Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

WEST AFRICA SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PROGRAMME

▶ SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY

A 'Seascape' partnership platform for the development of the blue economy in West Africa

PROJECT LEADER:

LANDSCAPE FINANCE LAB

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

AGIRE – KOAL FADIOUTH

UNIVERS SEL – ECHANGE DE SAVOIR-FAIRE ENTRE PRODUCTEURICES

GREAT GREEN WALL FRONTLINE

AREAS OF INTERVENTION:

- **The Gambia** (North Bank Region),
- **Guinea-Bissau** (Cacheu),
- **Senegal** (Grand Sine-Saloum).



DURATION:

36 months
(September 2026 – September 2029)

TOTAL COST:

€ 1.8 million
(of which ≈ €300,000 in co-funding)

CONNECTING BUSINESSES, COMMUNITIES, ECOSYSTEMS AND FINANCE ACROSS THREE MARINE LANDSCAPES


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OBJECTIVES

Support SMEs and cooperatives in West African seascapes within the blue economy sectors (aquaculture, shellfish farming, salt production, and rice-fish farming) to improve production, processing, and marketing; facilitate their access to financing; and boost local incomes.

Bring together businesses, producers, and conservation stakeholders through regional partnerships that balance economic development, mangrove restoration, and ecosystem governance.

CONTEXT

In the targeted coastal areas, initiatives relating to conservation, entrepreneurship, governance and financing are often designed and implemented in isolation. This fragmentation limits their ability to bring about sustainable transformation of local economies, restore ecosystems, build inclusive value chains and attract large-scale public, private, carbon or blended finance.

PROJECT ACTIONS

The project's approach is based on establishing regional partnership platforms, enabling participatory assessments to be carried out and priority value chains to be strengthened. It also involves supporting and accelerating the growth of SMEs and cooperatives, backed by a catalytic funding mechanism, as well as structuring investment and carbon finance projects. These economic and financial actions are complemented by mangrove restoration and community monitoring activities, with a view to linking local economic development, the mobilisation of funding and the preservation of ecosystems.





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TARGET GROUPS

- Producer cooperatives and fishing groups in the sectors of shellfish farming, aquaculture, processing, salt production, rice-fish farming, and production systems that respect mangroves;
- Local SMEs and emerging businesses in the fields of processing, collection, quality assurance, circular inputs, and ecosystem services;
- Women and young people (ages 15 to 35).

FINAL BENEFICIARIES

Coastal communities in the broadest sense, spread across the three marine areas, estimated at around 200,000 people in the main intervention areas and their immediate catchment areas.

KEY EXPECTED RESULTS

- 3 participatory value chain assessments conducted;
- A regional partnership platform and a funding strategy developed and operational in each of the three marine landscapes covered by the project;
- 300 hectares of mangroves restored;
- Community-based monitoring, reporting, and verification systems established across 500 to 1,000 hectares in mangrove and wetland ecosystems;
- 1,500 to 2,000 producers supported within 20 to 25 cooperatives, 60% of whom are women and 30% are young people;
- Improved living conditions and livelihoods for 200,000 people in the three seascapes;
- 10 to 15 businesses accelerated;
- Establishment of the "Frontline Fund," a catalytic financing mechanism with €120,000*;
- Carbon projects and structured investment proposals designed to attract public, private, and blended financing.

TARGETED CHANGES

- Strengthen priority "blue" and "blue-green" value chains through coordinated actions aimed at reducing post-harvest losses, improving quality and hygiene, developing processing, ensuring traceability, and facilitating structured market access;
- Develop sustainable, integrated production systems at the seascape scale, as well as nature-based productive solutions, including low-impact aquaculture and nature-based solutions (NbS) that support mangroves;
- Strengthen SMEs, cooperatives, and producer groups through tailored support and access to financing.

CONTRIBUTION TO WASOP OBJECTIVES

- Demonstration of an integrated territorial model combining economic development, governance, conservation and blue finance.
- Strengthening coastal value chains, business structuring, access to finance, ecosystem restoration and the participation of women and young people.
- Capitalising on, developing and adapting methods, tools, platforms and financing mechanisms for other seascapes in West Africa.

** The 'Frontline' fund (€120,000) awards grants of between €5,000 and €20,000 to producers, cooperatives and SMEs, whilst connecting them with external funders. It supports their creditworthiness and market access, with the aim of enabling them to become self-sufficient through future funding.*

The project *"Seascape' Partnership Platform for the Development of the Blue Economy in West Africa"* is one of four pilot projects funded by the European Union as part of the call for proposals under the WASOP Program, Pillar 2—Sustainable Blue Economy, implemented by Expertise France.

These four projects aim to test and develop sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economic models in West Africa's coastal regions. They share a common goal: to make the blue economy a driver of shared prosperity, innovation, job creation, and climate resilience.

With a budget of €59 million over five years, the WASOP – West Africa Sustainable Ocean Programme - stems from the European Union's Global Gateway Strategy.

EXPERTISE FRANCE
GROUPE AFD

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