



OWNERSHIP • SUSTAINABILITY • INCLUSIVITY

STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE - 2030

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	5
II. FOREWORD.....	7
III. INTRODUCTION	9
IV. THE STRATEGY	10
4.1.Vision.....	10
4.2. Mission Statement	10
4.3. Strategic Priorities.....	13
4.4. Implementing the Strategy	33
4.5. Improving the way we work	35
4.6. Prioritised Agenda and Actions.....	37
4.7. Measuring progress: Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation.....	38

“ Fisheries and aquaculture are sustainable, resilient and productive and provide equitable and inclusive benefits to communities and citizens of members of the OACPS. ”

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
COP	Conference of the Parties
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease- 2019
EU	European Union
IUU fishing	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
OACPS	Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
RGA	Revised Georgetown Agreement
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SSF Guidelines	FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security





STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE - 2030

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the “OACPS Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture – 2030”. It outlines a strategic vision and priority actions to promote the potential of fisheries and aquaculture, as a crucial, important anchor of sustainable and inclusive development of OACPS’ countries, communities and citizens that depend on fisheries and aquaculture for their economies, livelihoods and wellbeing.



This Plan is guided by three fundamental principles of promoting **Sustainability**, **Ownership**, and **Inclusivity** in the use of fisheries and aquaculture resources, and ensuring that no one is left out or left behind. Ten Strategic Priorities frame specific actions to be implemented - to address key constraints, while leveraging on opportunities to build vibrant and resilient fisheries and aquaculture sectors in and across the member states and regions of the OACPS.

This Strategic Plan is the product of comprehensive consultations which involved and included key stakeholders working closely together. First to take stock of progress made under the previous plan, and then to review current and emerging challenges before determining the strategic priority actions needed to reinvigorate the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sectors of Members and Regions of the OACPS.

It received high-level political endorsement by the 7th Meeting of OACPS Ministers in-charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture held in Accra, Ghana on 8 April 2022. A decision which attests to the interest and commitment of Member States of the OACPS to galvanize global, regional and national level actions for good ocean governance and the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture, and the blue economy.

It will be implemented on the basis of a rolling three-year Action Plan, which will be subjected to regular reviews through annual reporting, and under the supervision of the Ordinary Ministerial Meetings. The “living” Action Plans would need to be flexible and open to revision and, or amendment, as needed.

I commend the “OACPS Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture – 2030” to you, and believe that with strong cooperation, collaboration, commitment and participation of Member States and key stakeholders of the OACPS at intra-regional, inter-regional, and national to community levels, as well as with key Partners of the OACPS, we will be able to realise its effective implementation which in turn will ensure “Fisheries and aquaculture are sustainable, resilient and productive and provide equitable and inclusive benefits to communities and citizens of members of the OACPS.”

H.E. GEORGES REBELO PINTO CHIKOTI,
Secretary-General of the OACPS

“Promoting Sustainability, Ownership, and Inclusivity in the use of fisheries and aquaculture resources, and ensuring that no one is left out or left behind.”

H.E. GEORGES REBELO PINTO CHIKOTI



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It is obvious that fisheries and aquaculture resources, the oceans, and the blue economy are of immense importance to the sustainable development of many, if not all, of the seventy-nine member states of the OACPS.

As Chair of the OACPS Ambassadorial Working Group on Fisheries during the preparation of this OACPS Strategic Plan of Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture – 2030, I am honoured to introduce this comprehensive, ambitious, yet strategic and action-oriented agenda for good ocean governance and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development as well as the blue economy, as determined by Members and Regions of the OACPS.

Endorsed by the 7th Meeting of OACPS Ministers in-charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture, held in Accra, Ghana, in April 2022, this document is a product of comprehensive consultations held with key OACPS stakeholders and our partners. It was created during



the most trying period of the global COVID-19 Pandemic, and we are proud of the outcome.

I believe the strategic priorities and actions will contribute to improving the sustainability and resilience, as well as inclusive development of OACPS’ fisheries and aquaculture sector, if we fully embrace the principles of ownership, sustainability, and inclusivity.

As the OACPS, we have set for ourselves an ambitious agenda which we must deliver. For this reason, we must commit to continue engaging closely with each other and with our partners at all levels if we are to catalyse action in pursuit of good ocean governance and realize the sustainable development of our fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

I commend to you the OACPS Strategic Plan of Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture – 2030.

H.E. SENA SIAW-BOATENG
Ambassador of the Republic of Ghana &
Chair of the OACPS Ambassadorial Working Group on Fisheries (2019 – 2022)

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STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE - 2030

INTRODUCTION

The fisheries and aquaculture sector is vital to all 79 Member States and 6 Regions of the **Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)**. It contributes to our sustainable development and trade opportunities, and to our peoples' livelihoods, health and nutrition. Recognising this, the 3rd Meeting of ACP Ministers in-charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture held in 2012, adopted a **Strategic Plan of Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2012-2016**, which they subsequently extended to 2020.

While much progress has been made against the previous Strategic Plan 2012-2020, it was determined that a new strategy is required to set the framework for the period up to 2030. Primarily to respond to the new institutional context of the OACPS, current fisheries and development policy frameworks, and – above all – adapt to the contemporary priorities and needs of OACPS Member States, for their fisheries and aquaculture sector.

In 2019, the mandate for developing a new Strategic Plan was finalised in the Samoa Declaration of the 6th Meeting of **ACP Ministers in-charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture**. It was reinforced by the **110th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers**, in Nairobi, on 7 December 2019, which called for a new Strategic Plan to be drawn up. In the **Nairobi Nguvu Ya Pamoja Declaration**, adopted at the 9th Summit in December 2019, the ACP Heads of State and Government confirmed the Organisation's renewed commitments to fisheries, aquaculture, and ocean governance.

