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Fourteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14)
to the Convention on Cooperation for Protection,
Management and Development of the Marine Environment and
Coastal Areas of the Atlantic Coast of the
West, Central and Southern African Region
(Abidjan Convention)

Nouakchott, Mauritania, 21st to 23rd May 2025

PROGRAMME OF WORK 2025 – 2027

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Abidjan Convention

1. The Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the Atlantic Coast of West, Central and Southern Africa – Abidjan Convention, was born out of the need to adopt a regional approach to preventing, reducing and controlling pollution of the marine environment, coastal waters and related river waters under the jurisdiction of the States of West, Central and Southern Africa.
2. On 23 March 1981, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, countries signed the Convention and its Protocol on Cooperation in Combating Pollution in the Event of an Emergency. On that occasion, the States Parties also adopted an action plan for the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment of the region. The Abidjan Convention, an intergovernmental treaty, is a legal framework agreement that entered into force on 5 May 1984. The geographical area of the Abidjan Convention covers 22 countries, from Mauritania to South Africa, including Cabo Verde and Sao Tome and Principe, covering approximately 14,000 km of coastline. It is home to three major marine ecosystems: the Canary Current, the Gulf of Guinea Current and the Benguela Current. To date, 20 countries are Parties to the Convention, with Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe not yet ratifying it.
3. Recognizing the ecological uniqueness of the region's marine and coastal areas, the importance of their resources and economic opportunities for countries, and the emergence of new threats to ecosystem conservation, the parties emphasized the need for additional ocean governance tools. At the Meeting of the Plenipotentiaries in Abidjan in July 2019, the States Parties therefore adopted four additional protocols to address the new challenges of the sustainable development of the oceans and prevent, mitigate and combat threats to marine ecosystems. These are the (i) Bassam Protocol on pollution from land-based sources and activities, (ii) Malabo Protocol on environmental standards associated with offshore oil and gas activities, (iii) Pointe-Noire Protocol on integrated coastal zone management; and (iv) Calabar Protocol on sustainable mangrove management.
4. Under the presidency of the Republic of Congo and in accordance with Article 17 of the Abidjan Convention, the Secretariat organized the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) from 13 to 15 December 2021, with the theme 'Ocean Governance: Challenges and Prospects for Africa's Sustainable Development'. Due to the ongoing pandemic, COP13 was held virtually. Twenty decisions were adopted at COP13, as well as the Pointe-Noire Declaration and the 2022–2024 Work Programme (CP13/2). The following COP13 Bureau has been established: President: Congo Vice-Chairpersons: Mauritania and Sierra Leone; and Rapporteurs: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and South Africa.

B. Context

5. Through decision CP.13.1, COP13 requested the secretariat to continue efforts to implement certain decisions from COP12 relating to the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management Policy (CP.12.7) and the fight against the illegal trade in marine and coastal fauna and flora (CP.12..14), combating invasive marine and coastal plants (CP.12.13), sustainable lagoon management (CP.12.15), coastal city management (CP.12/17), promoting ocean energy (CP.12.18) and implementing the Abidjan Convention's Alliance of Parliamentarians and Local Elected Officials in Coastal Areas (CP.12.19).
6. The lingering impacts of the 2021 Covid-19 pandemic affected the pace of activity implementation during the 2022–24 period. Countries have not yet returned to pre-Covid levels of economic activity, which has impacted the implementation of activities.
7. The Secretariat has experienced financial difficulties, which have had a drastic effect on the functioning of the Convention.
8. COP14 and the development of the work programme are taking place in a context marked by changes aimed at instilling new dynamics to better address biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate

change crises. These global challenges require strong commitments from the Contracting Parties and the identification of concrete actions.

9. The adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework for the decade 2020-2030 in Kunming-Montreal in December 2022 is an important milestone in the overall process of planning, cooperation and resource mobilization to achieve targeted biodiversity conservation goals. To halt and reverse the dangerous decline in biodiversity, which threatens the survival of one million species and could disrupt the lives of billions of people by 2050, the efforts of the Parties must be intensified. It would be wise to seize the opportunity offered by COP14 to adopt measures that can facilitate the achievement of the 2030 objectives. Issues of governance, partnerships, resource mobilization and measuring progress must be addressed with the aim of reducing biodiversity loss and conserving at least 30% of land, water and seas.
10. In June 2023, countries adopted the agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (the High Seas Treaty, or BBNJ), which highlights several legislative, administrative and political challenges for states. Implementing the BBNJ Treaty will require regional cooperation to be strengthened, as well as the capacity of Contracting Parties to the Convention, to reap the benefits, ensure access to marine genetic resources (MGRs) and create and implement area-based management tools (ABMTs). This includes establishing marine protected areas on the high seas to accelerate the goal of protecting at least 30% of the seas and oceans, assessing environmental impacts (EIAs) and building capacity and transferring technologies.
11. The Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) are at the halfway point and will culminate in the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), which will take place in Nice from 9 to 13 June 2025. The Nice conference will focus on four key priorities: (i) concluding multilateral ocean-related processes; (ii) raising the level of ambition for ocean protection; (iii) mobilising financing for SDG 14 and supporting the development of a sustainable blue economy; and (iv) strengthening and disseminating knowledge related to marine sciences to improve policy decision-making.
12. Since July 2019, additional protocols have been signed which would significantly contribute to ocean governance, the reduction of marine biodiversity losses and the fight against marine pollution if implemented. However, these protocols have not been ratified by any Contracting Party.
13. Finally, states are preparing for the final stages of negotiating a legally binding intergovernmental treaty on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. This will take place from 5 to 14 August 2025 in Geneva. Once adopted, the treaty will require strong political commitment for signature, ratification and implementation.

