

ABOUT THE WEST AFRICA SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PROGRAM

The **West African Sustainable Ocean Program (WASOP)**, is a € 59 million initiative funded by the European Union, implemented by Expertise France, IUCN, FAO, EFCA, CSRP, and FCWC, in partnership with ECOWAS. The 5-year program aims at promoting sustainable use and management of marine and coastal resources across West Africa, boosting inclusive economic growth.

As climate change and human activities continue to put immense pressure on marine ecosystems, WASOP seeks to foster a sustainable blue economy, enhance regional ocean governance, and support the restoration and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems.

Aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063, the program promotes sustainable blue economy as "Africa's future" and includes, through an integrated approach that focuses on local economic development while preserving marine and coastal ecosystems, drawing on the EU's Ocean Pact and the "Seascope approach". It involves all sectors related to oceans, seas, and coasts—from marine-based activities (e.g., shipping, fisheries, renewable energy) to land-based operations (e.g., ports, shipyards, aquaculture, coastal tourism, and local communities)—to ensure comprehensive action.

This approach is grounded in three pillars: governance, support for a sustainable blue economy, and ecosystem restoration and integrated management.

A coordinated and multi-stakeholder approach, the program seeks to address key drivers of environmental degradation, socio-economic stressors, and climate-induced vulnerabilities affecting coastal communities by integrating climate-smart, inclusive, and innovative approaches to enhance economic opportunities while ensuring the long-term health of the region's marine and coastal resources. Overall, the initiative aims to contribute to a more prosperous and resilient future for West Africa, where the benefits of a sustainable blue economy are shared by all.



The program will be implemented across the 13 coastal countries in West Africa:

- Benin
- Cabo Verde
- Côte d'Ivoire
- The Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Liberia
- Mauritania
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Togo



KEY PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

Implementing partners: Expertise France, FAO, EFCA, CSRP, FCWC and IUCN

Key stakeholders: ECOWAS, WAEMU, EBID, BOAD, national public and private sector

CONTACT

wasopcoordination@expertisefrance.fr



WEST AFRICA SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PROGRAM

- Ocean governance
- Sustainable blue economy
- Ecosystem preservation

More information about the West Africa Sustainable Ocean Program



WASOP is implemented by:



The west african coastal areas host approximately one-third of the region's population (about **100 million people**), generate **56%¹ of its GDP**, and account for **90%² of imports and exports by sea**. However, the blue economy is subject to numerous challenges and anthropogenic pressures. About **40% of fish stocks** in the region are overexploited or depleted due to illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices, particularly affecting small-scale fishing,



PILLAR I: OCEAN GOVERNANCE



Implemented by FAO, EFCA, CSRP, and FCWC, this pillar aims to strengthen and implement policies and regulatory frameworks for effective marine resource management.

Key Focus Areas:

- Ensure a **substantial reduction in IUU fishing** to support sustainable economic growth, safeguard biodiversity, and enhance the well-being of coastal communities for generations to come.
- Champion **scientific advice** for better management of shared stocks of small pelagic fishes.
- Facilitate the enhancement and enforcement of **regional fisheries governance**, policies, and multi-stakeholder cooperation.
- Advanced knowledge and empowerment of artisanal fisheries.

(1) World Bank Blue Economy in Africa, 2022
(2) UNCTAD's Review of Maritime Transport 2021

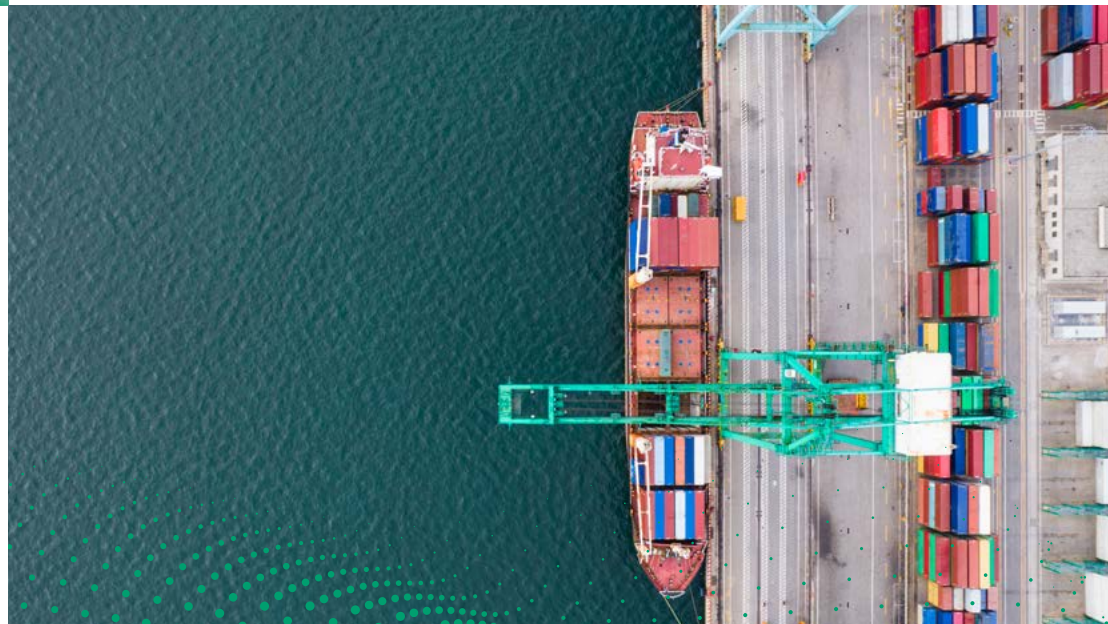
PILLAR II: SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY (SBE)



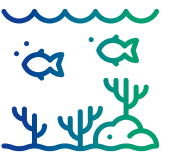
Implemented by Expertise France, this pillar focuses on balancing economic development with sustainability, by ensuring that ocean-based industries can thrive without degrading the environment. This initiative will be a powerful driver for innovation, entrepreneurship, economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction in the target regions, and this will be achieved through strategic collaboration and implementation of programs that will promote sustainable blue economic activities and accelerate climate action.

Key Focus Areas:

- Strengthen **regional and national blue economy policies, regulatory frameworks**, and institutional capacities, as well as promote **private-sector participation** in sustainable ocean-based industries and facilitate access to **sustainable financing mechanisms** to foster inclusive and long-term economic growth.
- **Raise awareness** of the potential of the sustainable blue economy and support a **practitioner network** to share good practices and foster partnerships
- **Ensure efficient WASOP “3 pillars” implementation** through coordination services and overall program management, monitoring and evaluation.



PILLAR III: MARINE AND COASTAL ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION & RESTORATION



Implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in partnership with WAEMU, it focuses on enhancing the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems in West Africa .

Key Focus Areas:

- Develop **innovative scientific knowledge, management and funding tools** for the effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- Support the establishment of a representative, coherent and functional **regional network of Marine Protected Areas** in support of West African countries efforts towards the 30x30 objectives (Global Biodiversity Framework under the United Nation Convention on Biological Diversity).
- Promote **cross-border marine conservation dynamics** and the creation/extension of transboundary MPAs, extended to the deep-sea areas of Exclusive economic zone (EEZs) and international waters, in line with the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) treaty.
- Support the involvement of local actors and communities to conserve biodiversity and strengthen community resilience through a small grant scheme.