

# WEST AFRICA SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PROGRAMME

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WASOP PROGRAMME

Funded by the European Union with a total budget of €59 million, the **West Africa Sustainable Ocean Programme (WASOP)** aims to promote the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources in West Africa.

It aligns with the priorities of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the European Pact for the Ocean, and is based on three pillars:

1. Ocean Governance
2. Sustainable Blue Economy
3. Preservation of Marine and Coastal Ecosystems

WASOP covers the **13 coastal countries of West Africa**: Benin, Cabo Verde, Ivory Coast, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### "Sustainable Blue Economy in West Africa" - WASOP Programme

As part of Pillar II – Sustainable Blue Economy, **Expertise France** is launching a **Call for Proposals (CFP)** to:

- ▶ Support the development of a sustainable and inclusive blue economy in West Africa; and
- ▶ Catalyse the growth of the blue private sector.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Fund inclusive sustainable blue economy projects (including gender-sensitive initiatives) with strong potential for replication and/or scaling up, building on existing levers or capable of mobilizing complementary—including private—funding.
- ▶ Encourage partnership approaches (multi-stakeholder, multi-sector, multi-level) serving a sustainable blue economy that addresses West African challenges.
- ▶ Fund environmentally responsible projects that contribute to climate adaptation or mitigation.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- ▶ **Total CFP budget:** €10 million
- ▶ **Grant per project (per applicant):** between €1 million and €4 million
- ▶ **Indicative number of projects selected:** 3 to 4
- ▶ **Co-financing:** Not mandatory, but leveraging (co-financing, eligibility for public/private funding) will be valued in the evaluation grid.
- ▶ **Project duration:** Minimum 24 months, maximum 36 months, with closure by 31 August 2029.

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following local or international entities may apply:

- ▶ **Lead applicants (non-profit organizations):**
  - NGOs/CSOs; operational foundations; associations; non-profit professional networks or similar entities.
- ▶ **Eligible partners\*:**
  - NGOs/CSOs, operational foundations, associations, non-profit professional networks, non-commercial public institutions or similar;
  - For-profit entities;
  - Universities / research and training centers.

\* Partners are not mandatory but recommended. However, if the lead applicant is an international structure, it must associate with a partner based in one of the 13 eligible West African countries where the project operates.

## TARGET GROUPS AND FINAL BENEFICIARIES

Applicants (lead and partners) must implement actions for the following target groups:

- ▶ **Private sector (priority group):** micro and small enterprises (MSEs/SMEs), cooperatives, individual entrepreneurs, social and solidarity economy actors, informal sector, etc.
- ▶ **Organizations supporting sustainable blue economy development in West Africa:** incubators, banks, training centers, local authorities, etc.

Target groups may receive sub-grants up to €40,000 per third-party beneficiary, provided their necessity and impact are justified. This ceiling may be raised if duly justified for optimal action development. Other forms of support (capacity building, technical assistance, etc.) are also possible.

## 12 ELIGIBLE THEMES (7 PRIORITY AREAS)

1. Improvement of value chains
2. Fisheries
3. Integrated marine aquaculture (including seaweed farming)
4. Sustainable coastal tourism
5. Nature-based solutions (NbS)
6. Resilience of coastal cities and communities
7. Preservation of marine and coastal ecosystems

8. Clean energy for marine and coastal use
9. Port infrastructure (blue and green ports)
10. Marine resource valorization (blue biotechnologies)
11. Circular economy
12. Maritime transport

## GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

Projects must be implemented in one or more of the 13 eligible West African countries. Single-country projects are eligible, but multi-country or cross-border projects will be prioritized to ensure broad regional coverage.

## ELIGIBLE ACTIONS

An action is a set of activities implemented in one or several target countries and addressing one or more of the eligible themes, while respecting eligible and non-eligible cost rules. Activities must aim to strengthen and support target groups.

## CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLES

- **Inclusion and Gender:** Concrete measures are expected to promote gender equality and the inclusion of youth and persons with disabilities.
- **Environmental and Social Safeguards:** A proportional safeguard mechanism is mandatory for all projects.
- **Economic Impact:** Actions must contribute to the sustainable blue economy and deliver direct economic results during implementation (e.g., job creation, increased added value).
- **Climate:** Projects must contribute to climate change adaptation and/or mitigation.
- **Participation in the practitioner network:** Grantees supported by WASOP will be connected through a peer network to encourage knowledge sharing.

## KEY DATES

- The CFP was launched in early December 2025. It is accessible at this link on the [POPS platform](#).
- The deadline for submitting summary notes is **30 January 2026**. The deadline for submitting full notes will be communicated to pre-selected candidates at a later date.

## TWO-STAGE SELECTION PROCESS (restricted call for projects)

**Stage 1 :** Submission of a brief note by 30 January 2026.

**Stage 2 :** Preselected projects will submit a detailed proposal.

## INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

For more information about the CFP, contact [wasopcoordination@expertisefrance.fr](mailto:wasopcoordination@expertisefrance.fr) and [celine.cardinael@expertisefrance.fr](mailto:celine.cardinael@expertisefrance.fr)

Find out more about the WASOP program - [WASOP Presentation](#) | [Expertise France](#)

## FURTHER INFORMATION ON WASOP'S WORK

Another call for projects will be launched under WASOP's Pillar 3 to support local marine landscape conservation initiatives in West Africa. This call for projects will be organized under the supervision of IUCN and implemented by PRCM. It will support small-scale projects (€100-120K) contributing to biodiversity conservation, marine protected area (MPA) management, the implementation of soft solutions for coastal resilience, and the development of sustainable value chains linked to MPAs in West Africa.



Implemented by:



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
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Commission Sous-Régionale des Pêches  
Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission



FCWC  
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