was shared with AU stakeholders at different pavilions during the UNFCCC conference in Azerbaijan, 2024.*

- AU–IBAR participated in various pavilions at the Conference mounted by stakeholders, including AUC and Member States. The Information Note was shared with the Member States and discussions held on issues pertaining to articulation of African priorities, regarding climate change and environmental issues. Some of the AU Member States engaged at the Conference included the following: The Republic of Togo, the Republic of Burkina Faso, the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Nigeria, the EAC Partner States the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of South Sudan; the Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Uganda that had a joint Pavilion;



Figure 9: *Presentation by the Mr. Eric Nadiope, Legal and Institutional Officer, Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Officer during the discussion in support of African Position*



Figure 10: *Photo session after meeting and engaging the delegates of Burkina Faso at their Pavilion highlighting the need to increase attention towards aquatic biodiversity conservation*



Figure 11: *Family photo with the Togolese delegation after a presentation on the challenges to food security induced by climate change effects*

- AU-IBAR established Networking and avenues for collaboration with other International Institutions that are engaged in the Climate Change arena; including the Swedish Government Pavilion, Norway Government Pavilion, the Ocean Pavilion, OPEC pavilion, and the AFDB at the African Union Pavilion to highlight the role and efforts being played in regards to conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems as well as to seek partnerships.



Figure 12: *Mr. Nadiope Eric with the Manager, projects development, OPEC Fund during the UNFCCC COP29 in Azerbaijan at OPEC pavilion*

3. Partnership with SEBE, AUC and UNEP to support the Validation of the Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan as well as Capacity Building of AU Member States and other stakeholders on the New High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement), Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania 1st – 4th April, 2025

AU-IBAR, represented by the Aquatic Biodiversity Project Coordinator and the Legal and Institutional Officer contributed technically to the expert validation of the Africa Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan (AOGS), that was developed under the mandate of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) to address fragmented governance and enhance coordination across existing Ocean-related frameworks. AU-IBAR contributed to articulation of the inputs and priorities of AU Member States and other stakeholders present to aligning the Strategy to the Continental priorities and also ensuring synergies with other existing related AU Instruments, including the Africa Blue Economy Strategy and the Policy framework and Reform Strategy for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa.

The development of the Ocean Strategy was initiated in 2015 at the AMCEN Cairo Declaration followed by reaffirmations at the 2018 Nairobi and 2022 Dakar Declarations respectively. The Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for coordination, cooperation and implementation of Africa's existing and future governance frameworks in Ocean related matters. It was noted that while challenges towards Ocean Governance remain, the commitment of stakeholders to strengthen coordination, enhance inclusivity, and secure financial sustainability was evident. Moving forward, efforts will focus on ensuring that regional perspectives are fully integrated, governance structures are clarified, and financial sustainability is secured



Figure 13: *Opening statement by Director of SEBE, Mr. Harsen Nyambe at the validation of the Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan*



Figure 14: *family photo of the participants during the validation of the Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan*

On Capacity Enhancement on the BBNJ Agreement

AU-IBAR, supported the training workshop, that was organized by UNEP and SEBE (AUC) to enhance the knowledge and understanding of selected AU Member States and regional institutions on the provisions of the New High Seas Treaty (The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). Specifically, the workshop aimed at:

- Deepening understanding of the BBNJ Agreement in the context of Africa's Ocean governance.
- Discuss the levels of Africa's preparedness to ratify and implement the Agreement.
- Strengthen Africa's collective voice in ongoing and future BBNJ-related negotiations and implementation discussions.



Figure 15: *Participants while conducting a group discussion to chart ways of how to enhance ratification and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement*

Support to Regional Economic Communities, AU Member States and stakeholders at the coordination meeting on Blue Economy; organized by SEBE in April, 2025

AU-IBAR, within the framework of the SIDA funded project and the Norway programme on support to implementation of Africa Blue Economy Strategy, collaborated with the SEBE and UNDP, to support the Workshop on Blue Economy Coordination meeting from 28th to 30th April, 2025, in Maputo, Mozambique. The workshop was hosted by the Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters, and Fisheries of Mozambique and participants included RECs, AU Member States and other stakeholders. The meeting aimed to advance Africa's Blue Economy agenda by aligning policies, sharing best practices, and fostering partnerships to harness aquatic resources sustainably during three days.

The workshop provided an avenue for AU-IBAR to support AU-MSs, RECs and other stakeholders present at the meeting to articulate their priorities and strengthen on Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and ecosystems management in African Blue Economy development. The main outcome of the workshop was the development of a roadmap for enhancing coordination and synergies between AUC, RECs, National Governments, and other stakeholders in the sustainable development of Blue Economy initiatives, with aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management. remaining one of the key drivers.



Figure 16: *Participants at the RMCS-CC who attended the Blue Economy coordination meeting in Maputo – Mozambique*

Participation in Second Africa Climate Summit in September, 2025, Addis Ababa

The Project represented by the Coordinator, Dr. Mohamed Seisay, participated in the following events at the second Africa Climate Summit in the following capacity as represented below.

No.	Title of Side Event	Organizations	Role played by the pocket
1	Women leadership and climate resilience (Women-Led Climate resilience Solutions)	Organized by AU, Ethiopian Government and organization called 'Pathfinder'	Shared AU-IBAR's experiences on improving environmental policy for effective participation of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation, fisheries and environment; including harmonization of policies for inclusive rational biodiversity conservation and environmental management.
2	Nature-positive solutions for climate change adaptation; including Nature-base Solutions for resilient communities	Organized by AU, Ethiopian Government and organization HILFE	Briefed the delegates on AU-IBAR's experiences on the implementation of Nature-based Solutions in aquatic systems restorations as exemplified by intervention of AU-IBAR in aquatic biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, climate mitigation through blue carbon sequestration

3	Aquatic food systems and sustainable aquaculture	Organized by AU, Ethiopian Government and organization	AU-IBAR gave keynote speech on continental perspectives on Aquatic food systems and sustainable aquaculture; elaborated relevant policy arenas of the PFRS and the ABES.
4	Blue Governance and Climate Resilience in the Horn of Africa	IGAD	Outlined and sensitized delegates the strategies adopted by the project in advancing aquatic biodiversity and ecosystem management?



Figure 17: *Panel Discussion on Blue Governance and Climate Resilience in the Horn of Africa: panelists include Dr. Jakob Granit, Director-General, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida; Mr. Harsen Nyambe, Director, Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy Directorate, AUC; Dr. Keriako Tobiko, Special Advisor, Environment & Climate Change, AUDA-NEPAD; Dr Mohamed Seisay, Fisheries Management & Blue Economy Expert, AU-IBAR; Ms. Anene Kejela Wodajo, Legal Advisor to the Minister for Transport and Logistics of Ethiopia*

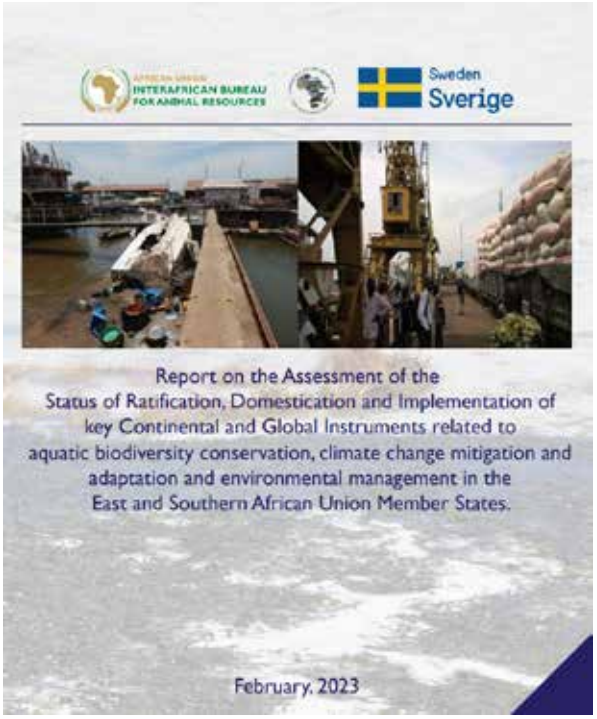


Figure 18: *Dr. Mohamed with organizers of the side event on aquatic blue food and sustainable aquaculture the Second Africa Climate Summit in September, 2025, Addis Ababa*

Output 1.2. Ratification and implementation of Conventions and Agreements related to conservation of biodiversity in AU MSs and RECs supported.

Support to AU Member States to review National Policies, Regulations and align National Instruments to relevant Continental and Global aquatic biodiversity and environmental Instruments

At the beginning of the implementation of the Project, studies were commissioned that resulted in the identification of 54 priority Continental and Global Instruments considered key to the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems in Africa.



These Instruments included the following:

i. International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships MARPOL 1973;
ii. Bamako Convention;
iii. Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions;
iv. Revised African Convention on Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (African Convention);
v. Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD);
vi. Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972;
vii. United Nations Convention of the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS);
viii. UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA);
ix. Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, 2016;
x. Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biodiversity;
xi. Nagoya Protocol;
xii. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
xiii. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITIES.

The project intended to support Ten (10) AU Member States in the course of project implementation. However, during the first three years of implementation, the project supported nine (9) AU Member States to domesticate Continental and Global Instruments relating to aquatic biodiversity conservation. Climate change mitigation and environmental management.

During the no-cost extension phase, the project has supported the Kingdom of Lesotho to align and domesticate relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental management.

Achievements from the support to Kingdom of Lesotho included the following:

- Technical assistance i.e. (National consultant) was hired that conducted situational analysis and review the National Policies and Regulations. This resulted in identification of gaps in relation to priority Regional and Global frameworks and mechanism developed that aligned National Instruments with relevant priority Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental management Instruments.

SITUATION ANALYSIS REPORT
REVIEW AND ALIGNMENT OF NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS TO GLOBAL, CONTINENTAL AND REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS ON AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS CONSERVATION, CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION AND ENVIROMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO



- The project organized National stakeholders (expert) validation consultative workshop, that comprised of 36 National experts, created awareness on the consultant's findings, reviewed, enriched and validated the consultant's National report on identified gaps within the existing National Regulatory frameworks relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and environmental management in relation to Continental and Global Instruments for aquatic biodiversity conservation.
- The validated final report was disseminated among National stakeholders and Policy makers as well as widely distributed on AU-IBAR website.

Other achievements of the mission

The validation workshop also provided an opportunity to enhance awareness among the Blue Economy technical experts of the Kingdom of Lesotho on the importance of "Conserving aquatic biodiversity in the African Blue Economy" and also the African Blue Economy Strategy.



Figure 19: *Hon. Minister for Labour and Employment for the Kingdom of Lesotho – Hon. Tseliso Mokhosi giving opening remarks at the National stakeholders (expert) consultative and validation workshop of the consultancy's National report on identified gaps within the existing National Regulatory frameworks relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and environmental management in relation to Continental and Global Instruments.*



Figure 20: *the high table during the opening session of the consultative and validation meeting of the Consultants' report on identified gaps within the existing National Regulatory frameworks relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and environmental management in relation to Continental and Global Instruments. Center: Hon. Minister for Labour and Employment Kingdom of Lesotho – Hon. Tseliso Mokhosi, Left Dr. Motseki Hlatshwayo SADC representative, Right Dr. Relebohile Lepheana – the Director General Veterinary Services – Kingdom of Lesotho*



Figure 21: *Family photo taken during the National Workshop for the Kingdom of Lesotho held between 21st - 22nd October, 2024 at the consultative and validation meeting of the Consultants' report on identified gaps within the existing National Regulatory frameworks relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and environmental management in relation to Continental and Global Instruments. Seated Centre is the Hon. Minister for Labour and Employment – Hon. Tseliso Mokhosi (Also, standing in for the Minister in-charge of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.*



Figure 22: *Participants drawn from relevant Ministries Departments and Agencies of the Kingdom of Lesotho during the Opening session*



Figure 23: *Group Discussions: fostering interagency collaboration on governance of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems*

SO2: Optimizing conservation and sustainable biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among users of Blue Economy Resources.

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

Key achievements:

A. **STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES CAPACITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN COASTAL STATES ON MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE (MCS) SYSTEMS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING; AND PROTECTION OF AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

i. The project hired two consultants (one with expertise in MCS and the other with expertise on aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management) and trained representatives from 14 National institutions (fisheries and environmental agencies) on MCS measures to combat IUU fishing and on tools to protect aquatic biodiversity and the environment. The training workshop was conducted in Pointe-Noire, in the Republic of Congo, on the 21st – 23rd October, 2024. The participants were from the seven Coastal Member States of COREP – Angola, Congo, Cameroon, Gabon, Dr. Congo, Guinea Equatorial and Sao Tome & Principe. Specifically, the training focused on the following: MCS systems – with emphasis on Understanding MCS Concepts, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks, Data Collection and Management, Operational Aspects, MCS equipment, including electronic equipment (Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS), Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) and their use, Surveillance and Enforcement, Developing and Implementing MCS Plans and Compliance and Cooperation

ii. Aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management – which equipped the trainees with the knowledge, practical skills, and tools needed to understand, assess, and protect the diversity of life in aquatic environments—including freshwater, Marine, and wetland ecosystems. The training focused on; The concept of aquatic biodiversity conservation, Threats to Aquatic Biodiversity, Assessment and Monitoring Techniques, Conservation Strategies and Management utilizing tools such as MPA, MSP, aerial and seasonal closures, combating Climate Change, Socio-economic, Policy and Regulatory Dimensions etc.

