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FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES



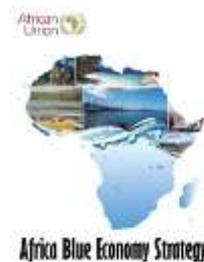
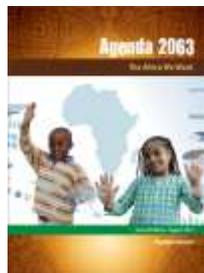
Sweden
Sverige

GAF9 - The 9th Global Conference on Gender in Aquaculture & Fisheries Transforming Aquaculture and Fisheries for Gender Justice

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION THROUGH
THE AFRICAN UNION CONTINENTAL GENDER STRATEGY FOR AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY
CONSERVATION: ALIGNING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE WOMAN FARMER
(IYWF 2026).

Friday 3rd October, 2025
Bangkok, Thailand

BY: MS. STEPHANIE ACHIENG*, HELLEN GUEBAMA AND MOHAMED SEISAY,
AU-IBAR



Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in the Context of the African Blue Economy Project



Implementation: 2021 – 2024/2025

Funding support from the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)**

OBJECTIVE: To enhance the policy environment, regulatory frameworks and institutional capacities of AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities to sustainably utilize and conserve aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems.



SO1

Support AU-MS to ratify and/or align relevant International/Regional Instruments related to blue economy themes (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity);

SO2

Optimizing conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among users of blue economy resources, **(with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity);**

SO3

Strengthening measures for mitigating the negative impacts of coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas, deep sea mining and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment;

SO4

Strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

A Continental Strategy For Gender Mainstreaming in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Management in Africa

Chronology

1. **Continental Study** to identify priority issues and actions for enhancing the role of women in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management

2. **Expert consultative workshop** to develop a continental strategy on gender mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management

3. **Validation** of the Study Report and Continental Strategy (*Study report; Continental Strategy; Policy brief*)

4. **Rolling out the Continental Strategy:**

- Support to 5 AU-MS to develop National Strategies on Gender Mainstreaming in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management
- Technical support environmental-based NGOs to develop gender-sensitive workplans



VISION

Equal and equitable gender participation in conservation and management of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems for a sustainable blue economy that significantly contributes to Africa's transformation and growth.



