







PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION



Policy Brief

Anchoring Blue Economy in IGAD Region and Member States



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IGAD BLUE ECONOMY
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Key Messages

- Since July 2021 the Agriculture and Environment Division of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has been implementing a project “Enhancing Blue Economy in the IGAD Member States for Biodiversity Conservations and Livelihood Diversification” financially supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Transformative results have been achieved and next phase priority interventions are identified through gap analysis.
- This project assisted in implementing some pillars of the 5-year IGAD Regional Blue Economy (BE) Strategy. All IGAD Member States developed and endorsed their National Blue Economy Strategy through the support of this project. The project supported also capacity of IGAD and its Member States through institutionalizing and mainstreaming Blue Economy at both national and regional levels while increasing cooperation and regional integration.
- Since Blue Economy is an emerging concept, as part of the awareness creation, a series of events were conducted including campaigns against plastic pollution, media advocacy trainings, gender and use oriented workshops, and publication as well as dissemination of various promotion materials have been carried out. In addition to the preparation of a dedicated website for Blue Economy, the mainstream media and various social media platforms (Twitter, WhatsApp group, Facebook and YouTube) have been appropriately used to sensitize the Blue Economy concept.
- Nevertheless, the final project evolution analysis shows that Blue Economy is a new and innovative approach and hence there is a need to mobilizing more resources to implement the Blue Economy strategies at the regional and national levels for sustaining the achievements made so far. The key priority intervention areas are also identified and discussed thoroughly with IGAD Member States Project Steering Committee members.

Recommendations

In order to sustain the milestones achieved and fill critical gaps; the following recommendations are proposed:

- Mitigation and adaptation for climate change impact
- Marine Spatial Planning
- Marine Protected Areas and livelihood diversification
- Management of Plastic Pollution
- Private sector engagement
- Transboundary Blue Resource Management

Background

The Horn of Africa region is still reliant on rain-fed agro-pastoralism despite the water-stressed and harsh natural environments which are exacerbated by the demographic pressure and climate risks. Over the past decades, the IGAD region has realised an annual average economic growth rate of about 5 % but it has proven to be insufficient to pull out most of its populations from extreme poverty, hunger and insecurity.

The region has diverse socio-ecological landscapes beside a strategic edge on the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean. It stretches over a land area of 5.2 million km² which consists of 65% of water-stressed and 35 % of marginal lands. The combined inland water area is about 222,358 km² and is naturally/ unevenly distributed across the region. The coastal states of IGAD have an aggregated an Exclusive Economic Zone of 1.1 million Km², including 55,875 km² of inshore waters and 6,960 km of coastline.

Socio-ecological landscapes

5.2 million km²
*65% water-stressed
35% marginal lands,*

1 million km²
Economic Zone,

55,875 km²
inshore waters,

6,960 km
coastline,



Problem Analysis

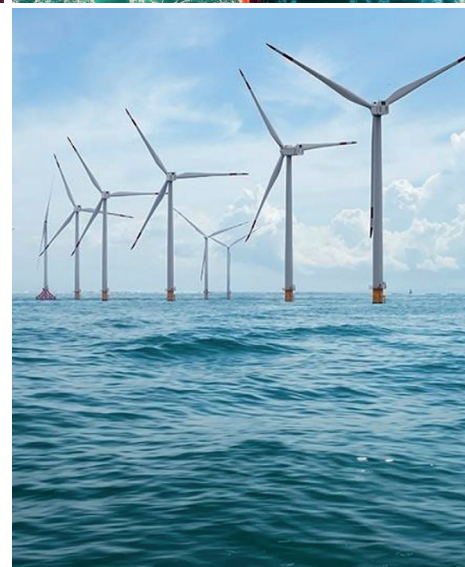
The economy of the IGAD region is mainly based on the use of its terrestrial natural resources while the region is also endowed with huge aquatic resources. However, these resources are not properly developed and used to improve the livelihoods and food/nutrition security of the region mainly due to:

- *Lack of coordinated efforts among different sectors*
- *Lack of common understanding of the concepts of Blue Economy*
- *Lack of guideline/framework on how to assess the value of the Blue Economy since the concept is new*
- *The fact that the potential of the blue economy is not well understood and quantified either at the central or at the decentralized level*
- *Inadequate capacity of the member states to sustainably manage the blue economic resources*
- *Lack of common legal and policy frameworks*
- *Lack of a regional platform to promote regional cooperation and exchange of views, ideas and experience on the various blue economy sectors*
- *Lack of enabling policies for public-private - partnership in the development of the blue economy*
- *Lack of targeted strategy and interventions to promote gender equity and social inclusion in Blue Economy*



The above challenges called for a comprehensive analysis at the national and regional levels with a multidisciplinary team which developed a 5-year IGAD BE strategy with the following strategic axis:

- **Axis 1:** Structuring of the BE in IGAD Member States
- **Axis 2:** Reinforcing traditional sectors and developing emerging sectors
- **Axis 3:** Implementation of regional initiatives
- **Axis 4:** Strengthening of regional cooperation and integration



Implementing IGAD Blue Economy Strategy

The IGAD's Blue Economy Strategy (2021-2025) and its implementation plan was developed with the support from the European Union Technical Cooperation Facility (EU-TCF). The strategy guides the formulation and implementation of projects and programmes on Blue Economy development in the IGAD region. To implement some pillars of the Blue Economy strategy, IGAD received financial support from the Government of Sweden on June 2021 for the project "Enhancing Blue Economy in the IGAD Member States for Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihoods Diversification". Through this project, IGAD seeks to ;

- i. Improve the governance of the Blue Economy in the IGAD region;*
- ii. Conduct marine biodiversity situation analyses;*
- iii. Make inventory of chemical and plastic pollutants from source to sea; and*
- iv. Develop and apply tools to monitor and mitigate chemical and plastic pollution in the coastal member states.*

This project contributed to the following outcome "the capacity of IGAD and its Member States strengthened by structuring and mainstreaming the BE at both national and regional levels while increasing cooperation and regional integration, and strengthening support to the member states to develop their own national BE strategies. It will also contribute to the effective implementation of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy". The project objectives were:

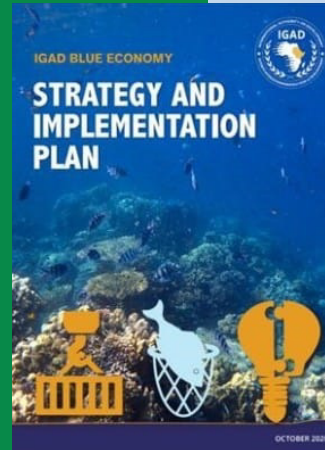
- To establish a functional Blue Economy structure at IGAD to cater for the regional and national needs (selected member states of IGAD),
- To assess the impact of pollution and develop mitigation measures on aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems, and
- To increase research and knowledge management/dissemination on key BE indicators (questions for the IGAD region for learning), policy and practice change among the Member States.



GAP ANALYSIS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY

Major Achievements

- Institutionalization of BE Governance
- Valuation of the contribution of BE
- Development of Regional and National Strategies
- Awareness created
- Knowledge generated
- Capacity developed
- Knowledge sharing platform created
- Women and BE analyzed and produced policy recommendations
- Produced draft strategy for plastic pollution management

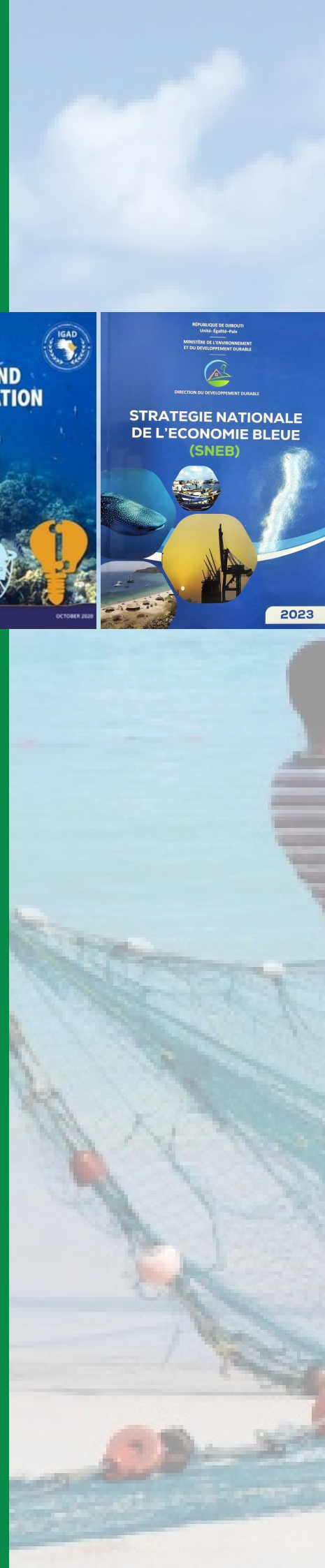


Gaps

- It is a regional project that mainly focused on policy issues with limited address to local/community needs
- Limited domestication and implementation of national strategies
- Evidence not generated through pilot demonstration
- Challenges due to climate change and plastic pollution
- Did not respond for competition for Blue Space
- Limited engagement of the private sector

Gaps for new interventions

- Mitigation and adaptation for climate change impact
- Marine Spatial Planning
- Marine Protected Areas and livelihood diversification
- Management of Plastic Pollution
- Private sector engagement
- Transboundary Blue Resource Management



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