The following were the key outcomes of the Workshop:

1. Capacity enhanced on MCS systems to combat, determine and eliminate IUU fishing in the region;
2. MCS personnel from the fisheries departments and personnel from the environmental departments in the seven Coastal COREP Member States Comprising of 12 males and 2 females were trained and equipped with modern skills & techniques for effective Monitoring, Control and Surveillance on the following areas:
   a. Different IUU fishing offences and how to detect them;
   b. Data collection, vessel register and observer skills;
   c. Communication, Data sharing and Fisheries Intelligence Network Collaboration skills;
   d. Sea inspection skills (boarding procedures).
3. The training created awareness and enhanced the skills of the trainees to effectively govern Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental protection
4. The participants also shared information on various ongoing initiatives by Member States in the region on MCS initiatives and on measures to conserve aquatic biodiversity, protection of environment;
5. A coordinated visit to the Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC) at Pointe-Noire, the Republic of Congo for practical exposure and orientation was undertaken for demonstration of electronic monitoring systems and implementation of other MCS measures;
6. MCS Training Manual was developed, titled: "Illustrated Training Manual for Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Gulf of Guinea Large Marine Ecosystems" and notes on Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and disseminated widely;



Figure 24: *Left to Right, Mr. Emmanuel Sabuni, COREP Executive Secretary, Rep. of the Director of AU-IBAR, Mr. Philippe Ouedraogo, Rep. of the Govt of Congo (Mr. Jean Pascal KOUMBA, Secretary General of the Department of Pointe-Noire) and the rep. of ECCAS Dr. Baschirou M. Demsa*



Figure 25: *Workshop participants group photo*



Figure 26. *Dr Rodrigue Pelebe, aquatic biodiversity expert, during the training session management*



Figure 27. *Delegates following the deliberations during plenary discussions.*



Figure 28. *Electronic monitoring systems - MCS Facilities in the Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC) in Pointe-Noire.*



Figure 29. *Vessel monitoring system showing the movement of fishing vessels at Sea, Congo's EEZ.*

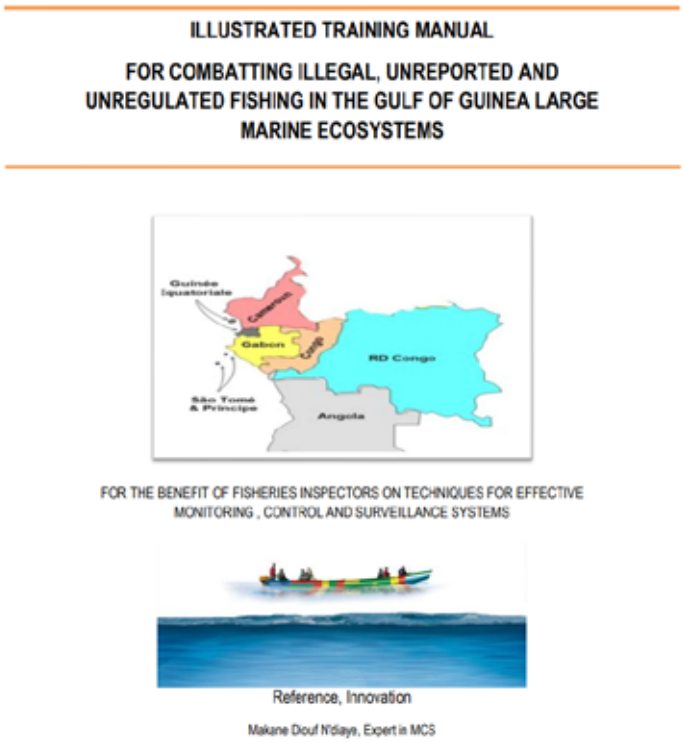


Figure 30. *MCS Training Manual that was developed with support from the SIDA funded Aquatic project*

Following the support to FCWC with equipment for strengthening MCS systems in the region, the FCWC Regional MCS Centre has completed the installation of HF and VHF transceivers provided by the African

Union Inter African Bureau on Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) through the SIDA funded project as part of the "Strengthening Regional MCS Systems for Conservation and Protection of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management in the African Region". The new HF and VHF radio equipment would contribute immensely to enhancing the communication and intelligence-sharing capacities of the FCWC regional Monitoring Control and Surveillance Centre (RMCSC), enabling direct contact with naval assets at Sea during patrol operations, and national MCS Units and Environmental divisions as well as facilitating coordination during maritime exercises.



Figure 31. *Left: Dr. Mohamed Seisay (AU-IBAR) handing over MCS equipment to Hon. Gaston Dossouhoui (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries – Benin), Photo by FCWC.*



Figure 32. *Communication and Intelligence sharing equipment (HF & VHF) radio after installation at the FCWC MCS Center in Tema-Ghana Mr. Ere-Walson (FCWC), Coordinator of the Regional MCS center. performing equipment test after installation*



Figure 33. *Mr. Ere-Walson (FCWC), in charge of MCS center performing equipment test after installation*



Figure 34. *Aerial installation of the VMS receivers at the FCWC MCS Center in Tema, Ghana.*

B. SUPPORT TO OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE SADC MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE COORDINATION CENTER (MCSCC)

AU-IBAR supported the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat to put necessary mechanisms in place for establishing or strengthening institutional frameworks towards the operationalization of the SADC Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Center (MCSCC). The project collaborated with partners, such as WWF, GIZ, Stop-Illegal-Fishing (SIF), and contributed immensely towards establishing and strengthening the institutional framework of the SADC regional MCSCC for full and effective operationalization: .

Two meetings of the Board of Directors of the SADC MCSCC (comprising mainly of Directors of fisheries in the SADC region) were supported to finalize validation, and adoption of the operational documents for the SADC MCSCC;

The key outcome of this coordinated support was that the Board meetings adopted and recommended to the committee of Ministers responsible for fisheries and Aquaculture in the SADC region the following:

- Adoption of the final draft Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) of the MCSCC for April, 2025-March, 2026,
- The draft MCSCC Governance Manual,
- The draft MCSCC Secretariat's Organizational Chart (including job descriptions and salary structure),
- Institutional framework for regional Observer programme
- The draft Code for the Establishment and Implementation of the SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels (RRFV) through the MCSCC,
- Creation of awareness of the project on Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy and its linkage to the African Blue Economy Strategy, through the MCS initiatives for fighting IUU in the SADC region;

Additionally, the MCSCC BOD received updates from the MCSCC Interim Project Management Unit (IPMU) and partners on the projects being implemented to support operationalization of the MCSCC;

Further the BOD Adopted;

a. Two reports from the Interim Project Management Unit (IPMU)
b. Draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for the MCSCC Board Committees;
c. Draft MCSCC Board Remuneration and Travel Policy and approved them for immediate implementation.



Figure 35. *Dr. Motseki Hlatshwayo, representative of SADC taking delegates through the agenda before its adoption*



Figure 36. *Delegates Group Photo*



Figure 37. *The Chairperson of the SADC MCSCC Board of Directors, Mr. Stanley Ndara (left) and the representative of SADC Secretariat, Dr. Motseki Hlatshwayo during the opening session of the meeting.*



Figure 38. *Mr. Vicente Cossa Senior Fisheries Officer, World-Wide Fund for Nature Mozambique giving the opening statement and a presentation of the work of WWF in the SADC region.*



Figure 39. *Delegates following the meeting presentation during the plenary discussion*



Figure 40*. The representative of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH – Ms Mara Geller (Expert Monitoring & Evaluation and Knowledge Management, GIZ Botswana) making a presentation during the 2nd Meeting of the MCSCC BOD, Johannesburg-SA.*

C. PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION WITH ATLAFCO/COMHAFAT (AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION PROMOTING FISHERIES COOPERATION BETWEEN AFRICAN STATES BORDERING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN)– TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF PORT STATE MEASURES AGREEMENT (PSMA).

AU-IBAR, as collaborating partner, was invited by COMHAFAT, to share/showcase the interventions undertaken under the Aquatic Biodiversity project to support AU Member States to effectively implement the PSMA framework in the ATLAFCO region "AU-IBAR delivered a presentation titled "Overview of the project and Support to AU Member States Towards Ratification and Implementation of Global Instruments".

Within the framework of the PSMA, and in application of its 2025-2027 strategic action plan, COMHAFAT organized on June, 23rd and 24th, 2025 in Rabat (Morocco), a workshop under the theme "Towards the effective implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing". Importantly, in 2005, FAO established the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing which had become persistent among Coastal States Globally and hence needed cost-effective measures. The Agreement was approved by the FAO Conference at its thirty-sixth session on 22nd November, 2009 and entered into force in June, 2016. The Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) thus became the first binding agreement whose main objective is to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal fishing, to prevent vessels engaged in these activities from using ports and port services to land their catches. Present in this workshop were the following sixteen (16) COMHAFAT Member States: Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Morocco, Mauritania, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, as well as Panama, represented by the Fisheries Agency. Also, participating were representatives from International, regional, governmental, and non-governmental organizations, including:

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as the PSMA Secretariat;
- African Union / Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR);
- European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA).
- Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC);
- Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC);
- Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of Central America (OSPESCA);
- Moroccan Confederation of Pelagic Fishing Industries (COMAIP);
- Media Observatory for Sustainable Fisheries in Africa (OMPDA);
- Policy Center for the New South;

The meeting provided an opportunity for AU-IBAR to present and highlight key achievements gained, among the delegates, by the project interventions' on supporting AU Member States to domesticate Global Instruments as well as strengthening institutional capacity in MCS for combating IUU fishing and protection of aquatic biodiversity and environment. The presentation outlined the relevant interventions as follows:

1. Commissioning a study on the identification and Assessment of International Instruments for Conservation and Management of Aquatic Biodiversity in Africa,
2. Support to 10 selected AU MS (Eswatini, Uganda, Djibouti, Ghana, Tunisia, Egypt, Lesotho, South Sudan, Cameroon, and Burkina Faso) to identify priority issues and challenges hindering ratification and effective domestication of the Instruments; and,
3. Capacity of building of Member States towards strengthening the MCS systems in the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC)and the SADC region. For FCWC, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) personnel from the six constituent Members States were trained on MCS and aquatic biodiversity conservation measures, and also strengthened the regional MCS center in Tema, Ghana by equipping it with MCS equipment to enhance communication among Member States towards totally preventing, deterring and eliminating IUU fishing in the region. The presentation highlighted the collaboration with SADC Secretariat to operationalize the SADC Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Center (MCSCC) in Maputo-Mozambique. With all efforts geared towards prevention of IUU fishing in the SADC region.

Outcome of the workshop;

1. Member states sensitized on AU-IBAR's interventions on strengthening institutional capacities for effective MCS measures and facilitating implementing of global instruments, including PSMA
2. The Member States present at the meeting exchanged information on the status of implementation of the provisions of the PSMA;
3. Partners role in supporting the effective implementation of PSMA was shared;
4. Inter-institutional cooperation for effective implementation of the PSMA Strengthened;
5. Commitment to the use of the Global Information Exchange System (GIES) to improve coordination and monitoring of implementation status of PSMA at regional and national levels was emphasized;
6. Lessons and best practices on good practices and effective measures to combat IUU fishing were shared;
7. Capacity needs for successful implementation of the PSMA were identified;

8. Actions to be undertaken to support Member States in successfully implementing the PSMA were identified.



Figure 41. *Delegates at the PSMA meeting*



Figure 42. *Representative of FAO - Mrs Minmin LEI (left in front) speaking during the opening ceremony, second left: Representative of the Minister for Fisheries of Guinea Bissau, Executive Secretary of COMHAFAT (Mr. Taoufik EL KTIRI) and right, Mr. Abdellatif HMIDANE - the representative of the government of Morocco.*

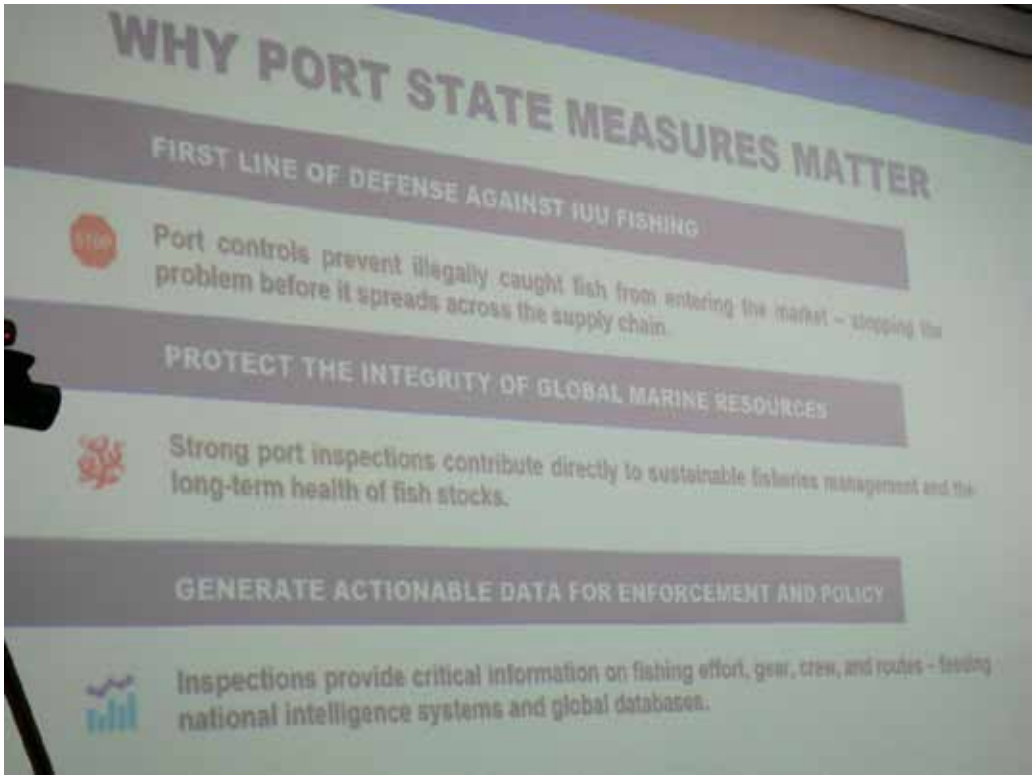


Figure 43. *PowerPoint Presentation on why PSMA matter?*



Figure 44. *Delegates listening attentively to the proceedings of the PSMA meeting proceedings.*



Figure 45. *Right: The Executive Secretary of FCWC, Dr. Gaston Antoine Djihinto*



Figure 46. *Presentation by AU-IBAR*

Overall achievement of the Mission:

- Sensitized the participants on the interventions undertaken by the Aquatic project to support AU Member States to effectively implement the PSMA framework not only in the ATLAFCO region but across the Continent;
- Created awareness on the "aquatic biodiversity conservation in African Blue Economy project" among the delegates of the ALAFCO Member States.