II. WORK PROGRAMME 2025-2027

A. Reminder of the dynamics of the work programmes

14. As part of a comprehensive and ambitious initiative to revitalise the Abidjan Convention, African governments have developed work programmes. The first programme of work of the Abidjan Convention was adopted at the seventh Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP7), which took place in Libreville, Gabon, on 22 and 23 March 2005. The 2005–07 Programme of Work focused on improving coordination mechanisms and promoting ratification. The strategic directions for the regional seas served as the basis for the 2005–2007 Programme of Work.
15. The 8th Conference of the Parties (COP8), held from 5 to 8 November 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa, adopted the Programme of Work for the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention for the period 2008–2011. This meeting helped maintain momentum by building on the priorities identified in the

previous work programme, as well as strengthening and intensifying links between partners, programmes, and projects.

16. Implementation of the 2008–2011 Programme of Work has been rather slow due to insufficient human and financial resources available to the Secretariat. The Regional Coordinator was only recruited at the end of March 2010, with limited staff and financial resources available. Consequently, only a few activities were implemented, primarily those that did not require financial contributions. Consequently, the Secretariat has been operating under a 'current level' funding scenario (i.e. considering that some Contracting Parties were not paying their contributions to the trust fund), focusing its efforts on collecting and synthesising data on coastal habitats and the threats they face, with a view to conducting a regional analysis.
17. Both COP9, which took place from 28 March to 1 April 2011 in Accra, Ghana, and COP10, which took place from 12 to 16 November 2012 in Pointe-Noire, Republic of Congo, adopted and approved the renewal of the 2012–15 Programme of Work. With financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Secretariat developed a programme of work based on the following components:
 - a. the valuation of ecosystem goods and services, as well as coastal and marine habitats;
 - b. management aimed at implementing programmes and activities to reduce or prevent the degradation of the marine environment and coastal areas;
 - c. coordination and legal policy issues;
 - d. Communication and Information Technology;
 - e. Emerging and cross-cutting issues.
18. At COP12 in Cape Town, South Africa, from 17 to 21 March 2014, the 2015–2017 work programme was adopted. While the Secretariat's efforts to secure additional funding are to be acknowledged, the implementation of the programme of work for 2015–2017 has been carried out based on the current scenario due to budgetary uncertainties. Thanks to the technical and financial support of partners such as the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystems Project (CCLME), the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMU), GRID Arendal, the MAVA Foundation, SIDA and USFRICOM, as well as USAID through the WABiCC Program, the 2015–2017 work programme has seen a remarkable implementation rate. This partnership has enabled the Secretariat to set up thematic expert groups to develop:
 - a) Additional Protocol to the Abidjan Convention on Environmental Standards and Norms for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration and Exploitation Activities;
 - b) Additional Protocol on Sustainable Mangrove Management;
 - c) Additional Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management;
 - d) Sub-regional emergency plan for combatting pollution due to the accidental spill of oil in the CCLME areas;
 - e) Regional Strategy and Strategic Action Plan for the Control of Marine and Coastal Invasive Plants.
19. In addition to these protocols, strategies and action plans, the Secretariat and its partners have worked to consolidate and extend achievements in habitat and biodiversity management.(i) invasive plants/algae; ii) illegal trafficking of wildlife in coastal areas; iii) marine debris; iv) ports and marine and coastal environmental management; v) ocean governance; vi) marine spatial planning (MSP); vii) ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs); viii) vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs); ix) biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ); x) ecosystem services.
20. The programme of work adopted at COP12 in Abidjan in 2017 emphasised the implementation of the WACAF action plan, which is based on the five pillars mentioned above. Thanks to the technical and financial support of partners such as the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMU), GRID Arendal, the MAVA Foundation, the Swiss Embassy (which supports the process of creating the Grand-Béréby Marine Protected Area (MPA)), the UNEP-FAO Partnership on Mangrove Reforestation (CFI Project), the University of Potsdam, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the West Africa Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change (WABiCC) Programme, and the World Bank through the West

Africa Coastal States (WACA) Programme, it has had a remarkable implementation rate. Thanks to these partners, the Secretariat has been able to develop action plans for implementing the protocols, as well as the Integrated Ocean Management (IOM) policy. Apart from these action plans and the IOM policy, the Secretariat has endeavoured, together with its partners, to consolidate and extend achievements in habitat and biodiversity management.

21. The 2022-2024 work programme was an extension of the previous planning cycle, continuing the efforts and consolidating the gains made in the implementation of the five pillars of WACAF. He focused on ocean governance, Integrated Ocean Management Policy, Marine Spatial Planning, blue economy, EBSAs, the State of the Marine Environment Report (MSAR), biodiversity in ABNJ, coastal protection, the global framework of climate change, habitat and biodiversity conservation, action plans for the implementation of the additional protocols to the Abidjan Convention, the new protocol on MPAs, and the resource centre.

