

COMMUNIQUE
CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP FOR THE VALIDATION OF DRAFT
BLUE
ECONOMY STRATEGY FOR COMESA



26-27 APRIL 2022 LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

1. INTRODUCTION

The consultative Validation meeting for the Draft Regional Blue Economy Strategy for COMESA was organized by the African InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) in collaboration with COMESA, and took place in Lusaka, Zambia, from 26th to 27th April 2022.

The African Blue Economy Strategy was endorsed by the African Union Executive Council in February 2020. The African Union Policy Organ recommended further to mobilise resource in order to support African Union Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), towards the implementation of the African Blue Economy Strategy. Accordingly, thorough support from the Kingdom of Norway, AU-IBAR provided technical assistance to COMESA for the formulation of the Regional Blue Economy Strategy for the RECs. In line with Article 7.1.3: of the AU Policy Framework & Reform Strategy (PFRS), “Effective consultations must

take place with stakeholders in order to obtain their views and informed consent for decisions that may affect them”. It is for this reason that the consultative validation workshop was held in order to have the views and perspectives of the stakeholders on this very strategic draft.

The major objective of the two-day workshop was to present the draft strategy to stakeholders and solicit their inputs, and identify gaps that need further strengthening in order to enrich and validate the draft regional Blue Economy Strategy the COMESA region. The specific objectives were:

2. PARTICIPATION

The meeting was attended by representatives from the twenty-two (22) COMESA **Member States** namely: Djibouti, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, eSwatini, Comoro, Zimbabwe, and Zambia; **Regional Institutions:** Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation (LVFO), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD); **Independent Experts from private sector and Academic institutions;** and staff members of AUC, COMESA and AU-IBAR.

DAY 1: TUESDAY 26th APRIL 2022

3. OPENING SESSION

Dr. Sloans Chimatiro, the President of the AU Policy Research Network for Fisheries & Aquaculture (PRNFAA), facilitated the opening session.

Remarks were received from the five institutions as follows:

- a) Welcome remarks were made by Senior Livestock and Fisheries Officer, Dr. Yoseph Mamo
- b) Statement was made by the Blue Economy Consultant, Dr. Hashali Hamukuaya,
- c) Welcome statement was made by AU-IBAR Director, Dr. Nick Nwankpa, represented by Mr. Admore Chakadenga
- d) Dr. Linda Etta, the Coordinator of Blue Economy at AUC
- e) The Opening Statement was made by the Assistant Secretary General, COMESA, His Excellency Amb. Dr. Kipyego Cheluget,

Dr. Yoseph Mamo, **Senior Livestock and Fisheries Officer, the organiser of the workshop,** welcomed all the participants to the COMESA Secretariat expressed his delight that finally

COMESA had a Blue Economy Strategy. He further **highlighted the importance of the meeting to the overall COMESA goals.**

Dr. Hashali Hamukuaya, in his statement expressed his pleasure for having been given the opportunity to assist COMESA with the preparation of the Regional Blue Economy Strategy. He noted that there was a lot of goodwill among the Member States and stakeholder whom he had consulted in the process; and that he was confident the consultative workshop was going to validate the draft and get it ready for endorsement.

Mr. Admore Chakadenga, made remarks on behalf of the AU-IBAR Director, Dr. Nick Nwankpa. In his remarks, he thanked all physical and virtual participants for sparing their time to take part in the review and validation of the draft Regional Blue Economy Strategy for COMESA.

. He recalled the priority that AU Heads of State and Government have placed on Blue Economy as one of the pillars of the Agenda 2063; and also **underscored the need for the COMESA BE Strategy to be aligned with the Continental BE Strategy.** He therefore, called on COMESA Secretariat and the Member States to ensure that the Strategy is implemented. He thanked the Government of the Kingdom of Norway for the funding which has enabled AU-IBAR to develop the Strategy and hold the workshop.

Dr. Linda Etta, the Coordinator of Blue Economy at AUC, a representing the Director of Sustainable Development & Blue Economy, Dr. Nyambe Nyambe, urged the meeting to ensure that the COMESA BE Strategy enables the region to contribute towards “the Africa we want”. She assured COMESA of AUC’s commitment to the coordinating role to ensure coherence of COMESA’s action with the continental strategy.