Output 2.2. A framework for establishing National, Regional, and Transboundary cooperation on Africa Blue Economy Strategy Thematic Areas.

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

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

i. Partnership with WWF and Nairobi Convention to advance the MSP processes in the Northern Mozambique Channel.

AU-IBAR, through the aquatic biodiversity project, had collaborated with WWF and the Nairobi Convention to develop institutional guidelines (including draft regional guidelines for MSP) to advance the transboundary MSP process in the Northern Mozambique Channel. Within the framework of ongoing collaboration on advancing transboundary MSP, AU-IBAR, on the 07th -11st April, 2025, as collaborating partner, participated and contributed to the Validation of the Marine Spatial Planning Technical Guidelines and Innovative Tools for the Northern Mozambique Channel, involving Mozambique, Madagascar, Comoros, and Tanzania. The overall objective of the workshop was to finalize and validate the MSP technical guidelines for the NMC region, and identify the way forward on the MSP process for the NMC region.

The workshop was attended by key partners including:

- Nairobi Convention Secretariat;
- Nairobi Convention Focal Points from Mozambique, Tanzania, Madagascar, Seychelles and Comoros;
- Members of the MSP Technical Working Group (TWG) in the NMC region;
- Members of the MSP national coordinators in the NMC region;
- Regional bodies: WIOMSA, African Union-IBAR;



Figure 47. *Participants Group Photo*



Figure 48. *Delegates being taken through a practical MSP simulation session*



Figure 49. *The representative of Seychelles (in a white shirt with a tag) demonstrating how marine space is allocated to different human or sectoral use.*



Figure 50. *Prof. Igor Mayer (Breda University), [in black shirt] demonstrating the use of DTO - MSP digital tool for ecosystem management*





Figure 51. *Delegates (a & b) participating in MSP process, a practical simulation on the table*

The key outcomes of the Validation workshop included:

- Finalization and validation of the MSP technical guidelines for the NMC region;
- Introduction of the Northern Mozambique Channel Digital Twin Ocean (DTO) Prototype to the members, More precisely:
  a. The basic concept and value proposition of a (future) Northern Mozambique Channel Digital Twin Ocean DTO.
  b. The workshop demonstrated the co-design or more prototypes of a (future) Northern Mozambique Channel DTO using the MSP Challenge simulation platform as a canvas (sketch board);
  c. Co-identified and sketched possible use cases for an MSP Challenge e.g. Northern Mozambique Channel Edition.
  d. Engaged the NMC subgroup of the West Indian Ocean (WIO) MSP Technical Working Group in regional initiatives for developing a (future) Northern Mozambique Channel DTO.
- Communication of the methodology of the Natural Capital Assessment to the members, including results of the initial studies and the possibility of integrating the DTO tool onto the NMC MSP process.

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

i. Partnership and Collaboration with selected AU MS (Gabon, Madagascar & Senegal) to operationalize and strengthen governance mechanisms in National Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Support to the Government of Gabon to strengthen Governance of Marine protected Areas for conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management

a. In partnership and collaboration with the Regional Fisheries Commission for the Gulf of Guinea COREP), the Project supported the Government of Gabon, by organizing an expert National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting, comprising of about 30 national experts, on the 12th – 14th November, 2024;
b. The overall objective of the National consultative meeting was to develop a roadmap for effective implementation and improved governance of the established Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Gabon
c. The meeting developed a Roadmap for effective, sustainable implementation and improved Governance of the established Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Country towards conservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems management.

On the overall, the following outcomes were achieved:

a. Awareness and capacity building on the importance and necessity for MPA (an effective tool for conservation of aquatic biodiversity) created;
b. Issues/challenges related to the management and governance of MPAs in Gabon identified;
c. Priority actions for the challenges identified;
d. A roadmap for the effective governance of MPAs in Gabon developed;



Figure 52. *Workshop participants group photo*



Figure 53. *Above right (Standing), The Ground facilitator & Focal point for Gabon, Mr. Clauvice NYAMA MOUKETOU introducing the high table to make opening statements. Sited, from left: Mr. Emmanuel K. Sabuni – Executive Secretary of COREP, Dr Bashirou Moussa Demsa (ECCAS), Rep. of the Government of Gabon, Madame Micheline SCHUMMER GNANDJI and Mr. Philippe Ouedraogo (AU-IBAR) rep. during the opening ceremony.*



Figure 54. *Participants of Group 2 during a working session.*



Figure 55. *Participants in a working group 1 – Discussing on the issues affecting the governance of MPAs in Gabon*

Support to the Government of Madagascar to strengthen Governance of Marine protected Areas for conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management

Between 19th – 21st February, 2025, AU-IBAR in partnership with the Republic of Madagascar, organized an expert National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting, comprising of 41 national experts, to Develop a Roadmap and Guidelines for Sustainable Implementation and Governance of the Established Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Madagascar. The workshop was attended by Dr. Paubert Tsimanaoraty MAHATANTE, the Minister for Fisheries and Blue Economy (who represented the Government of the Republic of Madagascar), representatives of various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Madagascar (environment, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, forestry, judiciary, transport, Gender and youth etc), representatives from private sector, CSO, Women and youth representative, experts/resource persons and relevant members of staff of AU-IBAR. The overall objective of this National consultative meeting was to develop a roadmap for the effective implementation and governance of established Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Madagascar.

The main achievements of this National consultative workshop included:

- Sensitized the participants on the provisions of the aquatic biodiversity conservation project and African Blue Economy Strategy;
- Awareness created (and capacity enhanced) on lessons and best practices for MPA implementation and governance towards conserving aquatic biodiversity and ecosystem;
- Issues/challenges related to the management and governance of MPAs in Madagascar identified;
- Priority actions/recommendations proposed for each of the identified issue/challenge to enhance management of MPAs in Madagascar;
- Roadmap for the realisation of the identified priority actions proposed to ensure effective governance of National MPAs;
- Relevant National stakeholders in the management/governance of MPAs were successfully brought together for interaction and new collaborations established;
- A communique containing key decisions from the meeting was collectively adopted;



Figure 56. *Members of the high table during the official closing ceremony for the workshop, Mr Rafik Nouaili, Rep. of Director of AU-IBAR (Center)*



Figure 57. *Delegates in a group photo (front), section of delegates following the proceedings during the workshop*



Figure 58. *AU-IBAR team on a courtesy call to the Minster (Center) for Fisheries and BE for Madagascar*



Figure 59. *Participants during working group sessions, (a, b, & c)*

Support to the Government of Senegal to strengthen Governance of Marine protected Areas for conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management

In partnership and collaboration with the Republic of Senegal, the project supported an expert National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting, involving 30 National experts, to Develop a Roadmap and Guidelines for Sustainable Implementation and Improved Governance of the Established Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in Senegal, 15th - 17th April, 2025. This workshop brought all stakeholders for a collective commitment to the sustainable governance of nationally established MPAs.

The overall objective was to develop a National roadmap and operational recommendations for a more effective, sustainable, and inclusive governance of Senegal's Marine Protected Areas. By the end of the workshop, key outputs were developed from this meeting as follows:

a. Relevant National stakeholders in the management/governance of MPAs were successfully brought together for interaction and interagency collaboration fostered among National institutions;
b. Awareness created (and capacity enhanced) on lessons and best practices on implementation and governance of MPAs among stakeholders and on the strategic value of MPAs in terms of biodiversity conservation, ecosystems management, climate resilience and local economy
c. Significant constraints affecting the management and governance of MPAs were collectively identified and analyzed;
d. Concrete actions to strengthen the governance, financial sustainability, and territorial integration of MPAs were proposed;

e. A realistic, inclusive National roadmap aligned with regional and International commitments was developed based on exchanges and recommendations from the workshop.
f. Recommendations for an operational roadmap were developed;
g. A communique containing key decisions from the meeting collectively adopted;
h. A field visit to Somone MPA (Community Co-managed) in Dakar, Senegal on lessons and best practices for co-managed MPA.

Following the project's support, stakeholders' consultations resulted in a number of key issues and dynamics thus allowing them to propose salient innovations for taking governance of MPAs forward, that include:

i. The systematic integration of the Gender dimension into the governance mechanisms of MPAs emerged as a priority e.g. the need to ensure equitable representation of women in management committees and territorial planning mechanisms is now fully recognized;
ii. The recognition of Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) as a strategic lever for expanding Marine conservation opens up essential opportunities. Enhancing existing community initiatives, particularly through the legal recognition of Zones d'Intersion de Recifs Artificiels)/Artificial Reef Immersion Zones (ZIRA), zones de pêche protégée or protected fishing areas (ZPP), and Aires Protégées Communautaires or Community Protected Areas (APAC), will make it possible to expand the protected ecological cover rapidly.
iii. The promotion of eco-citizenship and the link between conservation and local economic activities (ecotourism, sustainable development of resources) is an essential change of approach. It is a question of moving away from a restrictive conservation vision to make it a driver of local economic development and resilience.
iv. The integration of MPAs into territorial development plans, and no longer only into sectoral plans, is another major innovation. This reflects the desire to place Marine conservation at the heart of sustainable development policies



Figure 60. *Participants group photo, 15/04/2025*



Figure 61. *Opening Ceremony: High table, from left: Col. Abdou Aziz NDIAYE (Deputy Director in charge of Marine Protected Areas); Dr. Namadou Goudiaby (Chief of Staff and Director of Cabinet in the ministry of Fisheries, Maritime and Port infrastructure – Representative op. of the Minister for fisheries) and Mr. Philippe Ouedraogo (representative of the Director of AU-IBAR); 15/04/2025*



Figure 62. *Closing Ceremony: In the middle of the High table: Mr. Mouhamadou Abibou Diagne, Secretary General (Permanent Secretary) of the Ministry of Fisheries, Maritime and Port Infrastructure (MPIMP)*



Figure 63. *Section of delegates following the workshop proceedings, 15/04/2025*

FIELD VISIT TO MARINE PROTECTED AREA IN SENEGAL

- A field visit to Somone Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Senegal was conducted on the 18th April, 2025 by a team of AU-IBAR staff, the director in charge of community Marine Protected Area, 3 staff from the Somone MPA and the facilitators of the National stakeholders consultative meeting in Senegal which was completed on the 17th April, 2025.



Figure 64. *a & b above: Field Visit to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by AU-IBAR team and the consultant*



Figure 65. *Marine Protected Area: Somone, Senegal*



Figure 66. *AU-IBAR team briefed by enforcement officers in charge of Somone community MPA, in Senegal during the field visit; 18/04/2025*

Purpose of the visit to the MPA and outcomes:

- The visiting team met with the enforcement officials of the Somone MPA with the aim of gathering information related to the establishment, co-management mechanism, revenue generation from the MPA, challenges and opportunities in the establishment and governance of the MPA.
- The field visit was intended to obtain practical information on the management of the Marine Protected Area, learn lessons and best practices on the sustainable implementation and governance of the community involvement in the collaborative management of the MPA in Senegal towards effective conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management.

Lessons learnt and best practices in the governance of the Somone MPA:

- Management of the Somone MPA is a collaborative, community-driven process, where primary responsibility for managing the MPA lies with local communities, who are organized into management committees. These committees are tasked with day-to-day oversight and decision-making. They allocate areas for use to other stakeholders (transportation, construction etc), collect revenue from various economic activities and plan and prioritize how the collected resources are utilized. On the other end, the Government provides regulatory oversight, mobilizes funding, and supports the implementation of integrated management plans.

