

Communication and outreach

The design and execution of an effective communication and outreach strategy are key to the success of the Blue Economy policy formulation and implementation process.

A communication and outreach strategy is important to more effectively engage key stakeholders in crafting and communicating messages and sharing outcomes from each relevant application. A framework could be created in which the Blue Economy communication component is more actively employed and fully integrated in order to better influence the overall outcomes and impacts of the projects.

Creating a comprehensive communications plan collaboratively from inception would engage all the partners, actors, and change makers. It could also serve to strengthen existing communication strategies within the existing institutions or help identify gaps. In addition, it could assist with capacity-building outreach skills within groups and institutions that have limited capacity in this area. Formulation of such a plan could be done in phases, as outlined below:

- **Phase 1:** Initiation and scoping: a communication workshop involving various stakeholders could be held in conjunction with the start of a relevant Blue Economy activity. This communication workshop would gather key communication specialists and other stakeholders to work collaboratively.
- **Phase 2:** Connecting knowledge and people: the communication group could work to foster a dedicated community of practice both through exchanges and through enabling networks for collaborative communications that could continue beyond the finite project cycles.
- **Phase 3:** Sharing success and looking forward: the communication group could develop knowledge-sharing mechanisms as a way to ensure continued conversation and messaging beyond the project cycle.

Africa's "Blue word" is made of vast lakes and rivers and an extensive ocean resource base. The Blue Economy can play a major role in Africa's structural transformation, sustainable economic progress, and social development. The largest sectors of the current African aquatic and ocean-based economy are fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transport, ports, coastal mining, and energy. This Policy Handbook, offers a step by step guide to help African member States to better mainstream the Blue Economy into their national development plans, strategies, policies and laws. The Blue Economy approach is premised in the sustainable use, management and conservation of aquatic and marine ecosystems and associated resources.

