

# **PART III: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**



# Partnerships for transformative Blue Economy actions

## Situation statement

In a globalized world, nations and groups cannot effectively thrive in isolation. This is particularly so in the Blue Economy, where nations are interlinked through dynamic and ever-changing trade, geopolitical, security, socioeconomic, and political interests and concerns. Aligning such interests is at the root of successful partnership building. Poor communication could lead to poor outcomes and to the exacerbation of tensions leading to conflicts.

At a more local level, synergies and linkages between island, coastal, and land-locked countries are paramount for strengthened socioeconomic and political security as well as for enhanced regional integration. RECs and IGOs such as the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA) and the Central Corridor Transit Transport and Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA) have a critical role to play in facilitating this cooperation process through consolidated inter-REC/IGO and inter-country partnership agreements and processes.

Establishing partnerships for innovation is crucial for new transformative initiatives such as the Blue Economy. The current pathway to establishing meaningful partnerships requires stronger emphasis on participation, accountability, and ownership. What is needed is a different form of collaboration across disciplines and across sectors in order to generate a more holistic approach. This is necessary not only for innovation but also for sound policymaking itself.

In a Blue Economy context, Africa both seeks and can offer knowledge, capacity, and operational capabilities across five primary innovation themes:

- Technological
- Scientific
- Social
- Political and governance
- Fiscal and economic

As Africa advances the Blue Economy, each country should have ownership over shaping its own economic transformation, free of external influences.

## Challenges

Cooperation and partnerships are the glue among key stakeholders willing to work together, sharing their aspirations and their expectations. Today, partnerships in Africa are in some instances fragmented, unbalanced, and not sufficiently strategic. States, RECs, IGOs, and Pan-African organizations can overcome existing challenges in forging partnerships for the Blue Economy by effectively participating in partner mapping, bridging information gaps. Among and between States, RECs, and IGOs worldwide, growing geopolitical and security concerns and constraints often jeopardize the scope and sustainability of partnership outcomes.

Existing partnerships for the Blue Economy also have to overcome the challenges of shaping a common vision, synchronizing priorities and expectations, enabling collaboration and coordination mechanisms, creating facilitation processes, and forging better understanding and consensus around emerging challenges and opportunities in the Blue Economy. The innovative and sustainable dimensions of partnership and cooperation frameworks are not always fully embedded into policymaking processes, making it difficult for key players (States, RECs, IGOs, civil society groups) to adequately plan for human and financial resources. Currently, the costs of Blue Economy interventions, which could be quite high and capacity-intensive (such as research and development), can effectively be bridged through innovative and sustained partnership and coalition building for action.

## Opportunities

The Blue Economy emphasizes the role of regional and subregional integration in improving development. It further recognizes the importance of coordination with regional and subregional organizations, such as the AUC, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC), IGAD, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). The New Partnership for Africa's Development

(NEPAD), AfDB, other regional development banks, and ECA also have a critical role to play in supporting Africa's Blue Economy.

The Blue Economy also provides an opportunity for South-South and Triangular Cooperation that could be a useful tool for African States to address the challenges of development and promote economic and social progress. At the international level, institutions like the World Bank, European Development Bank (EDB), the New Development Bank (formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNEP, the development community in general, and the centers of excellence in particular, could be engaged for resource mobilization and partnership building.

The Blue Economy provides an opportunity for different types of cooperation and collaboration, including PPPs. They emphasize the value of cooperation in the exchange and strengthening of technical capacities in areas such as mapping, mineral exploration, energy development, fishing, aquaculture, the environment, air and maritime transport, and port security. They underline the importance of enhancing scientific and technical cooperation in areas of interest and proposals for joint actions. In this regard, the continued need for capacity building, technology transfer, and research and development is crucial and would of necessity require the development of integrated, innovative, and effective partnerships (see case study 15).