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

The project recognizes that capacity building on the Continent in disciplines related to aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems management would contribute immensely to sustainability of the outcomes of the project's activities. Accordingly, the project conducted assessments that identified three institutions as the African Union Centres of Excellence in Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management



Figure 67. *Presentation of the report, by the Director of AU-IBAR, Dr. Huyam Salih, on assessment of institutions for selection as AU Centres of Excellence on aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management to the STC_ARDWE in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2024.*

The Summit of African Heads of States and Governments, in 2025, endorsed the following institutions as AU Centres of Excellence for training and research in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystems Management.

i. University of Ghana, Ghana
ii. University of Nairobi, Kenya
iii. Pwani University, Kenya



Figure 68. *The lead expert, Mr. Etienne Hinrichsen at Nairobi University, Kenya conducting a physical inspection, and on the right is a staff of the University.*



Figure 69: *The Evaluating Facilities at PWANI University, Kenya*



Figure 70: *University of Ghana*



Figure 71: *University of Nairobi University of Ghana*

The Centres of excellence will, in doubt, contribute immensely to capacity development on the continent on issues of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems management that would ensure integrated, sustainable management of Africa's aquatic ecosystems and resources. Based on the recommendations, following the endorsement of the three institutions, the process of selection of additional institutions as African Union Centres would continue to ensure regional balance in the representation of the new centres in the Continent. The capacity of AU endorsed centres would be strengthened through provisions of equipment based on gaps identified during the selection process.

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 the environment.

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

3.1.1.3 Support efforts to strengthen conservation and climate change impact mitigation efforts for identified ongoing initiatives on ecosystem restoration (Mangroves, Seagrass, etc.) to mitigate the impact of climate change (increasing carbon sinks).

a. A data analysis report titled 'Strengthening Conservation and Climate Change impact mitigation efforts for identified ongoing initiatives on Nature-Based Solutions on Seaweed Farming in Zanzibar – Towards conserving Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management' was developed. The report outlined Designing Methodology, Developing Appropriate Data Collection Tools and Planning for Field activities for mainstreaming gender, climate change and environmental consideration in seaweed farming.
b. Continental Strategy on Nature-based Solutions for Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Africa

In February, 2025, a technical consultant was recruited to develop a Continental Strategy on Nature-Based Solutions to provide structured guidance to the African Continent for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management that would also contribute to socio-economic empowerment of communities dependent on the resources.

The key deliverables included the following:

☐ Situational Analysis Report
☐ A Continental Strategy on Nature-based Solutions for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management

In 13th May, 2025, 2025, a virtual validation workshop, comprising 65 participants, was held that received inputs and comments from stakeholders that substantially enriched the Continental Strategy on Nature-Based Solutions for Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Africa. The Strategy was thereafter validated by stakeholders.

The workshop achieved the following outcomes:

1. Awareness created and capacity of stakeholders enhanced on Nature-Based Solutions in aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration.
2. Key Continental stakeholders' views and inputs on AU-IBAR's draft Continental Strategy for NbS in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management captured and incorporated in the draft Strategy.
3. Key priority issues and actions for NbS in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management identified.

4. Continental Strategy on NbS in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management enriched and validated.





OUTPUT 3.2. Strategies for an integrated strategic framework for Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism and Mining developed.

In March, 2025, AU-IBAR commissioned a study on the impacts of plastic pollution and a technical consultant was recruited to conduct "Assessment of the impact of plastics and microplastics pollution on Aquatic Biodiversity and Environment and develop a Continental Strategy for the control and mitigation of plastics and microplastics pollution on Aquatic Biodiversity and Environment in Africa".

The study was completed in May, 2025 and the following deliverables were achieved;

i. Draft Continental Strategy developed for the control and mitigation of plastics and microplastics pollution on Aquatic Biodiversity and Environment in Africa;
ii. Comprehensive study Report based on the field missions, desktop studies and interviews with key stakeholders;

On 29th May, 2025, a virtual stakeholders validation workshop, involving 59 stakeholders, was held that received inputs from stakeholders that significantly enriched the report of the study on "Assessment to determine the impact of plastics and microplastics pollution on Aquatic Biodiversity and Environment and to develop a Continental Strategy for the control and mitigation of plastics and microplastics pollution on Aquatic Biodiversity and Environment in Africa";

The key outcomes of the virtual workshop were:

i. Awareness created and stakeholders sensitized on plastics and microplastics pollution and impact on Aquatic Biodiversity and Environment in Africa and mitigation strategies;
ii. Stakeholders' comments/views and inputs to enrich the draft strategy were received;
iii. Draft Continental plastic strategy validated, consultant requested to incorporate all the inputs from stakeholders;
iv. Recommendations for next steps;
v. Comprehensive report of proceedings of Validation Workshop.



Figure 72: *AU-IBAR Team and the technical Consultant following the proceedings during the virtual Stakeholders validation workshop, 29th May, 2025.*

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.

In February, 2025, a technical expert was recruited to develop an implementation plan for the operationalization of the Continental Strategy for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. This is in response to the decision by the African Heads of States and Governments in 2024, after endorsement of the Continental Strategy on Gender mainstreaming, to support operationalization of the Continental Strategy in AU Member States and regional institutions.

The key deliverables from this consultancy were:

- Situational Analysis
- Draft implementation Plan
- Final Report on consultancy

In April, 2025, a virtual validation workshop, involving 105 participants, was held on Tuesday 29th April, 2025 to validate the findings of the technical consultant, and therefore endorse the Gender implementation plan.

The key outcomes achieved during the consultative workshop were:

1. Key stakeholders sensitized on AU-IBAR's Continental Strategy for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management;
2. Priority issues and actions for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and

environmental management through the implementation plan identified;

3. Mechanisms for operationalizing the Continental Strategy for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management outlined;
4. An implementation plan on Gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management in Africa enriched and validated.

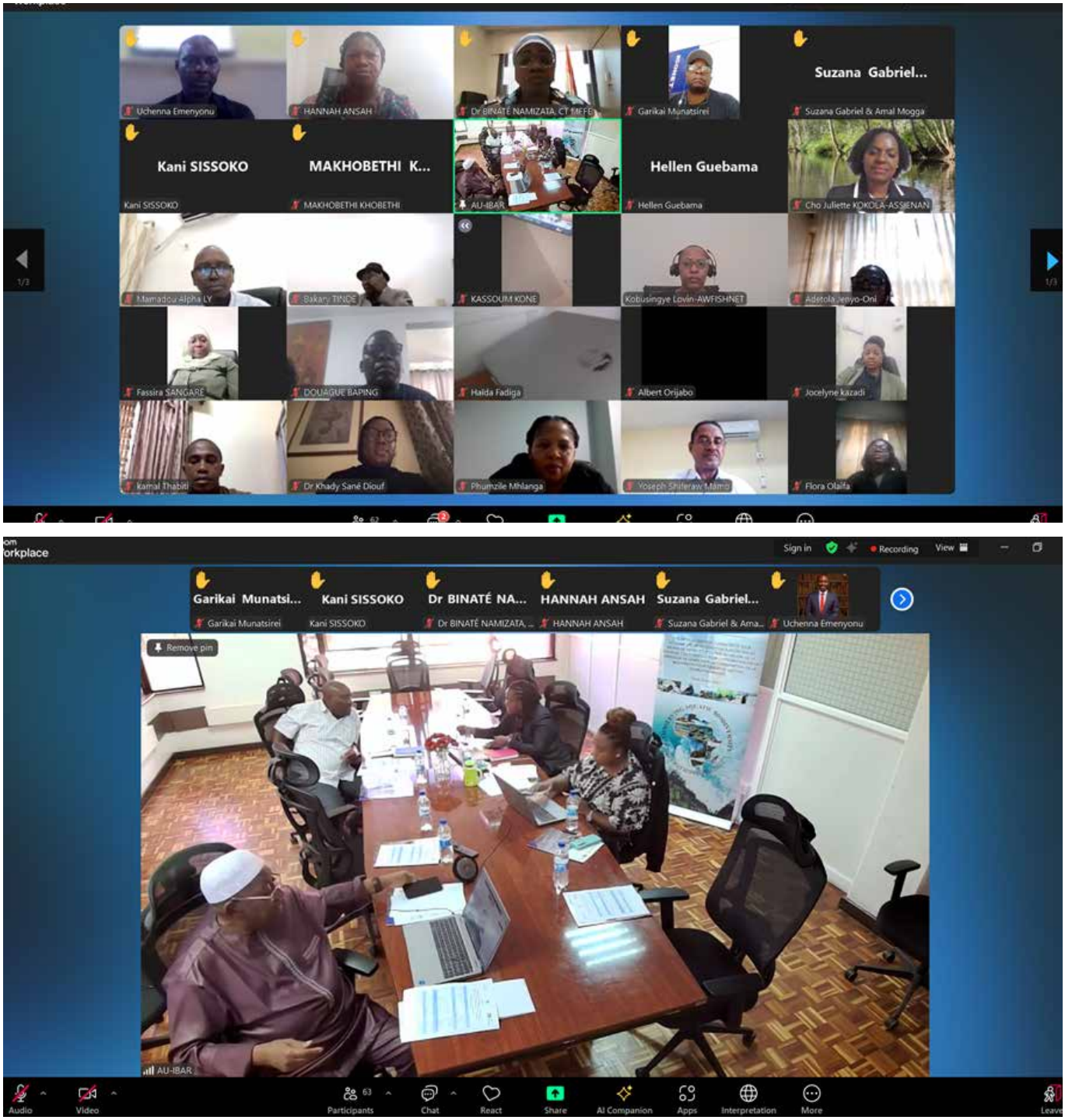


Figure 73: *Photos of the virtual consultation on Gender implementation plan*

4.1.1.1.Technical support to two (2) AU Member States to develop all-inclusive and deliberate biodiversity strategies as important entry points for women's empowerment; for enhancing the role of women and youth in inclusive aquatic biodiversity and integrated environmental management; opportunities to build on women's specific roles and capacities in biodiversity and environmental management

To roll out the Continental Strategy on Gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management, the project supported 2 AU-MS (Egypt and Cameroon) to develop all-inclusive and deliberate strategies for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

a) Support to the Arab Republic of Egypt to mainstream Gender dimensions on National policies and strategies for aquatic biodiversity conservation.

To ensure regional balance in the support by the project on Gender mainstreaming, the Arab Republic of Egypt was identified as the 4th AU-MS for support for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and integrated environmental management (the Project had supported Malawi, Ethiopia and Cote D'Ivoire). An expert national consultative workshop, comprising 28 national experts, was held in Cairo, Egypt from 26th – 28th November, 2024, in collaboration with Egypt's Lakes and Fisheries Resources Protection and Development Agency (LFRPDA). Preceding the workshop, a National consultant was recruited to assess National Instruments relevant to conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management and to identify gaps relating to Gender and women integration.



Figure 74: *Opening remarks by Dr. Ahmed Saney, Lake Fisheries Resources and Protection Development Agency (LFRPDA), Egypt*



Figure 75: *Group Photo of participants of the workshop in Cairo, Egypt*



Figure 76: *Deliberations during the National consultative workshop in Cairo, Egypt from 26th – 28th November, 2024*

Main achievements:

1. Identified National Instruments relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management as well as Gender empowerment issues
2. Gaps identified in National Instruments with regard to African Continental Strategy for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation and environmental management.
3. African Continental Strategy on Gender inclusivity for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management mainstreamed into National Instruments relevant to aquatic biodiversity and environmental management.

b) Support to the Republic of Cameroon to mainstream Gender dimensions into National policies and strategies for aquatic biodiversity conservation.

The Republic of Cameroon as the 5th AU-MS was selected for support to develop a Strategy for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and integrated environmental management. An expert national consultative workshop, comprising of 34 national experts, was held to develop an all-inclusive deliberate Gender Strategy for aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation and environmental management in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 25th – 27th February, 2025, in collaboration with Cameroon's Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA).



Figure 77: *Opening remarks by Dr. Taiga, Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA), Government of Cameroon.*



Figure 78: *Group Photo of Participants and Delegates in Yaoundé, Cameroon*



Figure 79: *Photo of consultations during the workshop by participants in Yaoundé, Cameroon*

Main achievements:

1. Identified National Instruments relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation
2. Gaps identified in National Instruments with regard to African Continental Strategy for mainstreaming Gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation
3. National instruments relevant to aquatic biodiversity reviewed and aligned with the African Continental Strategy for Gender mainstreaming

4.1.1.2. Identify and conduct regional (Blue Economy) value chains assessments that will create opportunities for employment (e.g. manufacturing and processing), income generation, revenue collection, reducing poverty and cost of living

In February, 2025, AU-IBAR recruited a technical consultant to assess and propose mechanisms for strengthening regional blue value chains in small-scale Octopus fisheries towards strengthening Gender dimensions in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation in East Africa and South-West Indian Ocean under the SIDA funded Project "Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy". The consultant developed an inception report and undertook a comprehensive literature review/desk study.

In March and April, 2025, the technical consultant conducted field missions in Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar and Comoros in order to benchmark and complement the desk studies.
In June, 2025, a stakeholders' workshop, of 35 participants, was then held to validate the findings of the technical consultant in Mombasa, Kenya from 3rd – 5th June, 2025. The outputs of the workshop included a communique and a report. A regional Octopus fisheries' Network for East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean region was also established known as Western Indian Ocean Network for Small-Scale Octopus Fisheries (WION-SOF).

