



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 31-Jan-2025 | Report No: PIDDC01195

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Project Beneficiary(ies)	Operation ID P509153	Operation Name West Africa Coastal Areas Blue Economy and Resilience Multi-Phased Program	
Region	Estimated Appraisal Date 29-Sep-2025	Estimated Approval Date 04-Dec-2025	Practice Area (Lead) Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing (IPF)	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance	Implementing Agency Ministry of Fisheries and Port Infrastructures , Ministry of Environment and Transport	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

Develop and strengthen the resilience of select areas of the West African coast.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**Maximizing Finance for Development**

Is this an MFD-Enabling Project (MFD-EP)? No

Is this project Private Capital Enabling (PCE)? No

SUMMARY

Total Operation Cost	360.00
Total Financing	360.00
of which IBRD/IDA	360.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS**World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	360.00
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IDA Credit	360.00
Environmental and Social Risk Classification	Concept Review Decision
High	The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context



1. **This document outlines the proposed concept for the West Africa Coastal Areas Blue Economy and Resilience Program (WACA+), which aims to stabilize and restore coastlines and promote the development of the blue economy across West Africa by building on the success of the ongoing West Africa Coastal Areas Management Program (WACA).**¹ WACA+ is a regional World Bank initiative leveraging a Multi-Phase Programmatic Approach (MPA) to sustain and enhance regional platforms for coordinated and scalable solutions. WACA+ will build on the ongoing WACA program and its established partnerships (see box 1) to advance coastal development and protection, aimed at fostering the blue economy and creating jobs in West Africa. Complementing these efforts, WACA+ will emphasize regional integration, driving knowledge exchange and collaboration to strengthen and amplify national initiatives. Designed with flexibility in mind, WACA+ provides participating countries with a tailored menu of activities to align with their specific needs and priorities.

Box 1. Achieved Outcomes of the WACA Program

Launched in 2018, the WACA Program has been instrumental in tackling coastal degradation, flooding, erosion, and pollution across West Africa while fostering regional integration and collaboration in the blue economy. WACA focuses on building climate-resilient coastal communities by enhancing coastal resilience, protecting ecosystems, and improving livelihoods, laying the groundwork for sustainable blue economy growth. The program has been targeting 17 countries in West Africa, with operations in Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and São Tomé and Príncipe, with knowledge-sharing initiatives across all countries.

Key Achievements (2018–2024):

- ✓ 13,876 households with reduced exposure to coastal erosion (target: 17,188 by 2026).
- ✓ 17,242 households with reduced exposure to flooding (target: 73,210 by 2026).
- ✓ 5,946 households with reduced exposure to pollution (target: 8,158 by 2026).
- ✓ 28,215 hectares of ecosystems protected or restored (target: 31,808 by 2026).
- ✓ 10,958 jobs created, exceeding the original target of 7,782.
- ✓ 1,385 hectares of coastal areas safeguarded with flood control (target: 26,060 ha by 2026).
- ✓ 60 percent of livelihood beneficiaries were women, emphasizing inclusivity.
- ✓ 64 km of shoreline protected with erosion control measures (target: 90 km by 2026).

Partnership and Collaboration: WACA benefits from co-financing by donor partners like the Nordic Development Fund (NDF), Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM), Invest International (Netherlands), and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), as well as support from institutions in France, the Netherlands, and Japan. Regional institutions, including the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the West Africa Coastal Observatory (CSE), play key roles in capacity building.

Capacity building and private sector engagement:

- ✓ The Africa Center of Excellence for Coastal Resilience (ACECoR), a PforR led by the World Bank Education GP.
- ✓ The Sustainable Ports Partnership (SPP) by the World Bank's Transport Global Practice and the Port Management Association of West & Central Africa.

WACA's achievements set a strong foundation for expanding its impact through future initiatives like WACA+.

¹ The WACA program includes the West Africa Coastal Areas Resilience Investment Project (162337), West Africa Coastal Areas Resilience Investment Project 2 (P175525) and the West Africa Coastal Areas High-Level Platform (P166218).



Based on consultations and analytical work, this document presents the program concept and proposed interventions for its first phase.

A. Regional Context

2. **The West African coast is a dynamic hub, hosting approximately one third of its total population and contributing 56 percent of its GDP.**² Stretching across 17 countries, from Mauritania to Gabon, including São Tomé and Príncipe, it was home to over 360 million people by 2023. Despite their diversity, these nations share commonalities: dense coastal infrastructure, concentrated populations, and economic activity, fueling rapid urbanization and an average population growth rate of 2.2 percent between 2019 and 2023. The population is predominantly young, with over 39 percent of individuals aged 0-14 years in 2023.³ These demographic trends underscore the need for sustainable development strategies toward creating economic opportunities for this expanding and youthful population while addressing the increased pressures on fragile coastal ecosystems.

3. **West Africa's coastal economies grew at an average annual rate of 3 percent between 2019 and 2023, yet this growth has not generated sufficient jobs or significantly reduced poverty.**⁴ Agriculture, fisheries, and forestry accounted for over 20 percent of GDP and employed 35 percent of the workforce in 2023.⁵ Despite economic gains, poverty remains widespread, with 106.8 million people in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) living on less than \$2.15 per day in 2019.⁶⁷ Job-growth in the region has not been able to keep pace with rapid population growth and a youthful demographic, as reflected in the low employment-to-population ratio of 32 percent for those aged 15-24 in Western and Central Africa.⁸

4. **Women in West Africa face significant barriers to full labor force participation, often relegated to insecure, low-paying jobs.**⁹ In 2023, only 50 percent of women over 15 were in the labor force, with rates ranging from 26 percent in Mauritania to 76 percent in Liberia. Most women work in agriculture, a sector highly vulnerable to climate shocks, further exacerbating their challenges. Part-time employment is common, with 45.1 percent of women in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)'s private sector working part-time.¹⁰ Closing gender gaps could significantly boost growth; the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates gender equality could increase WAEMU's GDP by 8 percent over a decade and raise per capita growth by 1.7 percent. For example, in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, eliminating labor market gender disparities could raise GDP by 17 percent and 11 percent, respectively.¹¹ Addressing gender inequality is critical for inclusive growth and resilience in West Africa.