The **7th Meeting of OACPS Ministers in-charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Accra**, on 8 April 2022, committed to the effective implementation of the "OACPS Strategic Plan of the Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2030", and requested the Secretariat to align it with the meeting's recommendations.

A New Context for the OACPS

The "**OACPS Strategic Plan of Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2030**" is elaborated against the political and institutional backdrop of the OACPS, as a fully-fledged intergovernmental organisation. The endorsement of the Revised Georgetown Agreement (RGA) by the **9th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government in Nairobi**, Kenya, in December 2019 and its subsequent entry into force on 5 April 2020, established the OACPS as the largest transcontinental organisation representing only developing countries. Commensurate with this status, a bold vision for the OACPS was outlined by the **OACPS Heads of State and Government** to establish it as 'the leading transcontinental organisation working in solidarity to improve the living standards of our peoples through South-South and North-South Cooperation'.

At the same time, the post-2020 development landscape has changed such as a new partnership agreement between the OACPS and the European Union, that replaces the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, and the RGA, which opens possibilities to develop much wider cooperative relationships with other international actors. Globally, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has redefined global goals and targets for sustainable development, and is being comprehensively addressed by all Member States of the OACPS. With respect to fisheries and aquaculture, SDG 14 (Life Below Water) aimed at «Conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development» takes prominence and provides a framework for the development of the Strategic Plan and Actions programmed under it. Other SDGs and targets are also closely linked to fisheries and aquaculture (in particular environment, climate, gender, inclusivity, and human rights) and these need to be integrated into an holistic approach.

¹ ACP/84/031/12 Rev.5(CoA).

² Georgetown Agreement, as revised by Decision No.1/CX/19 of the 110th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers, Nairobi, Kenya, 7 December 2019; and endorsed by the 9th Summit of the ACP Heads of State and Government, Nairobi, Kenya, 9-10 December 2019.



It is within this context that this Strategic Plan must adapt to and complement, both the new and evolving approaches in fisheries and aquaculture management, as well as the developing (current and emerging) priorities of the OACPS. The central role and potential of both fisheries and aquaculture as part of the “blue economy” needs to be recognised, given place and valued. A growing number of countries are exploring the potential of aquaculture, as it is considered to have potential to reduce poverty, ensure food and nutrition security, and stimulate economic growth and development. Yet challenges remain in developing national industries due to a range of factors, including the lack of technical capacity or infrastructure, and/or unfavourable business and regulatory environments. Other countries are investing in national fishing fleets, inland fisheries, and others still are seeking to develop the processing sectors to add value to primary production.

Given this diversity, this “OACPS Strategic Plan of Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2030” is aimed at providing supporting mechanisms for management and planning that would enable the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Member States and Regions of the OACPS to adapt, modernise, and prosper over the next 10 years and beyond.

THE STRATEGY

■ VISION

Greater ownership, improved sustainability and resilience, and inclusive development of fisheries and aquaculture that delivers benefits for the people, environment and prosperity of all Member States, communities and citizens of the OACPS.

■ MISSION STATEMENT

To accelerate the development of a sustainable, productive and resilient fisheries and aquaculture sector in Member States and Regions of the OACPS, by strengthening ocean governance, and improving approaches to fisheries and aquaculture, and to the blue economy, through strengthened coordination, dialogue, advocacy and political support.

The vision is anchored on the key principles of:

● **Ownership:** to increase ownership and control over fisheries and aquaculture resources and industries to maximise sustainable returns and benefits for countries and citizens of the OACPS.

● **Sustainability:** to ensure fisheries and aquaculture are sustainable, resilient to shocks, and with improved economic performance providing sustainable benefits to present and future generations.

● **Inclusivity:** to ensure that no-one is left out or left behind.



The vision is also structured around ten strategic priority areas:

- 01 Strengthening the enabling environment to realise sustainable, inclusive and better governed fisheries and aquaculture
- 02 Combating IUU fishing
- 03 Supporting the growth of profitable, sustainable aquaculture
- 04 Unlocking the potential of the blue economy
- 05 Supporting small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, and empowering and protecting communities
- 06 The OACPS as a global actor
- 07 Sustainably managing, using and conserving our aquatic ecosystems and natural capital
- 08 Building resilience and sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors
- 09 Building capacity for science and technology to support fisheries, aquaculture, and the blue economy
- 10 Raising standards for fish products from Members and Regions of the OACPS



“Enhancing transparency in fisheries management as well as in all blue economy-related policies will be essential for strengthening fisheries governance, securing long-term benefits.”

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

01

Strengthening the enabling environment to realise sustainable, inclusive and better governed fisheries and aquaculture

OUTCOME: Fisheries and aquaculture governance is improved and supported by strong and effective regional and national institutions, laws and policies.



While OACPS Members have undertaken laudable actions to: (i) develop and modernise fisheries policies, institutions, and laws; (ii) expand monitoring, control, and surveillance actions to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and (iii) implement international agreements and best practices; much remains to be done to ensure sustainability and governance of fisheries.

Member States of the OACPS will continue to update and implement effective fisheries and aquaculture policies by incorporating international agreements and best practices, which are to be informed by local (regional, national, or sub-national) situations and constraints - in particular for small-scale fisheries and aquaculture.