Proposed new Interim Bureau for the Western Indian Ocean Network for Small -Scale Octopus fisheries (WION-SOF)

Name	Country	Roles
Mrs. Amina Ahmed	Kenya	Chairperson
*Mr. Dany Rajaonarison	Madagascar	Vice Chair
Mzee Ali Khamis Haji	Tanzania	Secretary General
Ms. Nassima Said Mloza	Comoros	Treasurer

***The Octopus stakeholders in Madagascar requested to replace Madame Marie Rasata**



Figure 80: *Group photo of participants during the validation workshop in Mombasa, 3rd - 5th June,2025*



Figure 81: *Interim Bureau of WION-SOF with AU-IBAR staff and technical expert*



Figure 82: *Group Photo of AWFISHNET GA participants during workshop in Dakar, Senegal*

In July, 2025, a Consultative Virtual Workshop, comprising of 28 stakeholders, was held on West Indian Ocean Network for Small-Scale Octopus Fisheries Regional Value Chain (WION-SOF) to Strengthen Regional collaboration on Gender Dimensions, Climate and Environmental Considerations in the West Indian Ocean Region.

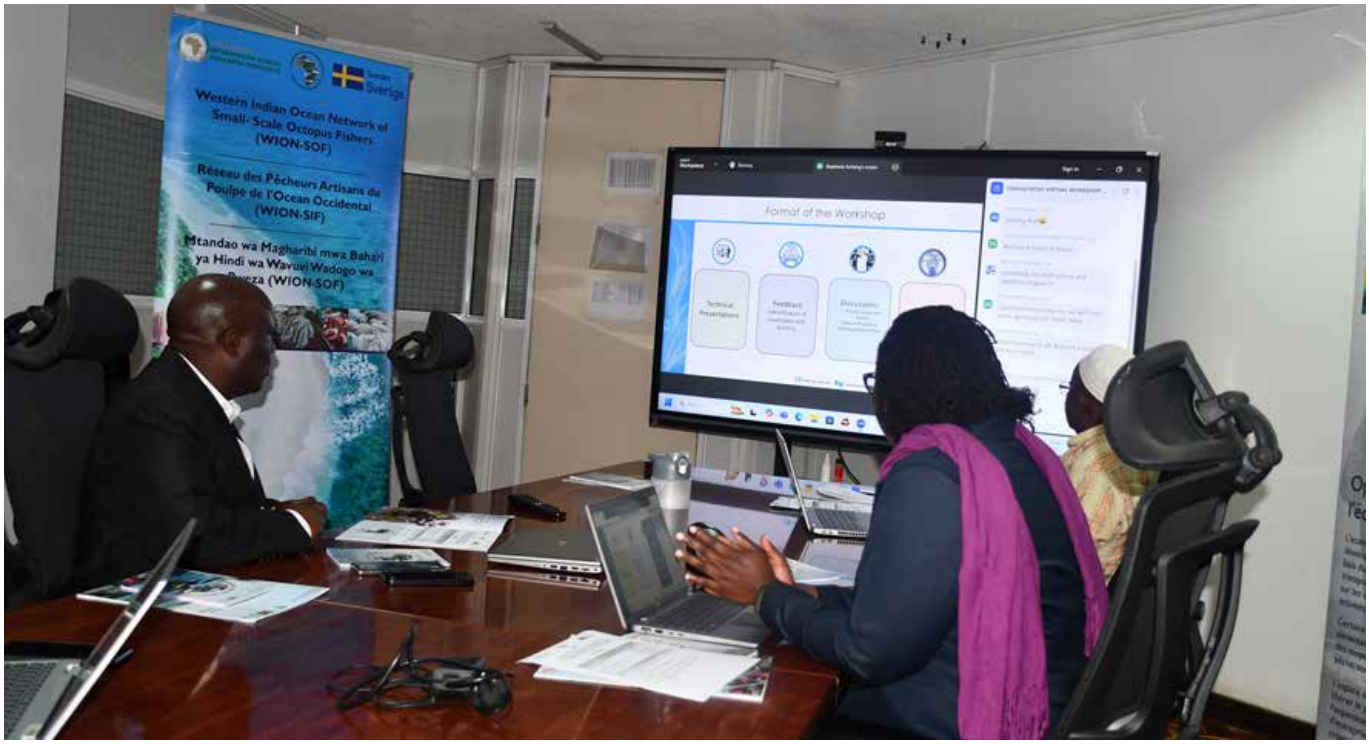


Figure 83: *Photo of the virtual workshop on small scale Octopus' fisheries on 29th July, 2025*

The workshop sought to create awareness of the WION-SOF (West Indian Ocean Network for Small-scale Octopus' fisheries) among stakeholders and develop broad-based consensus on the way-forward for strengthening the Network for effective role in promoting inclusive and sustainable Octopus' fisheries in the WIO.

The workshop achieved the following outcomes:

1. Stakeholders were briefed on the assessment conducted on small-scale Octopus' fisheries regional value in the WIO, current status, regulatory frameworks, Gender and sustainability issues, challenges and opportunities
2. Stakeholders were sensitized and awareness created on the WION-SOF.
3. Information was shared on the outcomes of stakeholders' consultative meetings on small-scale Octopus' fisheries regional value chain in the WIO.
4. Members were identified and invited from the other WIO Countries to engage and participate in the Network.
5. The Rules of Procedures was presented and feedback garnered for finalization.
6. Way forward reviewed and next steps identified on full operationalization of the WION-SOF.

The Next Steps were identified as follows:

1. To further enrich, then finalize the meeting report and disseminate among the delegates both those who were in attendance and not in attendance.
2. Adoption of the official logo for the Network.
3. the interim executive, the consultant and AU-IBAR to liaise with NGOs and relevant organizations to identify stakeholders in small- scale Octopus' fisheries in Mauritius, Seychelles, Mozambique and Somalia.

4. Follow up on the proposal by Madagascar to replace the Country's interim representative as Vice president
5. Finalize on the Rules of Procedure, translate into French, Portuguese and Swahili, then disseminate to the Network.
6. Identify a communications officer for the Network from the WIO Countries that were not present during the inception workshop in Mombasa, June, 2025.

4. PROGRESS ON INDICATORS

4.1 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)		Reduction 30%	In Africa, progress is being made through increased regional cooperation, stronger governance, enhanced monitoring using technologies such as satellite imagery, and the promotion of community-based management. i. Worked with SADC to strengthen the institutional framework for the SADC Regional MCS Coordinating Centre towards Combating IUU in the SADC region ii. Strengthening the capacity of MCS and environmental personnel in the FCWC region and the COREP region in effective MCS Measures to combat IUU and protect Aquatic Biodiversity iii. Purchased equipment for FCWC to enhance their regional MCS Centre in Ghana for combating	AU-IBAR Reports	Political will and cooperation from the Regional and National authorities on the development and enforcement of relevant Legal Frameworks
	# of RECs (or specialized Regional Institutions) and MSs whose institutional capacities for conservation and utilization of aquatic biodiversity were enhanced	0	4 RECs/ RFBs 15 MSs	2 RECs SADC; 3 RFBs: LVFO, COREP, FCWC; 28 MSs • LVFO - Capacity for harmonized management of transboundary freshwater ecosystems • COREP Harmonized Management of Marine Ecosystem • FCWC- Harmonized management of MCS to combat IUU by purchasing equipment • SADC – Institutional Framework for enhanced • ECCAS – what was done in COREP • Supported 28 MSs	AU-IBAR Reports	
Outcomes						
1 Improved ratification and alignment of relevant Policies and Regulations to key International and/or Regional Instruments related to the protection and conservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems	Ratification rates of relevant legal Instruments (Disaggregated by Instrument)			Studies were completed, and a list of 55 priority continental and global issues was identified. Ten countries were supported in domesticating the instruments.	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	

2. 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		15	(18-Member States supported) • 5 AU Member States supported (Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, DR Congo and Congo); • 7 AU Member States supported (Tanzania, Kenya, Congo, Gabon, Madagascar, Senegal and Gabon) in the transboundary and national MPA process, which included an ecosystem approach is incorporated in the establishment and governance approaches • 6 AU Member States on the transboundary MSP process that incorporated the Ecosystem in advancing MSP processes (Togo, Benin, Tanzania, Comoros, Mozambique, Madagascar) included • Total Countries supported through overlap in support in some Countries, for example, Kenya and Tanzania, supported across different activities • LVFO and COREP supported to develop harmonized framework for the transboundary management of shared freshwater and marine ecosystems respectively	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
3. Measures for mitigation impacts of coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas, deep Sea mining, and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment strengthened	# of RECs or specialized institutions or AU Member States (AU MSs) in which the recommendations on mitigating the negative impacts of climate change are piloted	0	2	3 AU MSs supported (Tanzania (Tanzania), Kenya (Gazi bay), Ghana (Keta region) 1. Specialized institution Working in collaboration with KEMFRI, Communities in Gazi Bay, trained on mitigating the impact of CC on ecosystem restoration. 2. Specialized institution Worked with Zanzibar Seaweed Culture Initiative (ZASCI) to mainstream climate change consideration in seaweed farming 3. IUCN Specialized Institution Ghana for Gender Mainstreaming and Ecosystem Restoration in the Keta Coastal Region	AU - IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
4. Improved participation and engagement of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management	# of RECs and MSs in which measures to enhance participation of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management are implemented	0	7 MSs (including other organizations)	Supported 7 MSs • Malawi and Ethiopia, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Cameroon, Ghana and South Africa to mainstream women and youth in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. Gender sensitive strategies for aquatic biodiversity and conservation of marine ecosystems • Collaboration with IUCN to develop gender-sensitive management plans for the community-based resource area committee • Collaboration with Mabuyi Development Planners to develop a gender policy and action plan for a community-based NGO working at the interface of South African small-scale fisheries		

Outputs:						
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 in the 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 involved, since BE transcends different sectors
	# of AU MSs supported to participate in relevant aquatic biodiversity and environmental Fora	0	6	Six countries supported • 3 AU MSs (Kenya, Togo, and Zimbabwe), as resource persons, supported to UNFCC meeting in Abu Dhabi in 2023 • 1, MS- Seychelles, supported participation in the UNFSA review conference in New York in June 2023 • 2 MS- Kenya and DR Congo supported the MSP Forum in Tanzania in 2023 • 1 MS – Tanzania supported to participate in 2024 FAO COFI meeting in ROME	AU - IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	Timely availability of financial, human, and material resources Innovative technologies are used to facilitate implementation in light of COVID-19-induced restrictions.
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	10	Ten (10) Countries • Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Eswatini, South Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia, Lesotho, Ghana, and Uganda — supported the review of domestic relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity and the 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	1: Done for South-Eastern Regions. Various scenarios were provided with mechanisms which the regional centre can use, it is yet to be rolled out	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	2 Regional institutions: Abidjan Convention, WWF and Nairobi Convention • Collaborated with the Abidjan Convention on the transboundary MSP process between Benin and Togo in the Gulf of Guinea Large marine ecosystems • Collaborated with WWF and the Nairobi Convention on the transboundary MSP process in the Northern Mozambique channel in the Indian Ocean	AU - IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
	# of transboundary aquatic ecosystems Frameworks developed for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management	0		2 Collaboration with LVFO to develop a harmonized framework for the management of transboundary freshwater ecosystems • Worked with COPREP to develop a harmonized framework for the management of transboundary marine ecosystems 2 developed: o framework for harmonized management of transboundary freshwater ecosystems o A framework for harmonized management of transboundary marine ecosystems		

	# of AU MS supported in the development of a harmonized Strategy or Polices for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management	0	5	5 AU MS supported in the development of National Strategy or Policy Instruments for the preservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecological management: Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, DR Congo, and the Republic of Congo		
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	2 In two regions, the Indian Ocean region • 2. Transboundary MPA guidelines piloted between Tanzania and Kenya, in collaboration with WIOMSA • 3. West Africa (Gabon and Congo in the Atlantic for shared transboundary marine ecosystems • 2. Transboundary MPA Guidelines piloted between Rep of Congo and Rep of Gabon, in Collaboration with FCWC • 3 (three) institutions identified: i. University of Ghana, ii. University of Nairobi and iii. Pwani University • Identified and endorsed by the STC as centres of excellence for research and training in aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management	AU – IBAR Reports	
	# of Aquatic Biodiversity Centres of Excellence established and strengthened	0	2			
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, completed, disseminated and piloted in Gazi and Zanzibar communities	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	5 AU MSs: Gabon, Kenya and Nigeria, Egypt, and Angola supported to develop Masterplans • Based on the study, countries were supported to develop a Strategic Framework for sustainable Coastal and Marine tourism and mining	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
4.1 Continental strategy for Gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity and environmental management developed	# of AU MS supported to implement Regional Strategy for enhancing the role of women and youth in aquatic biodiversity and integrated environmental management	0	5	5 supported: Malawi, Ethiopia and Cote D'Ivoire, Cameroon, Egypt • The continental strategy was endorsed by the STC and 5 MSs were supported	AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	
	# of environmental-based NGOs supported to implement of Gender-sensitive workplans	0	2		AU- IBAR Implementation and Monitoring Reports	

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT



Figure 84: *AU-IBAR monitoring and evaluation team with the Octopus fisherwomen in Lamu*

During the period under review, the monitoring and evaluation team conducted an annual monitoring exercise in Mauritius, Seychelles, Kenya, Madagascar, and the Comoros. The purpose of the monitoring exercise was to assess the progress made by the Aquatic Biodiversity Project towards meeting its output and outcome targets.