² World Bank, A partnership for saving West Africa's Coastal Areas (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2016).

³ World Bank, World Development Indicators (2024), produced and distributed by the World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

⁴ World Bank, World Development Indicators (2024), produced and distributed by the World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

⁵ World Bank, World Development Indicators (2024), produced and distributed by the World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

⁶ The Institute for Security Studies (ISS), ISS African Futures ECOWAS: Geographic Futures (Pretoria: ISS African Futures, June 30th, 2024).

⁷ There is however a large regional spread. With countries such as Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Togo, and Sierra Leone having ¼ of their populations living below the poverty line, and Cabo Verde holding the lowest number of people living in poverty at around 3.4%. (Ibid.)

⁸ World Bank, World Development Indicators (2024), produced and distributed by the World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

⁹ African Development Bank (AfDB), Labor Markets and Jobs in West Africa (Abidjan: AfDB, 2018).

¹⁰ WAEMU, Les femmes et les hommes dans les pays de l'UEMOA: LIVRET GENRE 2024 (Ouagadougou: WAEMU, 2024)

¹¹ International Monetary Fund (IMF), Gender Inequality in the WAEMU: Current Situation and Opportunities (Washington D.C.: IMF, 2024).



5. **The West African coast faces severe environmental and economic threats from human activities and climate change, costing the region an estimated \$3.8 billion annually, or 5 percent of GDP.**¹² Rising sea levels, intensified storm surges, changing rainfall patterns, and rising temperatures degrade ecosystems by accelerating coastal erosion, altering river flows, and increasing salinity in estuaries and groundwater. These impacts are worsened by human pressures, including resource overuse, habitat loss, excessive freshwater extraction, and poor waste management. In 2017, these stressors cost Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Togo \$3.8 billion, or 5 percent of combined GDP.¹³ Plastic pollution worsens the burden, with 7.9 million tons consumed in 2021 across 17 countries, projected to rise to 12 million tons by 2025. Poor urban planning and mismanaged waste heighten vulnerabilities and socioeconomic inequality.

6. **Climate change is also driving migration**, with the World Bank projecting 32 million internally displaced people in West Africa by 2050 due to coastal erosion and flooding.¹⁴ Women, often reliant on subsistence farming and natural resources, face unique challenges, including limited access to inputs, heightened poverty, and increased exposure to gender-based violence. Climate-induced resource scarcity exacerbates inequality and hinders women's socioeconomic progress in the region.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

7. **The blue economy is a critical driver of West Africa's coastal development, with sectors such as tourism, fisheries, and maritime trade forming the backbone of economic growth and job creation (see box 2).** In 2018, coastal tourism contributed US\$80 billion (around 3.4 percent of total GDP) and around 24 million jobs in 2018 for all of Africa. In West Africa, coastal tourism accounted for 4.8 percent of GDP, above the regional average, highlighting its regional importance. By 2030, the blue economy sector is estimated to generate \$405 billion annually across all of Africa, with an estimated US\$100 billion of this generated by coastal tourism for Africa as a whole.¹⁵ West Africa is uniquely positioned to benefit from this strong coastal tourism growth, with rich cultural and natural heritage—including UNESCO World Heritage sites and numerous protected areas. Fisheries are equally vital to the West African blue economy, supporting approximately 9 million livelihoods in the ECOWAS region¹⁶ with women playing key roles in fish processing and trade. Fish is a crucial source of protein, representing up to two-thirds of

Box 2. The Blue Economy approach is defined as “the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and job creation while preserving the health of ocean ecosystems. Specifically, the Blue Economy requires that the development of individual oceanic sectors be pursued in an integrated fashion, and with a view to managing their impacts on ocean health. The Blue Economy aims to align economic development opportunities with ocean health to foster low-carbon, resource-efficient growth that creates jobs and reduces poverty. It recognizes the triple bottom-line objectives of financial, social, and environmental sustainability. This challenge is made even greater by the fact that, contrary to land-based activities, oceanic sectors operate mostly in public goods setting, where user rights and property rights are not clearly defined, which leads to many instances of the Tragedy of the Commons”.

Source: World Bank (2021). Riding the Blue Wave: Applying the Blue Economy Approach to World Bank Operations. Washington, D.C.: World Bank

¹² World Bank, THE COST OF COASTAL ZONE DEGRADATION IN WEST AFRICA: BENIN, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, SENEGAL AND TOGO (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2019).

¹³ (Ibid.)

¹⁴ World Bank, GROUNDSWELL AFRICA INTERNAL CLIMATE MIGRATION IN WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2021)

¹⁵ World Bank, Operational Brief Blue Economy in Africa: a Synthesis, (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2022)

¹⁶ Economic Community of West Africa Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP), Fisheries and Aquaculture (Abuja: ECOWAP, 2024). <https://ecowap.ecowas.int/ecowap-sector/7>



animal protein consumed in many West African ¹⁷ The fisheries sector also contributes significantly to food security and the sustainability of local economies. Ports and maritime trade further emphasize the importance of the blue economy. Over 90 percent of the region's trade by volume is handled by West African ports, which serve as gateways to global markets. They provide essential infrastructure for industries such as oil and gas, agriculture, and manufacturing. Developing efficient and sustainable port infrastructure is vital for boosting trade competitiveness, reducing supply chain costs, and fostering economic diversification. Ports also generate significant employment opportunities, contributing to regional integration and socioeconomic development.

8. **Despite the blue economy's immense potential, several systemic barriers hinder its sustainable development across key sectors such as tourism, fisheries, and maritime trade.** The region's job-generating potential remains largely untapped, with much of the workforce engaged in informal employment. In West Africa, approximately 6 million people enter the labor market annually, but only about half a million jobs are created, pushing many into low-quality, insecure informal work.¹⁸ Informality affects 92 percent of jobs,¹⁹ with 60 percent of employers operating informally, including 49 percent of larger firms. Women and youth are disproportionately impacted, often facing unstable incomes and limited opportunities for career advancement. In the tourism sector, inadequate infrastructure, limited local training, and insufficient capacity to manage sustainable tourism practices pose significant barriers to growth. These challenges prevent the sector from realizing its full potential as a major driver of economic development. In fisheries, the processing sector, which is predominantly female, faces persistent issues such as low wages, poor working conditions, and inadequate access to technology and resources. The lack of formal market access and modern techniques limits the sector's ability to expand sustainably. Similarly, aquaculture, struggles with a lack of financing, technical capacity, and poor market access, especially for small-scale producers. Meanwhile, maritime trade is hindered by outdated port infrastructure, inefficiencies in logistical operations, and inadequate regulatory frameworks, which contribute to higher transaction costs and reduced competitiveness. Addressing these barriers is critical to unlocking the full potential of the blue economy. By investing in infrastructure, improving access to finance, fostering cross-border partnerships, and strengthening local capacity, the region can transform these sectors into sustainable engines of growth. The integration of women and youth into value chains and the promotion of innovative business models will further enhance resilience and drive equitable development.

