Workshop on the FAO's "Blue Ports" initiative

Towards the implementation of the blue transformation of fishing ports in the ATLAFCO region.

Financing Africa's blue fishing ports : *Challenges and perspectives*

-

Tangier, March 05, 2026

M. Nabil ANWARI

- Expert on Blue Economy-

Outline

- Context
- Main financing challenges and barriers
- International standards and frameworks
- Financial instruments and mechanisms
- Regional case studies and practical lessons
- Key takeaways and lessons learned

Financing fisheries infrastructure : main challenges

- **The financing deficit:** blue fishing ports struggle to bridge the gap between rigorous global industrial standards and essential local socio-economic protections.
- **Revenue volatility:** Unlike commercial cargo ports that rely on stable, fixed transit fees, blue fishing ports are inherently dependent **on fluctuating fish stocks**
- This dependence on biological health makes revenue streams far less predictable and **significantly harder for investors to quantify or de-risk (High-risk profile)**
- Upgrading existing fishing facilities into "Blue Ports" is a daunting endeavor due to complex structural and regulatory features.

Some artisanal landing sites

Some major structural barriers

- **Lack of bankable data:** A significant portion of small-scale landings is never formally declared, as sales often occur directly on the beach at informal landing sites rather than through digital port facilities. This lack of documentation is particularly prevalent in remote areas.

  When a port authority attempts to secure a loan to upgrade a landing site by incorporating facilities such as solar cold storage or waste treatment, banks find no 'paper trail' of revenue to guarantee repayment.

- Most African countries cannot finance fishing ports **unilaterally**. They are increasingly dependent on **blended Finance**, where the government provides the land and a "Blue Fund" or private investor provides the capital.

- **Inadequate scale:** Upgrading a local fishing port might cost $2M–$10M. However, international "Blue Funds" often have a minimum entry requirement of $20M - $25M, leaving small fishing ports in a "financing gap"—they are too large for microfinance but too small for institutional capital.

- **Procedural barriers:** The complex application processes and stringent due diligence requirements of international financiers often exceed the administrative capacity of local African authorities. This makes such funds effectively inaccessible, even for viable projects.

Some competitive and social barriers

Competing ocean interests:

In some countries, fishing ports often compete with more lucrative sectors for both space and capital.

- **Oil & Gas Crowding:** Deep-water ports for oil and gas often receive priority for government funding and private investment because they offer faster, dollar-denominated returns.
- **Displacement Risks:** "Blue Economy" developments (like large-scale offshore wind or luxury tourism) sometimes displace traditional fishing grounds, making investors wary of "social risk" and local protests that could stall port projects.

The table illustrates **the Missing Middle phenomenon** in African fisheries. **The specific amount needed to actually modernize a fishing port ($2M–$10M) is currently stuck in a "dead zone."**

Mechanism	Financial range	Key characteristics & barriers
Local upgrade	**$2M – $10M (sweet spot)**	Focuses on vital infrastructure like **solar cold storage, improved jetties, and processing facilities**. Too large for microfinance but too small for major institutional funds.
Microfinance/Local savings (new net, a small boat motor…)	**< $5k – $10k**	High accessibility for individuals but lacks the "muscle" to fund community-wide industrial infrastructure.
Institutional "Blue Funds"	**$25M+ (Minimum)**	Managed by entities like the World Bank or EIB. These funds require a high **"minimum ticket size"** to justify the high cost of administrative due diligence.

High cost of administrative due diligence

When a bank mentions "high administrative costs," they are usually paying for:

- **Legal Fees:** Lawyers must verify land titles (often messy in rural areas), check local fishing regulations, and draft 100-page contracts.
- **Technical & Engineering Audits:** In 2026, banks require "Technical Due Diligence" (TDD) to prove a jetty won't be washed away by rising sea levels within 5 years.
- **Environmental & Social (E&S) Impact:** Experts must spend weeks on-site to ensure the port won't destroy mangroves or violate labor laws.
- **Financial Forensic Work:** Accountants must create a "paper trail" where none exists, often manually reconstructing revenue data from informal beach sales.

The Fixed cost trap.