B. Overview of the implementation of the 2022-2024 work programme

22. The Programme of Work for the period 2022–2024 was presented at the COP13 Expert Segment and adopted by the Ministerial Segment in decision CP13.03.
23. Together with the Parties and other partners, the Convention is implementing a number of initiatives through projects that contribute to the objectives of the work plan. These include: i) the ACP MEAs 3 programme, 'Capacity building related to multilateral environmental agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries', funded by the European Commission; ii) the Investment for Coastal Zone Resilience in West Africa (WACA ResIP) project, funded by the World Bank; iii) the Grand-Béréby project, which focuses on creating and managing the Grand-Béréby Marine Protected Area in Côte d'Ivoire. This project is funded by GEF and was launched in February 2025. Other initiatives include the Plastic Project, supported by GIZ, and the initiative to improve the livelihoods of coastal communities of Grand-Béréby, supported by CMA-CGM.
24. The decision (CP13.5) to develop an additional protocol on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is being implemented by convening three meetings of the expert group on MPAs. This has enabled the drafting of a protocol for consultation with the Parties, which is included on the agenda for COP14, pending the scheduling of a plenipotentiary meeting. The draft protocol includes references to SC13.13 on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). Meanwhile, the Convention has contributed to establishing the Baie de l'Etoile marine protected area in Mauritania and is supporting the development of management plans for the Donaten (Benin) and Somone (Senegal) marine protected areas, while continuing to develop a guide on MPA management.
25. Decisions CP13.10 and CP13.15, relating to the preparation of a report on the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Abidjan Convention Area, and to Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) respectively, are being implemented within the framework of the ACP-MEAs3 project. This project has been extended at no additional cost and will conclude on 31 December 2025. In collaboration with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) and the Small-Scale Fisheries Programme (SST), regional and national capacity-building training sessions have been organised to continue the efforts initiated by Grid Arendal and the West and Central Africa Coast (WACA) project, while also supporting some national initiatives. Following the preparation of national reports on the state of the marine environment, collaboration with AU-IBAR has resulted in the creation of a Benin-Togo transboundary report, leveraging the transboundary consultation framework established under WACA. As part of the implementation of decision CP13/16 on marine plastic litter, a regional framework on plastic litter management has been developed. Pilot processes for the preparation of national plans have been initiated in three countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania and the Democratic Republic of Congo) in application of the regional framework.
26. Within the framework of the WACA project, the Convention collaborated with the West African Economic and Monetary Union to develop four community regulations for the governance of coastal and marine areas, in accordance with decision CP13.9 for the transposition of the additional protocols into domestic law. Following a meeting of West African Ministers of the Environment organized by WAEMU, the regulations were adopted by the WAEMU Council of Ministers and came

into immediate effect in November 2024. Meetings with Abidjan Convention focal points and national institutions responsible for marine and coastal environments have resulted in the adoption of a monitoring and reporting framework for Abidjan Convention regulations, thus contributing to the Convention's reporting mechanism.

27. To accelerate the implementation of the four additional protocols and provide parties with a national action plan (SC13.18), the Convention within the WACA ResIP activities, supported nine parties in adopting their action plans. This brings the total number of parties with a national action plan to twelve. To encourage ratification of the protocols, the Convention supported capacity building for focal points on ratification processes for international treaties, as well as on their role in ensuring the Abidjan Convention functions properly at the national level. Finally, in collaboration with the PRCM and the UEMOA, the Convention launched the development of a regional framework to consult and raise awareness among parliamentarians of the challenges of sustainably managing marine and coastal areas, and of the merits and contents of the protocols, in accordance with decision CP 12/19 on establishing and animating the Alliance of Parliamentarians and Local Elected Representatives in Support of the Abidjan Convention (APPELCA). The focus was on the benefits of ratifying the protocols and the need to harmonise the legislation governing the management of coastal and marine zones.
28. A memorandum of understanding was signed by the Abidjan Convention, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the PRCM for the sustainable management of coastal and marine areas. This establishes a framework for consultation, resource mobilisation and the pooling of resources.
29. The project, 'Strengthening the Sustainable and Inclusive Management of the Grand-Béréby Marine Protected Area', which is recognised as being particularly important for the conservation of biodiversity in Côte d'Ivoire, was officially launched in February 2025. Funded by USD 1,320,000 from the GEF, it aims to combat biodiversity loss.
30. As part of a partnership with the private sector, an initiative to improve the livelihoods of coastal communities, particularly women and fishermen in Grand-Béréby, is underway with financial support from CMA-CGM.
31. A project document entitled 'Combating the loss of biodiversity and degradation of coastal areas of the broad marine ecosystem of the Gulf of Guinea Current through action-based' is being developed with the support of UNEP. A meeting with the GCLME focal points was held on 18 March 2025.

C. Funding for 2022-2024

32. The financial sustainability of the Convention hinges on Contracting Parties honouring their financial commitments to the Secretariat and making regular contributions to support the various programmes of work. As with previous programmes of work, the 2022–24 programme is expected to be funded through contributions from Contracting Parties and donors.

