

The Indian Ocean is a complex scenario. Environmental, social and economic policies must make up the criteria for the sustainability of fisheries, which - despite the social, cultural and economic importance of the blue economy - may remain secondary in the focus of good practices and strategies of IORA countries that represent a key global resource for the blue economy.

Training for blue careers and skills development, renewal and modernisation of the fleet, generational change, strengthening the role of women, shortening and integration of the supply chain, recovery of added value for producers, quality and traceability, incentives for modernisation, are the policy chapters that must be accompanied by a relaunch of investments in the field capable of rethinking, reprogramming and innovating all the production chains linked to the sea economy. Today, it seems clear that the effects of the pandemic have profoundly altered development scenarios, making it even more urgent to adopt a new vision, new strategies and therefore new skills to revitalise the fisheries and aquaculture sector, which can be a great development opportunity for our country.

In this framework, two initiatives are proposed to be developed: "Blue Campus" and "Women in Fishing", which are part of the following United Nations 2030 Agenda Goals:



Blue campus

The Blue Campus aims to respond to the need to accompany the promotion and cultural, social and entrepreneurial upgrading of the human heritage on the coasts of the countries bordering the Indian Ocean, with a specific focus on the networking of these coastal communities with international circuits, in order to overcome the trend towards point-based development in favour of endogenous, widespread, interconnected and therefore sustainable development. In this framework, in addition to the productive segments of the blue economy, fishing and aquaculture, the most fragile sectors of the system, will benefit directly and indirectly from the realisation of the Blue Campus, whose activities will favour the relaunch of the whole fishery chain through the valorisation of coastal areas.

It is believed that this action can be realised through the constitution of a pole of excellence, the Blue Campus, which sees the coordinated action of researchers linked to university structures and research centres of the IORA countries and stakeholders with experience in the sector.

The Blue Campus, connected to the Blue Economy supply chain, will bring together stakeholders, companies, training and research centres, schools, universities, trade

associations, environmentalists and civil society, and aims to offer services and advice to the coastal communities of the IORA system.

Description of project activities

The Blue Campus will carry out a wide range of activities, including:

- skills development and training for blue careers (re-skilling and up-skilling);
- intercultural contamination processes;
- scientific collaborations;
- stakeholder support for access to international funds (World Bank, United Nations system, European Union) in relation to the Sea Economy sector.

It is also an incubator for "blue" projects and businesses, including social ones, and therefore a centre for collaboration and innovation that brings together both the scientific community linked to the sea and the companies and innovative ideas that the sector expresses.

Impact

The Blue Campus community will be engaged in a radical and collaborative initiative to develop joint projects and encourage the sharing and use of its wide range of technology platforms, research infrastructure and redeveloped facilities.

It represents a valuable investment in both the short and long term and at different levels:

- Economic: the possibility of exploiting new forms of production can help revitalise sectors in crisis such as fishing and coastal tourism and identify emerging sectors;
- Social: this entrepreneurial dynamism can lead to an increase in the number of jobs, benefiting people and gender equality. The Campus will also benefit young people wishing to enter the world of fishing and the fishing industry.
- Environmental: the improvement of production techniques and harvesting at sea, in the direction dictated by the blue economy, makes it possible to reduce harmful emissions, benefiting the environment and safeguarding the marine habitat in terms of flora and fauna.

In short, we could say that the true mission of the Blue Campus is to identify new landing places for social and cultural transformation capable of producing sustainable forms of economy and, at the same time, participatory forms of governance for IORA coastal cities.

Empowerment of women in the blue economy (fisheries and aquaculture)

The fishing world is known not only as a particularly productive sector, but also for its specific male connotation. In fact, women have always been a constant but silent presence, with no visibility and even less recognition and protection for their role as collaborators in the family fishing enterprise.

At a global level and in the IORA countries in particular, women play a particularly significant role, since in addition to looking after the family, they are often the ones who carry out the land-based tasks required: marketing the catch, administration, and carrying out bureaucratic procedures.

The enhancement of women's role in the fisheries sector passes through self-determination and awareness of the importance of the work women do, as well as carving out a decision-making space that is broader than at present and more in line with the responsibilities they bear.

Providing training that helps women in the sector to develop a micro-entrepreneurial approach also means giving them the tools they need to better reconcile work and life times and consequently improve the quality of life of the whole family-enterprise.

Description of project objectives/activities

1. To promote the advancement of a cultural, legal and social process for the recognition of the role of women working in the fisheries sector.
2. To favour the process of self-determination of women, making them able to recognise and value their work and to carve out a decision-making space that is wider than the current one and more in line with the responsibilities they bear, so that they can be known as micro-entrepreneurs.
3. To create a network of Fishery Women among the IORA countries, in order to support the exchange of experiences and knowledge among professionals of the sector, to activate strategies and synergies aimed at the improvement of the respective entrepreneurial activities and to favour the competitiveness on the markets of the single ichthyic enterprises: a learning and practice community for the sharing of problems and good practices.
4. To improve their own entrepreneurial activity and competitiveness on the market through the opportunities provided by an aggregative organizational model, respecting the individuality of each ichthyic enterprise.
5. To increase the know-how and the ability to acquire, through the activities of a network, the financial, technical and human resources able to allow the achievement of new strategic objectives for the single enterprises activating, where necessary, microcredit instruments
6. To provide general notions of management and marketing to women, in order to support their personal, cultural and professional growth, to improve the commercial performance of their enterprises.

7. To develop in fishery women the concepts of profit ethics and social responsibility linked to the concept of female entrepreneurship and enterprise culture.

Impact

Working in the "maritime industry", within the above parameters, is also possible for women, and financial instruments should target and include:

1. Information, Education and Training;
2. Introduction and institutional determination of the role of women in fisheries;
3. Encouragement of scientific research;
4. Participation in the integral supply chain;
5. Use in the processing and packaging industry;
6. Use in marketing;
7. Employment in fish market services.

Training centre for aquaculture

The quality of the aquaculture production is improving impressively and, given the weaknesses of many fish stocks, it is important to supply the global markets. Many countries have a huge need of fish supply, because their domestic demand exceeds the offer, so more fish is needed in the global markets.

Description of project activities

The training centre will be an excellence research and innovation. It will foster the interoperability between fisheries and aquaculture, and contribute the sharing of knowledge among researchers within the IORA countries. Italy is absolutely ready to start this technical cooperation through the sharing of skills and careers, both in the aquaculture and fisheries sector.

Impact

- Exchange of knowledge and circularity of experts between IORA countries;
- Generational turnover;
- Environmental sustainability of aquaculture;
- Digitalisation of competencies
- Ensure the marketing of aquaculture products from IORA countries into international markets (certification and traceability).