9. **The sustainable use and management of "blue capital"—marine resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity—are crucial for the long-term viability of the blue economy.** However, West Africa's blue capital is increasingly threatened by human activities. Overfishing, pollution, coastal development, and unsustainable tourism practices are among the primary pressures facing marine ecosystems. Depleted fish stocks, plastic pollution and habitat destruction undermine biodiversity and degrade ecosystems, leading to reduced productivity and threatening local livelihoods that depend on these resources. Climate change compounds these human-induced challenges, amplifying the risks to blue capital. Rising sea levels, more frequent and intense storms, and increasing ocean temperatures are disrupting coastal ecosystems and fisheries. Ocean acidification further exacerbates the stress on marine life, particularly coral reefs and shellfish, which are vital to local economies and food security. These compounded pressures weaken the resilience of coastal ecosystems, jeopardizing their ability to provide essential services and sustain livelihoods. If these challenges are not addressed, they could undermine the long-term sustainability of the blue economy. The degradation of natural capital will limit job creation, reduce economic diversification, and increase vulnerability to environmental and economic shocks, particularly in coastal communities that depend on marine resources for their livelihoods. Protecting and managing blue capital in the

¹⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Coastal Fisheries Initiative: Promoting sustainable fisheries in coastal areas (Rome: FAO, 2021)

¹⁸ World Bank, How the private sector can create jobs and drive development in Western and Central Africa (Washington D.C.: World Bank, July 2024).

¹⁹ World Bank, OPERATIONAL BRIEF Jobs and Livelihoods in the Blue Economy: BLUE ECONOMY FOR RESILIENT AFRICA PROGRAM (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2022).



face of both human pressures and climate change is essential to safeguarding the region's development prospects and ensuring the resilience of its coastal economies.

10. **Coastal erosion is one of the most pressing environmental challenges in West Africa.** Driven by both natural processes and human activities—such as river damming, port construction, and urban expansion—coastal erosion accelerates land loss and disrupts sediment flows. Rapid urbanization and population growth further exacerbate these pressures, putting additional strain on ecosystems and infrastructure. In countries like Togo and Benin, erosion rates are among the highest in the Gulf of Guinea. Despite their relatively short coastlines—124 kilometers in Benin and 55 kilometers in Togo—these areas are facing erosion of up to 30 meters annually, with frequent flooding. In 2017, erosion cost 2.5 percent of GDP in Benin and 6.4 percent in Togo, with Togo losing US\$71.2 million worth of land in 2022 alone. Climate change is intensifying these risks, with rising sea levels, more frequent storms, and heightened flooding threatening coastal communities and economies. Therefore, it is critical to invest in sustainable coastal management practices that protect ecosystems and improve resilience against these growing challenges.

11. **The governance of marine and coastal resources in West Africa remains fragmented, with many countries lacking the capacity to enforce regulations effectively.** The lack of effective marine spatial planning (MSP) and integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) frameworks exacerbates the challenges in sustainable resource management. These tools are crucial for balancing competing interests and ensuring equitable resource use. However, existing MSP and ICZM plans are often inadequate or poorly implemented, and there is a lack of regional coordination. Establishing harmonized MSP and ICZM frameworks is essential for better resource management, preventing conflicts, and promoting cross-border cooperation. The WACA program has supported the development of MSP and ICZM frameworks in several West African countries, including Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo. The operationalization of these frameworks is vital to ensuring that sectors like coastal tourism and maritime transport can thrive while maintaining the integrity of marine ecosystems. The development and enhancement of marine protected areas (MPAs) are vital for preserving West Africa's coastal biodiversity and combating resource overuse. While 141 MPAs exist across the region according to a 2022 assessment by the IUCN, only a few countries, namely Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, The Gambia, and Guinea, have designated over 1 percent of their EEZs as MPAs, far short of the 10 percent target set by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Existing MPAs face challenges such as limited focus on issues like erosion, pollution, and climate change, and regional coordination remains weak, highlighting the need for stronger measures and regional cooperation to enhance ecosystem resilience.²⁰

12. **Given the transboundary nature of coastal erosion, marine governance, pollution, and resource management, regional collaboration is essential for addressing these challenges effectively.** Coastal ecosystems, and most marine resources do not respect national borders, making coordinated regional efforts crucial for reducing transaction costs and efficiently managing shared resources. Under the original WACA program, Togo and Benin implemented joint coastal protection works along 41 kilometers of coastline, reducing erosion and flooding risks for 27,000 households.²¹ Such collaborative efforts are vital in addressing common challenges, especially those related to sediment movement and climate impacts, which span national boundaries. Regional institutions—such as WAEMU, ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Abidjan Convention, and the Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE)—play a critical role in coordinating efforts to address these challenges. By working together, these organizations provide holistic solutions that span economic, environmental, financial, and policy domains. Collaboration among regional bodies like the Port Management Association of West and Central Africa (PMAWCA) and the Africa Center of Excellence for Coastal

²⁰ International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), State of West African marine protected areas 2022 (Gland: IUCN, 2024).

²¹ World Bank, WACA Impact Stories: Cross Border Investment (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2024).



Resilience (ACECoR) further supports capacity building and the promotion of best practices. Strengthening regional cooperation and improving governance frameworks will ensure the coordinated development of West Africa's blue economy, and resilience across the region. By tackling these challenges through regional collaboration and sharing of sustainable management practices, West Africa can build a path towards long-term prosperity and resilience for coastal communities.