Policy and legislative reforms and strengthening of institutions, law enforcement and governance mechanisms will focus on key priorities such as **improving sustainability and good governance, strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance, improving value chains, by promoting community-led governance and co-management arrangements.**

Enhancing transparency in fisheries management as well as in all blue economy-related policies will be

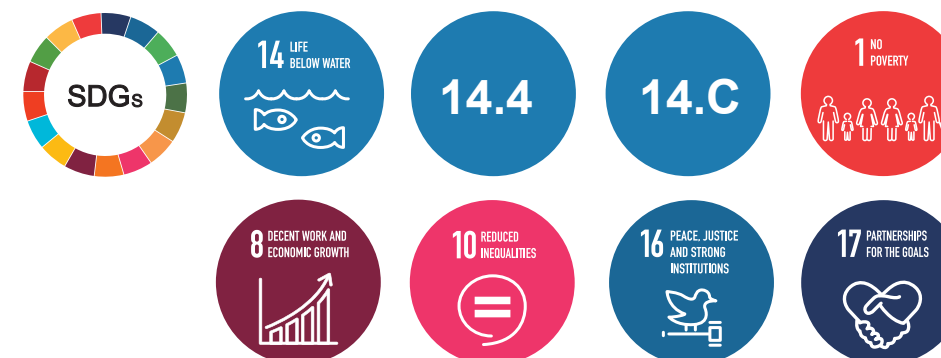
essential for strengthening fisheries governance, securing long-term benefits, and drawing from the lessons learned and successful experiences of Member States' voluntary initiatives. **OACPS actions in this area will:**

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Support Member States to update and implement stronger effective and transparent fisheries and aquaculture policies,** by incorporating international best practices and stakeholder participation, as informed by the local circumstances.
- Support sub-regional and regional efforts to harmonise policies,** laws, and standards among its Member States and Regions.
- Provide a framework for collaboration, cooperation, coordination and experience-sharing** to support implementation of initiatives and bring focus on key concerns of Members at regional, intra-regional and global levels.
- Build genuine and balanced relations with international partners** and defend the collective interests of Members of the OACPS.

02 Combating IUU fishing

OUTCOME: Enhanced measures to combat IUU fishing in all Regions and Member States of the OACPS is realised through improved cooperation and collaboration between States, and within and across Regions.



IUU fishing remains one of the most significant threats to successful and sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems, and marine and inland fisheries. **The OACPS must continue to support all Members in maintaining and developing initiatives to combat IUU fishing, in conformance with SDG Target 14.4 and 14.6 of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** While significant progress was made under the previous Strategic Plan of Action 2012-2020, much more is needed.

Given the connection between IUU fishing and transnational organised criminal activities such as drug, human and small arms trafficking, illicit oil bunkering, trade-in contraband goods, document fraud, and money laundering, **it is imperative for Members and Regions of the OACPS to promote inter-agency collaboration to address organised criminal activities.**

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Support existing regional initiatives to combat IUU fishing**, such as sharing experience and coordinating intra-regional initiatives between regions and amongst Members, in facilitating information exchange on: suspected vessels, transshipment, denial of port entry and use, and other data and experiences related to IUU fishing activities.
- Foster reinforced dialogue with the European Union and other relevant entities** concerning IUU fishing, especially regarding the catch certificate and the pre-identification process.

- Engage with development partners to provide legal & technical, technological, and capacity-building support** to Member States, to successfully combat IUU fishing and related organised criminal activities along the fisheries value chains.
- Promote the implementation of legal and policy actions** to effectively implement monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement measures, including by building capacities and strengthening fishing licensing systems, registration of all vessels and their beneficial owners, fishing authorisations, transparency and monitoring, and inter-agency cooperation.
- Catalyse intra-regional cooperation** to support the establishment of Regional Vessels Registers, Regional Vessel Monitoring Control Surveillance Centres, Regional Observer Programmes, Regional Surveillance Programmes, Regional Catch Documentation Schemes, and Regional Ports State Measures Frameworks.
- Leverage OACPS' collective voice** to focus attention on the particular challenges that IUU fishing and wider aspects of fisheries and maritime crimes for OACPS Members – both in terms of impacts and of the difficulties in developing effective responses given limited capacities and, often, large maritime jurisdictions.

“It is imperative for Members and Regions of the OACPS to promote inter-agency collaboration to address organised criminal activities.”

OUTCOME: Fish production from aquaculture is increased substantially in and across the Member States of the OACPS.



While aquaculture is at a nascent stage of development in many Member States of the OACPS, it is considered to have great potential to reduce poverty, ensure food and nutrition security, and stimulate economic growth and development over the next decade and beyond. That said, **it is critical that any developments take place within a robust enabling framework, to ensure long-term viability and sustainability of the sector.** Existing ecosystem-sensitive tools and frameworks can be used as guidelines for aquaculture development, taking into account environmental, social, infrastructural and economic factors.

It is essential that policymaking and planning for aquaculture considers local circumstances and needs of aquaculture development actors, including the perspectives and participation of small-scale stakeholders such as local fishing communities.

As aquaculture is often considered a subcategory of the fisheries sector because of its low economic importance, development pathways are not always well adapted to address the constraints facing aquaculture development. Therefore, implementing impactful solutions for sustainable aquaculture development requires new institutions, to offer a solid institutional foundation for the development of and investment in aquaculture.

OACPS Member States should consider:

- Developing dedicated systems for aquaculture governance,** with standalone institutional and administrative, and monitoring and implementation systems.
- Ensuring approaches are specific to the local production systems and to the environmental, social and economic context, and **give priority to**

“Implementing impactful solutions for sustainable aquaculture development requires new institutions, to offer a solid institutional foundation for the development of and investment in aquaculture.”



aquaculture production methods with lower environmental footprints, including the farming of low-trophic species and integrated multi-trophic aquaculture or aquaculture combined with agriculture such as fish combined with rice farming.

- Assessing the potential for aquaculture development and either adopting or refining national development strategies for aquaculture, beyond reflecting aquaculture as components or addenda to fisheries policies. Particular attention should be given to advancing spatial **planning and mapping of areas for aquaculture development to encourage appropriate environmental and socio-economic safeguards** to be put in place, to minimise potential conflicts with other blue economy activities through adopting a precautionary approach.

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Provide a **forum for collaboration, coordination and experience-sharing** to support implementation of aquaculture development initiatives and address key concerns for the sub-sector's development including technical and technological constraints and

opportunities, aquatic animal health and biosecurity frameworks, interaction with the environment or common issues on governance, blue economy and the development of value chains and markets.

