



CONSERVING AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY IN AFRICAN BLUE ECONOMY PROJECT

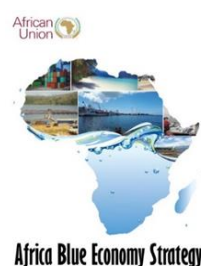
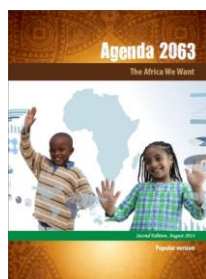
Overview of the project and Support to AU MS Towards Ratification and Implementation of Global Instruments

~At Ministerial Conference ~Organized by ATLAFCO/COMHAFAT

"Towards the effective implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.", Rabat- Morocco.

Rabat, 23rd – 24th June 2025

Joel Mokenye – Aquatic Biodiversity Specialist , AU-IBAR

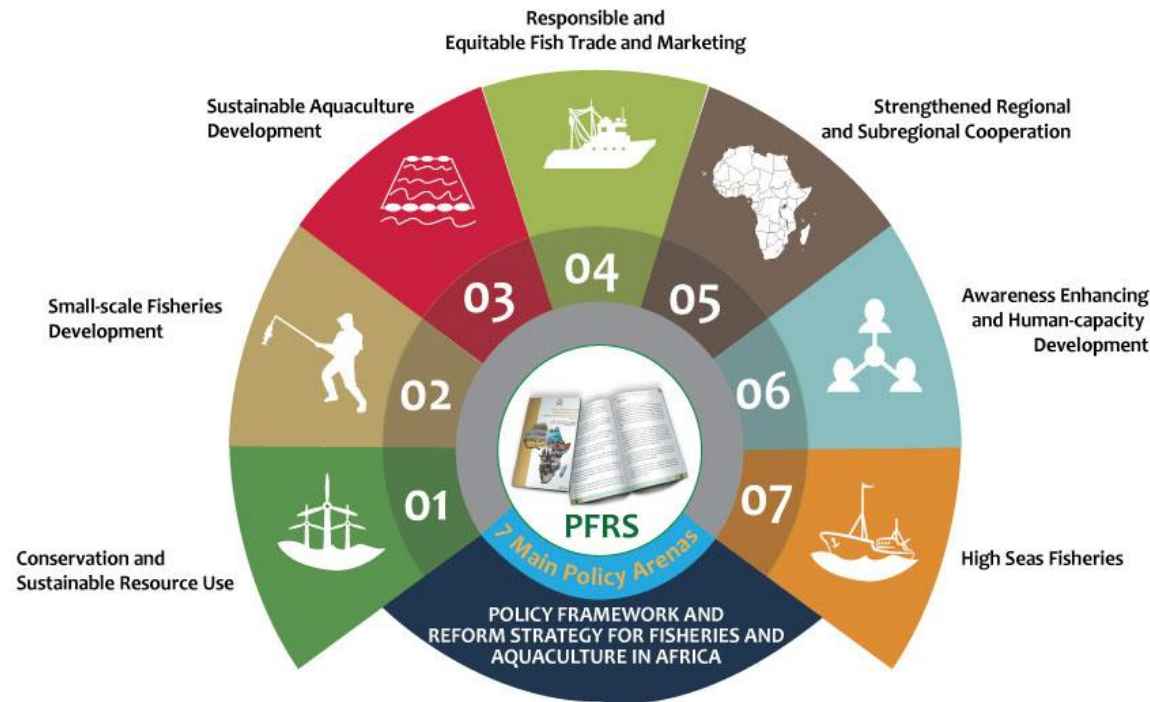


About AU-IBAR

- **AU-IBAR** is a specialized technical office of the African Union Commission (AUC), headed by the Director who reports directly to the AUC through the Department of **Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE)**.
- AU-IBAR's mandate covers all aspects of animal resources, including livestock, fisheries, Bees and wildlife, across the entire African continent.
- AU-IBAR fills a unique and strategic niche by working at the continental and regional levels, with the RECs being key partners.

The Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS)

Aims: Guide African Union member states towards sustainable and responsible management of fisheries and aquaculture resources.



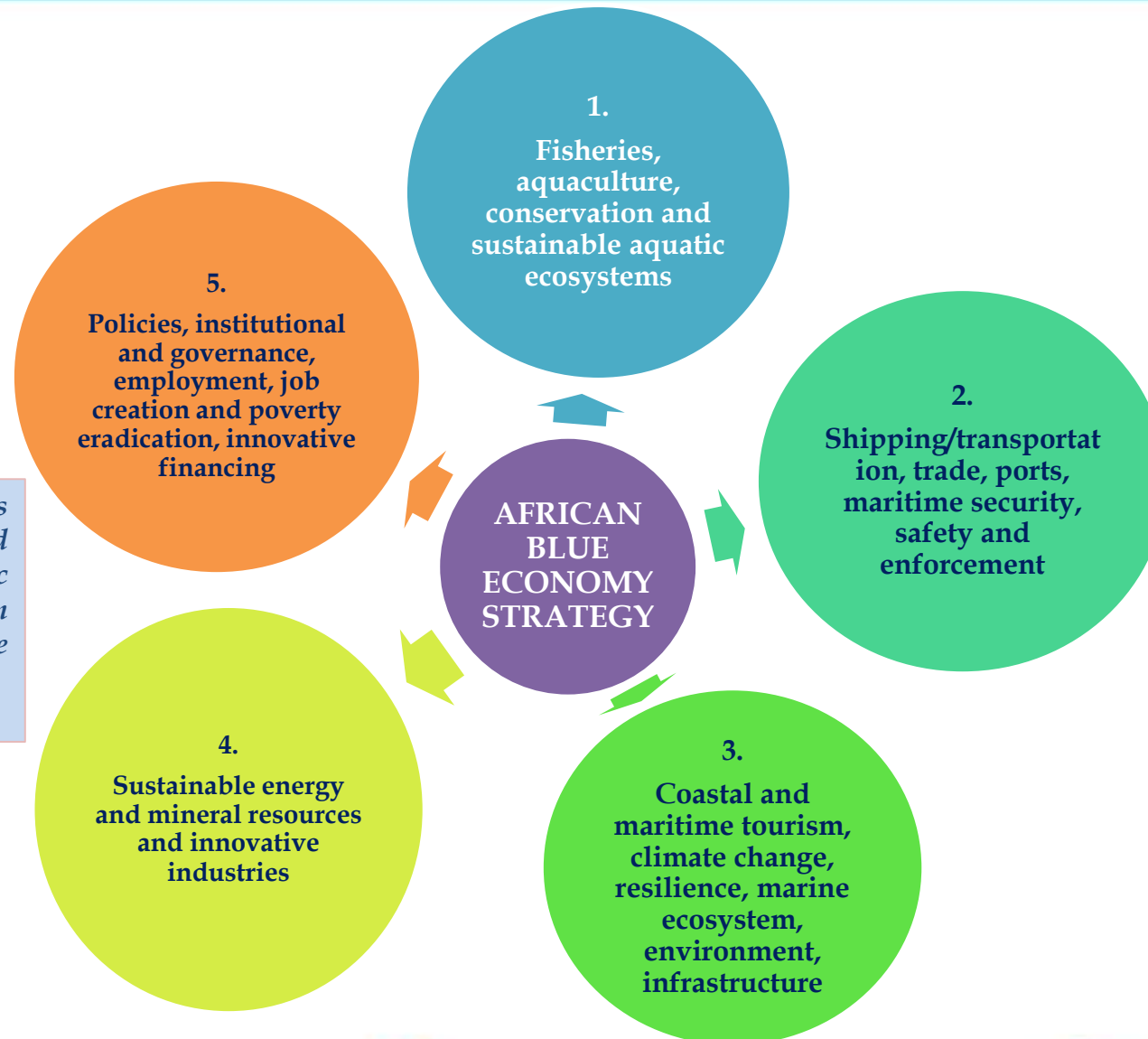
Cross-Cutting Issues in African Fisheries and Aquaculture



7 Policy arena & 3 Cross-cutting Issues

The African Blue Economy Strategy (ABES)

The five thematic areas provides for Protection and conservation of aquatic biodiversity across the African continent under the Africa Blue Economy Strategy.