Item	Small port ($2M loan)	Large port ($100M loan)
Due diligence cost	$250,000	$250,000
Cost as % of Loan	12.5%	0.25%
Bank's verdict	"Too expensive to process"	"Profitable Deal"

Blue finance standards

- While many African nations face significant hurdles in securing the capital necessary to develop modern fishing infrastructure due to high perceived risks and limited fiscal space—aligning with global frameworks can unlock vital investment.
- To bridge this funding gap, it is essential to look toward established international standards that provide a roadmap for sustainable ocean economies. Key among these are the IFC's **Guidelines for Blue Finance (2022-2025)**, which offer a strategic framework for thematic lending, and the **Practitioner's Guide on Blue Bonds (2023)**, which provides the technical granularity needed to structure debt instruments that appeal to **ESG-conscious** global investors.
- By adopting these benchmarks, African countries can enhance transparency, mitigate "blue-washing" concerns, and demonstrate a commitment to the long-term ecological health of their coastal waters, ultimately making their maritime projects more bankable on the world stage.

ESG-conscious pillars

Factor	Core of focus	Examples in Fishing/Ports
Environmental	Impact on the planet and natural resources.	Protecting biodiversity, reducing carbon emissions from ships, and preventing overfishing.
Social	How a project treats people and communities.	Ensuring fair wages for fishers, workplace safety at ports, and supporting local coastal economies.
Governance	How a project or country is managed.	Transparency in where the money goes, fighting corruption, and following international maritime laws.

What standards for blue finance projects?

Instrument	Primary Author/Lead	Best For
Sustainable Blue Economy Principles (2018)	European Commission & WWF	High-level ethics and strategy.
Guidelines for Blue Finance (2022-2025)	IFC (World Bank)	Technical project eligibility & loan metrics.
Practitioner's Guide on Blue Bonds (2023)	ICMA & UN Coalition	Step-by-step instructions for issuing bonds.
Blue Finance Instrument Guidelines	National Governments (e.g., Indonesia 2022)	Localized regulatory compliance.

IFC's Guidelines in a nutshell

The Guidelines for Blue Finance (Version 2.0) were developed in 2025 by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the **World Bank Group**, in partnership with AXA Climate, the Climate Bonds Initiative, the Technical University of Denmark (DTU), and other stakeholders.

For an activity to be labeled "**blue,**" it must pass these three tests:

- **Substantial contribution**: The project must make a measurable contribution to the regeneration, protection, or sustainable use of marine or freshwater resources. It must specifically align with the targets of SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) or SDG 14 (Life Below Water).
- **Do no significant harm** (DNSH): The activity cannot introduce material risks that negatively affect other environmental or social areas, including alignment with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.
- **Minimum safeguards**: Projects must follow internationally recognized environmental and social (E&S) standards, such as the IFC Performance Standards or the World Bank Group Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) Guidelines.

IFC's Guidelines in a nutshell

Scope and relationship between Blue finance and Green standards.

Category	Description & Alignment
Core Definition	Finance dedicated to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and ocean ecosystem health.
Global Frameworks	Directly builds upon the **ICMA Green Bond Principles*** and **LMA/APLMA/LSTA Green Loan Principles**.
Key Objectives	1. Marine conservation 2. Sustainable fisheries 3. Decarbonization of maritime transport 4. Circular economy in plastic waste.
The "Blue" Difference	Unlike general Green finance, Blue finance requires specific "Blue" use-of-proceeds and unique environmental impact metrics related to water and marine life.

* These principles will be discussed later

IFC's Guidelines in a nutshell

- To be eligible for blue finance, activities must contribute substantially to sustainable water management or ocean protection, deliver measurable outcomes, and align with the Blue Guidance Framework, with social co-benefits, including poverty reduction and economic empowerment.
- The activities include the financing and refinancing of research, design, manufacturing, developing and implementing interventions across multiple blue economic sectors such as sustainable water and wastewater management, marine biotechnology, transport and shipping, **fisheries and aquaculture**, habitat restoration and tourism.