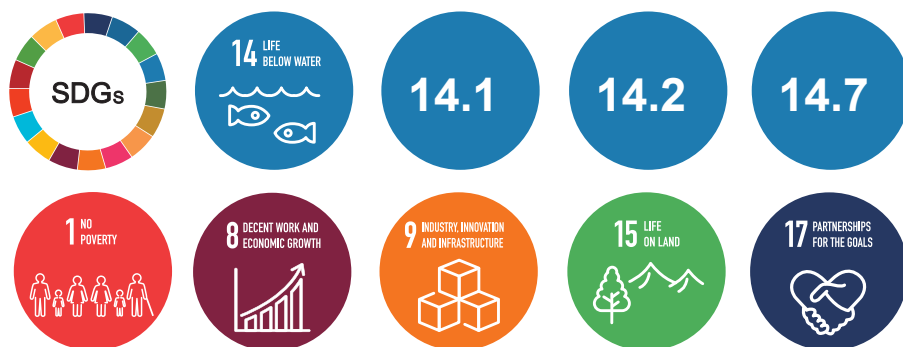
- Support regional and subregional organisations to develop and/or implement harmonised regional protocols, policies and standards for the development of aquaculture.** Regional protocols could promote harmonisation of legislation, cooperation and integration of economic activities, capacity building support, information sharing, research and technology transfer, and promoting the role of civil society.
- Broker **support for national or regional-level aquaculture research and development, and training** in OACPS countries, such as developing farming models that are cost effective, user-friendly and easily adaptable to the local conditions of any country, with limited modifications.
- Promote the use of improved and innovative technologies,** including energy-saving and clean technologies throughout aquaculture value chains.



04

Unlocking the potential of the blue economy

OUTCOME: Thriving, inclusive and sustainable blue economies that contribute significantly to social and economic transformation through improved regulatory, business and investment environments for fisheries and aquaculture operators.



Sustainable management, use and conservation of fisheries and aquaculture resources cannot be achieved or fully realised, without considering the overall potential of the blue economy. Fisheries and aquaculture compete with other uses and users of maritime, coastal, and inland aquatic spaces and resources, as well as other economic sectors for government support, investments, and human resources. It is therefore **critical to ensure that the fisheries and aquaculture sector is properly represented, well understood, and accounted for in blue economy-related policy decisions**, which is not always the case. For instance, **recognising small scale fisheries as the biggest sector of the blue economy in terms of jobs, livelihoods, and food and nutrition security, is a crucial, essential step.**

Adopting whole-of-government, whole-of-region,

integrated approaches that include fisheries and aquaculture and related sectors is critical in ensuring that the most efficient policy tools are considered and developed through close coordination and consultation. However, this can be difficult to achieve in practice. For example, the use of policy tools other than fisheries policies can require different budgets and decision-making channels as they may fall under the remit of other Ministries. Such approaches are also essential in designing and applying effective policies, laws, planning, and tools that enable competing economic activities to develop coherently.

The OACPS' Member States and regional agencies are already involved in multiple activities, programmes and strategies that fall under the umbrella of the "blue economy".

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Pursue implementation of value chain upgrading strategies** to optimise competitiveness and profitability, generate tangible economic benefits, and contribute to poverty reduction and wealth creation in fishing communities of OACPS countries.
- Support Member States and regional agencies, through technical assistance and knowledge sharing**, by disseminating results and highlighting success stories to achieve a sustainable blue economy.
- Focus on **developing transparent policy and participatory planning instruments** including Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, to effectively address pressures on the ocean and marine and coastal resources. **A precautionary approach is critical for preserving OACPS Members' natural capital** and ensuring that pursuit of blue economic development is sustainable and does not degrade coastal ecosystems, increase coastal pollution, and lead to resource user conflicts,

including with artisanal and small-scale fisheries actors.

- Improve the enabling environment for sector development and investments**, including by facilitating transparent, sustainable, and responsible investments for local, national and foreign players. Strengthening links with the private sector and civil society in sector development will improve the ability to coordinate investments and sector needs and to launch new blue growth opportunities.

- Strengthen relationships with development partners** to work with governments to provide adequate funding and staffing for the institutions responsible for supporting sustainable management and development, including in particular small-scale fisheries, governments and local fisher representatives. Mindful that these are central to the 100% management approach needed to achieve not only national but also international commitments such as the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

“Recognising small scale fisheries as the biggest sector of the blue economy in terms of jobs, livelihoods, and food and nutrition security, is a crucial, essential step.”





05

Supporting small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, and empowering and protecting communities

OUTCOME: Small scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture are empowered, acting as levers for inclusive social and economic development, including the equitable participation of women in fisheries and aquaculture value chains.



Small scale fisheries and aquaculture in Member States of the OACPS make a greater contribution to the economy than the industrial sector, and are critical in providing income, food security and nutrition, employment and social development. Although small-scale fishers are the 'most numerous ocean users, many small-scale fishing communities remain impoverished and vulnerable, and are often marginalised in decision-making, as this fisheries sub-sector is often undervalued or overlooked because its economic and social impact is hard to measure directly and sometimes limited to community or local levels. Therefore, small-scale fisheries may be excluded in national economic estimates in comparison with major export-oriented fisheries value chains.

In addition to suffering the consequences of climate change, ecosystem degradation, and other external

shocks, the future of small-scale fisheries and fishing communities can be threatened by activities of other - more powerful - blue economy sectors (tourism, industrial fishing, deep-sea mining for instance).

Moreover, differences between international standards and artisanal practices often result in national legislation being developed mainly for industrial fisheries, which further marginalises and reduces support for sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture activities.

While women play a crucial role at all stages of small-scale fisheries value chains, they suffer from a lack of recognition of their significant contributions, and consequent dire working and living conditions.