Background of the Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management Project



AFRICAN UNION
**INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES**



Sweden
Sverige

Overall Objective:

To enhance the policy environment, regulatory frameworks and institutional capacities of AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities to sustainably utilize and conserve aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems.

Strategic Objectives (SO) of the Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management Project



SO1

Support AU-MS to ratify and/or align relevant International/Regional Instruments related to blue economy themes (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity);

SO2

Optimizing conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among users of blue economy resources, (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity);

SO3

Strengthening measures for mitigating the negative impacts of coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas, deep sea mining and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment;

SO4

Strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

FISHGOV2 PROJECT



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

- Output 3.2 Mechanisms are put in place to encourage and facilitate the domestication of global instruments and initiatives at continental, regional and national levels

A study to Identify & Assess International Instruments for Conservation and Management of Biodiversity in Africa

Overall objective

To identify and assess relevant international instruments for conservation and management of biodiversity in Africa:

- ❖ AU-MSs' efforts to **ratify, adopt** (domesticate) and **implement** these Instruments,
- ❖ Processes used, and challenges faced in ratification and implementation.
- ❖ Ways for enhancing ratification, adoption and implementation

Purpose

- To create awareness on key provisions of the instruments including opportunities and challenges
- To develop guidelines and priority actions for enhanced processes
- To suggest workable solutions for dealing with challenges with the processes.

Approach

- Extensive literature review and web-based survey
- Consultations with key Member State agencies.
 - ❖ Extent of implementation of ratified instruments.
 - ❖ Opportunities and challenges in ratification and implementation.
 - ❖ Processes used in ratification and implementation.
 - ❖ Existing capacity and gaps for use of the identified instruments.

Consideration of existing practices and suggestions for improvements

- Review of existing policies, strategies and management plans.
- Devising of guidelines for enhancing the ratification and implementation.
- Workshops for consultation and validation of the outcomes of the study.

Status of Ratification and Implementation

Number of relevant fisheries and environment regional and global instruments identified:

❑ 42 instruments are global

❑ 12 instruments are regional

- Majority of the identified instruments require state action for adoption and implementation;
- A number are only meant to set international standards for conduct of business activities

The identified relevant Global Instruments related to Aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems Conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation and Environment sustainability were:

- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), 1973.
- Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972.
- United Nations Convention of the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS III), 1982.
- Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, 2016.
- Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992.
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 1992.
- Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, 1989.
- Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade), 1998.

CONT'D: Identified Global Instruments

- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, 2001.
- Seabed Arms Control Treaty, 1971.
- International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 RC 90).
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), 1973.
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat, Ramsar, 1971
- UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) - Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10TH December, 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks)



Other key conventions & Instruments identified for aquatic biodiversity conservation include:

- Paris Agreement for Climate Change mitigation and adaptation, 2016
- International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 1990 (OPRC 90)
- Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Seabed and Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (Seabed Treaty)
- **International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU), 2001**
- Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (VGFSP), 2014
- FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, 2015
- International Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA – Sharks)
- **African Union Blue Economy Strategy – (ABES)**
- **Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa**

Note that the voluntary guidelines become only enforceable/implementable after they have been domesticated into the national laws

Status of Ratification and Implementation of Identified Instruments for Aquatic Biodiversity Management and Conservation by AU-MSs in North, West and Central Africa

Member States	Number of Instruments			Implementation Status	Key challenges raised
	Ratified	Adopted	Implemented		
Cameroon	25	7	18	Low	Lack of financial, technical capacity, unaware of the Instruments
DR Congo	31	9	14	Low	Lack of financial, technical capacity, unaware of the Instruments.
Ghana	29	11	14	Low	Lack of financial, technical capacity, unaware of the Instruments.
Tunisia	43	34	39	High	Review of existing Laws (Transport, Maritime, Environment, Trade and Finance.

