



**REGIONAL OCEAN GOVERNANCE MEETING  
SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA  
26 – 28 JUNE 2024  
CONCEPT NOTE**

**Background**

The value of the global ocean-based economy is estimated to be between 3-6 trillion USD/year, with more than 3 billion people relying on the oceans for their livelihoods. In the last few years, coastal and marine ecosystems around the world have begun to show signs of degradation due to unsustainable utilization of living and non-living resources, infrastructure development, extractive industries, and pollution. Such complex threats call for effective ocean governance to coordinate the multiple uses of the ocean and the protection of the marine environment through policy instruments, regional actions, and national legal frameworks. The governance of the ocean should evolve from sector-by-sector management to integrated ocean management, as the ocean is a single dynamic, inter-connected global ecosystem. The need for integrated management of coastal and marine resources through ecosystem and area-based management approaches such as the application of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) has become more critical and urgent. In 2014, the African Union Assembly adopted the 2050 Africa's Integrated Marine Strategic Plan of Action (2050 AIM Strategy) which outlines the actions that should be implemented to foster increased wealth creation from Africa's oceans and seas by developing a sustainable blue economy. The AIM Strategy seeks to achieve a comprehensive, concerted, coherent and coordinated approach that improves maritime conditions with respect to environmental and socio-economic development as well as the capacity to generate wealth from sustainable governance of Africa's seas and oceans. The African blue economy and maritime security agenda was further developed through the [Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa](#) (Lomé Charter, 2016) and the [African Blue Economy Strategy](#) (2019). These continental policy frameworks have been supported by the development of associated policy instruments at the regional economic community (REC) and regional seas levels, while also providing the framework for Africa's contribution to global ocean governance frameworks and targets, including the UN Agenda 2030 and its associated Sustainable Development Goals, notably Goal 14 'Life Below Water'.

**African Ocean Governance Strategy**

The 2015 Cairo Declaration of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) agreed to support efforts for the protection of the marine environment through development of an African ocean governance strategy. The 16<sup>th</sup> session of AMCEN, held in Gabon in June 2017, requested the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariats of the Regional Seas Conventions to enter cooperative arrangements with regional bodies to enhance the application of ecosystem-based approaches in ocean governance in Africa. At the 7<sup>th</sup> special session of AMCEN, held in September 2018 in Nairobi, African states were urged to promote growth and development of the ocean sector in the context of the sustainable blue economy pathway and the mainstreaming of aquatic biodiversity in all productive sectors. As a follow-up to these measures, the AMCEN Secretariat undertook background studies to support Member States in developing an [Africa Ocean Governance Strategy](#). These undertakings support the African Union's



Agenda 2063 aspiration for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

### **Climate Change and Ocean Governance**

The aspirations of Agenda 2063 are threatened by climate change in the continent as increased frequency of climate related emergencies and conflicts divert resources, hampering economic development. The [African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan](#) is a key instrument in supporting regional collaboration on climate change and more effective international partnerships. It provides a continental framework for collective action and enhanced cooperation in addressing climate change issues that improves livelihoods and well-being, promotes adaptation capacity, and achieves low-emission, sustainable economic growth. It highlights opportunities to address climate threats to Africa, including in blue economy, to realise the region's commitment to SDG14 'Life Below Water' and Agenda 2063's vision for the region's oceans, coasts, and inland water bodies to serve as major contributors to continental transformation and growth. The Strategy notes that regional and adaptive governance approaches are central to addressing climate challenges; it is therefore essential to leverage existing regional institutions and programmes to support sharing of data and good practice, and joint programme implementation in strengthening the climate resilience of the regional and continental blue economy.

The [Nairobi Convention Climate Change Strategy](#) is an operational framework to foster regional cooperation in addressing the impacts of climate change by assessing the degree of preparedness and the vulnerability and adaptive options of communities within the Nairobi Convention area. It provides a strategic platform for use by policy and decision makers at all levels, as well as for the development and strengthening of partnerships for implementation of national and regional initiatives. It endeavours to respond to regional needs in the management of shared transboundary resources which require regional actions to address climate change impacts and challenges.

### **Regional Ocean Governance Strategy for the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Region**

In support of the 2015 AMCEN decision, the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention adopted Decision CP.10/5 on Ocean Governance Strategy during the tenth Conference of Parties (COP), which requests the Secretariat to finalise the development, in a participatory process, with the support of partners, of an ocean governance strategy for the WIO region as a contribution to the African Ocean Governance Strategy, as well as invite the African Union Commission and RECs to enhance collaboration with the Nairobi Convention on ocean governance in the WIO region. In implementing the COP decision, the SAPPHIRE project, through the Nairobi Convention mechanism, supported the development of a [Regional Ocean Governance Strategy \(ROGS\)](#) through cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships with the African Union, RECs, Commissions, related intergovernmental organisations, and non-state actor stakeholders and experts. The Strategy includes all aspects of the ocean and coastal environment, the blue economy, and the related communities, institutions, productive activities, risks, and opportunities. The ROGS does not attempt to resolve all the complex challenges facing ocean governance in the WIO but provides a framework for WIO countries and regional institutions to cooperate more effectively and to focus their joint priorities, based on a common understanding of the state of ocean governance and the blue economy. The ROGS focuses on selected priorities. It also creates a framework for future regional actions on numerous other priorities and to meet emerging challenges. Guided by the COP



decisions, the ROGS focuses on enhanced cooperation between existing regional institutions and adaptation of existing arrangements. It avoids creating new regional institutions unless critical gaps are identified, and focuses rather on the empowerment and adaptation of existing institutions and arrangements. The policies and activities of the existing regional organisations are assumed to already reflect national aspirations and positions, given the participatory nature of their development, but can benefit from further alignment through the ROGS.