Some eligible activities related to fishing operations

- **Waste and Pollution management:**
  - ✓ **Solid Waste Facilities:** Collection and treatment facilities for garbage and waste at ports and terminals.
  - ✓ **Water Treatment:** Non-chemical treatment equipment (such as UV radiation or membrane bioreactors) for blackwater and greywater generated at ports.
  - ✓ **Oil Spill Recovery:** Systems and technology to improve oil/fuel spill prevention and recovery facilities at ports.

- **Fishing industry infrastructure:**
  - ✓ **Cold Chain and Storage:** Specifically for small and medium-sized fishing operations in areas with sustainable fishing quotas.
  - ✓ **Processing Facilities:** Small to medium-scale biorefineries for processing fish byproducts (like oils and minerals) and larger-scale processing for sustainable species.
  - ✓ **Traceability Systems:** Investment in systems to ensure the sustainability of operations and supply chains within the fishing industry

- **Sustainable shipping and Power:**
  - ✓ **Enabling Infrastructure:** Renewable electric shore-side power and charging points at ports to reduce emissions from vessel.

Impact indicators (KPIs*)

- **Impact indicators (KPIs)** are used to demonstrate the environmental and social benefits, as well as the co-benefits, derived from blue-eligible activities.

- Regarding **fisheries and aquaculture**, the borrower should make reasonable efforts to gather data for the **allocation report**—which tracks the use of proceeds (the total amount of money raised from an investment, such as a Blue Bond or a Blue Loan)—and for **impact reporting** in accordance with relevant KPIs.

- For the sake of assisting issuers and borrowers, non-exhaustive list of inspirational examples of blue-eligible activities and their corresponding indicators are provided.

* **KPIs:** Key Performance indicators

Impact Reporting : Fisheries and Aquaculture

Blue Finance Activity	Indicator of Performance (KPI)	Unit
Sustainable Production	Volume of sustainable aquatic production	Tons / year
Pollution Control	Nutrient removal (e.g., Nitrogen/Phosphorus)	Tons / year
Infrastructure	Cold storage and refrigeration capacity	m3
Certification	Share of production meeting MSC/ASC criteria	% / year
Social Impact	Small-scale and artisanal fishers benefiting from the project	Number of people
Traceability	Products covered by verified traceability systems	Number / % of total
Energy Decarbonization	Share of renewable energy in the total energy mix	%

Practitioner's Guide on Blue Bonds (2023)

- When you buy a bond, you are essentially acting as the **lender**. You provide **capital** to a government, municipality, or corporation; in exchange, the issuer commits to **repaying the principal** on a set **maturity date**, while providing **fixed periodic interest payments** (known as **coupons**) throughout the life of the bond.

Think of a bond as a contract with three key components:

- **Face Value (Par Value):** The total amount of money you are lending (e.g., $10 million). This is the sum you receive back when the bond reaches "maturity."
- **Coupon Rate:** The fixed annual interest rate the issuer pays you based on the face value (e.g., 5% per year).
- **Maturity Date:** The specific date the "loan" agreement concludes and the issuer is legally obligated to return your original investment.

- During the last few years, the bond market has begun to play a significant role in catalyzing investments in projects related to the sustainable use of maritime resources and the promotion of ocean-based activities.

Practitioner's Guide on Blue Bonds (2023)

-The guidance on blue bonds, which are a special case of green bonds, builds on existing global market standards that underpin sustainable bond markets. These include **the Green Bond Principles**, **the Social Bond Principles**, **the Sustainability Bond Guidelines**, and **the Sustainability-Linked Bond Principles**, provided by the International Capital Market Association (ICMA) in conjunction with large actors such as UNEP and the World Bank.

-This voluntary guidance aims at:

- ➢Providing issuers with guidance on the key components for launching credible blue bonds.
- ➢Assisting investors by promoting the availability of information to evaluate the environmental impact of their bond investment.
- ➢helping underwriters by offering vital steps that will facilitate transactions (using standard contracts accepted worldwide).

