

Concept Note & Programme

Unlocking the Value of Blue Resources in Africa and the Indian Ocean

Insights from the UNECA Blue Economy
Valuation Toolkit

Joint IORA-UNECA Webinar

DATE:

Wednesday
5 March 2025

TIME:

10:00 - 12:00 GMT+1 (Yaoundé)
11:00 - 13:00 GMT+2 (Kigali)
12:00 - 14:00 GMT+3 (Dar es Salaam)
13:00 - 15:00 GMT+4 (Port Louis)

Background

The Blue Economy represents a sustainable development approach that advocates for the integrated, fair and circular use of aquatic resources while safeguarding the health of the aquatic ecosystem. Globally, the ocean economy was valued conservatively at USD 1.5 trillion in 2015, with projections doubling to USD 3 trillion by 2030.[1] However, this figure underrepresents the broader contributions of Blue Economy activities. In Africa, the blue economy encompasses oceans, coasts, rivers, lakes and groundwater, emphasizing the sustainable utilization of both coastal and inland aquatic systems.

The African Union underscores the transformative potential of the Blue Economy in its 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy and Agenda 2063, positioning it as a cornerstone of the continent's sustainable development aspirations. Countries across Africa and the Indian Ocean region are scaling up efforts to harness their Blue Economy potential, many with the support of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) or the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

IORA has championed Blue Economy development since 2014, focusing on six priority areas: fisheries and aquaculture; seaport and shipping; coastal tourism; renewable ocean energy; marine biotechnology, research and development; and seabed exploration and minerals. Its *Working Group on Blue Economy* and the *IORA Blue Carbon Hub* have advanced regional cooperation and frameworks to protect shared marine resources.

UNECA has also played a pivotal role, introducing the Blue Economy Policy Handbook for Africa in 2016 to guide strategic policy development. This methodology has informed national and regional Blue Economy strategies in several countries, including in Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Seychelles, and regionally by the East Africa Community, Indian Ocean Commission, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the African Union Blue Economy Strategy in 2019. UNECA has also supported maritime security initiatives and trainings and seed funding for MSMEs on market and finance access.

[1] OECD (2016), The Ocean Economy in 2030, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251724-en>

Despite progress, a major challenge remains: the socio-economic and ecological value of aquatic ecosystems is insufficiently quantified in Africa and the Indian Ocean region. To address this gap, UNECA developed the Blue Economy Valuation Toolkit (BEVTK) to enable member states to assess the contributions of blue resources to economic, environmental, and social well-being. This toolkit has already been applied in Africa and the Caribbean to guide policy and sustainable resource management, including in IORA member countries: Madagascar, [Tanzania](#) and [Seychelles](#).

Building on their shared goals and overlapping membership, IORA and UNECA signed an MoU to strengthen collaboration on technical assistance, capacity building, and knowledge sharing for Blue Economy development. In line with this partnership, UNECA's Sub-Regional Offices for Central and Eastern Africa and IORA are hosting a joint webinar to introduce the BEVTK, demonstrate its application, and encourage increased adoption to inform policymaking in Africa and the Indian Ocean region.

Objective

The objective of this capacity-building event is to create a virtual platform for sharing knowledge and experiences related to the Blue Economy, with a specific focus on the application of the UNECA Blue Economy Valuation Toolkit. The event aims to equip technical experts and policymakers from Central Africa, Eastern Africa, and the wider Indian Ocean region with the knowledge to use the BEVTK effectively. The anticipated outcome is enhanced understanding and adoption of this tool, enabling the development of data-driven policies and strategies to support the sustainable transition to a Blue Economy.

This webinar will support the strategic goals of the IORA Working Group on the Blue Economy by creating an enabling environment for private investments and sustainable financing for Blue Economy initiatives to secure sustainable, economic, and inclusive growth.

Format

The webinar will be held on **5 March 2025**. Note the time zones below:

10:00 - 12:00 GMT+1 (Cameroon)	12:00 - 14:00 GMT+3 (Ethiopia)
11:00 - 13:00 GMT+2 (Rwanda)	13:00 - 15:00 GMT+4 (Mauritius)

This webinar brings together experts and officials from IORA Member States and Central and Eastern African UNECA Member States, while welcoming participation from regional institutions, civil society, academia, and development partners in the Blue Economy. To ensure broad engagement, live interpretation will be available in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

The webinar will be held on **Zoom**. Participants must register at bit.ly/BEVTKwebinar to receive the access link.

Programme

The proposed 2-hour agenda would include presentations from officials and Blue Economy experts with IORA, UNECA, and regional governments.

OPENING AND CONTEXT	
Moderator	Introduction of Webinar
IORA, UNECA	Opening Remarks
IORA, UNECA	Blue Economy in the Regional Context: Challenges and Opportunities
5-minute HEALTH BREAK	
BLUE ECONOMY VALUATION TOOLKIT (BEVTK)	
UNECA, Tanzania	BEVTK Methodology and Tool
	BEVTK Application in Tanzania: Results and Lessons
IORA, UNECA	Way Forward