Relationship to Regional Strategies

13. **WACA+ is strategically aligned with regional priorities and goals.** The program supports the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063²² and Blue Economy Strategy,²³ advancing a vision for a prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive Africa. It fosters growth in ocean-based sectors, including fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and resilient port infrastructure, while promoting strong governance and private sector participation. The program also aligns with ECOWAS Vision 2050²⁴ and its Regional Climate Strategy (RCS)²⁵, enhancing climate resilience and supporting sustainable development to build a peaceful and prosperous West African community. Additionally, WACA+ complements the Blue Belt Initiative's (BBI)²⁶ call for long-term funding frameworks and adaptive, country-specific programs, positioning itself as a critical tool for addressing regional blue economy challenges.

14. **WACA+ embodies the World Bank Group's mission of "ending poverty on a livable planet" by promoting sustainable blue economy development, fostering private sector job-growth while building resilience to climate change and safeguarding marine blue capital.** By leveraging its Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA), WACA+ achieves scale and impact while fostering collaboration and innovation to tackle complex regional challenges. Aligned with key frameworks such as the Blue Economy Development Framework (BEDF), the Africa Climate Business Plan (ACBP), the Climate Change Action Plan (2021–2025), and the Regional Integration and Cooperation Assistance Strategy (RICAS), the program supports climate resilience and improved governance. It also advances the WBG Gender Strategy (FY24–30) by creating economic opportunities for women and youth, promoting leadership roles, and ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth across West Africa.

15. **WACA+ adheres to the Maximizing Finance for Development (MFD) principles, while supporting policy harmonization across WAEMU countries.** By mobilizing private capital and enhancing market conditions, the program supports private sector growth through technical assistance, mentoring, and investment initiatives aligned with the World Bank's Private Capital Mobilization (PCM) and Private Capital Enabling (PCE) agendas.

16. **At the national level, WACA+ aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Country Climate Development Reports (CCDRs).** WACA+ directly supports SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and is closely aligned with CPF priorities in Benin and Mauritania, reflecting its integration with national development goals. In Benin, the program supports CPF Focus Area 3 "building

²² African Union (AU), *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (Addis Ababa: AU, 2015)

²³ African Union (AU), *Africa Blue Economy Strategy* (Addis Ababa: AU, 2020)

²⁴ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), *ECOWAS VISION 2050 "ECOWAS of the Peoples: Peace and Prosperity for All"* (Abuja: ECOWAS, 2022)

²⁵ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), *ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy (RCS) and Action Plan (2022-2030)* (Abuja: ECOWAS, 2022)

²⁶ The Blue Belt Initiative (BBI), launched by Morocco at COP22 in 2016, promotes sustainable ocean management in fishing and aquaculture, fostering innovation, funding, and collaboration to preserve ecosystems, grow the blue economy, and position Africa as a global ocean conservation leader, with the World Bank and PROBLUE as key partners.



resilience to economic and climate shocks” by addressing coastal erosion, pollution, and flooding, including investments in nature-based solutions such as mangrove restoration, and promoting climate-resilient income generating activities for livelihood improvement. It also promotes blue economy opportunities, including ecotourism and fisheries, while strengthening governance capacity in the sector. In Mauritania, WACA+ aligns with CPF Focus Areas 1 and 3, focusing on climate resilience and sustainable economic growth by improving fisheries governance, infrastructure, and restoring marine ecosystems to support inclusive and resilient economic growth. These efforts ensure that WACA+ is firmly embedded in national priorities, driving sustainable and inclusive growth. The program is also aligned with relevant NDCs and leverages findings from relating CCDRs.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

17. **The proposed Program Development Objective (PrDO) of WACA+ is to develop and strengthen the resilience of select areas of the West African coast. The proposed PrDO-level indicators seek to capture the breadth of the blue economy, providing measurable impact for jobs, private sector financing, restored and protected ecosystems, and improved climate resilience.** The PDO-level indicators aim to provide comprehensive and comparable measures of progress in coastal development and protection across West-African coastal states, while ensuring the measurability of benefits for women and youth. The indicators will be designed to contribute to the WBG “scorecard”, ensuring comparability across participating countries. The proposed PDO indicators are:

- a) Blue Jobs: New or Better Jobs (Number, %Women, %Youth) (Scorecard)
- b) Blue Investment: Private capital mobilized (sum USD) (%Women-owned enterprise) (Scorecard)
- c) Ecosystems: Area under Enhanced Conservation and Management (Hectares Terrestrial and Aquatic) (Scorecard)
- d) Climate: People with Enhanced Resilience to Climate Risks (Number, %Women, %Youth) (Scorecard)
- e) People benefiting from actions to advance gender equality, and the number benefitting from actions that expand and enable economic opportunities (total people) (Scorecard)
- f) Total private capital enabled (sum USD) (Scorecard)

18. **A detailed results monitoring framework will be developed during MPA preparation.** All phases under the proposed framework will cumulatively contribute to the PrDO. During the preparation of the program, specific results indicators will be constructed for each component. These program components will be developed as a shared “menu” of indicators for the program, from which relevant indicators may be selected by a country. This will aid the program in ensuring cross-country comparability in monitoring efforts. To ensure that indicators and progress are sufficient, rigorous impact evaluations will be explored (at midpoint and endpoint of the program) to assess the impact of specific interventions.