ICMA principles for credible bonds

To ensure transparency and integrity, blue bonds follow four fundamental pillars:

- **1. Use of Proceeds:** This is the most important pillar; the bond contract must explicitly state that 100% of the funds will be allocated exclusively to "Eligible Green/Blue Projects".
- **2. Process for Project Evaluation and Selection:** The issuer must clearly explain to investors the process used to determine if a project is "Blue" enough. This typically involves a dedicated committee that evaluates projects against rigorous environmental and sustainability standards.
- **3. Management of Proceeds:** To prevent funds from being mixed with general corporate spending (such as rent or salaries), the money must be tracked in a separate sub-account or "ring-fenced".
- **4. Reporting:** The issuer is required to provide an annual report detailing exactly where the funds were allocated and the actual environmental impact achieved (e.g., "Restored 500 hectares of coral reef").

Excerpts from the Republic of Seychelles sovereign blue bond. (according to ICMA standards)

The "Use of Proceeds" Clause: The net proceeds of the issue of the Notes will be used by the Issuer for **financing and/or refinancing, in whole or in part, the Seychelles' Blue Economy projects**, as described in the Blue Bond Framework. Such projects include, but are not limited to: (i) the expansion of marine protected areas, (ii) improved governance of priority fisheries, and (iii) the development of the Seychelles' blue economy value chain."

2. **The Negative Pledge (Standard Bond Protection): "**So long as any Note remains outstanding, the Issuer will not create or permit to subsist any mortgage, charge, pledge, lien or other form of encumbrance or security interest upon the whole or any part of its present or future assets or revenues to secure any Public External Indebtedness, unless at the same time or prior thereto the Issuer's obligations under the Notes are secured equally and rateably therewith"

3. **Allocation and Management of Funds:** This section is unique to the Blue Bond. It legally mandates how the money moves through local institutions :"The proceeds shall be allocated to the Blue Grants Fund and the Blue Investment Fund. The Blue Grants Fund will be administered by the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT), and the Blue Investment Fund will be administered by the Development Bank of Seychelles (DBS). Each Fund shall maintain separate accounts and records for the receipt and use of such proceeds."

4. **Covenant on Environmental Performance:** Unlike standard bonds, the issuer covenants to maintain specific environmental milestones: "The Recipient [Seychelles] shall ensure that the Project is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and the Process Framework (PF). The Recipient shall not amend, abrogate, or waive any provision of the Safeguard Instruments without the prior written consensus of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development."

Some calculation

1. Core bond terms:

- **Issuer:** Republic of Seychelles
- **Principal Amount: $15,000,000 USD**
- **Issuance Date:** October 2018
- **Maturity Period:** 10 Years (2018–2028)
- **Investor Coupon: 6.5%** (Market rate)

Year	Interest paid	Principal repayment	Total cash outflow
2018–2025	$975k / year	$0	$975,000
2026	$975k	$5,000,000	$5,975,000
2027	$650k*	$5,000,000	$5,650,000
2028	$325k*	$5,000,000	$5,325,000

2. The Repayment Schedule (Amortization)

- **2018 – 2025:** Interest-only payments.
- **2026:** $5,000,000 Principal Repayment.
- **2027:** $5,000,000 Principal Repayment.
- **2028:** $5,000,000 Principal Repayment (Final Maturity).

3. The "Blended Rate" Calculation

The magic of this bond is the **$5 million concessional loan** from the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, which acts as a subsidy.

- The three primary investors (Calvert, Nuveen, and Prudential) must receive the full 6.5% coupon annually: Total Annual Interest= 15,000,000 * 0.065 = $975,000
- The GEF funds cover a significant portion of that $975,000, lowering the "effective rate" for the Seychelles government from **6.5%** down to **2.8%**
- This is the actual amount the Seychelles Treasury must budget for every year: Net Annual Interest = $15,000,000 * 0.028 = $420,000.