“While women play a crucial role at all stages of small-scale fisheries value chains, they suffer from a lack of recognition of their significant contributions(...).”



OACPS actions in this area will:

i. Address the challenges of small-scale and artisanal fisheries through tailored governance and collaborative co-management by:

(a) enhancing fisherfolk and local communities participation in small-scale fisheries governance;

(b) building on international frameworks, best practices, and guidelines, in particular the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), and SDG 14b to ensure access to fisheries resources and market for artisanal fisheries;

(c) advocating for secure tenure rights and access to fishing resources for small-scale fishers.

(d) developing and accelerating the implementation of participatory and gender balanced national «Small-Scale Fisheries strategic plans of action», to ensure support for small-scale fisheries communities and co-management of the fisheries resources; guided by national and regional policies, plans and roadmaps, and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines.

ii. Spearhead the modernisation of the small-scale fisheries sector by improving the working conditions, safety and efficacy of small-scale fishing operations.

iii. Improve access to digital services and information and communication technologies (ICTs) to increase small-scale and artisanal fishers access to early warning and weather forecasts, microfinance, risk insurance, financial literacy, and modern technologies marketing tools.

iv. Modernise locally owned fishing fleet to transition away from subsistence non-motorised to motorised operations to improve the spatial reach and improve food security, livelihoods and the safety of the fishing crew.

v. Increase awareness of and build support for, inland, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, through active participation in regional and global processes

such as ongoing efforts to implement the Rome Declaration – Ten Steps to Responsible Inland Fisheries, and the United Nations “International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture” in 2022.

vi. Ensure fish products are better recognised in national, regional and global food security and nutrition strategies and integrate fisheries, aquaculture, food and health policies.

vii. Implement initiatives and develop sector strategies and policies that recognise and prioritise the role of women, youth and other disadvantaged groups in fisheries and aquaculture development; and ensure that national gender policies and legislation aimed at eliminating gender inequalities and prohibiting discrimination are implemented in fisheries and aquaculture businesses and inform the implementation of gender responsive actions.

viii. Support actions by Member States to improve small-scale fishers working conditions, including their access to social rights (social security, education, safety at sea, for instance) and to legitimate and democratic representation of their interests in fisheries and ocean governance more generally.

ix. Maximise the development potential of women, through removing barriers to engagement and involvement throughout small-scale fisheries value chains and by: (a) according them equal opportunities to participate in fisheries and ocean governance, and sustainable economic development as employees, employers or entrepreneurs; (b) enhancing better alignment and support for national gender policies, investments, programmes and projects to promote equality in fishing and aquaculture rights systems, including but not limited to equitable access to fishery resources and raw materials, different credit systems such as microcredit.

x. Advocate for improved transparency and accountability in fisheries management through such steps as the adoption of gender sensitive data collection on the sector and the dissemination of information on new coastal sea and land-based (industrial or foreign aid) projects and financing mechanisms for ocean conservation.

06 The OACPS as a Global Actor

OUTCOME: OACPS interests, concerns, and challenges are represented better at the global level, and OACPS Members are better able to influence and improve the outcomes of global processes.



The 79 Member States of the OACPS form a sizable bloc which can be leveraged in international forums to advance collective interests, including the special interests of coastal, Small Island, and Land-locked States.

OACPS solidarity and cohesion is critical for influencing and securing Members' interests in the ongoing multilateral negotiations related to fisheries, ocean governance, biodiversity, climate change and the blue economy, notably for the negotiations: (i) for a new international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ); (ii) on fisheries subsidies at the World Trade Organisation; (iii) for the UN Convention on Biodiversity's post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; (iv) in the UNFCCC COP processes; (v) for fisheries-related frameworks governed by the FAO.

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Strengthen the voice of the OACPS in global, regional, and bilateral trade negotiations** to better achieve Members' interests and objectives, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs, by forging common positions and advocating these in multilateral negotiations.
- Ensure continued engagement in ocean, climate, and biodiversity governance** and multilateral processes while building synergies between ocean, climate, and biodiversity agendas, to deliver people-centred outcomes, especially with respect to tackling sea-level rise impacts on coastal States of the OACPS.

iii. **Actively engage with Members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIFS), the Climate Vulnerable Forum, and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** in relevant forums to advocate for a global solution to the issue of sea-level rise which will impact the lives, health, and well-being, livelihoods, ecosystems, and economies of OACPS Member States.

iv. **Support South-South cooperation** among Member States of the OACPS with regard to knowledge sharing, study tours, technology transfers, and fisheries and aquaculture value chain development.

v. **Support (where necessary by promoting OACPS solidarity) Members dealing with bilateral and multilateral trade issues and disputes** and, where these occur between Members, use its potential as an independent mediator to facilitate resolution or consensus, as interruptions to trade can have significant short-term and long-term impacts. These may result from trade disputes affecting fish products, disruptions due to regional or global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, or sudden changes to bilateral or multilateral trading rules.

vi. **At regional levels, act as an intermediary** in supporting the development of regional trading arrangements, as well as building favourable business environments and marketing networks at the international level.

vii. **At the global level, represent the Members collectively** in bilateral and multilateral discussions related to trade and, where possible, explore the potential for new market opportunities such as may arise from the withdrawal of Britain from the European Union.



“ The OACPS is committed to ensure continued engagement in ocean, climate, and biodiversity governance and multilateral processes while building synergies between ocean, climate, and biodiversity agendas (...). ”



“ The OACPS will strive to conserve and restore aquatic ecosystems by focusing on long-term management and maintenance of the biological productivity of aquatic ecosystems, to support fisheries and aquaculture sector sustainability. ”

07

Sustainably managing, using and conserving our aquatic ecosystems and natural capital

OUTCOME: The health and productivity of marine and inland aquatic ecosystems are enhanced and the capacity of countries, communities, and citizens of the OACPS to sustainably manage, use, and conserve those aquatic ecosystems is strengthened.