The Opening speech was made by the Assistant Secretary General, COMESA, His Excellency Amb. Dr. Kipyego Cheluget. In his opening speech, His Excellency Amb. Dr. Kipyego Cheluget, welcomed all to Lusaka and expressed gratitude to African Union for agreeing to provide COMESA with the technical support through which the draft Strategy has been developed. He reported that Blue Economy had been identified by COMESA as a priority area for regional industrialisation and integration. Therefore, implicitly the COMESA Treaty enshrines the concept of the blue economy in various provisions. Furthermore, the COMESA Industrial Strategy 2017-2026, Medium Term Strategic Plan 2021-2025 adopted a clear

definition of the blue/ocean economy. Consequently, concrete plans and strategies have been put in place to enable MS to realise the development potential of our oceans, seas, coastlines, lakes, rivers and underground water, and encompassing a range of several productive sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transport, shipbuilding, energy, bio-prospecting and underwater mining to accelerate structural transformation. **He highlighted COMESA's comparative advantage in regional integration, which provides an enabling environment for coherence & optimisation of BE outcomes. He pointed out the need for the BE Strategy to highlight "conflict resolution"; urged the participants to ensure that the recommendations of the workshops guides COMESA's interventions; and thanked the Kingdom of Norway for the technical support to the BE formulation process.** He officially declared the meeting opened

4. THE MEETING

The overall facilitation of the workshop was done by Dr. Karani and Dr. Sloans Chimatiro
Objectives of the workshop by Dr. Yoseph Mamo

TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

SESSION 1: SETTING THE SCENE PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Patrick Karani kicked off the deliberations with a technical presentation on AU Africa Blue Economy Strategy. He provided background information and linkages on the Blue Economy Strategy from theoretical conceptual framework to practical applications in the context of consultative process, technical deliberations, high level engagement of the STC and endorsement of the AUC of the five thematic areas: Fisheries, aquaculture, conservation and sustainable aquatic ecosystems; Shipping/transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement; Coastal and maritime tourism, climate change, resilience, environment, infrastructure; Sustainable energy and mineral resources and innovative industries; and, Policies, institutional and governance, employment, job creation and poverty eradication, innovative financing.

Dr. Eshete Dejen, AG. PM Environment Protection, Agriculture & Environment Division at IGAD, provided a virtual presentation on IGAD regional Blue Economy Strategy. He spelt details and approach to engaging and consulting Member States. Dr. Eshete **reported that IGAD already finalised its BE Strategy, and is moving to support MS to finalised their National BE Strategies.** He acknowledged the uniqueness in each Member State that constraint regional integration and may result in duplication of efforts to some extent. Some

Member States perceive Blue Economy as coastal frontier and may have limited integration in plans, programmes and projects in inland countries. **Therefore, it is critical to ensure that COMESA National BE Strategies are aligned with both the IGAD and COMESA Regional BE Strategies.** The IGAD Blue Economy supported by Sweden attempts to remove barriers, build capacity, and promote harmonization of efforts and lessons learnt.

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Mr. Simal Amor, Head of Strategic Planning, Research & Policy Harmonisation at COMESA, provided the COMESA context of the BE, noting that underpinned by MTSP, BE is a Conservation + Development Space. Mr. Simal Amor presented COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan (2021-2025). He articulated the value addition of the strategic plan and the importance of establishing linkages to the COMESA Blue Economy Strategy. This process of interlinkages would enable COMESA in collaboration with AU IBAR identify financial gaps and leverage efforts in mobilizing needed financial resources to implement the regional Blue Economy supported by Member States. **As responsibilities are shared among AUC, RECs & MS, the principle of subsidiarity should apply, to avoid duplication. In order for BE to succeed, there is a need to achieve critical mass by having more MS with harmonised strategies; improve reporting on progress; ratification of regional commitments at national levels; and build effective partnerships to impact.**

SESSION 2: INFORMATION SHARING ON OTHER RELATIONAL RELATED BE INITIATIVES

Dr. Patrick Karani presided over as chair of the technical session 2. **In this session, only LVFO was able to present their experience.**

Dr. Robert Kayanda, **Director Fisheries Resource Monitoring & Research –Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO)**, made a presentation highlighting key natural resources of blue in nature endowed with the Member States. **Dr. Robert Kayanda, noted that BE for LVFO should focus on both marine and fresh water resources.**

Lake Victoria for example provides habitat for Nile Perch fish considered and valued as gold for the communities around the lake and the private sector involved in fish trade. Therefore, **BE priorities for L. Victoria are fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, water management and climate change.** There is need to consider the areas of value chain and fast track trade matter to enable Member States capitalize on opportunities emerging from the Blue Economy.

PRESENTATION OF DRAFT BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY FOR COMESA

Dr. Sloans Chimatiro presided over the session on presentation of the COMESA draft Blue Economy Strategy. Procedural matter ensued, in accordance with COMESA processes. In this regard, elections were held and the following were endorsed in the various portfolios: Malawi was elected Chair (Dr. Friday Njaya, Director of Fisheries, Malawi); Zimbabwe was elected the Vice Chair (Dr. Chenai Majuru, Deputy Director - Diagnostics and Research, Division of Veterinary Technical Services – Zimbabwe); Kenya (Mrs. Susan Otieno, Ag. Director, Department of Blue Economy - Kenya) and Comoros (Mr. Mahamoudou Abidina) were elected First and Second Rapporteurs, respectively.