Specific objectives of the assessment were:

1. To take stock of the achievements against log-frame targets.
2. Assess the extent of achieving key project outputs, outcomes, and benefits streams.
3. To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, outcomes/impact and sustainability of project results
4. To take stock of key lessons learnt and best practices to obtain stakeholder feedback
5. To assess the octopus value chain, especially the challenges and opportunities

This assessment adopted a pragmatic paradigm and employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

The following methods were used:

1. Document and literature review of project documents and reports. The team also reviewed literature on the Octopus value chain, including the study commissioned under the project.
2. Primary data collection was carried out in the target Countries, engaging with relevant stakeholders, including relevant ministry officials, partner agencies, and farmer groups.
3. The focus group discussions were recorded for purposes of report generation.

Summary of findings

- The project delivered its outputs well according to plans and was welcomed in the target Countries, as the activities implemented contributed to ecological balance and the health of aquatic ecosystems. Most activity targets in the logframe (see annexed log-frame) were either achieved or surpassed. The rate of completion of planned activities was 100% for all output areas.
- Stakeholder engagement, coordination and collaboration for this project were exceptionally good
- Strengthening of beach management units and strengthening of community-based ecosystems management approaches resulted in improved conservation and utilisation of aquatic resources in Lamu, Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles
- Marine Spatial planning; Madagascar is in active policy development with legal Instruments and National roadmaps referencing land-sea planning; the process is advancing, but still at early/implementation planning stages. Comoros: MSP is embryonic, with awareness and pre-planning activities underway, but a finalised National plan has not yet been established. Mauritius: The MSP for the EEZ is a national initiative under government coordination (PM's office / maritime authorities). Seychelles is ahead of the Countries monitored; a national Marine Spatial Plan has been developed and was formally enacted into law in 2025.
- Marine protected areas- All the Countries monitored are committed to Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, an International Agreement to conserve 30% of the Earth's land and sea by the year 2030 to protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change. By 2024, Seychelles had achieved 32%. This is backed by firm government policy and political will. Other Countries remain committed, but the achievements are still low.
- Octopus fisheries value chains are a generational trade constrained by Biological factors: Overfishing, poor enforcement of closed seasons, and habitat degradation; Economic factors: Limited market access, lack of cold storage/ weak cold chain, and low prices for fishers; Institutional: Weak governance, weak organisation of women fishers, inadequate data and monitoring; Social factors Gender inequality, youth unemployment and livelihood vulnerability: Environmental factors Climate change impacts (temperature rise, coral bleaching) among others, across the Countries visited.

Recommendations

1. Given the excellent rate of achievement for the project, it is recommended that, going forward, projects aimed at consolidating and sustaining the achievements and momentum created by this project be developed and implemented after the closure of this project
2. The recommendations of the exit strategy should be implemented to ensure the sustainable closure of this phase
3. In future programmes, consider building the capacities of aquatic resources-dependent communities

in alternatives like seagrass farming, mariculture and beekeeping to cushion them against seasonal vulnerabilities

4. Consider programmes/ projects that strengthen exchange learning further to strengthen capacities in the conservation of aquatic resources
5. Consider programmes/ projects that strengthen market linkages to enhance the profit margins currently obtainable
6. Build capacities for value addition/processing to enhance revenue and minimise post-harvest losses in aquatic resources value chains

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY OVERVIEW

6.1 Introduction

Guided by the Communication and Visibility Plan, the project has systematically developed and executed activities to ensure transparency, amplify its impact, and highlight donor contributions, particularly those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Communication efforts have combined traditional media, digital platforms, and knowledge products to engage a diverse audience of policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and community stakeholders across Africa and beyond.

From the launch phase, communication activities were designed to create awareness and generate visibility around project objectives, while progressively showcasing achievements and lessons learned. The establishment of a dedicated project microsite under the AU-IBAR website provided a central hub for information and knowledge sharing, with steady growth in visitor traffic and Global reach. Complementing this digital presence, the project produced and disseminated flagship documentaries, policy briefs, research outputs, and technical reports, which have been widely shared across events, exhibitions, and online platforms. Social media engagement on LinkedIn and Twitter/X further expanded outreach, blending professional milestones with advocacy campaigns on Gender, youth, and environmental inclusion.

In addition, the project has benefited from robust media engagement, with coverage spanning AU-IBAR's own channels, local and regional media outlets, and Continental networks, including MOSFA and APO syndications. These efforts have consistently reinforced the visibility of Sida's support while amplifying Africa's leadership in advancing aquatic biodiversity within the Blue Economy agenda. Collectively, these activities demonstrate how the project's communication and visibility strategy has not only documented progress but also fostered stakeholder ownership, strengthened policy advocacy, and positioned AU-IBAR as a Continental hub for knowledge exchange and collaboration in aquatic biodiversity conservation.

6.2 Microsite Maintenance – Impact and Visibility

The project has successfully maintained a dedicated microsite as part of the main AU-IBAR website, accessible at Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the Context of the Africa Blue Economy. The microsite serves as a communication and knowledge-sharing platform, providing stakeholders and the broader public with comprehensive information on the initiative.

Key features of the microsite include a project overview, objectives and outcomes, stakeholder profiles, updates on activities, a calendar of events, and access to key publications and resources. These elements ensure transparency, visibility, and accessibility of information. Importantly, donor visibility has been ensured through prominent placement of the funding partner's logo across the microsite, reinforcing recognition of their contribution and support.

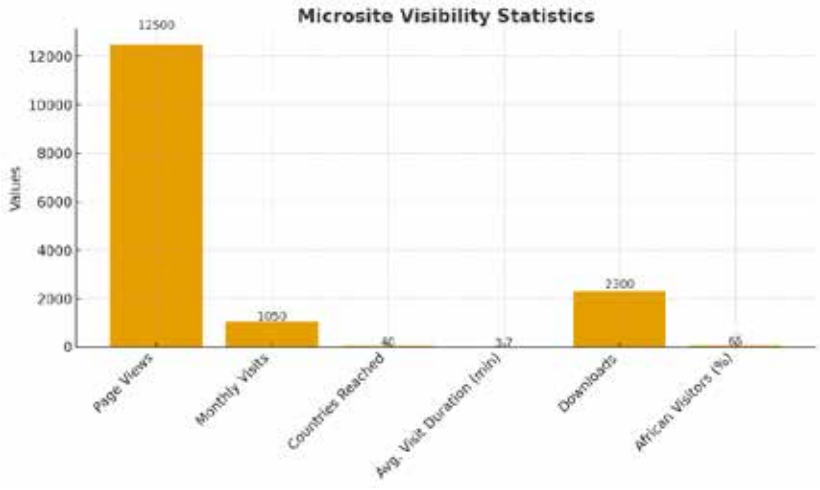


Figure 85.*Microsite Visibility and Reach*

- Page Views: Over 12,500-page views since project launch, with an average of 1,050 monthly visits.
- Visitor Demographics: Users originate from more than 40 Countries worldwide, with 65% of traffic from Africa and strong engagement from policymakers, researchers, and NGOs.
- Engagement: Average visit duration of 3 minutes 40 seconds, indicating sustained interaction with project content.
- Downloads: More than 2,300 publications and resources have been downloaded directly through the microsite.
- Search Engine Visibility: The microsite ranks on the first page of Google search results for keywords such as "Africa Blue Economy biodiversity conservation".

6.3 Multimedia Visibility and Storytelling

As part of its communication and visibility strategy, the project has produced two flagship documentaries that showcase progress and impact under the Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the Context of the Africa Blue Economy initiative. These documentaries serve as powerful storytelling tools, amplifying the voices of stakeholders while ensuring strong visibility for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the funding partner.

The latest instalment, released in April 2025, was uploaded to the AU-IBAR YouTube Channel and embedded within the AU-IBAR website and project microsite. The video has already attracted 796 views, reflecting strong and growing interest from stakeholders, partners, and the general public. Beyond online viewership, the documentary has also been showcased at high-level meetings, including the Knowledge Share Fair and various exhibitions, extending its reach to policy audiences and technical experts. Through compelling visuals and stakeholder testimonials, the video highlights achievements and lessons from across Africa. Featured contributors represent a diverse spectrum of actors, including AU-IBAR experts, regional institutions such

as the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), scientific leaders from the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), grassroots initiatives like Mikoko Pamoja and the Vanga Blue Forest Project, and community voices from Kenya, Tanzania, and Ghana. Collectively, their perspectives highlight the tangible results of the project through 2025.

The first documentary, launched in May 2023, has gained 274 views to date. This introductory video provided an overview of the project's objectives and components, narrated by AU-IBAR staff and enriched with field footage. It highlighted the project's interventions at regional and community levels, including activities at FCWC in Ghana, Mikoko Pamoja in Gazi Bay, the Vanga Blue Forest Initiative in Kenya, and collaborations with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) and KMFRI. Like the second video, it has been played at project events and exhibitions, serving as an essential entry point for stakeholders and partners while laying the foundation for ongoing engagement.

Together, these documentaries have become integral visibility tools, not only strengthening recognition of Sida's support but also communicating the project's contributions to biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihoods in Africa's Blue Economy.

AU-IBAR's knowledge sharing platform has been used to capture multimedia and pictures of projects, including the curation of external news.

6.4 Knowledge Products and Dissemination

The Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity repository section hosts a diverse range of knowledge products that reflect the breadth and depth of research, policy guidance, and practical insights generated by the project. Policy briefs constitute the largest share, with 16 documents, underscoring the project's focus on providing actionable recommendations for decision-makers and stakeholders. Research papers (9) and strategic documents (8) offer evidence-based analyses and frameworks to guide aquatic biodiversity management across Africa. Case studies (3) highlight practical applications and lessons learned from project interventions, while technical reports (3) provide detailed methodologies, monitoring data, and technical assessments. Collectively, these resources form a comprehensive knowledge base that supports informed decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and policy development in aquatic biodiversity conservation and have been disseminated at major exhibitions.

Products added to the repository in past years

Year	Number of Knowledge Products
2022	1
2023	7
2024	6
2025	6

6.5 *Social Media Engagement*

In 2024–2025, the Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity Project achieved notable visibility across LinkedIn and Twitter/X/X, reflecting effective communications and stakeholder engagement strategies. On LinkedIn, posts generated an average of 22 likes, four comments, and five reposts, with the highest engagement seen for the formation of the Western Indian Ocean Network for Small-Scale Octopus Fisheries (WION-SOF), project videos, and workshops. Twitter/X, serving as a platform for broader awareness and advocacy, showed an average of 14 likes and 10 retweets per post, with International Women's Day and regional blue economy strategy posts receiving peak engagement. Observance days and awareness campaigns, particularly those emphasizing gender, youth, and environmental inclusion, also contributed to increased visibility across both platforms.

Content analysis indicates that posts featuring project videos and infographics consistently outperformed text-only updates, highlighting the importance of visual storytelling. Professional milestones, capacity-building workshops, and knowledge-sharing content resonated strongly on LinkedIn, whereas Twitter/X audiences engaged more with advocacy-focused and thematic awareness posts, especially when hashtags and organisational mentions were included. Posts that integrated targeted hashtags such as #BlueEconomy, #AquaticBiodiversity, #SIDA, @Women, and @Youth amplified reach and engagement, underscoring the value of strategic tagging.

