



# A Global Ocean Accounts Partnership Africa Vision Strategy for Ocean Accounting towards Sustainable Ocean Development (2024-2026)<sup>1</sup>

## Vision

The GOAP Africa Community of Practice (Africa CoP) recognises **the advantages and opportunities provided by ocean accounting to underpin diverse ocean governance, instruments, objectives and processes to achieve Sustainable Ocean Development in Africa**, thus ensuring the benefits of Africa's blue economies. These include the way ocean accounting -

1. **informs Sustainable Ocean Development indicators** through consistent and regular relative metrics of ocean change and ocean resource-use change across time, thereby benchmarking both forecast and hindcast scenarios against targets and histories respectively;
2. enables the **integration of diverse information from across the social, economic, environmental and legal domains** through multidisciplinary approaches to ocean governance processes that are sustainable, inclusive, and implementable;
3. is **easily integrated into, and aligned with other currently utilised ocean governance instruments, tools and processes**, (including for example, marine spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management, marine protected area planning and sectoral regulation) within the Ocean Science – Policy – Society interface.
4. **accommodates diverse data and information** arising from new and emerging technologies including remote sensing, AI and big data analytics from a broad range of geographic and sectoral sources and systems; and
5. is calibrated, to **underpin blue financing opportunities** and associated indicators and therefore has important opportunities in the resourcing of sustainable ocean governance.

The GOAP Africa CoP identifies the need for a dynamic ocean accounting action strategy to be developed and implemented (and reviewed on a biennial basis – initially 2024 to 2026) to ensure that the needs, challenges and opportunities for ocean accounting in African ocean governance are recognised and underpinned by research, innovation and capacity enhancement to ensure the measurable uptake of ocean accounting in sustainable African ocean policy formulation. The strategy **recognises sustainability as a long-term environmental construct that includes social inclusivity**, and while there are different spatial definitions of oceans and blue economies in Africa, **the strategy pertains only to the ocean components of a blue economy and pressures on the African ocean space**. Ocean pressures have origins in ocean, terrestrial or freshwater economic activities, and African pressures are likely to be non-linear in relation to long-term ocean demand and supply time frames. **African blue economies include significant subsistence and informal economy components** that require extensive stakeholder consideration in ocean governance approaches within the strategy. Importantly the GOAP Africa CoP recognises the novelty of ocean accounting in ocean governance processes in Africa and the strong need for capacity enhancement in this field in Africa.

<sup>1</sup> This Vision Strategy was developed through a series of open virtual stakeholder engagements held by the GOAP Africa Community of Practice to which extensive participant invitations were broadcast as well as multiple sessions held at the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Dialogue on Sustainable Ocean Development held in Sanur, Bali over the period 1 to 5 July 2024. The open virtual events both preceded and followed the Global Dialogue event. Percentage overall attendance in these events comprised 19% from non-governmental or non-profit organisations, 25% from government institutions, 36% from academic institutions, 11% from private companies and 8% from regional or international organisations, including those from the GOAP Secretariat. All received comments to email distribution of the strategy have been accommodated and or discussed with their respective authors.



## Strategic Objectives, Outcomes and Milestones

The ocean accounting action strategy identifies the following objectives and milestones.

Objectives	Outcome	Milestones <sup>2</sup>
<b>1. Drive measurable uptake of ocean accounts into sustainable ocean policy</b>	Within-country and regional ocean accounting is expanded and taken up into policy across African coastal nations.	A minimum of five examples of ocean accounts integrated to national or regional policy by December 2026.
<b>2. Build and participate in global, regional, and national partnerships and collaborations.</b>	Global and Pan-African collaborations and cooperations in the use of integrated ocean accounting in Africa are evident.	A minimum of ten African institutions or governments maintaining active partnerships [or similar] by December 2026.
<b>3. Produce tangible research outputs including peer reviewed, popular, policy brief and technical guidance products and ensure their uptake to ocean governance processes.</b>	Ocean accounting research and innovation initiatives in African coastal nations ensure relevant and pertinent practices and processes in ocean governance.	A minimum of twenty Africa-specific research outputs by December 2026
<b>4. Create and maintain a functioning forum and evidence of annual engagement including an annual research report.</b>	Quarterly meetings of the Africa CoP ensure communication, collaboration, and cross-pollination of initiatives.  An African Ocean Accounting Academic Forum is established to advance global and continental academic collaborations.	A minimum of four meetings per year of the African Community of practice through to December 2026.  Monthly meetings of an Academic Forum.
<b>5. Drive new GOAP membership in Africa and encourage African involvement in global GOAP initiatives.</b>	African membership of the GOAP is actively encouraged.  African ocean accounting practitioners are engaged in GOAP global initiatives.	A minimum of five new country members (from across government institutions, NPOs and academia) of the GOAP by December 2026.  A minimum of three African ocean accounting practitioners are members of the GOAP Technical Expert Panel by December 2026.
<b>6. Conduct training and capacity enhancement initiatives at regional and national levels.</b>	Enhanced ocean accounting capacity is ensured as a key process in ocean governance in Africa	A minimum of ten people trained or enrolled in ocean accounts at a postgraduate level by December 2026.  Fifty policy mainstreaming practitioners trained in aspects of ocean accounts by December 2026.  A Global GOAP and African COP co-develop an ocean accounting training module (that is contextually relevant for

<sup>2</sup> Milestone achievement is subject to available resourcing.