Underpinning all dimensions of the Blue Economy is a focus on sound research and development. Development of the Blue Economy needs to be firmly embedded in scientific knowledge on matters such as technological innovations, understanding climate change impacts on marine resources, and accumulating the best lessons learned from Blue Economy projects and developments from an environmental and social standpoint. It is important to create knowledge platforms to share and exchange data and best practices at the regional and continental level to inform policymaking and regional cooperation. Barriers to success in research and development of the Blue Economy lie not just in the scientific knowledge gap (which universities, businesses, NGOs, and research institutions need to address through cutting-edge research, think tanks, and improved knowledge centers) but also significantly in barriers to funding from both public and private resources.

For example, marine science and marine scientific research are indispensable measures to effectively preserve the marine environment and to sustainably develop the oceans, seas, and their resources. UNCLOS requires States and competent international organizations to promote and facilitate marine

scientific research, including through different forms of cooperation. Over the years, considerable progress has been made in marine science, including the discovery of new species (i.e., marine genetic resources) and features in the oceans, as well as new minerals and natural gas hydrates, all of which have potential applications and uses across a range of sectors relevant to the Blue Economy. Case study 15 describes a scientific cooperation initiative in the South Atlantic Ocean.

### Case study 15

#### Scientific cooperation

The Brazilian Institute of Oceanographic and Hydrographic Research (INPOH) is an illustrative example of a cooperation program for integrated marine surveys of Deep Sea areas. The program encompasses scientific, economic, strategic, and environmental cooperation in the South Atlantic Ocean. The program pursues integrated scientific study of the oceanographic characteristics, including geoscientific, biological, chemical, and physical methods; an understanding the geological history and dynamics of associated ecosystems of the areas; identification of mineral and biotechnological resources of economic interest; and collection of baseline data to support the sustainable use and conservation of marine ecosystems. The priority project of INPOH is the integrated study of the mid-oceanic ridge of the South Atlantic Ocean between 13 and 26 degrees south. The aim is to identify favorable areas for mineral extraction and bioprospecting. The project includes the study of associated ecosystems as well as the identification of areas for protection and preservation. The program also focuses on information gathering, data generation, and development of public policies and strategies in the South Atlantic Ocean.

#### Lesson

This case provides an example of cooperation for integrated marine surveys, as well as integrated research in the South Atlantic Ocean, to support sustainable development.

## Policy guidance

States could consider the following options and approaches for action to build effective and sustained partnerships for Blue Economy-centric development:

- Mapping and engaging with relevant Blue Economy processes and initiatives, as well as stakeholders and key institutions (for instance, through participation in summits, workshops, and solution platforms).
- Harnessing South-South and Triangular cooperation, including through collaboration with traditional donor countries and multilateral organizations to facilitate South-South initiatives by accessing funding, training, management, technology transfer, and other forms of support.
- Maximizing the potential of PPPs, including through identifying, developing, and strengthening partnerships, such as those for research, product development, concept development, exchange of intellectual property, financial, in-kind, and/or human resources in mutually agreed ways.
- Establishing a Blue Economy Transformative Knowledge for Action Network supported by an online innovation platform to stimulate new research into key, focused innovation needs for the Blue Economy.
- Creating a network of stakeholders and change makers that would allow leaders and change makers to convene, debate, learn, and create solutions for local, national, regional, and continental challenges.
- Exploring how new higher education strategies could enable a sustainable Blue Economy for generations to come. This could include the establishment of innovative programs to attract students from diverse academic and social backgrounds and support a new generation of Blue Economy leaders.
- Optimizing partnerships aimed toward “Africa for Africa.” RECs, IGOs, and States could foster results-driven partnerships within the framework of AU Agenda 2063 and the AU 2050 AIMS. The outcomes of these partnerships in knowledge building and socioeconomic and political integration at all levels could contribute to the formulation of a new geopolitical, African-centered paradigm embedding all sustainable development dimensions.
- Establishing modalities to enable partners to consistently and coherently review the rationale, terms of reference, roles, and responsibilities of involved parties, including emerging issues and priorities as well as readjustments to agendas and expected goals and impacts.