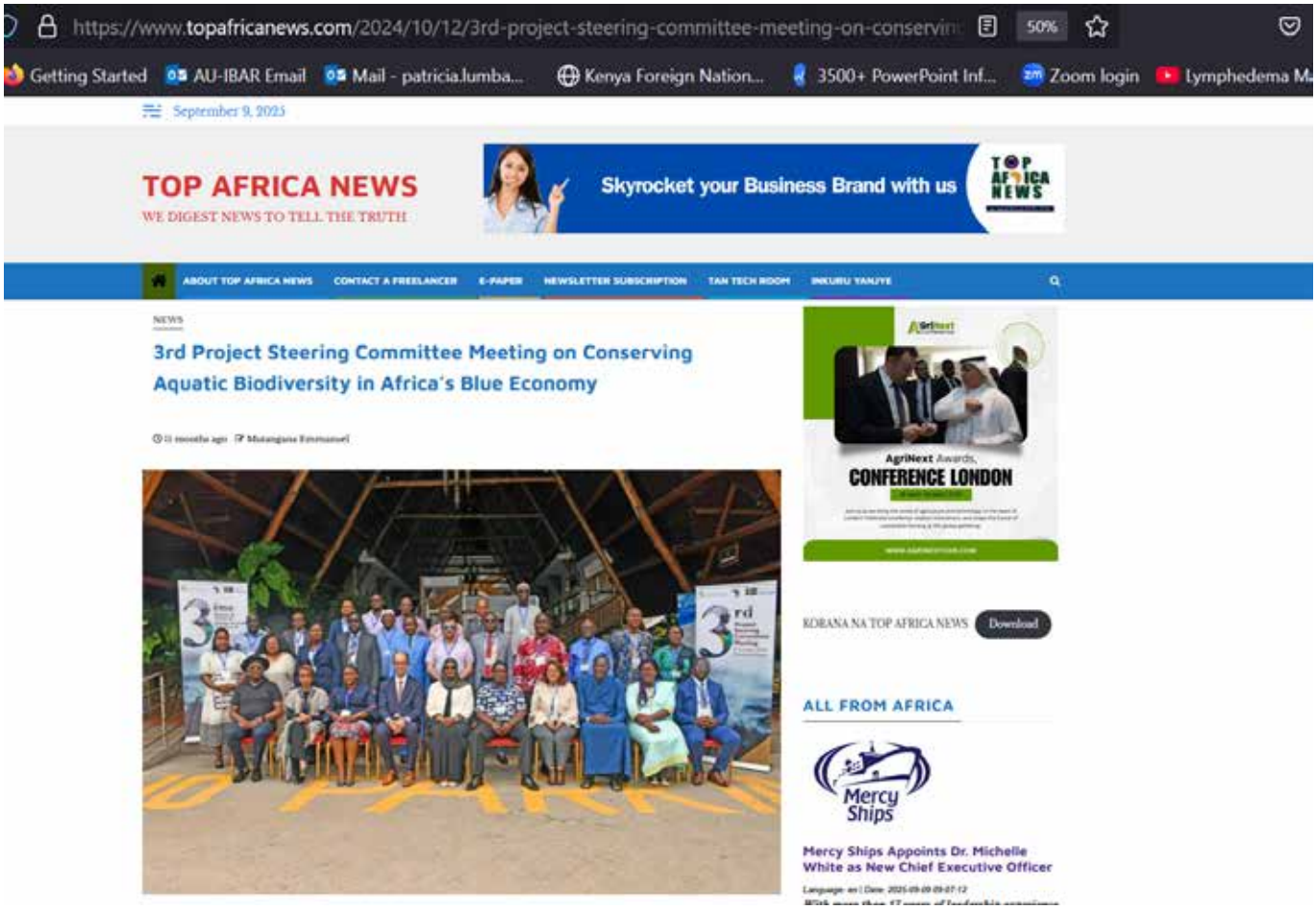
These engagement trends reflect a growing interest in collaborative networks, practical project outcomes, and inclusion initiatives among the audience. The combination of LinkedIn's professional network and Twitter/Xs advocacy potential has enabled the project to reach multiple stakeholder groups effectively. High-performing posts demonstrate that aligning content with audience interests, professional development on LinkedIn, advocacy, and awareness on Twitter, remains crucial for maximising engagement.



Looking forward, the project should continue to expand its use of project videos and interactive posts, while strategically leveraging hashtags and mentions to amplify reach. Maintaining a focus on gender, youth, and environmental themes will further strengthen engagement and foster a deeper connection with stakeholders. Regular monitoring of monthly engagement trends and audience growth will provide actionable insights to optimise communications across both platforms, ensuring the project maintains high visibility and impact in aquatic biodiversity conservation.

6.6 Media Engagement

Since its inception, the project has attracted steady media attention across AU-IBAR channels and external outlets. AU-IBAR has developed core narratives, such as documentary releases and project deliverables. At the same time, external media and platforms have highlighted governance and results-oriented angles, particularly during all Technical and Steering Committee cycles. Media engagement in Kenya has contributed to the project's visibility in over 10 events, including reporting in KiSwahili and dissemination on local TV, radio, print media, and YouTube platforms. Observatory of Media for Sustainable Fisheries in Africa (MOSFA) has anchored the media-engagement dimension, publishing workshop materials that codify Blue Economy messaging principles. Regional portals such as Top News Africa, AfricaBlueEconomy.com, along with APO Group syndication, have broadened reach beyond AU-IBAR's audience, ensuring consistent recognition of SIDA's support and linking to the project microsite and knowledge assets.



6.7 Branding, Memorabilia and Visibility

Branding has been a central component of the project's communication strategy, ensuring consistent recognition of AU-IBAR and Sida's partnership across all platforms and activities. The project has adhered to AU and donor visibility guidelines by prominently displaying logos on the microsite, publications, documentaries, and at physical and virtual events. This consistency has reinforced trust and credibility while showcasing the collaborative nature of the initiative.

To enhance visibility and stakeholder connection, the project also invested in memorabilia and branded materials. Items such as banners, brochures, policy briefs, event backdrops, and exhibition materials have provided professional visibility at high-level forums, technical meetings, and community engagements. Additionally, branded tokens, including notebooks, folders, and digital giveaways or flash drives with knowledge products, have extended the project's reach by creating tangible reminders of its work. These efforts have not only strengthened brand identity but also amplified recognition of Sida's support in advancing aquatic biodiversity within the African Blue Economy.

6.8 Target Outreach

The project's outreach strategy has been carefully designed to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, ensuring messages resonate across policy, technical, and community levels. Since inception, communication activities have targeted:

- Continental and Regional Policymakers – through policy briefs, technical reports, high-level forums, and steering committee meetings, enabling informed decision-making.
- Researchers and Academia – by sharing research outputs, strategies, and case studies that contribute to evidence-based knowledge and innovation.
- Community and Grassroots Actors – through documentaries, case studies, and participatory initiatives that highlight local voices and practices.
- Women and Youth – by tailoring content to highlight inclusion, capacity building, and opportunities in aquatic biodiversity and the Blue Economy.
- Media and the Public – via AU-IBAR channels, local and regional media, and international platforms, amplifying visibility and public awareness.

Outreach has been delivered through multiple channels, including digital platforms (microsite, social media), multimedia storytelling (documentaries, photos, podcasts), knowledge products (briefs, strategies, reports), and in-person engagement (workshops, exhibitions, fairs). This multi-pronged approach has ensured that the project is visible not only at the policy and technical levels but also in communities where its impact is most tangible.

Looking ahead, targeted outreach will continue to focus on consolidating partnerships, inspiring grassroots ownership, and sustaining continental visibility of Africa's leadership in aquatic biodiversity conservation.

6.9 Messaging and Key Messages

The reporting and dissemination formats employed an inclusive messaging strategy to create awareness, foster participation, and maintain visibility for both AU-IBAR, its partners, and its donor, SIDA. Messages were tailored to policymakers, scientists, civil society, and local communities, ensuring relevance and impact.

The project's communication emphasized clarity, inclusivity, and visibility. As noted, messages and content were disseminated through the project microsite, AU-IBAR's website, press releases, social media, documentaries, and exhibitions. Community voices and expert perspectives were combined to highlight both technical achievements and grassroots impact.

Key Messages

1. Africa's aquatic biodiversity is vital to the Blue Economy, underpinning food security, climate resilience, and livelihoods.
2. Communities, particularly women and youth, are central to conservation outcomes.
3. Partnerships among governments, regional institutions, and donors, especially Sida, drove project impact.
4. Evidence-based solutions, such as marine spatial planning and biodiversity monitoring, informed decision-making.
5. The project demonstrates Africa's leadership in promoting a sustainable and inclusive Blue Economy.

6.10 Challenges and Recommendations

The Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity Project has achieved remarkable visibility and engagement since its inception, yet there remain opportunities to strengthen and sustain impact beyond the project's lifespan.

One key area is the sustainability of knowledge management systems. While the microsite and repository have been highly effective, they are affected by the need for long-term maintenance, which will require institutionalization within AU-IBAR. Another opportunity lies in enhancing accessibility and inclusivity. Knowledge products are rich and diverse, but wider uptake can be achieved by translating them into the official languages of AU and using simplified formats, such as infographics, briefs, and videos. This will extend benefits to women, youth, and grassroots actors.

At the same time, there is scope to balance high-level visibility with community-level engagement. Strong policy visibility has been achieved through documentaries, media coverage, and social media; however, increasing collaboration with National and local media, as well as participatory storytelling, will further deepen community ownership.

Finally, the project can build on its strong digital presence by refining social media strategies using analytics, hashtags, and influencer partnerships, while consolidating lessons learned into a compendium of impacts and success stories that can inspire future initiatives.

Overall, these recommendations highlight not challenges but clear pathways for ensuring that the project's communication legacy remains impactful, inclusive, and sustainable well into the future.

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. Ms. Stephanie Achieng – 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
h. WWF
i. ZASCI

9. CHALLENGES

On the overall, the implementation of the project continued smooth and in accordance with the workplan, for no-cost extension, approved between the AU-IBR and the SIDA. However, due to the delays experienced in the first year in recruitment of experts to conduct studies, a few activities spilled over to the no-cost extension phase of the project. Some of these include, support to domestication of Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management; support to coordinated Africa Coordinated positions in relevant Global fora; strengthening Gender dimensions in community-based organizations on environment; strengthening regional capacity on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance systems to combat, deter and eliminate IUU fishing etc.

The project has created immense awareness and strengthened institutional capacity on integrated management of aquatic ecosystems and their living resources (aquatic biodiversity). This intervention has, in no doubt, excited the Continent. However, as the results of the project were piloted in few AU Member States, regional institutions or communities, this development has brought about considerable pressure on AU-IBAR to extend the support to other AU Member States, regional institutions or communities. Due to the limited scope of the project, these expectations are yet to be fulfilled.

The intervention by the project has contributed to the realization of the imperative need for institutional or interagency collaboration, to ensure sound or rational management of aquatic ecosystems and their biodiversity. This achievement is very critical especially for National institutions in charge of management of fish and aquaculture. The project faced changes in few Countries, over institutional mandates, when project activities were being implemented in AU Member States, especially issues such as Marine Protected Areas, Gender mainstreaming, climate change; these issues cross-cutting and, in most cases, mandates were overlapping. The project realized there was a need to bring together all Blue Economy related department's national consultative processes in order to have a balanced view.

The emerging issues include strengthening institutional capacity for pollution control in aquatic ecosystems to minimize impacts on aquatic biodiversity, sensitizing the Continent on Nature-Based Solutions in ecosystem restoration and aquatic biodiversity conservation, regional blue value, study tours, or twinning by communities; ensuring distribution of Centres of Excellence in the five regions of the Continent.

Thus, the implementation of the project would require a follow-up phase for the lessons learnt and best practices from the current phase, emerging issues, and for consolidating the gains made so far.

Some of the issues that emerged during course of project implementation included the need to:

i. Strengthen Monitoring, Control and Surveillance systems (MCS) to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as incorporating the aspect of protecting aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems;
ii. Enhance Continental capacity on tools to conserve and protect aquatic biodiversity and the environment
iii. Support AU Member States and RECs on pollution control and minimizing impact on aquatic biodiversity, including fish resources, in Africa's aquatic ecosystems; focusing on Chemical and plastic pollution;

iv. Support capacity for implementation of Nature-based Solutions for aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems as well as for enhancing livelihoods of communities;
v. Strengthen capacities for data collection and analysis for aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management;
vi. Strengthen Gender and youth dimensions, climate change and environmental consideration along regional blue value chain in coastal, ecosystems-based fisheries;
vii. Enhance Africa's capacity to be a Global player in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management;
viii. Private sector engagement in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management
ix. Organize an annual forum for sharing or dissemination of project findings among stakeholders
x. Ensuring regional distribution of Centres of Excellence in aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems management

Lessons and Best Practices in the course of implementation of the Project:

Some important lessons were learnt and best practices identified during the 4 years of Project implementation; these include:

1. Creating partnerships for joint implementation of activities, especially activities that are transboundary, would increase prospects of continuity or sustainability of those activities for eventual impact. These became evident with the partnerships with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) for the transboundary Marine conservation between Kenya and Tanzania; with the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Nairobi Convention for the transboundary MSP initiative in the Northern Mozambique Channel; With the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat on operationalization of SADC Regional Monitoring, Control, Surveillance Coordinating Centre;
2. Building upon ongoing activities by partners would render cost sharing and strategic use of resources;
3. Inclusivity in stakeholders' consultative processes would promote project visibility. This became apparent when public sector, private sector, Civil Society Organizations, Women and youth representatives participated in consultative processes organized by the project;
4. The involvement of RECs and high-level personnel (at the level of Government Ministers in AU Member States) increased the relevance of intervention and increased prospects of ownership of project outcomes. This approach however also leads to several demands on the project for support to AU Member States and communities;
5. Similarly, the inclusion of cross section of broader stakeholders in the project technical and governance structures (Project technical and steering committees) resulted in balanced views in recommendations or decision making by these bodies;
6. Due to of the Project in the first phase, the approach adopted to pilot study recommendations in AU Member States, with due consideration for regional representation, was an effective approach;
7. The sensitization of AU Member States on integrated management of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems generated lots of interests especially among the Ministries in charge of fisheries;
8. Synthesizing reports of projects' activities into knowledge products (Policy Briefs, technical Guidelines, Advocacy Notes etc.) with policy messages and guidance for implementation substantially increased

prospects of utilization of Project's outcomes by stakeholders;

9. Reaching out to the Global Organizations/Institutions with mandates of SDGs that impact the Marine and aquatic space forged collaboration and partnership.
10. Utilizing Continental Trained Experts with expertise in aquatic biodiversity, environmental and climate change (and in negotiation skills) to support AU-MS in the MS preparation processes i.e. (training AU-MS) greatly contributed to effective participation of MSs in Global Fora and Regimes.

10. DISCUSSIONS

The implementation of the project has contributed immensely to creating awareness and capacity building on aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management towards achieving the stated overall goals and strategic objectives.

The Project has successfully organized Project technical and steering committee meetings. The outcomes of these project statutory meetings have been impressive. No doubt the members of these statutory committees have been impressed by the project implementation, areas of focus, and have overwhelmingly recommended 'no-cost' of the project.

