

AFRICA'S CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (2022-2032)



THEMATIC AREA: Transforming the blue economy



Context

Oceans play a key role in regulating the earth's climate, having absorbed over 90% of the excess heat generated by greenhouse gases in the climate system, as well as 20-30% of anthropogenic carbon emissions. However, this regulating capacity is not unlimited and there is a growing understanding of the diverse ways in which climate change is impacting oceans.

The key climate impacts on oceans are changes in water temperature, ocean acidification and deoxygenation. These drive a number of secondary impacts such as changes in ocean circulation and chemistry, rising sea levels, increased storm intensity, as well as changes in the diversity, distribution and abundance of marine species and phenomena such as coral bleaching. In turn, these changes impact society through physical risk to infrastructure and human life, as well as economic and food security risks. These risks are particularly acute for coastal and island communities who rely on marine resources for food security and a range of ecosystem services, and who are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts such as extreme weather events.



Priority action areas

Promote climate-resilient coastal development

Invest in ecosystems and natural assets as multi-benefit providers; strengthen grey and green (ecosystem-based/nature-based) adaptation in coastal zones; enhance financing for adaptation in marine and coastal zones; integrate climate risk in coastal development planning; and strengthen disaster risk reduction and preparedness plans and strategies.

Support sectoral and integrative blue economy interventions

Strengthen co-governance and regional fisheries governance mechanisms; integrate climate in marine spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management and other planning frameworks; and support sector-specific interventions for key blue economy sectors.

Strengthen research and policy

Strengthen the role of oceans and coasts in Nationally Determined Contributions and other climate-related policies and strategies; support research to predict, monitor and respond to ocean-related climate impacts; and ensure ocean-related climate policy interventions consider equity and the unique position of vulnerable groups.



Regional policy frameworks

Several regional policy frameworks recognise the importance of Africa's blue economy, with Agenda 2063 envisioning the region's blue economy as a major contributor to continental transformation and growth (it is important to note that Africa's blue economy is defined as including both marine and freshwater ecosystems).

The Africa Blue Economy Strategy (2019) was developed following the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference that took place in Nairobi, Kenya. The objective of the Strategy is to guide the development of an inclusive and sustainable blue economy that becomes a significant contributor to continental transformation and growth. Implementation of the Strategy addresses various themes related to climate change, including blue carbon, blue energy, climate-resilient coastal infrastructure and responses to improve the climate resilience of Africa's fisheries and aquaculture sectors.