*Table 1: Since COP13, out of 20 Contracting Parties, only eight (08) have made a cumulative payment of **\$US 845,449** from 2022 to 2024 and **\$US 54,688** for 2025, bringing the total payment received to **\$US 900,137***

COUNTRIES	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL Received
	Received	Received	Received	Received	
BENIN	95,258	-	14,220		109,478
CONGO	47,640	-	-		47,640
COTE D'IVOIRE	-	-	50,866	-	50,866
GAMBIA	-	-	-	7,300	7,300
MAURITANIA	62,998	20,811	-		83,809
NAMIBIA	23,694	23,694	23,694	47,388	118,470

SENEGAL	-	-	284,409		284,409
SOUTH AFRICA	66,055	66,055	66,055		198,165
TOTAL RECEIVED	295,645	110,560	439,244	54,688	900,137

33. Budget execution for implementation of the 2022–2024 work programme (see Table 2), adopted at COP13, has seen a remarkable rate of implementation, thanks entirely to technical and financial support from the Convention's partners, contributing 81% compared to the mere 19% contribution from the Contracting Parties.

Table 2: Funds raised for the implementation of projects

Table 1: Funds raised for the implementation of projects			
No.	PARTNERS	Project Fund	% IMPLEMENTATION
INDICATOR: Amount of funds mobilized from partners for the implementation of the Abidjan Convention			
1	WACA Program (World Bank)	\$ 939,609	81%
2	ACP MEAs III Programme	\$ 1,273,873	
3	CHALK	\$ 45,611	
4	ICA-GEF-2024 / MPA GRAND BEREBY	\$ 1,320,000	
5	CMA CGM / BEREBY MPS PROJECT	\$ 23,684	
6	SWEDEN AMP GRAND BEREBY	\$ 58,685	
TOTAL PROJECTS MOBILIZED BY THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION		\$ 3,661,462	
7	TOTAL RAISED BY THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION TRUST FUND	\$ 845,449	19%
TOTAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION		\$ 4,506,911	100%

34. Given the very low level of contributions received from States Parties for the period of 2022 to 2024, it is anticipated that the budget estimates for implementing this work programme for 2025–2027 will unfortunately exceed the contribution commitments. Consequently, greater efforts will be required to collect unpaid pledges, as well as arrears from 2010 to 2024.
35. Clearly, the current scenario will persist unless another fundraising campaign is undertaken during the planning cycle to create a more favourable scenario that aligns with the programme expectations of the Parties. Unfortunately, the only way for the Secretariat to improve implementation of the programme for 2025–2027 is to continue collaborating with technical and financial partners. This is because our efforts to secure payments from Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention to the Trust Fund have had limited success.
36. As a reminder, Article 4 of the Rules and Procedures stipulates that no country with arrears of more than two years to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund can sit on one of the Convention's statutory bodies. It is hoped that this measure will increase the rate of payments to, and contributions to, the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund for the implementation of the Convention. In any case, the parties

are expected to demonstrate renewed political commitment to the Convention. The strong political commitment that existed at the time of creation is essential.

Table 3: Status of Arrears in Contributions of \$ 5,180,147.82 to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund - Period: Year 2010 to 2025 (US Dollars)

N°	Parties	TOTAL UNPAID as of 31 December 2024	PLEDGE for the Year 2025 Contributions	TOTAL UNPAID, as of 30 April 2025
1	Angola	\$US 528,440.00	\$US 66,055.00	\$US 594,495.00
2	Benin		\$US 23,694.00	\$US 23,694.00
3	Cameroon	\$US 524,143.17	\$US 43,079.00	\$US 567,222.17
4	Republic of Congo	\$US 102,122.80	\$US 23,694.00	\$US 125,816.80
5	Democratic Republic of Congo	\$US 473,869.00	\$US 43,079.00	\$US 516,948.00
6	Cote d'Ivoire	\$US 24,119.83	\$US 43,079.00	\$US 67,198.83
7	Gabon	\$US 561,350.92	\$US 43,079.00	\$US 604,429.92
8	Gambia	\$US 295,438.71	\$US 23,694.00	\$US 311,832.79
9	Ghana	\$US 226,163.00	\$US 32,309.00	\$US 258,472.00
10	Guinea	\$US 253,935.00	\$US 23,694.00	\$US 277,629.00
11	Guinea-Bissau	\$US 253,935.00	\$US 23,694.00	\$US 277,629.00
12	Liberia	\$US 270,403.00	\$US 23,694.00	\$US 294,097.00
13	Mauritania	\$US 26,780.05	\$US 23,694.00	\$US 50,474.05
14	Namibia		\$US 23,694.00	\$US 23,694.00
15	Nigeria	\$US 524,282.72	\$US 66,055.00	\$US 590,337.72
16	Senegal	\$US 61,425.54	\$US 32,309.00	\$US 93,734.54
17	Sierra Leone	\$US 94,776.00	\$US 23,694.00	\$US 118,470.00
18	South Africa		\$US 66,055.00	\$US 66,055.00
19	Togo	\$US 264,231.00	\$US 23,694.00	\$US 287,925.00
20	CABO VERDE		\$US 23,694.00	\$US 23,694.00
	TOTAL	\$US 4,484,414.82	\$US 695,733.00	\$US 5,180,147.82