Snapshot of some AfDB financed projects

Country / Region	Project Name	Fund (US $)	Financing scheme & Instrument	Infrastructure components
Comoros	Maritime Corridor Project (2025)	137 Million	**Blended Grant consisting** of $135M from the ADF (**concessional window**) and $2M from the **Transition Support Facility (TSF)**	Extension and modernization of Moroni and Boingoma ports to support fisheries value chains; includes 10 solar-powered fish storage facilities for women's cooperatives.
São Tome and Príncipe	BEFIRM Project (2026–2030)	21.9 Million	100% Grant via the TSF and African Development Fund (**ADF**).	Rehabilitation of three multipurpose fishing ports: Neves, Porto Alegre, and Chimaelo (increase fish production from 15,000 to 25,000 tons annually and provide 400 climate-resilient fiberglass vessels)
Cameroon	PD-CVEP (Value Chain Project)	98 Million	**Sovereign Loan** designed for value chain development.	Development of modern port infrastructure and cold chains to support fish exports and aquaculture.
SADC Region (Multinational)	PROFISHBLUE	9.2 Million	**Regional Grant** through ADF-15, managed by SADC.	Focuses on improving landing site governance across 16 countries and combatting IUU fishing.
Horn of Africa (IGAD Region)	BE-Prosper	5.2 Million (approx.)	**Technical Grant** (UA 4M) from TSF Pillar III for capacity building.	Improving fisheries management and port monitoring systems in Djibouti, Somalia, and Eritrea.

PROFISHBLUE

Maritime Corridor Project (2025)

some financing schemes in short

Financing Scheme	Primary target & Goal	Repayment status	Key features & Focus
Grant	Fragile states or countries with limited borrowing capacity	No repayment required.	Funded through the ADF includes a revolving fund mechanism for long-term port maintenance.
TSF (Transition Support Facility)*	Nations in "transition" (recovering from conflict, political instability, or economic shocks).	No repayment required (mostly grants/technical assistance).	Divided into pillars: Pillar I for supplemental funding, Pillar II for arrears clearing, and Pillar III for capacity building.
Sovereign Loan	Stable, middle-income economies	Repayment required based on standard AfDB loan terms.	Directly provided to national governments; focuses on "Value Chain Development" (cold chains, port logistics).
Regional Grant (Multinational)	Regional bodies spanning multiple borders	No repayment required.	Managed by a regional organization rather than a single government; aims to harmonize laws and manage shared resources.
Technical Grant	Capacity building in specific	No repayment required.	Focused on "soft" infrastructure and institutional strengthening; often sourced from TSF Pillar III.
Concessional Loan	Low-income countries needing large-scale infrastructure but unable to afford market rates.	Repayment required, but with highly favorable terms (low interest).	Features "grace periods" (years where no principal is paid) and long maturity dates; carries a significant "grant element."
Nature-for-Debt Swap (Ex: Porugal and Cabo Verde)	Debt-distressed nations with high-value biodiversity or marine ecosystems.	Debt is forgiven or restructured in exchange for local action.	External debt is cancelled in exchange for a commitment to fund local conservation, such as marine protected areas or sustainable ports.

* It is often used for 'top-up' activities that the main grant might not cover, such as technical training, peace-building initiatives, or strengthening local government institutions so they can effectively manage the grant and **prevent the failure** of the megaproject.


THE BLUE PROJECT GRANT JOURNEY
1. PREPARATION:
Align with Blue Economy Goals & SDGs.
2. SCOPING:
Develop Project & Partnerships.
3. FULL PROPOSAL:
Detailed Technical Plan, Budget & KPIs.
4. CONTRACTING:
Terms Negotiation & Agreement.
5. EXECUTION:
Actively Monitor & Adapt Project.
6. IMPACT:
Measure Success, Share Lessons & Audit.
PROPOSAL
BLUE AGREEMENT
GRANT AWARDED
TONS CO2 OFFSET
1. PREPARATION:
Align with Blue Economy Goals & SDGs.
2. SCOPING:
Develop Project Concept & Partnerships.
3. FULL PROPOSAL:
Detailed Technical Plan, Budget & KPIs.
4. CONTRACTING:
Terms Negotiation & Agreement.
5. EXECUTION:
Actively Monitor & Adapt Project.
6. IMPACT:
Measure Success, Share Lessons & Audit.
Identify Challenge.
Draft 3-5 Page Note.
Formal Submission.
Securing Funds.
Quarterly Reports.
Final Report.
© Marine Arts Collective

The rationale behind a grant provided by a development bank like the AfDB is that the Bank gains a stable, self-sufficient partner that eventually no longer requires constant financial aid—the ultimate goal of any development institution

