

**24th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of
Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE)**

Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa

Concept Note for the Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting:

**Blue Economy valuation approaches:
towards a better knowledge of the blue potential in Africa**

23 November 2020

I. Background

The “Blue Economy” considers all activities deriving from marine and aquatic ecosystems (oceans, coasts, seas, rivers, lakes and groundwater, and associated resources) and recognizes their synergies. The concept includes recognition that the productivity of healthy fresh-water and ocean ecosystems is a basis for aquatic and maritime-based economies. It recognizes that a healthy Blue Economy can work to ensure that islands, coastal countries, and even landlocked states, can benefit from Blue-Economy resources.

The socio-economic and ecological potential of aquatic and marine ecosystems and associated resources is still barely known worldwide, and in particular in Africa. As an example, it is estimated that only 5 percent of all the oceans is mapped; additionally, mapping of freshwater surface and underground waters is still very much insufficient on the continent. This situation tends to hinder adequate understanding of resources at stake and the formulation of effective policies and tools towards their sustainable use and management. It is, therefore, strategically important to emphasize building the knowledge and capacity development of key stakeholders in the Blue Economy so that they can support informed policy making to achieve outcomes that can harness the Blue Economy.

In 2016, the ECA launched the Blue Economy Policy Handbook for Africa, which is an essential tool towards developing national, regional and continental strategic policy frameworks to support rational and sustainable use and management of Blue Economy resources. The current approach to the Blue Economy is linear and compartmentalized with weak connections between and among institutions and sectors, and links between levels of intervention (global, regional, and national). The Handbook proposes a paradigm shift in both conceptual and institutional approaches. The proposed framework adopts a multi-sectoral approach, in which Blue Economy sectors are intertwined through their environmental, social and economic dimensions and strengthened synergies. The Policy Handbook includes a step-by-step methodology to using such a multisectoral approach.

The Blue Economy is encapsulated in the African Union’s 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (AU 2050 AIMS) and the 2063 agenda, which describes the Blue Economy as the “new frontier of African Renaissance”. The African Union also used the Handbook’s methodology in formulating their Blue Economy strategy, endorsed in October 2019. The Handbook’s methodology was also used to prepare the first strategic policy framework on the Blue Economy for Comoros and served as a reference for the production of a stocktaking report for Madagascar (in 2018), as well as the development of Blue Economy action plans for Seychelles and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) (in 2019). The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is also building on it for the finalization of their own strategy. IGAD had planned an international conference to discuss it, which was then postponed due to the Covid19 crisis.

During the last ICISOE meeting held in November 2019, in Asmara, Eritrea, Seychelles made a presentation on the importance of the Blue Economy for enhanced regional integration and

introduced policies, innovative financial instruments, and institutions involved. A side-event on “*Harnessing the Blue Economy for Regional Integration*” showcased the large Blue Economy potential of Eritrea, in particular in the fisheries and the deep-sea mining sectors and exhibited Blue Economy initiatives from the region. During the meeting, participants raised the lack of common understanding of the Blue Economy concept and insufficient data and research for policy development and underlined the need to assess the real socio-economic value of the Blue Economy. They also underscored the important role of regional cooperation in fostering sustainable sharing and management of Blue Economy resources and sectors.

II. Objectives of the AEGM

In view of the preceding requests emanating from the 23rd session of SRO-EA’s ICSOE and based on the action points included in the Blue Economy Action Plans of the IOC and Seychelles, the main objective of this AEGM, will be to discuss key Blue Economy policy experiences and tools supporting research, knowledge development and innovative accounting systems for informed decision-making in Africa, as well as youth advocacy in general and within the context of post-Covid 19 recovery pathways in particular.

As part of the discussions, the meeting participants will essentially deliberate on a valuation toolkit for the socio-economic assessment of the Blue potential, with the view to contributing to its strengthening and ownership towards informed and evidence-based policy making. In addition to the toolkit, the preliminary findings of an upcoming working paper titled *Comparative Analysis of Blue Economy Impacts and Strategies in Seychelles and The Bahamas using Blue Economy Satellite Accounts (BESA study)*, will be presented and discussed during the AEGM. The participants will also have the opportunity to further exchange on the strategic importance of youth participation and its role and contributions to Blue Economy’s achievements.