Fisheries and aquaculture are severely impacted by increasing human pressures on marine and inland water bodies. A key life-support system for the Blue Planet, the ocean and its aquatic ecosystems face multiple pressures, including from overfishing, pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change. These pressures affect the productivity and resilience of fisheries and aquaculture resources, as they threaten the health and productivity of aquatic ecosystems on which fisheries and aquaculture rely.

Furthermore, the IPCC's Special Report of 2019 on "The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate" (SROCC) emphasises the urgency of enhanced environmental stewardship by confirming the far-reaching damage inflicted by climate change on aquatic ecosystems and hence on the livelihoods and well-being of communities and countries which depend on them.

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Strive to conserve and restore aquatic ecosystems by focusing on long-term management and maintenance of the biological productivity of aquatic ecosystems, to support fisheries and aquaculture sector sustainability.
- Adopt and implement concrete initiatives and strategies such as co-management, area-based and ecosystem management approaches, guided by international best practices, while prioritising locally-led governance, notably by small-scale fishers.
- Engage partners to provide adequate financial and capacity means to support national and local resource management institutions and actors in their endeavours to ensure that the sustainable management and harvesting of all fish, and invertebrate species and aquatic plants are in alignment with SDG 14 - *Life Below Water*.
- Support opportunities to develop technical capacity building and cooperation to reduce aquatic pollution and other anthropogenic threats to ecosystems, including but not limited to banning single-use plastics to reduce marine litter.
- Support actions aimed at reducing bycatch of non-target species, ending overfishing, preventing the negative environmental impacts of aquaculture, and reducing impacts from lost, abandoned, and ghost fishing gear.

OWNERSHIP • SUSTAINABILITY • INCLUSIVITY

08 Building resilience and sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors

OUTCOME: Climate and disaster resilience considerations are integrated into fisheries and aquaculture sector policies, planning and practice decisions and actions.



Climate change and disasters from natural hazard risks continue to impact and challenge the fisheries and aquaculture sectors of OACPS Member States. They include changes to resource density, seasonality, distribution and migration of fish stocks, sea-level rise, damage to production infrastructures, and ecosystem changes such as ocean acidification, coral bleaching, algal blooms, and alteration of aquatic food webs. In addition, **communities that depend on fisheries and aquaculture for livelihoods, food security and nutrition are particularly vulnerable to climate change and disaster risks.** They are frequently among the most impacted by extreme climate and weather events, and among the last to recover. Therefore, ensuring that disaster risk management considerations are integrated in fisheries and aquaculture policy and planning processes is imperative.

Fisheries and aquaculture sectors should be included in national climate adaptation & mitigation, and disaster risk reduction policies and plans. These should include measures and policies to safeguard fishers and farmers, and their businesses, to ensure the health and welfare of indigenous aquatic animals and the marine environment, and to safeguard food safety and public health. For example, fisheries and aquaculture should also be taken into account when implementing climate change adaptation measures for other sectors, such as the increased use of dams, wind farms and hydropower in catchment areas with high rainfall, and the construction of artificial coastal defences or marine wind farms. The involvement of local communities and local stakeholders, and the consideration of their traditional knowledge in the formulation of climate adaptation measures should be acknowledged and encouraged.

“Fisheries and aquaculture sectors should be included in national climate adaptation & mitigation, and disaster risk reduction policies and plans.”

Vital to Member States and Regions of the OACPS will be to build resilience to risks and exogenous shocks by increasing their preparedness and adaptive capacities in the face of environmental degradation, disasters from natural hazard risks and climate change. This would need to be in collaboration with development partners, with special emphasis and focus on the most vulnerable, especially small-scale fisheries. To inform these adaptive policies, improvements will be needed in data collection, modelling and forecasting on the repercussions of climate change on marine and inland waters.

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Encourage Member States to integrate climate change and disaster risk management** considerations in national development strategies for fisheries and aquaculture, to manage, mitigate and reduce climate change and natural hazard risks to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development.
- Advocate for improved access to concessional finance for all OACPS Member States** on account of their disproportionate vulnerabilities and suscep-

tibility to climate change and disaster risks, and voice Member States' concerns in UNFCCC Loss and Damage discussions, while endeavouring to mainstream small-scale fisheries' concerns in that respect.

- Support development of comprehensive disaster risk management planning** at national and regional levels, including risk prevention and preparedness, focusing on policy responses for the most vulnerable communities and countries.
- Support cooperation and coordination at regional and OACPS levels** to help build capacity for monitoring, early warning and risk assessment, to mainstream the link between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, to increase knowledge and actions so as to build resilience of communities, infrastructures and production.
- Take account of local and regional specificities and mitigation commitments** as well as consider opportunities offered by nature-based approaches and the development of climate smart technologies.



09

Building capacity for science and technology to support fisheries, aquaculture, and the blue economy

OUTCOME: OACPS Member States benefit from improved access to scientific research, knowledge and technologies with applications in fisheries and aquaculture, and their involvement in networks and collaboration efforts in applied science and technology is enhanced.



Climate change and disasters from natural hazard risks Supporting research and collaboration among academics and practitioners in the fields of aquatic environment, climate change, biotechnologies, and production techniques is essential to strengthen and buttress the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Yet OACPS Members often remain at a disadvantage. **Scientific and technological initiatives will need to be appropriate to context, and supported and sustained in the long-term through building of local capacity, skills and knowledge.**

In the case of aquaculture development, science and technology capacity building **support needs to account for the specific geographic, environmental, biological, and other circumstances of individual countries.** For instance, simple and less costly, yet innovative techniques that select the right species and practices for the culture of organisms and have low trophic needs, can be a catalyst for developing a nascent industry.