The new wave of Programs for Results (PforR)

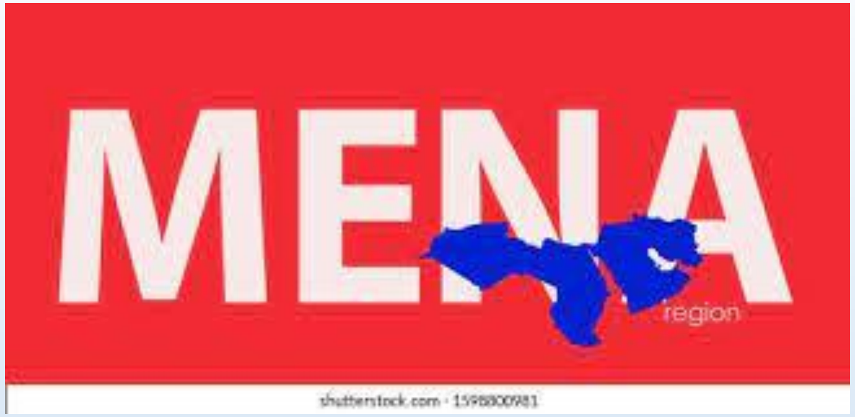
The **Program for Results (PforR)** is a specific financing instrument that differs from traditional investment projects in three major ways:

- **Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs):** The financing organization, such as the World Bank, does not pay for specific invoices (e.g., purchasing a boat or constructing a pier). Instead, it releases funds only when the government achieves specific, pre-agreed targets. For example, a payment might be triggered only once a certain number of ice storage facilities are built and operational.
- **Use of national systems:** The program utilizes the government's own institutions, procurement rules, and environmental regulations rather than the Organisation' s specific procedures. This approach is intended to strengthen the capacity of national governments to manage their own programs over the long term.
- **Focus on outcomes, Not inputs:** The emphasis shifts from "how much money was spent" to "what was actually achieved." Success is measured by "Results," such as improved fish stock health, or the operationalization of regional coastal clusters.

By tying funding to these results, the program incentivizes government ministries—which often work in silos—to collaborate and meet concrete deadlines to unlock loan disbursements.

Some PforR projects

Country / Region	Project Name	PforR Type	Key expected results
Morocco	Blue Economy Development	National	Passage of a National Blue Strategy; 14 new aquaculture farms; real-time Marine Data Portal.
West Africa (Regional)	ACECoR (Africa Center of Excellence for Coastal Resilience)	Education / Tech	Number of regional students trained; published marine research; international curriculum accreditation.
Mozambique	SWIOFish / ProAzul (Moving to PforR)	Institutional	Percentage of industrial fleet under VMS (Satellite); reduction in illegal fishing days; aquaculture SMEs licensed.
Tanzania	TASFAM (Scaling-up Marine Fisheries)	Results-Linked	110,000 hectares of mangroves protected; verified increase in seaweed export value; reduction in post-harvest losses.



- The World Bank approved on June 09, 2022, a US$350 million loan to support the Government of Morocco in launching of its Blue Economy program. The program aims to **improve job creation and economic growth, as well as the sustainability and resilience of natural resources and food security;**

- The Ministry of Economy and Finance represented by the program management Unit and the World Bank jointly carried out a supervision mission of the Blue Economy Program, from October 17 to 26, 2022. This mission was marked by various meetings with partners as well as visits on the ground mainly in the region of Agadir;

- It is expected to establish three marine protected areas in Agadir, Larache, and Cap of three Fourches and to develop income-generating activities for the benefit of Moroccan fishermen;

- The program will support the project on the multi-year acquisition of very high-resolution satellite images, which is monitored by the Directorate of Ports and the Public Maritime Domain.