D. Implementation strategy for the Programme of Work 2025-2027

37. Despite the financial context of the Convention, the new Work Programme 2025-2027 is intended to be an ambitious and innovative programme developed on the basis of emerging issues that require action in the south-east Atlantic Ocean region. In particular, it will continue efforts aimed at the ratification and entry into force of additional protocols to the Convention, including the new protocol on marine protected areas currently under negotiation. It will also support countries in ocean governance, particularly by promoting ocean management and governance tools, and supporting policies for a sustainable blue economy. Additionally, it will take action to combat pollution and create a knowledge management platform.
38. The programme will propose new initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 14 on oceans. In this regard, the programme is aligned with ongoing global-level policies and dialogues. This will include actively supporting ongoing negotiations, as well as the signing and ratification of a legally binding treaty to combat plastic pollution. It will also support the implementation of the Biodiversity Treaty beyond national jurisdictions, including the application of area-based management tools. Finally, it will comply with the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which aims to establish 30% of protected areas by 2030.
39. The key to success lies in the active mobilisation of partnerships and funding for the implementation of high-impact, structuring projects, as well as substantial contributions to the trust fund from Parties. In this respect, the Convention will be able to count on: i) Phase 2 of WACA ResIP, for which the contract is currently being negotiated at \$1,350,000; ii) The project to strengthen coastal resilience in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, for which the Convention is ensuring the implementation of the component relating to the dissemination of good practices, with a budget of \$319,000; iii) the Grand-Béréby project (\$1,320,000); and iv) the ACP MEA project, which has a residual amount of approximately \$317,000 and will close in December 2025. The Secretariat is working to finalise the GCLME project document with GEF funding. It will initiate new projects and partnerships to address the Convention region's priority challenges. In some cases, endorsement by Contracting Parties will be required, as well as initial resources to facilitate prior consultations in the conceptualisation phase.
40. The legitimate ambition of the Contracting Parties for a dynamic Convention that fully assumes its mandate to serve as a framework for cooperation in the protection, management, and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of the Atlantic coast necessarily requires real political ownership of the Convention by all parties, as well as the clearance of arrears in contributions to the trust fund. This is the catalyst for further new initiatives.

E. The main objectives of the 2025-2027 Work Programme

41. The main objective of the programme of work for 2025–2027 is to revitalise the Convention by strengthening its role as a platform to promote synergies and ensure the coordinated implementation of regional initiatives related to the protection of the marine and coastal environment. Specifically, this will involve:
 - a) Revitalise and promote the Abidjan Convention as a platform to increase collaboration and the implementation of marine and coastal aspects within the environmental programmes of regional organisations and partnerships, such as the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the African Ministers' Council on Water, the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and the Regional Economic Communities.
 - b) Contribute to regional capacity building, harmonise policies for integrated marine and coastal management and improve ocean governance in general.

- c) Support Contracting Parties in achieving the targets of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 14: to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, including beyond areas under national jurisdiction.
- d) Provide ongoing advice on developing institutional, legal and financial mechanisms necessary for ocean governance, supporting the long-term implementation of the Abidjan Convention while recognising that many countries implement the Convention alongside other sustainable development policies, strategies and programmes.
- e) Promote and facilitate integrated coastal zone management to safeguard coastal habitats and address physical coastal degradation by linking watershed management with ecosystem-based approaches that take into account the linkages between land-based activities and the marine environment.
- f) Engage public and private sector stakeholders to minimise pollution in operations and management practices for innovative ocean governance.
- g) Develop regional strategic instruments (regional strategies and thematic regional action plans) to guide the cooperation framework and support initiatives to improve biodiversity and reduce and combat marine pollution, including marine litter, microplastics and microbeads.

F. The main elements of the 2025-2027 Work Programme

42. The elements of the 2025-2027 work programme listed below are grouped under various funding scenarios: i) The scenario dictated by the current state of the trust fund, i.e. without any significant additional funding from Contracting Parties and an inability to engage in catalytic activities, ii) an optimistic scenario based on an increase in contributions to the trust fund to engage in catalytic activities impacting national and regional activities.
43. The 2025-2027 Work Programme is divided into four components. These are based on the strategic guidance used in previous programmes of work and are presented in the report of COP7, document UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.7/8. Cross-sectoral issues are also identified and focus more on the issue of mobilizing resources and contributions from Parties.
 - **Component 1: Evaluations.** This component focuses on ecosystem and habitat assessment activities. Topics covered include ecosystems and resources, pollution in the Exclusive Economic Zone and coastal areas, and social and economic issues, including the valuation of goods and services provided by the marine and coastal environment. The purpose of this component is to improve understanding of the marine environment and coastal areas, supporting decision-makers in addressing the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources.
 - **Component 2: Management.** This component involves implementing programmes and activities that aim to reduce or prevent the degradation of the coastal and marine environment. It will focus on sustainable resource development activities through field projects and programmes. The activities will be based on:
 - i. Spatial planning;
 - ii. The management of ecosystems and habitats (mangroves, seagrass beds, beaches and other sandbanks, lagoons, lakes, etc.);
 - iii. The fight against coastal erosion;
 - iv. The sustainable development of resources for poverty reduction in coastal areas;
 - v. The preservation of biodiversity, particularly in MPAs;

- vi. The prevention of marine pollution risks ;
- vii. The fight against plastic waste;
- viii. The fight against the proliferation of invasive plants (Sargassum, Water Hyacinth, Typha, etc.).

44. The purpose of this component is the effective management, sustainable use and protection of the marine and coastal environment of the Abidjan Convention region.