OBJECTIVE

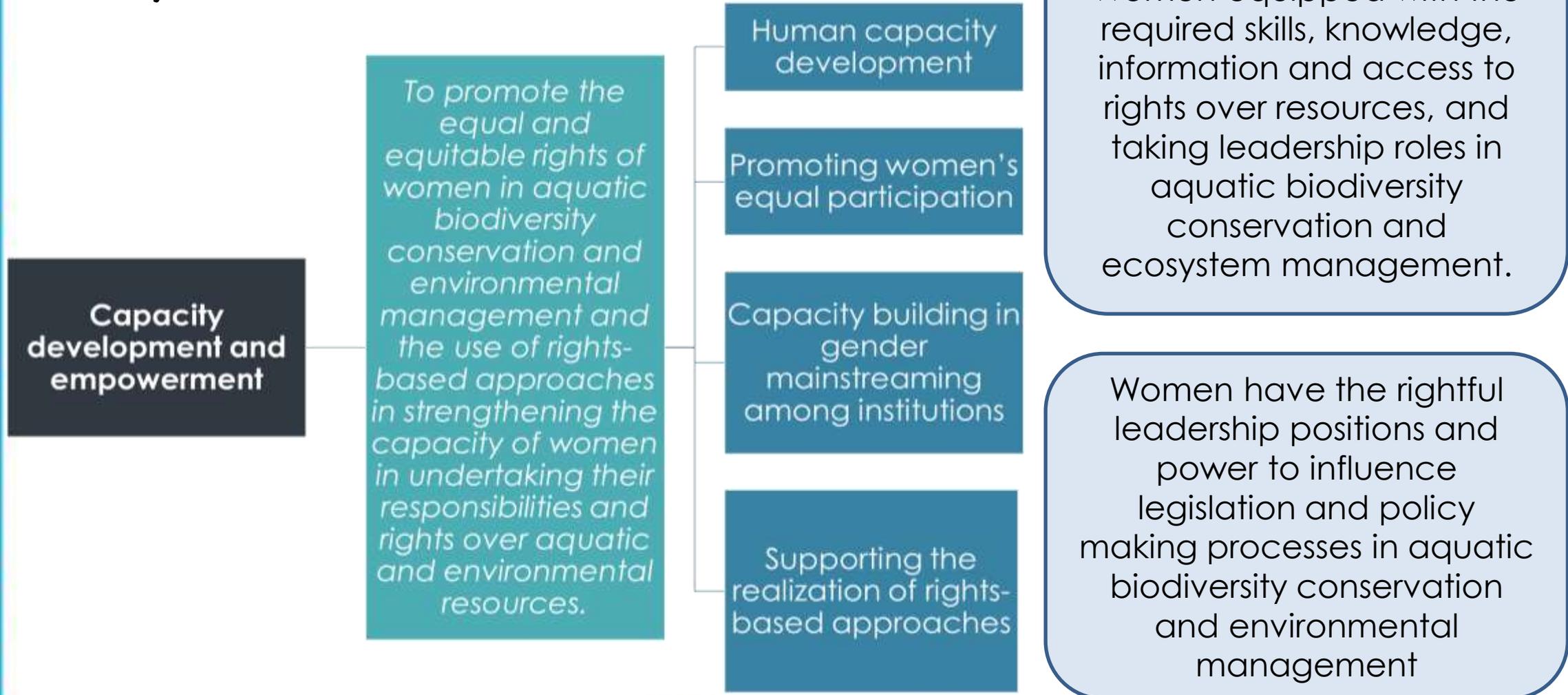
To support and provide guidance to African Union member states and regional institutions for coherent formulation of their national and regional gender mainstreaming strategies that would promote transformation and growth through conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management.

Challenges and Opportunities for the Identification for Women Inclusivity in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management

- **Constraints related to gender division of labor** – Gender norms often impose restrictions on women’s mobilities, limiting their access to aquatic resources and related livelihood activities.
- **Inequalities in accessing resources and benefits** – Access to aquatic resources has been gendered, and women have lower access to aquatic and environmental resources compared to men in Africa and elsewhere.
- **Participation in decision making processes** – Gender norms often define what men and women should do, and contribute to underrepresentation of women in decision making processes (Baker-Médard, 2017).
- **Women’s vulnerability to shocks and gender-based violence** – Women have been disproportionately vulnerable to environmental risks and disasters and gender-based violence amid degradation of aquatic and environmental resources (IFRC & UNICEF, 2021; UN Women, 2021a).
- **Transforming gender norms and sustaining women’s livelihoods** – Understanding gender norms which act as a barrier to women at different levels
- **Increasing women’s access to aquatic and environmental resources** – Promotion of inclusive and human-rights approaches that put gender equality at the center.
- **Women inclusion in building resilience in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management** – Opportunities exist in learning the experiences of women in aquatic biodiversity conservation, and in promoting inclusiveness in resilience building.
- **Building women’s technical, managerial, and leadership capacities** – Engaging women in collective action such as group formation and mobilizing social capital towards common goals in aquatic conservation and environmental management will help for increasing women’s inclusivity.

Priority Areas And Action Points For Women Inclusion In Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation And Environmental Management

Priority Area I



Priority Area 2

Communication and stakeholder engagement

To build engagement on gender equality and women's empowerment in aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management

Promotion of gender-responsive communication strategies

Increased awareness on gender-responsive and rights-based approaches among stakeholders.

Establishing a gender working group on aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management

Increased use of gender-responsive communication

Developing instruments for involvement of private sector in supporting gender inclusivity

Enhanced recognition of women's knowledge and skills in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management

Establishing mechanisms for stakeholder and consultative engagements

Increased participation of women in setting and driving aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management agenda

Priority Area 3

Policy Reforms

To ensure that aquatic biodiversity and ecosystem management policies and programs are sensitive to gender equality and women empowerment issues

Examine the policy context at national level and synthesize the policy context at regional level considering the specific contexts of each region

Map out existing / or design mechanisms for implementation of gender-responsive protocols/policies to address identified gaps

Establish Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) indicators for domestication of gender-responsive international/regional protocols/policies in national laws

Develop a monitoring and evaluation program for following up policy implementation at the national level.