Dr. Hashali Hamukuaya, the Blue Economy Consultant, presented the background, methodologies and approach to the development of the BE Strategy; as well as the draft COMESA BE Strategy.

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, 27TH APRIL 2022

5. RECAP

Dr. Sloans Chimatiro presented a recap of Day 1, during which he summarised the various presentations, including the opening remarks and speeches, as well as the key issues that emerged from the plenary discussions. The list below is a summary of the key issues that were raised for the draft BE to take into account:

- The need for the BE Strategy to present accurate statistics, because the statistics in the document were lower than the official statistics of the MS.
- Knowledge, scientific research & innovation to cover all priority areas, within the framework of UN Decade of Ocean Science (UNESCO); and inclusive of extractive aquatic industries.
- BE Strategy should be clear on the goal intended to achieve, the core problems to be addressed by the COMESA Blue Economy Strategy, and how the strategic objectives will be unpacked in order to achieve the goal.
- Access & Benefit Sharing as well equitable distribution of wealth generated from BE
- Clear timelines with realistic period: 5 or 10 year Strategy?
- There is a need for a clear M&E framework

- Clear financing & coordination mechanisms
- Use clear methodologies that can be replicated at country levels; e.g. UNECA BE Toolkit
- BE strategy should Include SWOT Analysis that will help clarify how to address the weaknesses and threats in order to achieve its goal
- There is a need to take into account the challenges that prevented COMESA from realising the aims of MTSP
- Make reference to global Agreements and Protocols to which MS are party; e.g. CBD, Nagoya Protocol, UNFCCC, SDG, Decade of Ocean Science etc
- Draw lessons from on-going implementation of BE initiatives; e.g. Seychelles, Mauritius, IGAD etc
- There is a need for mechanism to support MS implementation capacity
- There is a need for a Coordination Mechanism among COMESA, SADC, IOC & IGAD

6. PRESENTATION OF DRAFT BLUE GOVERNANCE COORDINATION MECHANISM AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Dr. Sloans Chimatiro made a presentation on “Blue Economy sectors and linkages for blue economy development in COMESA region”. In his presentation he noted that the linkages between Blue Economy Sectors and its development in COMESA region is depended on the marine and freshwater domain of the region. Therefore, successful implementation of BE could draw lessons from the fisheries and aquaculture strategies, where there are clear institutional arrangements and coordination at both the regional and national levels. To transform to BE MS need to strengthen capacity to plan coherently for Blue Growth; pull together existing traditional sectors (tourism, mining, shipping, fisheries etc) and draw lessons from examples countries with on-going BE such as Seychelles.

Mr. Admore Chakadenga, made a presentation on the Theory of Change for the BE Strategy, in which he identified **key issues/problem** (untapped potential of BE; weak and incoherent policies and regulations governing the BE sector; weak MCS; weak value chains; lack of data etc). These problems lead to such **consequences as** limited contribution of BE sector to economic growth, livelihoods and food and nutrition security etc.). Therefore, the potential **Responses, in terms of the goal for the BE Strategy could be (i)** to facilitate the

transformation of the BE sector in COMESA region for livelihood, income, food and nutrition security; with **Strategic objectives including** (i) to improve the BE policy and regulatory environment; (ii) to strengthen the BE management strategic partnerships, coordination and institutional; (iii) to harness significantly the benefits of COMESA's BE value chains through accelerated, equitable trade and marketing; (iv) to strengthen BE data collection, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism in the region; and (v) to increase and consolidate the African Voice in the governance of BE. The expected **Impact would be** "increased contribution of the BE sector to economic development etc".

Dr. Hamukuaya made a presentation of Proposed mechanisms for Blue governance coordination in COMESA region and Proposed Implementation Plans for blue economy strategy for COMESA

Two Working Group discussions

Group 1: Review the Draft Blue Economy Strategy for COMESA and make recommendations
Group 1 made a number of observations including (i) the need for the BE strategy to increase investments in mariculture and marine capture fisheries; (ii) include statistics on maritime industrial and artisanal fisheries; (iii) include the challenge on rights of tenure and access. On causes or contributing factors, the Group suggested 10 causes, including limited financial, human, infrastructure and institutional capacity. The strategic objectives include (i) to improve the BE regulatory framework, (ii) accelerate COMESA Blue value chain development and (iv) strengthen BE scientific research, data collection, MCS.

On discussions, there were a number of observations, including (i) the group seem to have different strategic objectives from group 2; and (ii) how would political will be stimulated in order to enhance domestication and implementation of the BE strategy, noting that BE is attracting interest from development partners.

