

“ Warm welcome



Welcome to the first issue of Our Blue Future (OBF) newsletter. The newsletter highlights key development milestones of OBF as well as insightful events in the blue economy sector over the last quarter of 2024. The issue also features Inclusive and Sustainable Blue Economy interventions and solutions that are being developed and delivered by some of our OBF partners in collaboration with the relevant state and non-state actors including the coastal communities.

Robin Farrington
The Interim Head of the OBF Secretariat.

Growing together: Together we can do more

Our Blue Future is a public – private – civil society alliance that fosters a diverse network of impact-oriented partnerships, projects and champions for an inclusive and sustainable blue economy in the Western Indian Ocean region.

Since its initiation following the adoption of decision (COP 10/12/2c) at the 10th Nairobi Convention Conference of Parties, the multi-stakeholder initiative has grown rapidly from the initial 8 partners in 2021 to 28 partners currently. As part of the OBF development process, partners have put together interim governance arrangement systems and structures, including Preliminary Steering Team (PST); three Task teams (TTs) namely the TT1 for strategy and guidance, TT2 for communication and Outreach and TT3 for Monitoring & Evaluation support; Secretariat and Innovation Teams (ITs).

A total of five operational sector-specific multi-stakeholder innovation teams (ITs) are in place and functioning, namely Fisheries, coastal communities, blue tourism, blue finance and circular economy Innovation Teams.

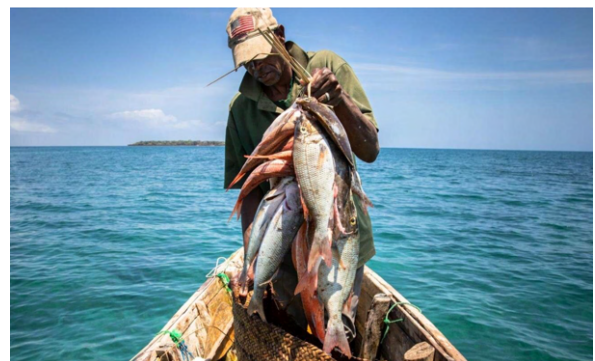
These are sector specific and inclusive stakeholder groups collaborating and fostering collective action for innovative Inclusive Sustainable Blue Economy (ISBE) solutions in the WIO region. **(Read more about these on the OBF website)**

CATALYZING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR LOCAL ACTION

Our Blue Future has continued to mobilize new partners to join the initiative while exploring project funding opportunities to support ISBE initiatives in the WIO region. GIZ is currently designing component 2 of the planned regional EU 'Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme' (SWIOP): facilitating investment in the sustainable blue economy.

OBF will leverage on the power of collective action to pool resources, provide cross-sector expertise, exchange ideas & knowledge for a transformative sustainable blue economy Sector in the region. Key impact areas under Our Blue Future initiative are advocating & supporting public policy implementation, increasing engagement of civil society and private sector in regional ocean governance, adoption and practice of SBE principles and leveraging investments into supporting SBE.

Read more



Coastal and marine ecosystems in the WIO are important for livelihoods Credit: Erica Pineros

HIGHLIGHTS & EVENTS



OBF partners in a strategic workshop in Nairobi

OBF PARTNERS STRATEGICALLY REPOSITIONING

Nineteen of Our Blue Future (OBF) partners convened at strategy workshop held in Nairobi, Kenya on 3rd and 4th September 2024 to reinforce their commitment to OBF and plan how to enhance its effectiveness and influence as the multistakeholder initiative for accelerating the transition to an inclusive and sustainable blue economy in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region.

Key strategic recommendations were drawn to shape the future of the initiative including developing a five-year strategy and an associated Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework, a communication strategy and digital collaboration platform and strengthening OBF's governance system. Further outcomes of the workshop can be found in the report.