MENA BLUE

Strengthening the Blue Economy in the Middle East and North Africa Region

Strengthen the capacity of North African countries to develop Blue Economy growth opportunities and climate resilient coastal investments at national and regional levels

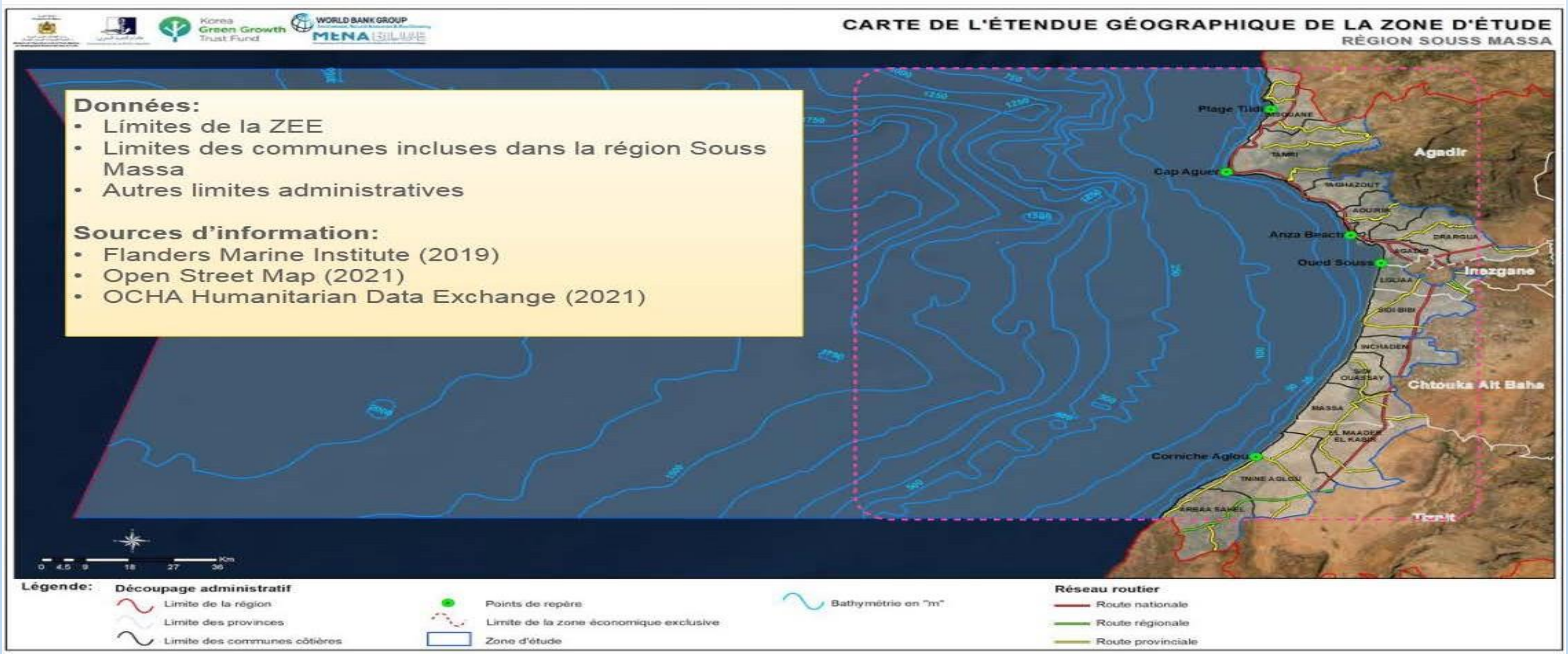
Pillar 1: Building the Analytical Foundation for Strategic Engagement on the Blue Economy	Pillar 2: Blue Economy and Integrated Coastal Management in Morocco		Pillar 3: Blue Economy and integrated coastal management in Tunisia	Pillar 4: Blue Economy and integrated coastal management in Gaza and the West Bank
Coastal erosion analytics on the North Africa shore	Analytics for the Rabat-Sale Kenitra regional coastal plan	Technical note for the Blue Economy in Morocco	Technical note for the Blue Economy in Tunisia	Marine plastic pollution
Tacking marine and coastal pollution	Marine Spatial Planning	COVID-19 impacts on the fisheries	Inputs for a Blue Economy Strategy in Tunisia	Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management
	Natural capital accounting for Morocco	Innovative Financing		
	Inputs for a Blue Economy Strategy in Morocco			

Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

Development of a marine spatial planning process to support the creation of an MPA in the Agadir Souss Massa region