		Africa) available by December 2026 <sup>3</sup> .
<b>7. Demonstrate measurable evidence of inclusivity in African ocean accounting initiatives.</b>	A broad group of stakeholders are engaged in all African ocean accounting initiatives (at both national and regional scales), ensuring the bridging of the Ocean Science-Policy-Society nexus.	

## Rationale for the ocean accounting action strategy objectives

The ocean accounting action strategy is informed by the following: -

1. The GOAP Africa CoP identifies ocean accounting as a key Sustainable Ocean Development instrument that addresses diverse African national or regional needs for ocean information; an instrument that is easily integrated into other existing ocean governance processes and instruments.
2. The GOAP Africa CoP encourages global and Pan-African collaboration and cooperation in the use of integrated ocean accounting by African nations (including through the membership of the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership and the inclusion of African ocean accounting practitioners in GOAP global initiatives).
3. The GOAP Africa CoP advances continued and expanded ocean accounting research and innovation initiatives in African coastal nations to ensure relevant and pertinent practices and processes that are based on global experiences.
4. The importance of African academic institutions in meeting ocean accounting research initiatives is identified.
5. Technical and human capacity enhancement is a key process in advancing ocean accounting in Africa and there is a need for national, regional and Pan-African capacity enhancement imperatives.
6. There is a need for inclusive multidimensional stakeholder engagement within and across the Ocean Science-Policy-Society interface of ocean sectors, users and beneficiaries, and the GOAP Africa CoP advocates full stakeholder engagement in all African ocean accounting initiatives, particularly in the inclusion of subsistence and informal ocean users and gender.
7. The GOAP Africa CoP identifies the need for a strategic action agenda and the associated outcomes to be reviewed on a biennial basis thus ensuring strategic relevance, transformation and pertinence for current African ocean governance needs.

## Background

Africa has a long history of interaction with the continent's oceans including traditional and modern formal and informal economic activities. The costs and benefits of such engagement extend beyond the ocean space. Human – ocean engagements (including in Africa) centre on four interactions aspects of ocean systems – a) indirect benefits; b) direct resource-uses; c) pressures arising from resource-uses, and d) ocean governance processes.

The benefits of ocean resource-uses have motivated numerous African nations and regions to turn to their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) to advance ocean development initiatives utilising both ocean and blue economy development approaches<sup>4</sup> in the development of new sectors and the expansion of

<sup>3</sup> For incorporation into both formal curricula and short course environments and applications.

<sup>4</sup> Ocean economies are viewed as the production and consumption and associated trade activities of sectors operating in, on or under the ocean or associated with the ocean by geographic or sectoral proximity. The associated blue economy concept has a broader scope which may in Africa extend geographically beyond the ocean (to inland waters) and beyond economic boundaries (to social and environmental dimensions). Blue economies also advance sustainable and equitable approaches



existing sectors. Africa's oceans face increasing pressures from a basket of synergistic pressure vectors, including unsustainable extraction, pollution, climate change, direct physical system decline and translocations that are often introduced through ocean development. Sustainable Ocean Development is achieved through the centring of long-term environmental sustainability and social inclusivity in ocean governance decision-support instruments (for example MSP or ICZM) and requires

1. adequate resourcing, and capacity enhancement to ensure the bridging of the Ocean Science-Policy-Society interface.
2. best available technologies, data, information and knowledge products to achieve evidence-based outcomes.
3. adequate stakeholder participation, including the voice of coastal communities and subsistence users,
4. adaptive development and implementation approaches within enabling economic and legal environments.
5. positioning to address a country's international and regional commitments and national development plans.

Ocean accounting and ocean accounting frameworks provide a systems-thinking approach to address these requirements for ocean governance for Sustainable Ocean Development. An effective Pan African communication strategy and increased collaborative approaches to resourcing, planning, implementation and review are critical in the uptake of ocean accounting within ocean governance processes.

## Ocean Accounting and the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership

Ocean accounting is advanced by the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP)<sup>5</sup> a global, multi stakeholder partnership established in 2019 to enable countries, partners and other stakeholders to use ocean accounting as an instrument to go Beyond GDP in the measurement and management of progress towards Sustainable Ocean Development. All countries compile and maintain systems of national accounts, although these have seldom adequately captured the ocean contribution to national economies or changes in the extent or condition of marine environments, and how these affect the economy. Ocean accounts integrate records of ocean economic activity, and social and environmental conditions on a regular basis in a manner that are compatible with international statistical standards, including the System of National Accounts, the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework and the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting Framework. Novel accounting frameworks propose the inclusion of social and governance records. A comprehensive sequence of ocean accounts enables countries to monitor changes in ocean wealth (and therefore sustainability), including produced and non-produced assets; ocean-related income and welfare for different groups of people and economic production from ocean sectors.

---

through a) the production of current opportunities in marine systems; b) the equitable distribution of those current opportunities; and c) the balancing of current and future opportunities.

<sup>5</sup> The GOAP comprises more than 35 current institutional members including national governments, international institutions and research and academic bodies with initiatives centred on the development of technical methods and standards for ocean accounting, the advocacy of ocean accounting in sustainable ocean governance processes (including within the UN Statistical Division SEEA Oceans development initiative), and associated research and capacity enhancement within member and non-member countries. With financial support from the UK Government, Australian Government, World Bank, UNESCAP, and others, the GOAP is co-chaired by the Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) of Ecuador and the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) of Indonesia. and hosted by the Centre for Sustainable Development Reform of the University of New South Wales, Australia.