THE NAIROBI CONVENTION MEMBER STATES ENDORSE DECISION TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING OBF

The Eleventh Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention (COP 11) themed 'Regional Collaboration for a Sustainable Blue Economy: Enhancing Ocean Governance in the Western Indian Ocean' was held on 20th – 22nd August 2024. Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative project and Our Blue Future Initiative were among the strategic Projects and Partnerships endorsed under Decision CP. 11. 16 to support operationalization of the Regional Ocean Governance Strategy. Further information about the outcome of the 11th COP can be found at [Nairobi convention website](#).



Tim Andrew of Nairobi Convention Secretariat making a statement during COP11 in Madagascar

OBF PARTNERS AT THE BLUE ECONOMY SUMMIT



The Blue economy summit held on 2nd – 4th October 2024 in Mombasa, Kenya brought together over 1200 participants from Government, startups and key stakeholders in the Blue Economy.

The event provided a platform for showcasing groundbreaking solutions in key sectors like Climate, Fisheries, Marine Conservation, and Renewable Energy. A number of startups got a platform to be matched with investors and opened the space for further stakeholders' collaboration to align on innovative solutions that can shape the future of our oceans.

A key highlight of the event was the official launch of Blue Economy DealBook that will source, prepare and match blue economy startups with matching investment opportunities. This initiative will be led by Sote Hub, East Africa Private Equity & Venture Capital Association (EAVCA), TechBridge Invest, Fie-Consult and Wildlife Conservation Society. GIZ was represented by three programs from different sectors of the Blue Economy and supported the event. In addition to the Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative (WIOGI), these were the Employment promotion for women for the green transformation in Africa (WE4D) and the SPARK program.

This provided a good opportunity to present GIZ's growing blue economy portfolio in the WIO region and to engage with key national and regional stakeholders / actors to explore synergies and cooperation potential against the backdrop of the common goal of promoting an ISBE with integrated solutions.

REDEFINING THE BLUE CARBON ECOSYSTEMS IN THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN

Policymakers, scientists, and community leaders from the WIO region, gathered for a three-day workshop from 22 to 24 October 2024, to align strategies for protecting the blue Carbon ecosystems (BCE) with global environmental goals. BCEs' exceptional carbon storage capacity positions them as key assets for climate finance, with mechanisms under the Paris Agreement offering pathways for monetizing their conservation through carbon credits. The WIO region holds untapped potential for BCE conservation that through innovative strategies could empower local communities, incentivize conservation, and ensure that benefits are shared equitably were emphasized.

The need for an integrated approach, cohesive policies that integrate BCEs into national blue economy strategies, connecting regional networks, fostering data-sharing platforms, and engaging the private sector in BCE conservation were among the key recommendations that could see unlocking BCEs' full potential. The workshop's outcomes included a proposed regional biodiversity framework and strategies for mobilizing sustainable financing. The workshop was convened by Nairobi Convention. Further insights from this workshop [here](#).



Dr. Obakeng, WIOMSA during the blue carbon ecosystems workshop in Zanzibar Credit: NCS

STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Separating BSF larvae from frass Credits: Photo taken at Chanzi BSF farm in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

BLACK SOLDIER FLY INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY IN WASTE MANAGEMENT.

Black Soldier Fly (BSF) technology is an innovative way to treat biodegradable waste streams. In the process of bioconversion (roughly 3 weeks) the larvae are transforming biowaste into protein and fats that are a nutritious feed for pigs, chicken and fish, while excreting frass that is a nutritious natural fertiliser. These outputs can replace the conventional imported animal feeds, including fishmeal that is currently extracted at a massive scale from oceans with its negative impact on marine wildlife. The frass applied on soil is fully absorbed and can replace synthetic fertilisers affecting the proliferation of coastal algae through runoff of excessive nutrients. The BSF industry is growing in the region, mainly in Kenya and Tanzania, and has a high potential of incentivizing improvements in waste management practices, that is a part of the larger circular economy development.

To know more get in touch with Piotr Barczak
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MSC LAUNCHES OCEAN STEWARDSHIP FUND

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) provides fisheries with an opportunity to benchmark and independently verify the environmental sustainability of their fishing operations, providing them a platform to demonstrate their role in a sustainable blue economy. Currently, in the Southwest Indian Ocean (SWIO) region there are five MSC certified fisheries targeting skipjack tuna and swordfish.