- **Component 3: Coordination and political and legal aspects.** The emphasis will be placed on revising and updating the Abidjan Convention and its Protocol on Cooperation in Pollution Control in the Event of Emergencies, adopting additional protocols on specific themes, creating action plans to implement these protocols, developing a regional Integrated Ocean Management policy and improving coordination of activities (including reporting and information exchange mechanisms) and institutional strengthening to implement the Convention. Activities will focus on:

- i. Adoption of the amended text of the Abidjan Convention.
- ii. Supporting the ratification and incorporation of the Additional Protocols to the Abidjan Convention, as well as other relevant global legal instruments, into domestic law.
- iii. Organising the signing of the Additional Protocol on MPAs by the plenipotentiaries and the action plans for its implementation.
- iv. The development of an action plan for the MPA Additional Protocol;
- v. Collaboration with the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, regional fisheries organisations, and other partners on ocean governance, including other regional seas conventions;
- vi. Support for financing mechanisms to implement ocean governance and the sustainable blue economy at national and regional levels.
- vii. Transatlantic cooperation;
- viii. Coordination with Contracting Parties, partners, and other bodies.

45. The purpose of this component is to strengthen the coordination structure within the Abidjan Convention and to formulate an adequate legal and institutional framework for the effective and coordinated implementation of the Abidjan Convention in collaboration with all the partners concerned.

- **Component 4: Communication and information technology.** This component focuses on information exchange with parties, partners and communities, as well as public education, awareness-raising, stakeholder empowerment and capacity building. Activities will include:
 - i. updating and implementing the communication strategy;
 - ii. the creation and maintenance of a resource centre;
 - iii. information management and sharing;
 - iv. education, awareness-raising and capacity building;
 - v. increasing the visibility of the Convention.

46. The objective of this component is to provide the Secretariat with a resource centre to provide information in an accessible and understandable format to assist in decision-making processes and public awareness of the importance of the marine and coastal environment.

C. Main activities of the 2025-2027 work programme

47. Tables 4-8 show the type of activities that the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention will carry out in collaboration with other partners.

a) Component 1: Ecosystem assessments

Table 4: Component 1: Ecosystem Assessments

Scenario	Component 1: Ecosystem and Habitat Assessment	Partners
Current level	Collect and synthesize data on coastal habitats and the threats they face	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
Optimal level	Assessments that address information gaps identified in national baseline reports	Contracting Parties
	Assess critical habitats including coral reefs, canyons, seamounts, seagrass beds, mangroves, estuaries, island complexes, etc.	CBD, UNEP-Regional Seas Programmes
	Assess threatened species such as rays and sharks, sea turtles, manatees, migratory seabirds, etc.	BirdLife, IUCN, Wetlands International, WWF, CITES and CMS, etc.
	Support for the formulation of integrated national oceans management policies	CIAPOL Côte d'Ivoire, CSE of Senegal, DGEC of Benin, EPA-Ghana, EPA-Sierra Leone, Grid Arendal, IOI-SA and SST of South Africa, etc.
	Promote and support the use of Marine Spatial Planning, report on the State of the Marine Environment, Ecologically and/or Biologically Significant Areas and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems as tools for the planning and management of habitats with important biodiversity; Establishment of a working group on MSP,	CIAPOL Côte d'Ivoire, CSE of Senegal, DGEC of Benin, IOI-SA, IOC-UNESCO, RAMPPO, WWF, IUCN etc.
	Assess biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction	IASS Potsdam and IDDRI
	Create the Guinea Current Commission	UNEP, UNIDO etc.

b) Component 2: Management (Prevention of degradation of the coastal and marine environment)

48. Given the current level of resources, the limited funds available mean that the secretariat of the Convention cannot support all the main management activities. The focus will therefore be on project development. Additionally, the activities of major projects related to marine ecosystems in the region will contribute significantly to achieving this objective.
49. If resources improve, activities will consist of supporting ongoing initiatives in the areas of habitat protection and restoration, and the sustainable development of resources.

Table 5: Component 2: Management and prevention of degradation of the coastal and marine environment

Scenario	Component 2: Management	Partners
Current level	Develop projects/action plans for the implementation of the protocols on marine protected areas.	Expert groups, MPAs, etc.
	Develop projects/programmes for the application of tools for the planning and management of habitats with important biodiversity (marine spatial planning, state of the marine environment, vulnerable marine ecosystems)	UNEP, IOI of South Africa etc.
	Develop a project/programme on the management of areas beyond national jurisdiction	SAMWM, IASS Potsdam and IDDRI etc.

	Develop a project/action plan for the implementation of the Integrated Ocean Management Policy	CIAPOL Côte d'Ivoire, CSE of Senegal, DGEC of Benin, EPA-Ghana, EPA-Sierra Leone, Grid Arendal and IOI of South Africa, etc.
Optimal level	Support initiatives to develop and implement habitat and biodiversity planning and management tools	Grid Arendal, German Ministry of the Environment
	Support pilot projects for the protection, restoration and enhancement of critical marine ecosystems and wildlife	MEAs, PRCM et RAPAC
	Support national action plans for adaptation to climate change	Parties
	Support Marine Protected Area Management initiatives	FEM, PRCM, RAMPAC et RAPAC, CSE, ACP MEAs3
	Implement the programme of work included in the GCLME Strategic Action Plan	FAO, PNUD, PNUE, ONUDI etc.
	Implement a monitoring and evaluation system for the Secretariat's project and programme	Secretariat and partners
Optimal level	Develop and organize training courses on MSP, climate change, valuation of ecosystem goods and services and management of protected areas, etc.	Grid Arendal and MEAs, IOC-UNESCO, RAMPAC, IOI-SA, CSE, PRCM etc.
	Implement projects and programmes for the protection, restoration of habitats and enhancement of marine and coastal resources.	IUCN, MEAs et PRCM
	Implement a plastic litter and other marine debris management programme	MEAs, UEMOA and the World Bank
	Operationalize the regional pollution control center	Contracting Parties