Specifically, the AEGM will explore the following:

- i. Whether the proposed valuation toolkit has a clear scope and application modalities, supporting an enhanced knowledge and awareness of Blue Economy resources and assets;
- ii. Whether the toolkit will enable a satisfactory collection and analysis of key data and information to measure the contributions of the Blue Economy to the overall economy, sustainable development and social well-being (also taking into account impact externalities related to climate change and the Covid 19 pandemic);
- iii. Whether the toolkit builds on existing and recognized methodologies for accounting (satellite accounting, natural capital accounting, etc.) and complements them to project the full picture of the Blue Economy specific features and multisectoral linkages;

- iv. Whether member States, RECs and IGOs will be ready to use the toolkit for a thorough socio-economic assessment of the Blue potential at their level through partnerships and regional cooperation agreements;
- v. Whether the findings of the BESA study could be further integrated in the development of accounting systems at all levels; and
- vi. Whether Blue Economy policy experiences, in relation to youth advocacy and involvement can be scaled-up in Africa and also contribute to accelerated post-Covid 19 recovery.

III. Format of the Meeting

This AEGM will be held virtually on 23 November 2020 and will be organised as follows:

9:00 – 17:30 : Blue Economy Valuation Approaches

Please note that the times listed are **GMT+2**

PART I	09:00-13:00
SESSION 1	<i>Overview of ECA work on the Blue Economy</i>
DURATION	30 minutes (09:00-09:30)
LAYOUT	(1) Welcome and Introduction
PRESENTERS	Daya Bragante, Pierre Failler
SESSION 2	<i>Valuing and Leveraging the Blue Potential—the Blue Economy Valuation Toolkit</i>
DURATION	3 hours and 30 minutes (09:30-13:00)
LAYOUT	(1) Presentations on the Blue Economy valuation toolkit (2) Q&As and moderated discussion (3) Conclusions & validation
PRESENTERS	Philippe Lallemand will make a presentation of 45 mns complemented by contributions of 3 country consultants from pilot countries (Zahra Omar Ahmed, Mads Knudsen and Stuart Laing) (15 mns each) <i>Moderator: Pierre Failler</i>
LUNCH BREAK	13:00-14:30
PART II	14:30-16:15
SESSION 3	<i>Youth advocacy and involvement in the Blue Economy</i>
DURATION	1 hour and 45 minutes (14:30-16:15)
LAYOUT	(1) Brief Address from Designated Minister of Fisheries and the Blue Economy (2) Seychelles Presentation (3) Q&As

PRESENTERS	Seychelles delegation: Designated Minister Jean-François Ferrari, Laurent Valentin, Pearl Bastienne, Gabriella Gonthier, Mario Desaubin and Jean-François Lephy <i>Moderator : Daya Bragante</i>
PART III	16:15-17:30
SESSION 4	<i>Valuing and Leveraging the Blue Potential–Blue Economy Satellite Accounts</i>
DURATION	<i>1 hour (16:15-17:15)</i>
LAYOUT	(1) BESA working paper presentation (2) Q&As (3) Conclusions
PRESENTERS	Raquel Frederick, Dindial Ramrattan
CLOSING	<i>Way forward and closing remarks</i>
DURATION	<i>15 minutes (17:15-17:30)</i> <i>Daya Bragante</i>

IV. Expected Outcomes

- i. Better understanding of the importance to value the Blue potential for informed policy development and implementation on the continent, and also as part of the post Covid 19 recovery process.
- ii. Recommendations towards strengthening of the Blue Economy valuation toolkit for an effective and efficient use and application.
- iii. Information sharing on Blue Economy satellite accounts as a key contribution to accounting systems at all levels.
- iv. Recommendations towards enhancing youth advocacy and involvement in the Blue Economy.

V. Participants

The AEGM session will be attended by representatives of the AUC, Eastern African member States, RECs, IGOs as well as Blue Economy experts. In attendance will also be representatives of the academia, the private sector, international institutions, youth groups and other relevant stakeholders involved in the Blue Economy.