Initiatives to create an enabling environment for research and scientific collaboration, and to support economic operators should **regard transfer of technology as an effective solution to technical bottlenecks for developing local opportunities and new commodities from aquatic resources for countries, communities, and citizens of the OACPS.** Aquatic biotechnologies for instance, hold much promise in regard to many tropical species such as algae, and the potential value and use of waste from fisheries and aquaculture activities.

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Promote the harnessing and dissemination of the knowledge and experience** of Member States and Regions of the OACPS to favour cross-fertilization of ideas, while simultaneously helping to channel research support and activity where it is needed for fisheries and aquaculture such as through partnerships with research institutions.
- Promote cooperation for science and technology that is locally adapted** to the needs of OACPS Members, including promoting the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge, as well as science-based governance approaches, innovative policies and practices for decent work, gender equity and certification.
- Support collaboration, south-south networking, and funding for local, regional and intra-regional training, learning (both vocational and tertiary-level courses), and research institutes.**
- Harness the potential of modern research** to produce sustainable and income-generating innovations such as the value-adding utilisation of invasive weeds in the manufacture of certain products (fertilisers, packaging, cosmetics).

“Initiatives to create an enabling environment for research and scientific collaboration, and to support economic operators should regard transfer of technology as an effective solution (...)”



“ Strengthening food standards, safety and quality for fish products is not only an issue of international trade, but it is also a matter of national policy concerning fisheries, food safety, public health, and maintaining environmental integrity. ”

10 Raising standards for fish products from Members and Regions of the OACPS

OUTCOME: Reduced post-harvest losses and waste, increased value addition, and enhanced market access for OACPS fisheries and aquaculture value chains.



Enormous potential exists for Members and regions of the OACPS to grow and expand their fisheries and aquaculture industries. However, **beyond fisheries and aquaculture production and harvest constraints, challenges related to value addition, market access, and maintaining health and quality standards need to be addressed.** Supportive governance, policies and plans, technologies, infrastructure and investments are, at each step of the value chain, key determinants for the success of small-scale and industrial fisheries, and aquaculture.

Access to key markets rests on complying with the regulations of the destination markets. **Strengthening food standards, safety and quality for fish products is not only an issue of international trade,** but it is also a matter of national policy concerning fisheries, food safety, public health, and maintaining environmental integrity.

OACPS actions in this area will:

- Expand market opportunities and enhance competitiveness at local, regional and global levels,** by promoting initiatives to assure the quality of fishery products, develop new products, reduce post-harvest losses and waste, and increase value addition.
- Play a role in the promotion of technology development and transfer,** and the sharing of know-

ledge, innovations and best practices amongst Members and Regions of the OACP.

- Support other value chain improvements** such as improving processing, reducing food losses and waste, with a view to increasing the profitability and socio-economic benefits of the fisheries sector.
- Play a facilitation role in building networks, skills, and opportunities for growing markets** at global, regional and local levels, by working with governments, civil society and the private sector.
- Support local-level efforts to foster favourable business environments for small-scale producers,** build marketing networks as well as capacities and skills for marketing, trade, and distribution.
- Steer and monitor ongoing value chain upgrading programmes** to build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture value chains in Member States of the OACPS. Promote scaling up of existing intra-OACPS programmes by using available and mobilising additional financing opportunities, in cooperation with partners while ensuring timely sharing of experiences and lessons learned of current value chain upgrades with Member States and Regions of the OACPS.

STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE - 2030

PROGRESSING IMPLEMENTATION

The adoption of the "OACPS Strategic Plan of Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2030" is the beginning of a process wherein all Members and Regions of the OACPS work together to realise their shared ambitions and priority actions in fisheries and aquaculture, ocean governance and the blue economy. Implementation of the Strategic Plan will require a combined, collective, cooperative, collaborative effort.

Within the framework of the agreed Strategic Priorities, the OACPS will need to identify not only the specific actions needed and results to be achieved, but also determine how the OACPS must act effectively at global, intra-regional, regional and bilateral levels.

As a living instrument, the Plan intends to provide a framework for action and outline the OACPS' strategic vision and its proposed, future trajectories on how to respond to current, emerging, and future priorities of Member States and Regions of the OACPS. It is designed to enable flexible and responsive implementation through specific actions and is subject to regular review in accordance with sectoral and organisational priorities.

Becoming a Global Player: Transforming the OACPS

The 9th Summit of OACPS Heads of State and Government (Kenya, 2019) recognised the need to identify relevant strategic policy changes and an organisational transformation to enable the Member States and Regions of the OACPS to enhance visibility, recognition, and influence at multilateral levels.

Consequently, the OACPS Secretariat is being strengthened and transformed with respect to its identity, structures, operations, functioning and outreach.

In this context, this Plan will be a key component in the overall organisational transformation of the OACPS in regard to its work on ocean governance, fisheries and aquaculture, and the blue economy. Indeed, these transformational strategies will be necessary to enable the OACPS to fulfil its mission under this Strategic Plan. Achieving its full ambitions will require the OACPS, as a new international/ intergovernmental Organisation to: develop new ways of working; forge new relationships; build new capacities and secure the requisite resources for these transformational changes.



³ Nairobi Nguvu Ya Pamoja Declaration. A Transformed ACP: Committed to multilateralism. 9th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government, Kenya, 9-10 December 2019.

The key elements of the OACPS institutional strategies for implementing this Strategic Plan include:

• **Enhancing intra-OACPS communication, coordination, and partnership**

Development challenges are becoming increasingly complex and interconnected. This requires ever greater collaboration across sectors and between partners, to deliver outcomes and impact at-scale, and ensure limited resources are efficiently and effectively used. The OACPS can play a major role in helping to “connect the dots” of these complex issues affecting Members’ fisheries and aquaculture sector, while simultaneously leveraging the potential of OACPS’ network to facilitate and increase inclusivity, coordination, information sharing, and joint planning and programming across and amongst Member States and regions, where relevant.