c) Component 3: Coordination and policy and legal aspects

50. Strategic Direction 5 of the Regional Seas ('Enhancing the use of regional seas as a platform for the coordinated implementation of multilateral agreements and global environmental initiatives') has taken this even further, with a growing emphasis on leveraging the Convention to foster greater collaboration. The formulation and implementation of the 2025–2027 Programme of Work, for example, is the result of a collaborative effort between the secretariat, governments, donors, and non-governmental organisations. Additionally, the Abidjan Convention necessitates an effective coordination mechanism that builds upon existing ecological management units.
51. There is an urgent need for decentralised coordination structures to address the complexities arising from:
- An increasing number of uncoordinated, international and related initiatives on marine and coastal areas by multilateral and bilateral partners;
 - numerous programmes and projects launched by non-governmental organisations;
 - extreme distances between countries in the Convention Area;
 - the distinct and exceptional nature of the three major marine ecosystems (the Benguela, Guinea and Canary Currents).
52. Regarding the above points, strengthening and developing partnerships with other agencies and projects will be an important element of the programme of work. This is evident from the incorporation of relevant elements into the work plans and activities of partner non-governmental organisations.
53. The capacity building of focal points will continue to be a priority and will benefit from the momentum generated by the establishment of national committees, the definition of specific terms of reference, and the development of a reporting mechanism for the Convention. The national

reporting mechanism to the Convention will provide the secretariat with ongoing guidance on national priorities for coastal and marine management.

54. A new protocol on MPAs is being negotiated, and work is underway on another protocol concerning the management of plastic waste.

Table 6: Component 3: Coordination and political and legal issues

Scenario	Component 3: Coordination and political and legal issues	Partners
Current level	Prepare and convene statutory conferences of Contracting Parties (COP and COP Bureau)	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Coordinate the implementation of cooperation activities agreed at meetings of the Contracting Parties	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Strengthen the coordination mechanism for projects relating to large marine ecosystems,	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Support the functioning of sub-regional coordination units based on natural groupings of countries that share the three major marine ecosystems as a means of decentralizing implementation.	BCLME, CCLME, et GCLME CPCO, COREP, CSRP, CEAC, ECOWAS, etc.
	Support the ratification process of the Mangrove Protocols, Environmental Standards and Norms for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploitation, Land-based Source Activities and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and Marine Protected Area Management	Etats-Parties, PRCM, UEMOA, CEAC, CEDEAO,
	Collaborate with African Union, RECs, regional fisheries management institutions and other partners on ocean governance;	Secretariat of the Convention
Optimal level	Support parties in the ratification and internalization of the BBNJ Treaty	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Establish a working group for the development of a regional strategy for the implementation of the BBNJ Treaty	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, SAMWM, DOALOS
	Support and strengthen the Regional Coordination Unit;	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Support the process of creating and commissioning the Guinea Current Commission;	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Develop a regional action plan for the implementation of the GPA Protocol	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, UEMOA, IUCN
	Support States in their process of developing the National Integrated Ocean Management Policy	CIAPOL Côte d'Ivoire, CSE of Senegal, DGEC of Benin, EPA-Ghana, EPA-Sierra Leone, Grid Arendal and IOI-SA etc.
	Organize the meeting of plenipotentiaries on the protocol on the management of marine protected areas	WACA, UICN MEAs, PRCM et UEMOA
	Update the texts of the Abidjan Convention and the WACAF Action Plan	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Recruit adequate staff necessary for the functioning of the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Provide technical support to States in the intergovernmental dialogue with Contracting Parties, including expert meetings and working groups, COP offices,	WACA and Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention,
	Support the development of financing mechanisms to implement ocean governance and sustainable blue economy at regional and national levels;	African Union Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention

	Support the process of developing a regional strategy/protocol on plastic waste management;	IUCN, MEAs, PRCM et UEMOA, CEAC, CEDEAO, Banque mondiale
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d) Component 4: Communication and information technology

55. Visibility is a vital element in the progress of the Convention. In this context, the secretariat will focus on the development of tools to (i) facilitate communication between Contracting Parties, (ii) raise the profile of the Convention by giving more visibility to its activities and achievements.