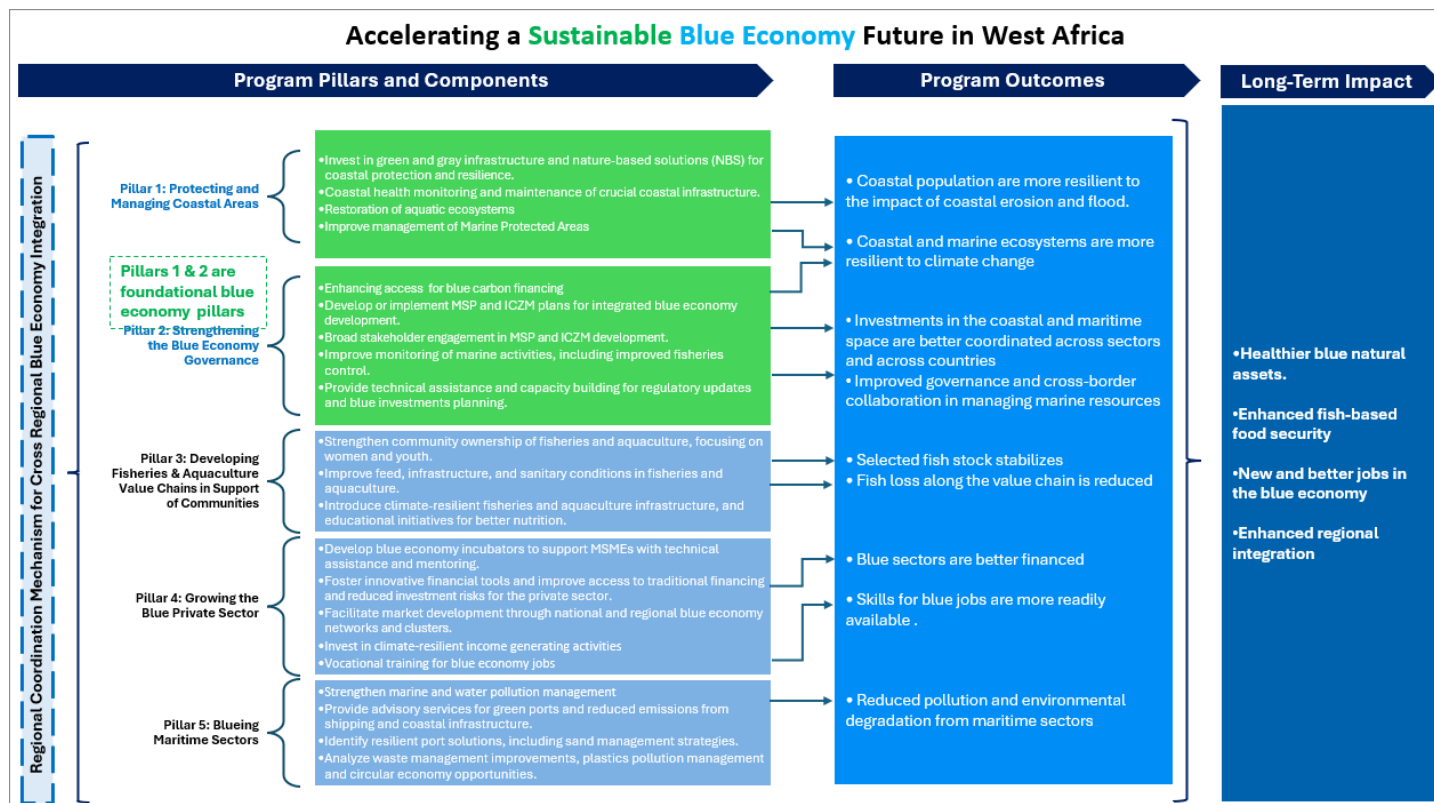
Key Results (From PCN)

19. **The achievement of WACA+ outcomes and long-term impacts will be facilitated by the One World Bank delivery and strengthened regional coordination.** The program aims to improve the health and resilience of coastal and marine natural assets by investing in green and grey infrastructure and nature-based solutions (NBS) for coastal and marine protection and resilience, restoring aquatic ecosystems, and improving the management and monitoring of marine and coastal assets. To achieve greater fish-based food security, the program will improve the sustainability of fisheries management, develop aquaculture, reduce post-harvest losses of fish food and increase the availability of fish. To create



new and better jobs in the blue economy, the program will facilitate the financing of blue enterprises and improve skills. The following graphic details the results chain in detail.

Figure 1. WACA+ Results Chain



D. Concept Description

20. **The proposed WACA+ will be implemented in close collaboration with IFC and MIGA, building on the foundations of the current WACA program.** Designed with flexibility in mind, the program offers countries a tailored menu of activities that align with their specific needs and priorities, organized across three components: (i) Strengthening governance and institutions; (ii) facilitating coastal development; and (iii) strengthening coastal resilience. These components provide a comprehensive framework to enhance national institutions, promote regional integration, and support the sustainable development and protection of West Africa's coast. By addressing the diverse challenges and opportunities within ocean-based sectors, WACA+ aims to foster the growth of the blue economy across the region:

21. **Component 1 – Strengthening Governance and Institutions:** This component aims to establish strong governance frameworks and enhance institutional capacity to support blue economy growth and environmental sustainability. It will focus on both regional integration and strengthening national governance for effective coastal development and protection management:

- a) **Sub-component 1.1 – Regional:** This sub-component aims to strengthen regional integration, governance, and knowledge exchange by building on and expanding the collaborative network established through the WACA program. It promotes cross-country cooperation to tackle shared challenges and seize opportunities for climate resilience and sustainable blue economy growth. Key activities include: (i) harmonizing policies, governance



frameworks, and strategies for coastal development, resilience, and sustainability to foster a robust blue economy; (ii) providing capacity building, technical assistance, training, and knowledge sharing to address transboundary coastal and marine challenges. A primary focus is identifying and addressing training and skills gaps in emerging blue economy sectors, aligning national education systems with the evolving job market to build a workforce capable of sustaining long-term growth. This will involve close collaboration with the Africa Centre of Excellence in Coastal Resilience (ACECoR), a regional institution dedicated to enhancing resilience to climate change and promoting sustainable coastal development in Africa. ACECoR supports research, knowledge sharing, and capacity building in coastal resilience, focusing on issues such as coastal erosion, ecosystem degradation, and climate adaptation in vulnerable regions. Additionally, the sub-component will leverage the network of regional institutions that have been engaged under the ongoing WACA program to support collaborative planning and the implementation of activities, ensuring a coordinated approach to shared coastal and marine challenges. Through strengthened partnerships with ACECoR, the Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Areas (PRCM), and other relevant regional institutions, the program will facilitate regional capacity building, knowledge sharing, and learning. It will also continue and expand dialogue with financial partners as part of the Regional Investments Action Plan (PARSI) and the Regional Strategy for Financial Resources Mobilization, to secure funding for key regional initiatives. Through these collaborations, the program ensures that governance and economic development are inclusive and gender-responsive, ultimately strengthening coastal development and resilience. Building on the WACA program's existing structures, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) will coordinate this network of relevant organizations, enhancing connectivity between countries and driving regional collaboration to improve coastal development and resilience.