The recently launched **MSC Improvement Program** aims to extend this opportunity to fisheries in fishery improvement projects (FIPs), providing time bound independent verification of their progress in implementing environmental sustainability improvements and the possibility of using MSC's supply chain assurance mechanism.

The MSC's **Ocean Stewardship Fund (OSF)**, provides financial support to researchers and fisheries for important research and fishery improvements. In the SWIO region, the OSF is currently funding research into **protecting vulnerable species and habitats** and **marine mammal interactions** in the hake longline fishery operating off the south coast of South Africa, and **genetic testing to identify octopus species in a small-scale Madagascan fishery**.



Cretus Mtonga extracting DNA from octopus tissue. Credit: Debora Benjamen.

SUSTAINABLE SEAS TRUST LAUNCHES GUIDEBOOK TO HELP SOLVE AFRICA'S UNIQUE PLASTIC WASTE CRISIS

Africa faces a complex plastic waste crisis, despite consuming less plastic per capita than other regions. As the second-most polluted continent, many impoverished communities prioritize survival over environmental concerns, making comprehensive solutions challenging. Addressing this issue requires a collaborative effort from governments, businesses, and civil society, particularly in light of the Global Plastics Treaty, which mandates signatories to develop detailed action plans for managing plastic waste. However, the obligations may be burdensome for many African developing nations.

To support these efforts, the Sustainable Seas Trust has published the **Plastic-Free Seas Guidebook**, which offers tailored strategies for the African context in response to the Global Plastics Treaty.



The guidebook outlines necessary actions across the plastic value chain while emphasizing the importance of education, behaviour change, and fiscal incentives. Recognizing the diverse economic landscapes of African countries, it promotes regional collaborations as essential for effective waste management. This guidebook complements the more technical **African Resource Book Series: A Guide to Plastics**, aimed at industry professionals seeking in-depth information on plastic pollution and existing policies. Ultimately, solving this systemic issue relies on collective action, where decision-makers, researchers, and civil society unite to implement effective solutions informed by these locally developed resources.

THE MIAMBA YETU INVESTMENT PROGRAMME: SUSTAINABLE REEF INVESTMENTS

The Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR), the largest global blended finance vehicle, is designed to scale financial solutions and blue economic growth that bolsters the resilience of coral reefs and the communities that depend on them. The Miamba Yetu Investment Programme is one of the first Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) initiative being implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The programme is currently being implemented along the coastlines of Kenya and Tanzania - including the Zanzibar archipelago, by supporting businesses that directly or indirectly benefit coral reefs. The programme has developed a pipeline of bankable projects that will be considered for financing through an investment vehicle that will deliver sustainable finance for larger commercial projects whilst also incubating smaller-scale investments that economically benefit local people while directly contributing to conservation outcomes for reef systems. Target projects are on coastal tourism, Land-use management, Fisheries management, Waste management & Blue carbon.



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN “DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE” AND “INVESTMENT READINESS”

The SWIO Venture Builder developed and being delivered under the Our Blue Future is an inclusive, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder entity aiming to develop a pipeline of community-led, ecologically and financially sustainable “blue” enterprises across the SWIO seascape. The venture builder is expected to be gamechanger in supporting and scaling small-scale enterprises across WIO region, in areas most in need and to coastal communities with limited opportunities to develop in a sustainable way.