Challenges in Ratification, Adoption (Domestication) and Implementation of Instruments

Ratification

- Difficulty in securing political commitment;
- Limited or lack of 'Conference of Parties' or concerned agencies in ratification process beyond securing signatures.

Domestication

- Challenges working across the different traditional sectors and different stakeholders in the implementation;
Each with own issues and challenges as concerns the implementation;
- Little or no attention paid to economic activities of the developing communities and attendant communities by the depositories.

Implementation

- Lack of political commitment and insufficient public awareness;
- Lack of guidelines for implementation and even for collaboration mechanism hence, difficulty in developing indicators for achieving biodiversity objectives that may contradict those for industrial, agricultural and or forestry development;
- Lack of budgetary resources for implementation of numerous conventions;
- The interval between successive COPs is too short to achieve the objectives;
- National institutions have limited capacity.

Output 1.2. Ratification and implementation of conventions and agreements related to conservation of aquatic biodiversity

AU-IBAR provided support to the Republics of

- ☐ Eswatini,
- ☐ Uganda,
- ☐ Djibouti,
- ☐ Ghana,
- ☐ Tunisia,
- ☐ Egypt,
- ☐ Lesotho,
- ☐ South Sudan,
- ☐ Cameroon, and
- ☐ Burkina Faso.....

- To review National Policies, Regulations and align National Instruments with relevant Regional and Global biodiversity and environmental management Instruments;



Djibouti



Tunisia



Kampala- Uganda



Accra - Ghana

Support to AU member States towards strengthening the Implementation of PSMA – Facilitating Communication

Purchased and handed over MCS equipment to FCWC to enhance capacity of the West African regional MCS coordinating centre as well as the 6 constituent member states (Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria, Liberia, Togo and Ghana) to effectively combat IUU and protect aquatic biodiversity

Equipment include: **SSB, VHF, HF, GPS, mobile phones and tables**



In collaboration with COREP, the project organized a training on strengthening MCS systems and aquatic biodiversity conservation efforts in the COREP region.

Support to operationalize the SADC MCSCC,..1st & 2nd Meeting of the Board of Directors for the SADC Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC);



The Biennial Forum :A Mechanism for Regular Consultations on Monitoring Implementation & Compliance within the Framework of the AFRM.

- ❑ **Aim:** Get Updates from AU member states on progress of domestication & Implementation of relevant continental and global instruments;
- ❑ (Share knowledge and experiences from AU MS)
- ❑ Mention status of international treaties and instruments for sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development, e.g. UNFSA, PSMA, CCRF and IPOAs;
- ❑ Commitments made by the African Member States to domesticate these international fisheries instruments
- ❑ A strategic approach to enhance MS involvement and compliance, while promoting the adoption of global and continental instruments was developed.

Some AU MS are implementing non-ratified and non-domesticated instruments



Delegates following proceedings at the 2nd biennial forum, Abidjan, 27-29 May 2025

Relevant Project's Knowledge products

- Enhancing Ratification, Domestication And Implementation Of Global Instruments For Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Mitigation And Adaptation And Environmental Sustainability In Africa;
- 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.
- Mechanisms For Enhancing The “African Voice” and the Effective Role And Participation Of African Union Member States In Continental, And Global Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation And Environmental Management Related Fora Or Regimes;



Future Directions and Continuous Improvement

1

Tracking and Technical
Support
for Policy Alignment

2

Capacity Enhancement

3

Enhance awareness
and support for
effective participation
in key forums and
events

4

Stakeholder
Engagement &
reinforcing platforms
& biennial forum

Thank You



**AU-IBAR: Providing leadership in the
development of animal resources for Africa**