### **Objectives of the Workshop**

The regional ocean governance meeting will bring together key stakeholders with an interest in improving ocean governance at both a regional and continental level to discuss the contribution of the ROGS for the WIO region to the Continental Strategy, and how implementation of these two (and any other) strategies can be harmonised and synergized. The workshop will seek to promote shared learning and exchange of experiences on governance and sustainable management of the coastal and marine resources in the WIO region. The workshop also seeks to draw insights from and contribute to ocean governance initiatives and policy processes in other continental sub-regions.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- ✓ Clear understanding of the ROGS for the WIO region, and the draft Continental Strategy
- ✓ Clarity on the synergies and complementarity between the two strategies
- ✓ Scenarios for harmonised implementation of the ROGS for the WIO region and the Continental Strategy
- ✓ Lessons for other continental sub-regions

### **Expected Participants**

Workshop participants will be drawn from African Regional Seas Conventions and Agreements, Regional Economic Communities and Commissions, UNEP's Regional Office for Africa, Nairobi Convention Focal Points, WIO ROGS Task Force, among others.



## Draft Programme

### Day 1: Wednesday, 26 June, 2024

Time	Session	Speaker	Institution
8:00 – 9:00	Registration		
9:00 – 9:10	Opening remarks	Timothy Andrew	Nairobi Convention
9:10 – 9:20	Opening remarks	Sibongile Mavimbela	SADC Secretariat
9:20 – 9:30	Opening remarks	Thandiwe Gxaba	Benguela Current Convention
9:30 – 9:40	Opening remarks	Georges Mba-Asseko	African Union Commission
9:40 – 10:00	Opening	Ms Annely Haiphene	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia
10:00 – 10:15	Review of programme and objectives	Alex Benkenstein	Facilitator
10:15 – 10:30	Africa's oceans: social, economic and environmental context	Alex Benkenstein	Facilitator
10:30 – 11:00	Tea		
11:00- 11:30	Ocean Governance: SIDS Focus and as Champions on Blue Economy	Veronique Nibourette	Seychelles
11:30 – 11:45	Africa's Blue/Ocean Economy: Policy review	Georges Mba-Asseko	African Union Commission
11:45 – 12:30	Review of draft African Ocean Governance Strategy	Robert Wabunoha	UNEP
12:30 – 13:00	Discussion	Alex Benkenstein	Facilitator
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		
14:00 – 14:20	Continental Strategy and the ROGS: Initial remarks	Timothy Andrew	Nairobi Convention
14:20 – 14:50	Review of draft Regional Ocean Governance Strategy	Kieran Kelleher	Technical expert
14:50 – 15:30	Discussion	Alex Benkenstein	Facilitator
15:30 – 16:00	Tea		



16:00 – 17:00	RECS & Regional Seas: Perspectives on integrated ocean governance (session 1)		SADC, BCC, ECOWAS, NC, FCWC
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**Day 2: Thursday, 27 June, 2024**

Time	Session	Speaker	Institution
8:30 – 9:00	Review of day 1 discussions and day 2 programme	Alex Benkenstein	
9:00 – 10:00	RECS & Regional Seas: Perspectives on integrated ocean governance (session 2)		COMESA, COI, UMA, IGAD
10:00 – 11:00	Integrated implementation: Civil society, the private sector, academia and other key stakeholder groups		WIOMSA, PMAESA, WIOGI , NOCAMO, CHICOP, MIHARI
11:00 – 11:30	Tea		
11:30 – 13:00	Group discussion: Opportunities and challenges for synergistic implementation of continental and regional ocean governance strategies		
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		
14:00 – 15:30	Report back and discussion		
15:30 – 16:00	Tea		
16:00 – 17:00	Discussion: Related policy processes and policy windows	Alex Benkenstein	Facilitator



**Day 3: Friday, 28 June, 2024**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Institution</b>
8:30 – 9:00	Review of day 2 discussions and day 3 programme	Alex Benkenstein	Facilitator
9:00 – 10:00	Financing for integrated implementation	Kieran Kelleher	Technical expert
10:00 – 11:00	Next steps: Process towards finalisation and adoption of African ocean governance strategy and ROGS	Georges Mba-Asseko and Timothy Andrew, followed by facilitated discussion (Alex Benkenstein)	African Union Commission Nairobi Convention
11:00 – 11:30	Tea		
11:30 – 12:30	Panel: Emerging insights on integrated implementation	AUC, NC, GGC, BCC	
12:30 – 13:00	Close and thanks		
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		