Ultimately, only businesses that are sustainable and align with the Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles will be eligible for inclusion in the SWIO Venture Builder’s portfolio of MSMEs. The venture builder is being coordinated by WWF with support of six regional partners and nine embedded local implementing partners. Further details can be found [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Name of Event	Theme/target objective	Date	Location	Organizers	Requirements
6th Ocean Innovation Africa Summit	Showcase African ocean-impact initiatives and brings together international changemakers for the growth of an equitable and sustainable ocean economy in Africa	24th - 28th February 2025	Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania	Ocean Hub Africa	Registration Link
2025 Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management Symposium	Applying the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management in ABNJ: Managing deep-sea fisheries and minimizing ecosystem impacts.	March 11-13, 2025	FAO Headquarters in Rome	NorthWest Atlantic Fisheries Organization in collaboration With FAO & ICES	Registration Link
AFRICA'S GREEN ECONOMY SUMMIT	Connect Global Capital and African Projects	19th-21st February 2025	Cape Town	VUKA group & E-Movement	Link
12th annual World Ocean Summit & Expo	Waves of change: healthy seas, sustainable growth	March 12th - 13th 2025	Tokyo, Japan		Link
Ocean Visions Biennial Summit 2025	Advancing Solutions for Ocean-Climate Restoration	March 25th-27th, 2025	Hyatt Regency, Vancouver, British Columbia	Ocean Visions	Link
The Blue Food Innovation Summit	Connecting a dynamic network of over 300 aquaculture and blue food pioneers scaling innovation and investment in the blue economy	April 8th-9th, 2025	London		Link
Prosper Blue Summit	Catalysing an Inclusive and Sustainable Blue Economy to Support Conservation of the Western Indian Ocean	29th and 30th April, 2025	Nairobi, Kenya	WIOGI GIZ	



CALL TO FEATURE ON NEWSLETTER

You have relevant information regarding Inclusive Sustainable Blue Economy with focus on regional or national interventions in Southwest Indian Ocean region ?

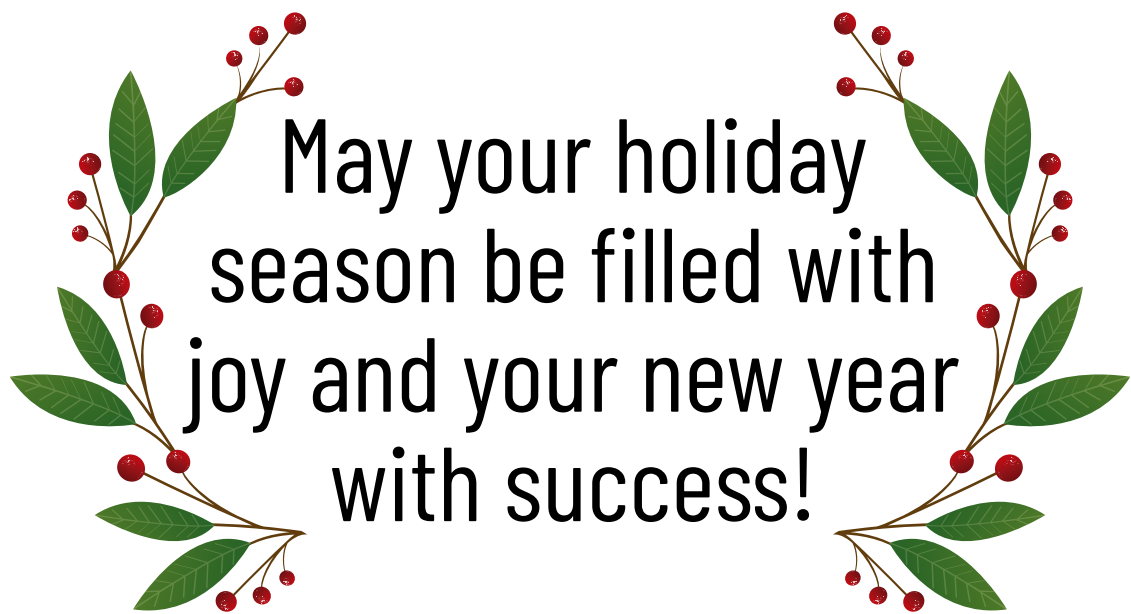
We would be happy to share your content in the upcoming issue, please contact us via nancy.mungai@giz.de or rose.machaku@giz.de

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The production of this newsletter was made by the technical and financial support of GIZ WIOGI programme and the OBF Secretariat. The contribution of articles from the OBF partners and the review of this first edition is highly commendable. We would like to appreciate Carol, Yvonne, Nana and Edward for their contribution to the work that has been highlighted in this newsletter.

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May your holiday
season be filled with
joy and your new year
with success!