- b) **Sub-component 1.2 – National:** This sub-component focuses on strengthening national governance frameworks and institutional capacity to support sustainable coastal development and effective coastal protection. It will prioritize the development of governance tools such as Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) to help manage resources, prevent overexploitation, and reduce illegal activities, while ensuring policy coherence across sectors. These tools will help improve both coastal protection and sustainable development by creating the conditions for more integrated and coordinated management. The sub-component will also support the development of Blue Economy Country Engagement Roadmaps to guide national policies and enhance engagement with blue economy opportunities. Gender equality will be a central focus, promoting greater participation of women in maritime governance and resource management. Further, partnerships with universities, research centers, and technical institutions will be encouraged to improve national capacities in blue economy planning, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the skills needed to meet the sector's demands. Finally, the sub-component will integrate blue carbon restoration efforts and align them with national policies, ensuring that coastal protection measures, such as restoring mangroves or other natural buffers, are incorporated into broader governance strategies. By developing knowledge products and advisory services, this component will support sustainable coastal infrastructure, addressing both development and protection needs with an emphasis on climate resilience and environmental sustainability.

22. **Component 2 – Facilitating Coastal Development:** This component aims to drive private sector-led growth and job creation in ocean-based sectors, with a strong emphasis on strengthening micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and promoting inclusivity for women and youth. Key activities include: (i) supporting the development of sustainable, climate-resilient and enabling infrastructure, (ii) providing technical expertise and mentorship, and (iii) facilitating access to finance through both traditional instruments (such as loans, guarantees, and financial intermediaries) and innovative financing mechanisms. Priority sectors include coastal tourism, fisheries and



aquaculture, and waste management, particularly plastics. Activities related to plastics recycling will be aligned with the ongoing Programmatic ASA for Western and Central Africa: Blue and Circular Economy Development, which enhances regional and national capacity for circular economy initiatives in blue sectors. Additionally, the component will support vocational training programs to align skills with market needs, further promoting blue economy growth. WACA+ will foster the creation of blue economy clusters along the coast, bringing together universities and research institutions to advance the commercialization of innovations and research. Community groups will benefit from revolving funds aimed at supporting climate-resilient livelihoods. A key focus will be on promoting women's leadership and ensuring equitable financial and market access for women- and youth-led enterprises.

23. Component 3 – Enhancing Coastal Resilience: This component is a critical element of the WACA+ program, focusing on stabilizing coastlines, safeguarding coastal communities, and ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of coastal ecosystems. Given the significant environmental and economic challenges posed by coastal erosion, flooding, and climate vulnerability—particularly for communities that are heavily reliant on natural resources—this component seeks to enhance resilience through a combination of hard and soft infrastructure investments. Key activities include: (i) supporting physical protection infrastructure solutions, such as seawalls, groynes, beach nourishment, dune restoration and management, and flood barriers; (ii) promoting and implementing natural and nature-based solutions, including mangrove restoration, seagrass bed and coastal wetland restoration, coral reef protection, and sand bypass schemes to maintain natural sediment flow; (iii) strengthening monitoring, data collection, and early warning systems; and iv) advancing climate change adaptation by developing strategies for coastal communities and enhancing carbon sequestration through coastal ecosystems. These interventions will be tailored to local needs and contexts, with the aim of stabilizing coastlines, restoring sediment flows, and protecting vital marine ecosystems. The sustainable management of marine protected areas will be achieved through structuring sustainable financing solutions for the management of protected areas, preparation and/or update of management plan, and infrastructure. Reducing pollution and promoting sustainable practices in key sectors like fisheries, tourism, and port development are essential for the long-term health of coastal and marine resources. These efforts will align closely with national and regional climate strategies. By combining targeted infrastructure investments with pollution reduction and blue carbon conservation, this component will play a vital role in enhancing the resilience of coastal communities and safeguarding the region's blue economy against the compounded threats of climate change and human activities.

24. WACA+ consists of different phases under the MPA with participating countries leveraging support from several components at the same time. Two phases are foreseen under WACA+ with the participating countries to be selected based on a set of selection criteria that include (i) strong government commitment toward developing the relevant country's blue economy; (ii) high potential for job creation, especially for women and youth; (iii) level of urgency toward addressing key issues; and (iv) satisfactory performance in previous WACA or similar projects.

25. The proposed Phase 1 of the WACA+ Program integrates activities across the different components outlined in the program framework, fostering the blue economy and strengthening coastal resilience in Benin and Mauritania, while strengthening national institutions and regional integration. To ensure efficient implementation, project activities are grouped into four components, closely aligned with the program framework (see also Figure 3): (i) Component 1 – Strengthening Governance and Institutions, (ii) Component 2 – Facilitating Coastal Development, (iii) Strengthening Coastal Resilience, and iv) National Project Management.

Component 1: Strengthening Governance and Institutions (Benin, Mauritania)

26. Sub-component 1.1 – Regional: This sub-component builds on the regional coordination, integration, and knowledge-sharing objectives outlined in the program description. It will actively engage Benin and Mauritania in key



regional and transboundary activities aimed at enhancing coastal governance, resilience, and sustainable blue economy growth. Key activities include: (i) harmonizing policies, governance frameworks, and strategies for coastal development, resilience, and sustainability to support a robust blue economy across the region; (ii) providing capacity-building, technical assistance, training, and knowledge sharing to address transboundary coastal and marine challenges, including issues such as coastal erosion, marine pollution, and biodiversity loss.

27. In addition, for Benin, the sub-component will strengthen transboundary cooperation with neighboring Togo for the management of shared marine protected areas and coastal ecosystems. Key activities will focus on reinforcing the institutional framework for joint implementation, leveraging existing regional mechanisms such as the Mono Basin Authority and the Mono Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. Efforts will also be made to address marine pollution, particularly targeting pollutant discharges from industrial activities such as the Kpémé phosphate plant in Togo. These initiatives will be coordinated through regional institutions to ensure collaborative, cross-border action that addresses environmental risks and fosters sustainable development. In Mauritania, this sub-component will support transboundary coastal and marine management efforts, with a focus on the Senegal River Delta Transboundary Reserve, which spans across both Mauritania and Senegal. This initiative will promote collaborative management of shared ecosystems and coastline, ensuring the effective protection of critical habitats, such as wetlands and mangroves, and addressing shared environmental threats, such as pollution and overfishing. Specific activities will include strengthening institutional coordination between Mauritania and Senegal to manage the Senegal River Delta and its associated marine ecosystems, as well as ensuring integrated management for sustainable development and climate resilience.