Table 7: Component 4: Communication and Information Technology

Scenario	Component 4: Communication and information technology	Partners
Current level	Report on the progress of the work programme and dissemination of results to Contracting Parties and other partners;	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Examine requests made and information provided by Contracting Parties;	
	Transmit to Contracting Parties of any notifications, reports and other relevant information received by the secretariat from Contracting Parties and other partners;	
	Organize Consultation with the Contracting Parties on matters relating to this Convention and its Protocols	
	Update regularly the Convention's website.	
Optimal level	Implement the Abidjan Convention Secretariat's communication strategy	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Improve the visibility of the Abidjan Convention through the improvement of the website and communication tools	
	Produce communication tools	
	Establish and maintain the clearing-house and information centres of the Abidjan Convention and the sister regional seas conventions	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention
	Develop a new web portal on the Abidjan Convention website.	UNEP
	Integration of the georeferenced database	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, WACA, UN Habitat etc.
	Support the development of new web/online reporting formats,	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, UNEP, WACA

e) Cross-cutting issues and emerging challenges

Table 8: Component 5: Cross-cutting and emerging issues

Cross-cutting issues and emerging issues	Partners
Encourage Contracting Parties to fulfil their obligations and contribute to the Trust Fund of the Abidjan Convention;	Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention and Contracting Parties
Mobilize additional funds from other sources, including non-conventional partners of the Convention	
Develop targeted and sustainable regional financing mechanisms to address marine and coastal issues	

Promote and support processes that increase access to finance	
Identification of sources of financing and income-generating mechanisms or providing financing for various activities.	

D. Financial Resources

56. The programme of work for the period 2025–2027 assumes that the current level of resources will be maintained, despite the dire situation of contributions making this a challenge. If resources are permitted, consideration could be given to expanding recruitment. This expansion could support increased activities at the national level. For the Convention to become a recognized platform for implementation and collaboration, its financial resources will need to increase. The Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention depends on the participation of Contracting Parties in the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund, as well as on donor funding, to develop and implement activities.
57. As part of the work programme, the Secretariat will continue to encourage Contracting Parties to fulfil their obligations and contribute to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund. This demonstration of increased commitment will help the secretariat as it seeks to secure additional funding. The Secretariat would also support the development of targeted, sustainable, regional funding mechanisms. This would promote and support processes that increase access to finance.
58. The projected level of funding for the 2025-2027 work programme amounts to US\$5,812,983, of which 64% is provided by the project partners and 36% by the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund, as illustrated in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Projected Funds to be raised for the implementation of projects 2025 - 2027

No.	Partners	Project Funds	% IMPLEMENTATION	OBSERVATIONS
INDICATOR: Amount of funds mobilized from partners for the implementation of the Abidjan Convention				
1	WACA Program (World Bank)	\$ 375,000	64%	Next balance carried forward
2	ACP MEAs III Programme	\$ 360,000		Next balance carried forward
3	WACA (World Bank) Program, Phase II	\$ 1,350,000		New Phase II Project
4	ICA-GEF-2024 / MPA GRAND BEREBY	\$ 1,320,000		Next balance carried forward to 2025
5	CMA CGM / BEREBY MPS PROJECT	\$ 23,684		Next balance carried forward to 2026
	New UNHABITAT project	\$ 319,000		New project mobilized
TOTAL PROJECTS MOBILIZED BY THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION		\$ 3,747,684		
6	Cote D'Ivoire	\$ 67,199	36%	Commitment of Cote d'Ivoire

7	Benin	\$ 23,694		Commitment of BENIN
8	Congo	\$ 62,908		Commitment of CONGO
9	Mauritania	\$ 50,474		Commitment of MAURITANIA
10	Balance contribution / Pledge 2025	\$ 484,158		Balance to be recovered for the year 2025
11	Pledge contribution Year 2026	\$ 688,433		100% to be recovered from the parties
12	Pledge contribution Year 2027	\$ 688,433		100% to be recovered from the parties
TOTAL TO BE COLLECTED BY THE TRUST FUND OF THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION		\$ 2,065,299		
TOTAL FUNDS TO BE MOBILIZED FOR 2025 - 2027		\$ 5,812,983	100%	

The proposed 2025-2027 budget for the Secretariat is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2027 (US\$)

BUDGET ITEMS	YEAR BUDGET			
	2025	2026	2027	Total
Project personnel				
Project personnel	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 900,000
Administrative Support	\$ 99,600	\$ 99,600	\$ 99,600	\$ 298,800
Sub-total Personnel	\$ 399,600	\$ 399,600	\$ 399,600	\$ 1,198,800
Travel on official business				
Travel on official business	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 75,000
Sub-total Travel	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 75,000
Meetings/Conferences				
COP 14	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000
Bureau Meetings	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 55,000
Sub-total Meetings/Conferences	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 215,000	\$ 255,000
EQUIPMENT				
Expendable equipment	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 30,000
Sub-total Equipments	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 30,000
Premises				
Operating cost	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 90,000
Sub-total Premises	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 90,000
Hospitality and entertainment				
Hospitality reception	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 9,000
Sub-total Hospitality	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 9,000
GRAND TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 487,600	\$ 487,600	\$ 682,600	\$ 1,657,800
13% Programme support cost (PSC)	\$ 56,096	\$ 56,096	\$ 78,529	\$ 190,720
15 % Capital Reserve	\$ 63,600	\$ 63,600	\$ 89,035	\$ 216,235
GRAND TOTAL, PSC & WCR	\$ 607,296	\$ 607,296	\$ 850,164	\$ 2,064,755

59. As shown in Table 9, the current budgetary resources of the Abidjan Convention are now recognised as insufficient given the rate of degradation of the marine and coastal environment. Therefore, the new funding structure must exceed the pledges governments have made to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund and target the private sector, civil society, and multilateral and bilateral partners operating in the Convention area.