Group 2: Review the proposed Blue governance coordination mechanism and Implementation plans and make inputs and recommendations

The group assessed the time frame and agreed that it should be from 2022 to 2032; (ii) increased focus areas to 6 to include "Blue Environment"; on priorities the group added "eco-tourism", improve maritime security and inland waterways; on underwater extractive industry, the group included "capacity of MS to undertake underwater extractive activities". This addition will enable MS to develop their own capacity. They proposed some adjustments on the strategic

objectives as follows: “To enhance blue environmental management and conservation”; and a number of results were developed, including (i) improved ecosystems and environmental services, (ii) innovative financial mechanism; (iii) promote integration of blue carbon services into policies; and (iv) promote carbon trading within the BE.

Another strategic objective was added “to promote research and innovation in MS”; the Results should be (i) improved research, (ii) supported innovation, (iii) integrated research and innovation into strategies, plans and programmes, (iv) mobilised resource for research and innovation, and (v) enhanced technical capacity and institutional ability for research and innovation.

Blue Governance Principles, Group 2 adjusted point 4 to read “inclusive and integrative, participatory, transparent, equitable and accountable process that ensures all relevant interested stakeholders are heard and addressed”. On institutional arrangements, at national level, a number of suggestion were made including detailed institutional structure organogram.

7. MEETING OUTCOMES

The meeting achieved the following main outcomes:

- i. The meeting received reports and experiences from a number of institutions, including AU-IBAR with regards to the Africa Blue Economy Strategy; IGAD, on the IGAD regional Blue Economy Strategy; COMESA context of the BE, the relationships with the COMESA Treaty and MTSP; LVFO experience, as well as MS experiences with BE and related actions.
- ii. The draft BE Strategy was exhaustively deliberated upon, gaps were identified, and suggestions were made in order to improve on the document as well as its relevance with their national and regional priorities.
- iii. Particularly, the group work made inputs on the Strategy’s implementation, governance and institutional arrangements of the Strategy to ensure effective implementation aligned to the AU ABES
- iv. Options for alignment and coordination at the country level were agreed upon, including the need for enhanced political will for better domestication and implementation

8. Recommendations

- i. Data and statistics:** there is a need to enhance MS capacity for BE data collection, analysis and dissemination in order to present accurate statistics on potential development impact of the BE
- ii. Research, innovation and knowledge generation:** MS to enhance their capacity for knowledge, scientific research and innovation, covering all priority areas of BE, building on the priorities that have been set under the UN Decade of Ocean Science
- iii. Goals and priorities:** COMESA and MS should set clear goals, strategic objectives as well as actions, that are based on core **problems** that will be addressed by COMESA Blue Economy Strategy. At the country level, the goals and strategic objectives should be informed by the local development contexts.
- iv. Capacity to achieve intended impact:** COMESA BE Strategy should set clear timelines with realistic period, and the Strategy should run for 10 years (2022 – 2032), with clear Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- v. Global commitments and agreements:** the BE Strategy should take into account the various global instruments to which MS are party, including CBD, UNCLOS, SDG 2030.
- vi. Resource mobilisation:** COMESA and MS should put in place clear and innovative financing strategies to ensure that the strategies at regional and national levels are implemented on a timely basis.
- vii. Coordination mechanisms:** there is a need for COMESA to put in place a new structure to ensure efficient coordination at the regional level. At the national levels, MS should ensure high level ownership and clear institutional structures. At the regional levels, there is a need for an inter-REC coordination, in order to ensure coordination among COMESA, SADC, EAC, IGAD & IOC. At the continental level, reinforce the existing RECs Coordination Platform.

- viii. **Capacity for implementation:** COMESA and MS should put in place mechanisms to support implementation of the Strategy; and clear methodologies for assessment and monitoring BE should put in place and be replicated at country levels.
- ix. **Mechanism for Cross-cutting and Learning:** COMESA should build mechanism for cross-learning among MS, by drawing lessons from on-going implementation of BE initiatives (e.g. Seychelles, Mauritius, IGAD etc)
- x. **Country Level Institutional Arrangements:** BE to be under the highest office possible to ensure better intra-sectoral coordination and resource mobilisation. As much as possible, a dedicated institution should be mandated to coordinate BE activities.

9. **Next Steps/way forward:**

Item	By whom	By when
Submission of revised BE Strategy	BE Consultant	12 th May 2022
Circulation to MS	COMESA Secretariat	15 th May 2022
Receive comments from MS	MS	8 th June 2022
Translate the Strategy	AU-IBAR	End of July
Circulation to technical Committee	COMESA	August 2022
Hold Technical Committee meeting	COMESA	3 rd week of August 2022
Submission to Ministers	COMESA Secretariat	3 rd week of August 2022