28. Through these activities, the sub-component will ensure inclusive, gender-responsive approaches to governance and economic development while strengthening regional cooperation to address shared challenges and advance coastal development and resilience across West Africa. By building on the WACA program's existing network of institutions and partnerships, the sub-component will enhance cross-country cooperation, particularly in managing shared marine ecosystems and promoting sustainable coastal management practices.

29. **Sub-component 1.2 – National:** This sub-component aims to enhance national governance frameworks and institutional capacity to support sustainable coastal development and bolster coastal resilience.

30. In Benin, the sub-component will enhance the policy and regulatory framework for SME business operations in relevant sectors by incorporating feedback from SMEs, ensuring that relevant market barriers are identified and addressed, thus fostering a more conducive environment for blue economy investments and sustainable business growth. The sub-component further aims to enhance governance, institutional capacity, and the policy environment for integrated coastal management, ultimately supporting sustainable economic development and improving coastal resilience. Specifically, it will support the following activities: (i) updating the Multi-Sectoral Investment Plan for Adaptation to Coastal Risks from 2018 by better aligning the existing plan with current climate change risks, emerging coastal challenges, and opportunities for adaptation, ensuring that it provides a comprehensive strategy for sustainable coastal management; (ii) enhancing the operational capacity of the National Coastal Protection and Management Unit (CNPGL) by ensuring effective coordination and implementation of coastal protection measures, allowing the unit to better manage the country's coastal resources and respond to environmental challenges. This will involve technical training, resource mobilization, and improved coordination with other national and local institutions; (iii) supporting the Implementation of the Master Plan for Coastal Development (2022), which provides a framework for integrated coastal management by focusing on harmonizing development, environmental protection, and climate resilience efforts, ensuring that coastal areas are sustainably managed while fostering economic growth; (iv) developing Early Warning and Climate Information Systems to address the growing challenges of flood and coastal resilience in Benin; by improving access to real-time data



on climate risks, such as storm surges and flooding, the project will help communities prepare and respond to coastal hazards more effectively; and (v) developing a Blue Economy Framework based on the ICZM Plan which will guide the sustainable development of Benin's blue economy, leveraging its coastal and marine resources for economic growth while ensuring environmental protection. The sub-component will also support strengthening the capacity of the Benin Directorate of Fisheries Production (DPH Direction de la Production Halieutique) and the Institute of Fisheries and Oceanographic Research of Benin (IRHOB, l'Institut de Recherches Halieutiques et Océanologiques du Bénin) for fisheries management plans based on sound scientific advice (equipment for collection and analysis of scientific data, sustainable financing), training of administrative and field staff for monitoring of artisanal and semi-industrial fisheries, in inventory of fishery products.

31. In Mauritania, this sub-component seeks to enhance coastal governance and institutional capacity, foster climate-resilient coastal management, and support participatory monitoring systems. These efforts will complement and reinforce the activities under Components 2 and 3, focusing on strengthening coastal protection, sustainable development, and resilience to climate risks. Specifically, it will support the following activities: (i) supporting the operationalization of the Mauritanian Coastal Development Master Plan (Plan Directeur d'Aménagement du Littoral Mauritanien/PDALM), which provides a strategic framework for managing Mauritania's coastal areas including facilitating the development of marine spatial planning (MSP) and ICZM tools; (ii) provision of capacity-building for national and local institutions, including government agencies, local communities, and private sector stakeholders with focus on better integrating climate change adaptation, coastal risks and resilient; (iii) strengthening the participatory monitoring system for tracking chronic coastal pollution, particularly plastic pollution, in collaboration with local communities, environmental organizations, and government agencies; and (iv) supporting the operationalization of the Coastal Observatory, a platform for monitoring and collecting data on the state of Mauritania's coastal ecosystems, erosion patterns and marine resources which has been established under the ongoing WACA program. Recognizing the importance of the fisheries sector in Mauritania, this sub-component will also support: (i) strengthening the research capacity of the Mauritanian Institute for Oceanographic and Fisheries Research (Institut Mauritanien de la Recherche Océanographique et de la Pêche/IMROP) by providing equipment and sustainable financing for data collection and fisheries management; (ii) certifying vessels for climate resilience through the Mauritanian Agency for Maritime Affairs (Agence Mauritanienne des Affaires Maritimes/ANAM); (iii) aligning vessel registration systems with International Maritime Organization (IMO) standards; and (iv) strengthening capacities of seagoing personnel through accreditation of the Naval Academy on the standards approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and on the Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW).

Component 2: Facilitating Coastal Development (Benin, Mauritania)

32. This component aims to drive private sector-led growth and job creation in key ocean-based sectors, including tourism, fisheries, and aquaculture, with a strong emphasis on strengthening micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), fostering climate resilience, and promoting inclusivity for women and youth.

33. Benin's economy is heavily reliant on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and forestry, which are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Despite the growing recognition of the potential of the blue economy, startups and SMEs in the climate technology sector face significant challenges, including limited access to financing. These businesses are often viewed as high-risk by the banking sector, as they tend to focus on innovative solutions that are still in the testing or early development stages. Furthermore, many blue economy ventures in Benin operate in highly regulated sectors such as energy, water, and waste management, which require advanced technical expertise to navigate complex regulatory landscapes. As a result, private sector solutions often serve the broader public



good, necessitating government intervention to help scale and sustain these initiatives. To support the transition to a more sustainable and resilient blue economy, strategic investments in capacity-building and enabling conditions are crucial. To address these challenges, targeted interventions will include: (i) providing business advisory and training services to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem, including vocational training for blue industries, (ii) offering small proof-of-concept (POC) grants to de-risk innovative ventures, (iii) providing market development services and access to product testing facilities, and (iv) facilitating technology development support to accelerate the commercialization of new blue economy solutions, such as technology solutions for increasing fish market information and transparency. Additionally, financial mechanisms such as guarantees, lines of credit, and partnerships with commercial banks will be promoted to support SMEs. These mechanisms will help make SME financing more attractive to banks by de-risking investments and working capital, building on successful partnerships established by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) with Beninese banks to finance over 1,000 SMEs. Through these partnerships, SMEs will also benefit from dedicated technical assistance to strengthen their capacity to access financing and grow sustainably. In addition, this component will strengthen small-scale fisheries cooperatives in an effort to diversify fisheries away from depleted rivers and lakes, by (i) facilitating the piloting of sustainable aquaculture and mariculture; (ii) improving fisheries infrastructure; and (iii) providing capacity-building/training aimed at strengthening fisheries value chains.