Strengthening of institutions and allocation of resources for policy adaptation and implementation

Gender analysis and budgeting conducted to inform and emphasize on of gender mainstreaming in the design, formulation, implementation, and monitoring of policies relevant for aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management

Priority Area 4

**Research and
innovation**

*To augment /
deepen the
active
participation of
women in
research and
innovation
systems in
aquatic
biodiversity
conservation
and ecosystem
management*

Adopt Gender-responsive
research and innovation
approaches

Involve women in research and
innovation and support their
engagement in a holistic
approach

Enhance the development of
value additional innovative
technologies to reduce post-
harvest losses and improve
/more income for women

Organisation and support –
social capital development

Enhanced participation
of women in research
and innovation teams,
increased inclusion of
women's knowledge
and experiences in
research and
innovation, and to
stimulate the gender-
responsiveness of
research and
innovation in aquatic
biodiversity
conservation and
ecosystem
management.

Support to AU-MS to Develop an All-inclusive And Deliberate Strategy For Mainstreaming Gender In Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation And Integrated Environmental Management



Malawi



Ethiopia



Cote D'Ivoire



Egypt



Cameroon

Continental Support to Gender-sensitive actions

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – West Africa

- Formal collaboration established between AU-IBAR and IUCN West Africa for implementing the project on “Integrated Protection of Fragile Ecosystems - Mangroves”.



Blue Wild Coast NPO via Mabuyi development Planners, South Africa

- Supported an NGO in South Africa on mainstreaming gender in SSF in their workplans and activities in coastal locations – Blue Wild Coast NPO – Ports St Johns and Hamburg, EC.



Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) – East Africa

- In collaboration with the KMFRI, supporting capacity building of **260 women and youth** to take lead in ecosystems restoration programme in the **Gazi Bay**, Kenya.



Zanzibar Seaweed Cluster Initiative (ZaSCI) , Zanzibar, Tanzania

AU-IBAR collaborated with the **Zanzibar Seaweed Cluster Initiative** - Strengthen Conservation and Climate Change Impact Mitigation Efforts for identified Ongoing Initiatives on Nature-based Solutions in Seaweed Farming.



Continental Support to Gender- Sensitive Actions

Continental Strategy on Nature-based Solutions for Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Aquatic Ecosystems and Fish Stocks

- A technical consultant was recruited to develop a continental strategy on Nature-based solutions for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of Aquatic Ecosystems and Fish Stocks.
- A virtual validation workshop was held on 13th May 2025 to validate the findings of the consultant and create awareness of the strategy.

Gender Implementation Plan to operationalize the continental strategy on mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation

- A technical consultant was recruited to develop a gender implementation plan for the gender-inclusive continental strategy, embedding gender perspectives into national policies and practices.
- A virtual validation workshop was held on 29th April 2025 to validate the findings of the consultant and create awareness of the implementation plan.

Study Report on Regional Blue Value Chains In Small-scale Octopus Fisheries And Mechanisms for Strengthening Gender Dimensions And Climate Change And Environmental Considerations In East Africa And South-west Indian Ocean

- Workshop was held to garner the respective national perspectives on status of octopus fisheries in the EA/SWIO region (June 2025).
- Identify issues and priority actions for strengthening regional blue value chains in small-scale octopus' fisheries towards strengthening gender dimensions in Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation in East Africa and South-West Indian Ocean.
- Validation of the findings of the technical consultant on the report.
- A regional network of fisheries for small scale octopus fisheries EA / SWIO established (WION-SOF).



Interim Bureau of WION-SOF with AU-IBAR staff and technical expert



Group photo of participants during the validation workshop in Mombasa, 3rd - 5th June, 2025

Thank You



**AU-IBAR: Providing leadership in the
development of animal resources for Africa**