• **Enhancing intra-OACPS communication, coordination, and partnership**

Developing and enhancing international partnerships and increasing advocacy and engagement in multilateral forums will be key to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Partnerships and engagements will be both technical (such as working with regional fisheries bodies) and political (such as working with the United Nations). Where possible, the OACPS will seek formal relations with other organisations that recognise and respect its status as a key transcontinental organisation.

The OACPS will also participate actively in international processes, advocating common positions of Member States (at the level of the whole Organisation/regionally/an OACPS subsidiary and consultative organ under the RGA, such as the SIDS Forum) and making strategic, focused interventions so that its voice is heard and respected.

• **International financial institutions and vertical funds**

International financial institutions (IFIs) are a critical component of the development landscape and are growing in scale and presence as new IFIs are established at regional and global levels. The OACPS must play its role in strengthening institutional partnerships with the IFIs to leverage their concessional financing resources and technical assistance in support of actions specified under the Strategic Plan. At the same time, the OACPS remains a vital implementation and policy partner to key vertical funds such as the EU. It will also need to accelerate its engagement with other potential sources of climate, development and blended finance, in order to fuel impactful investments that align with the Strategic Plan, in Member States and Regions of the OACPS.

The OACPS should support Member States endeavours to secure sector budget support so that fisheries agreements contribute to strengthening the sovereignty of OACPS Countries by supporting small-scale fishers, artisanal fishing and local economies, and by helping to improve Member States’ capacities in the areas of resource management, infrastructure and industry. This includes engaging development partners to provide adequate funding for the institutions responsible for supporting small-scale fisheries and local fisher representatives.

• **Creating global visibility**

The OACPS, as a new International Organisation, needs to define and consolidate its role in fisheries and aquaculture for this decade. This requires the OACPS to communicate effectively at all levels to ensure global visibility of OACPS actions, successes and concerns. Robust communication strategies and capacities will need to be developed and maintained.

IMPROVING THE WAY WE WORK

The primary mechanism for overseeing the implementation of this Strategic Plan will continue to be the OACPS Ministerial Fisheries Mechanism, which operates under the supervision of the OACPS Council of Ministers and the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

As part of the OACPS’ transformation, new Rules of Procedure for the Mechanism have been developed to support implementation of the “Strategic Plan of Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture – 2030”.

In addition, the Secretariat will provide further support by establishing Regional Working Groups and Thematic Working Groups that bring together the Secretariat and senior fisheries and aquaculture officials from Member Countries and competent technical regional agencies of the OACPS. The purpose of these Working Groups will be to develop and maintain regular dialogue, to exchange information, and to examine intra-regional, regional and thematic priorities. The regional and thematic working groups will strengthen cooperation and dialogue with existing regional organisations and projects in the fields of ocean governance, blue economy, fisheries or aquaculture, including strengthened dialogue with small-scale fishers and civil society. At the Members-level, National Focal Points will be established to provide routine and continuous contact for OACPS technical and other working issues related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.



³ Nairobi Nguvu Ya Pamoja Declaration. A Transformed ACP: Committed to multilateralism. 9th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government, Kenya, 9-10 December 2019.



PRIORITISED AGENDA AND ACTIONS

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be steered by a "Prioritised Agenda for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Blue Economy" and achieved through actions identified and agreed to by the Ambassadorial Working Group on Fisheries. The Prioritised Agenda will provide a framework for developing and implementing specific actions related to the ten Strategic Priorities.

The Prioritised Agenda will be reviewed and updated at each Meeting of OACPS Ministers in-charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture (held every two years) and specific implementing steps and actions (in the form of a "rolling" Action Plan) will be agreed to by the Ambassadorial Working Group on Fisheries, as needed.

The implementation of the actions will cumulatively shape the results of the Strategic Plan 2030, with the following being key elements of the approach:

► **Framing actions within the Strategic Priorities, as the main domain for improvement.** Actions will be defined, implemented and reviewed based on a continual assessment of Members' needs, priorities and related actions at national, regional and global levels.

► **Determining actions using SMART principles, in particular to focus on current steps that are needed to achieve the aims of the Strategic Plan.** Actions will therefore be developed with an annual or medium-term (2-4 year perspective) and will – necessarily – be based on the available capacities and resources of the OACPS and Members.

► **Identifying the actors – whether through the Secretariat, the Ambassadorial Working Group on Fisheries, other entities within the OACPS, or through the Members, Regions and/or groupings of Members.**

► **Reviewing, evaluating and adapting as needed through an integrated system of reporting, monitoring and evaluation** (see below) and, in particular, ensuring political endorsement, commitment and support through the biennial Meeting of OACPS Ministers in-charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture.



MEASURING PROGRESS: REPORTING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Reporting, monitoring and evaluation related to the Strategic Plan will be a continuous process. The procedures comprising three components are aimed at:

- Ensuring transparency of implementing actions, in particular to enable them to be reviewed and have their impact evaluated.

- Enabling strategic directions and actions to be adapted to current, emerging, and future priorities.

► **Component 1: Routine reporting to the Ambassadorial Working Group on Fisheries.**

The Secretariat will report routinely on the actions carried out, the results and/or impediments and issues arising.

► **Component 2: Annual reports.** The Secretariat will prepare an annual report on the

implementation of the Strategic Plan, together with a progress report and recommended revisions to the Strategic Actions for the next 2-3 year period.

► **Component 3: Mid-term (2025) and end-of-term (2030) evaluations** will be conducted to monitor progress, to refine future actions, and to identify lessons to be learnt.

These processes will be overseen by the Ambassadorial Working Group on Fisheries and supervised through the Ordinary Ministerial Meetings. In addition, progress reports will be made to the Council of Ministers and OACPS Heads of State and Government, through the regular procedures of the OACPS Ministerial Fisheries Mechanism.

ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES (OACPS)



AFRICA



CARIBBEAN



PACIFIC