Technical assistance from the Korean fund managed by the World Bank

- **The National Strategy for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for fishing Morocco validated in September 2011 is a genuine framework.**



West Africa Regional Fisheries Program (WARFP)

The West Africa Regional Fisheries Program (WARFP) is a multi-phase, World Bank-led initiative designed to modernize ocean management and support the "Blue Economy" across West Africa. Its financial structure relies on a blended finance model consisting of four primary pillars:

- **World Bank (IDA): Provides the core funding through low-interest loans and credits;**
- **Global Environment Facility (GEF): Offers grants focused on biodiversity, environmental protection, and "Climate-Smart" fishing;**
- **EU Partnerships (SFPA): Delivers substantial annual payments (such as Mauritania's €60.8 million) specifically for local governance and sectoral support;**
- **Diverse Co-financing: Supplemented by contributions from the African Development Bank (AfDB) and bilateral partners like Japan and Spain.**

West Africa Regional Fisheries Program (WARFP)

Category	Current status & Active Initiatives	Primary focus / Impact
Phase 2 Implementation	Active in The Gambia, Cabo Verde, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau.	"Wealth Capture": Transitioning from policing to building processing plants, cold chains, and aquaculture.
Regional Successor	WASOP (West Africa Sustainable Ocean Programme) launched late 2025.	Regional Unity: Acts as the "connective tissue" for governance across 13 ECOWAS countries.
Climate Integration	Folded into WACA in Togo, Benin, and Cote d'Ivoire.	Resilience: Building "climate-smart" infrastructure to protect landing sites from coastal erosion.
Recent Milestone (Jan 2026)	Togo begins creating its first Marine Protected Area (MPA).	Biodiversity: Protecting critical habitats from overfishing.
Recent Milestone (Feb 2026)	Ghana launches the Blue Food Innovation Hub.	Modernization: Partnering with the WEF to digitize and upgrade fisheries.
Surveillance Status	6 Nations (NG, SL, LR, MR, GH, GN) using active radar/satellite.	Enforcement: Actively deterring industrial trawlers from artisanal zones.

Some key lessons from practice

Focus Area	Core lesson	Evaluation insight
Infrastructure vs. Income	High-quality facilities such as ice machines and auction halls improve product quality, but do not automatically guarantee higher income for beneficiaries.	Revenue may not rise significantly above non-project sites if price increases are driven by national market trends rather than local facility upgrades.
Maintenance & Durability	Harsh environments such as maritime settings are extremely corrosive to physical infrastructure.	Rapid deterioration occurs when maintenance budgets and local management responsibilities are not clearly established post-handover.
Site selection & Technical suitability	Political considerations in site selection can sometimes override technical feasibility and safety.	Some sites may remain unusable or dangerous if the lack of proper supporting structures (like docks) makes operations non-viable for workers.
Training realism	Theoretical training has limited impact without direct, practical application in the field.	While basic literacy may improve, specialized business skills often do not; training schedules must align with the participants' daily income-generating routines.
Gender programs	Providing infrastructure for women requires addressing more than just the physical need for buildings.	Project success can be hampered by social barriers, such as family reluctance, and a continued market dependence on middlemen.

Some recommendations

- **Right-Scaling Infrastructure**: Match infrastructure development to actual market demand to prevent both debt-heavy oversizing and inefficient undersizing.
- **Integrated Value Chains**: Integrate cold-chain and processing units into port design. This scheme must be governed by a Triple Bottom Line (Profit, People, Planet) approach and **utilize** digital tracking (VMS/AIS).
- **Investment Bundling**: Aggregate 10–20 small-scale ports into a single National Portfolio. This standardization of management diversifies risk and makes small-scale maritime assets "bankable" for private capital.
- **Governance**: Establish a robust governance scheme to guarantee transparency, accountability, and proper data management. This provides assurance that resources are managed sustainably and in strict adherence to international standards.
- **Capacity Building**: Implement a comprehensive, tailored capacity-building program to equip port operators and the local workforce with the technical skills and standard operating procedures required to utilize the newly built infrastructure effectively and maintain the sought-high performance.

THANK YOU

anwari.nabil2020@gmail.com