34. The fisheries sector in Mauritania plays a crucial role in the country's economy, being one of the main sources of export revenue, food security and livelihoods for coastal communities. However, it faces a range of challenges including inefficient governance, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to finance and markets for SMEs, limited value addition, climate change and environmental degradation that hinder the sector's growth and sustainability. Consequently, this component will provide private sector-led support, by focusing on improving productivity, sustainability, and community engagement. Proposed activities include: (i) supporting infrastructure development including upgrading of artisanal fish landing sites, rapid sorting and processing facilities – by improving infrastructure, private-sector actors can reduce post-harvest losses, improve fish quality and create new market opportunities, and promoting technology-driven solutions to improve market information, (ii) supporting development of management modalities of artisanal landing and processing sites, (iii) facilitating access to finance through loans and guarantees that can enable MSMEs and fishers to invest in modern fishing techniques, infrastructure and value-added processing, (iv) fostering value addition through private-sector led investments in fish processing, sustainability certifications and marketing and branding, and through capacity-building/training of relevant stakeholders including to facilitate diversification away from fish meal production, (v) encouraging gender inclusion and improving women's capacity, behavior (socio-emotional skills) and overall economic performance in the industry, and (vi) building resilience to climate change through climate-resilient technologies and solutions, such as sustainable aquaculture practices.

Component 3: Enhancing Coastal Resilience (Benin and Mauritania)

35. This component will fund investments aimed at stabilizing coastlines, protecting coastal communities, and ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of coastal ecosystems.

36. In Benin, coastal flooding, erosion and pollution are significant challenges, threatening the country's coastal communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Building on the coastal protection measures financed by the ongoing WACA project, this component will support both infrastructure and nature-based solutions to enhance coastal resilience. Specifically, the component will support the following activities: (i) sand-dune stabilization to protect vulnerable lagoon banks and prevent further erosion; (ii) stabilization of the Mono River mouth in Grand-Popo, with feasibility studies



currently being developed under the WACA project to ensure sustainable solutions; ²⁷ (iii) the restoration of aquatic, terrestrial, and marine ecosystems, including mangrove reforestation, marshland restoration, and the rehabilitation of degraded lands, (iv) the management of community biodiversity conservation areas (CBCA), and (iv) clean-up of rivers and water bodies. Capacity-building and community-based activities will include: (i) promoting climate-resilient income-generating activities, including beekeeping and shellfish farming (oysters) in mangrove areas, and ecotourism; (ii) supporting communities in conserving and restoring mangrove forests while developing access to blue carbon credit financing; and (iii) building institutional and community capacity to align conservation with economic development goals, with a focus on empowering women and marginalized groups.

37. Coastal erosion is also a critical issue in Mauritania, affecting urban centers like Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, as well as essential infrastructure along the Atlantic coast. Contributing factors include human activities such as the construction of port facilities that disrupt natural sediment transport, sand mining, deforestation of mangroves, and the impacts of climate change, particularly rising sea levels. Natural processes like strong winds and ocean currents further influence coastal dynamics. These factors have led to the loss of protective dunes, increasing the risk of flooding and threatening both infrastructure and coastal communities. Building on the coastal protection efforts funded by the ongoing WACA project, this component will focus on nature-based solutions to strengthen coastal resilience, including: (i) dune stabilization through gap filling and vegetation restoration; (ii) protection and restoration of sensitive habitats, such as mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and wetlands, including support for protected and managed areas; (iii) enhanced data collection and coastal monitoring through the expansion of coastal observatories and the collection of high-resolution data on sediment dynamics, shoreline changes, and erosion hotspots; and (iv) community-led adaptation through capacity-building initiatives on coastal management practices and livelihood support.

Component 4: National Project Management (Benin, Mauritania)

38. **At the national level, the Project will support Project Implementation Units (PIUs) in each beneficiary country to manage the project.** This component will provide supplemental support for project management to ensure coordinated and timely execution of infrastructure investments and other activities. It includes project oversight and coordination, fiduciary management, including external/internal audits and accounting, quality control and assurance systems, environmental and social safeguard management, development and implementation of a communications and stakeholder engagement plan, and short-term training on project management. The component will also finance a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, which will capture data on physical and financial progress, and the results achieved in terms of outputs and outcomes.

Legal Operational Policies	
Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Area OP 7.60	No

²⁷ This intervention aims to control floods affecting 3,652 households across Athieme, Grand-Popo, Ouidah, and Abomey-Calavi municipalities.



Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

39. **The Environmental and Social (E&S) risk is high**, reflecting the potential impacts of activities in Benin and Mauritania, including coastal protection, ecosystem restoration, pollution management, and blue business initiatives. Risks include borrower capacity challenges observed in the ongoing WACA projects, potential impacts from civil works on sensitive ecosystems, improper design or implementation exacerbating coastal flooding and erosion, habitat and biodiversity loss, land acquisition and displacement, and community health and safety concerns such as Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) risks. Additional risks may arise from aquaculture activities using invasive species and the expansion of the program into fragile areas with limited ESF capacity. Mitigation measures will apply the mitigation hierarchy and include preparing ESF instruments such as the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). National PIUs, supported by environmental and social specialists, will ensure compliance with World Bank standards, monitor environmental indicators, and work with national agencies such as ABE in Benin and DCE in Mauritania. Technical Assistance activities will follow the World Bank's ESF and Office of Environmental and Social Risk Classification (OESRC) Advisory Note to ensure effective risk management and global alignment.

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