The Project has contributed greatly immensely to broadening knowledge on issues of aquatic biodiversity conservation through the production and dissemination of knowledge products such as Policy briefs, Advocacy Notes, and Technical guidelines on Policy orientation papers. These knowledge products would greatly increase the prospects of implementation or utilization of the Project's outcomes by the stakeholders, including AU Member States and RECs.

The project mode of implementation has relied on collaborative approaches to ongoing initiatives. The collaborative mode was adopted to jointly implement activities, notably:

- Collaborated with Abidjan Convention on advancing transboundary MSP process between Benin and Togo in the shared Marine ecosystems between the two Countries
- Collaborated with COREP to develop mechanism enhance governance of transboundary MPA between Rep of Congo and the Rep of Congo
- Collaborated with WWF and Nairobi Convention to advance the transboundary MSP process in the northern Mozambique channel
- Collaborated with IUCN to mainstream Gender in the management plans for environmental-based NGOs in the Coastal communities in Ghana
- Collaboration with WIOMSA to develop MOU between Kenya and Tanzania on Transboundary Marine Conservation Area (TBCA) between the two Countries
- Collaboration with KMFRI to strengthen capacity of Gazi Bay communities in aquatic ecosystems restoration for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need to continue a follow-up new phase for project on pertinent on conserving aquatic biodiversity conservation such as follows:
- Support to AU Member States to develop regulatory Instruments to domesticate Global Instruments relevant to aquatic biodiversity conservation and management and adherence to related Global best practices
- Support to formulation of Gender sensitive National policies and strategies on aquatic biodiversity and environmental management
- Enhancing regional institutional MCS capacity to combat IUU fishing, protect aquatic biodiversity and environment
- support to AU Member States and Regional Institutions towards effort to restore depleted fish stocks, degraded ecosystems and habitats and protections of aquatic biodiversity spots through implementation and effective governance systems for Marine Protected Areas
- Strengthen capacity for pollution control and capacity building on Nature-based Solutions mitigating climate change impact
- Knowledge share fair on outputs for the first phase of the project

12. PROJECT REPORTS

CONSULTANCY REPORTS	
1	AU-IBAR, 2021. Communication Plan - Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the Context of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy 2021 – 2024;
2	AU-IBAR 2022. Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the Project 'Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy'
3	AU-IBAR, 2023. Alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, adaptation and environmental management for the REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA.
4	AU-IBAR, 2023. Examen des instruments politiques nationaux et des cadres réglementaires de la République du Cameroun pour les aligner sur les instruments continentaux et mondiaux relatifs à la conservation de la biodiversité aquatique, à l'adaptation et à l'atténuation du changement climatique et à la protection de l'environnement.
5	AU-IBAR, 2023. Alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, adaptation and environmental management for the REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI.
6	AU-IBAR, 2023. Alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, adaptation and environmental management for the ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT.
7	AU-IBAR, 2024. Alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, adaptation and environmental management for the REPUBLIC OF GHANA.
8	AU-IBAR, 2023. Alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, adaptation and environmental management for the KINGDOM OF ESWATINI.
9	AU-IBAR, 2024 Review and alignment of National Instruments to Global, Regional and Continental Instruments on aquatic conservation, climate change and environmental management for the KINGDOM OF LESOTHO
10	AU-IBAR, 2023. Alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, adaptation and environmental management for the REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN.
11	AU-IBAR, 2024. Review, Alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation and Environmental Management for the REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
12	Examen des politiques nationales et des cadres réglementaires de la République du Burkina Faso afin de les aligner avec les instruments continentaux et mondiaux liés à la conservation de la biodiversité aquatique, à l'adaptation et à l'atténuation des changements climatiques, ainsi qu'à la protection de l'environnement
	AU-IBAR, 2022. Assessment to Map the Extent of Usage of Marine Spatial Planning (MSPs) in Africa as a Management Tool for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in West, Central and Northern regions of Africa, pp156.
13	AU-IBAR, 2022. Assessment to map the extent of usage of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in Africa as a Management Tool for the conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in the South and Eastern Regions of Africa, pp79.
14	AU–IBAR, 2023. Policy Guidelines and regulatory frameworks for the National strategy conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in transboundary aquatic ecosystems in the Republic of KENYA
15	AU–IBAR, 2023. Policy Guidelines and regulatory frameworks for the harmonized national strategy for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in transboundary aquatic ecosystems in the Republic of TANZANIA
16	AU–IBAR, 2023. Policy Guidelines and regulatory frameworks for the harmonized national strategy for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in transboundary aquatic ecosystems in the Republic of UGANDA
17	AU-IBAR, 2023. Development of a National Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Integrated Environment Management in Malawi
18	AU-IBAR, 2023. Policy measures to strengthen Regulatory frameworks for sustainable coastal, Marine tourism and mining activities towards aquatic biodiversity and environmental conservation in Kenya
19	AU-IBAR, 2023. A Masterplan for sustainable Coastal, Marine tourism and mining activities towards conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection in Kenya
20	AU-IBAR, 2023. Alignment and domestication of relevant Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, adaptation and environmental management for the Arab Republic of Egypt.
21	AU-IBAR, 2023: 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 for (North, West and Central Africa)
22	AU-IBAR, 2023. Report 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–for South and Eastern Regions of Africa.

23	AU-IBAR, 2023. Transboundary Environmental Issues Affecting Aquatic Biodiversity in Shared Freshwater Ecosystems – Towards Formulating Harmonized Regional Strategy for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Joint Action Plans
24	AU-IBAR, 2023. Assessment of transboundary environmental issues affecting biodiversity in shared marine ecosystems – towards formulating harmonized regional framework for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and joint action plan
25	AU-IBAR, 2023. Harmonized regional biodiversity framework and joint action Plan for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection in Transboundary Marine ecosystems
26	AU-IBAR, 2023. Cadre régional harmonisé pour la biodiversité et plan d'action Conjoint pour la conservation de la biodiversité aquatique et la protection de L'environnement dans les écosystèmes marins transfrontières
27	AU-IBAR, 2022. Impact of climate change on African aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity and proposed mitigation measures
28	AU-IBAR, 2023. Status of Ratification, Adoption and Implementation of key Continental and International Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and environmental management in the West, Central African Union Member States.
29	AU-IBAR, 2023. Renforcer la ratification, la domestication, et la mise en oeuvre des instruments mondiaux pour faciliter la conservation de la biodiversité aquatique, l'atténuation et l'adaptation au changement climatique et la durabilité environnementale en Afrique.
30	AU-IBAR, 2023. 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
31	AU-IBAR, 2023. Assessment of the status of Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) Systems for Conservation and Protection of Aquatic Biodiversity in shared African Aquatic Ecosystems in the East and Southern (ESA) regions of Africa
32	AU-IBAR, 2023. Assessment of the status of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) systems for conservation and protection of aquatic biodiversity in shared African aquatic ecosystems in the West, Central and North regions of Africa
33	AU-IBAR. 2023. A Continental Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Africa.
34	AU-IBAR, 2023. Developing an All-inclusive and Deliberate Strategy on Gender mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management in Ethiopia.
35	AU-IBAR 2024.Sstratégie nationale délibérée pour l'intégration de la dimension de genre dans la conservation de la biodiversité aquatique et la gestion de l'environnement en CÔTE D'IVOIRE.
36	AU-IBAR. 2025. Élaboration d' une stratégie globale et délibérée pour l'intégration de la dimension de genre dans la conservation de la biodiversité aquatique et la gestion environnementale AU CAMEROUN. rapport de l'atelier consultatif national.
37	AU-IBAR, 2024. National Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Integrated Environmental Management in The Arab Republic of Egypt.
38	AU-IBAR, 2023. Development of a National Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Integrated Environment Management in Malawi.
39	AU-IBAR, 2023. Report on Mapping and Identification of Degraded Mangrove Areas in Gazi Bay. Nairobi, Kenya.
40	AU-IBAR, 2023. Master Plan and Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks for the Sustainable Management of Marine and Coastal Tourism and Oil and Mining for the Conservation of Biodiversity and the Aquatic Environment in Gabon.
41	AU-IBAR, 2023. Guidelines to strengthen regulatory frameworks for the sustainable management of Coastal and maritime tourism, oil and gas and mining for biodiversity conservation and sustainable environmental management in Gabon
42	AU-IBAR, 2023. A Master Plan for sustainable Coastal, Marine tourism and mining activities towards conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection in NIGERIA
43	AU-IBAR, 2023. Policy Measures to strengthen regulatory frameworks for sustainable Coastal, Marine tourism and mining activities towards aquatic biodiversity and environmental in NIGERIA
44	AU-IBAR, 2024. A Master Plan for Marine tourism, oil & gas and mining activities towards conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental protection in ANGOLA
45	AU-IBAR, 2024. Policy Measures to strengthen regulatory frameworks for sustainable Coastal, maritime tourism, oil & gas and mining activities towards aquatic biodiversity and environmental conservation in ANGOLA
46	AU-IBAR, 2024. A Masterplan for Sustainable Coastal, Marine Tourism and Mining Activities Towards Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Protection in Egypt, pp125.

47	AU-IBAR, 2024. Policy measures to strengthen regulatory frameworks for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities towards aquatic biodiversity and environmental conservation in EGYPT
48	AU-IBAR 2023. Continental Review of Existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Document Lessons, Best Practices and Formulate Guidelines for their Sustainable Implementation and Governance in Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity Resources within the African Union Member States (AU MS) and Regional Levels (West, Central and Northern regions of Africa). Inception report, 66 pages.
49	AU-IBAR, 2022. Review of Existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Lessons, Best Practices and Guidelines for their Sustainable Implementation and Governance in Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity Resources in the East and Southern African Regions, 57 pages.
50	AU-IBAR (2025). Assessment of Regional Blue Value Chains in Small-Scale Octopus Fisheries and Mechanisms for Strengthening Gender Dimensions and Climate Change and Environmental Considerations in East Africa and South-West Indian Ocean.
51	AU-IBAR, 2024. Roadmap and guidelines for enhanced governance of National Marine protected areas (MPA) established in the republic of GABON
52	AU-IBAR, 2025. Roadmap for improved governance of Senegal's marine protected areas (MPAs)
53	AU-IBAR, 2025. Roadmap and Guidelines for sustainable implementation and Governance of the Established marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Republic of Madagascar
54	AU-IBAR 2025. Evaluation report for the Project 'Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy'

13. KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS		Type
1	Mechanisms for Enhancing the Effective Role and Participation of African Union Member States in Continental, And Global Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management Related Fora or Regimes	Advocacy Note
2	Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change on African Aquatic Ecosystems and Biodiversity	Advocacy Note
3	Continental Guidelines on Marine Spatial Planning for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa;	Advocacy Note
4	Enhancing Ratification, Domestication and Implementation of Global Instruments for Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and Environmental Sustainability in Africa;	Policy Note
5	Strategy for Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism Activities to Conserve Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa;	Policy Note
6	Strategy for Sustainable Mining Activities for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa;	Policy Note
7	Strengthening Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Systems in West Africa	Policy Note
8	Unlocking the Potential for Strengthening the Role of Women in Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management in Africa;	Policy Notes
9	Strengthening Environmental and Climate Change Consideration on Mitigation Efforts in Seaweed Farming Towards Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation: A Case Study of Zanzibar	Policy Note
10	Nature-Based Solutions to Strengthen Climate Change Impact Mitigation Efforts that promote the Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity Ecosystems - A Case Study of Gazi Bay, Kenya	Policy Note
11	Introducing the Continental Strategy for the Control & Mitigating the Impact of Plastic Pollution on Aquatic Biodiversity & Environment in Africa	Policy Note
12	An Insight into The Continental Strategy on Nature-Based Solutions for The Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa Mitigating Climate Change, Aquatic Biodiversity Loss and Securing Livelihoods;	Policy Brief
13	Aquatic Biodiversity Hotspots in Africa;	Policy Brief
14	A Guide to Implementation of MPA For Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Africa - Lessons and Best Practices from South and Eastern Regions of Africa;	Guidelines
15	Technical Guidelines for Best Practices on Strengthening Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Systems for Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Protection in Africa;	Guidelines
16	Transboundary Environmental Issues Affecting Biodiversity in Shared Marine Ecosystems in Africa: A Mechanism for Development of Harmonized Framework for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity in Africa;	Guidelines
17	Transboundary Environmental Issues Affecting Biodiversity in Shared Freshwater Ecosystems in Africa: A Mechanism for Development of Harmonized Framework for Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity in Africa;	Guidelines
18	Mechanism for Mainstreaming Gender in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management: A Case Study of the Dusorno Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) Community in Ghana;	Policy Orientation Paper
19	Key emerging issues, lessons learnt and best practices for mainstreaming Global Instruments relating to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation and environmental management into National Policies and Regulatory frameworks in Africa	Policy Brief
20	Small-Scale Octopus Fisheries in the Western Indian Ocean: Strengthening Gender Inclusivity, Climate Resilience and Sustainable Blue Value Chains	Policy Brief



African Union
Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)
Kenindia Business Park
Museum Hill, Westlands Road
P.O. Box 30786
00100, Nairobi, KENYA
Telephone: +254 (20) 3674 000 / 201
Fax: +254 (20) 3674 341 / 342
Website: www.au.ibar.org
Email address: ibar.office@au-ibar.org