



West Africa Coastal Areas
Management Program

KNOWLEDGE SHEET 10B | PRIVATE

The Role of the Private Sector Developing West Africa's regional ocean sustainably

Engaging the Private Sector on developing West Africa's Ocean sustainably

- **Total fishing production** in West Africa is currently estimated at **USD\$ 400 million per year**.
- With a change from selling fishing licenses internationally to national fishing, it is estimated that **West African states could generate USD\$ 3.3 billion and 300,000 jobs**. Local small-scale fisheries can account for up to 80% of catches.
- **Women play an important role in processing and marketing catches**. Fishing is thus a vital activity for the coastal communities in West Africa in economic terms, but equally in terms of employment and food security.
- **International tourism arrivals to West Africa increased to 65.3 million** in 2014, attracted by the marine and coastal environments.
- **Oil is expected to grow to 9 million barrels a day by 2030** and gas reserves to 7.9 Trillion Cubic Feet (Tcf) in 2040 (a 48% increase) (EIA 2016).

the Ocean off West African coasts. Although significant economic opportunities exist, they need to be implemented sustainably to ensure the continued services provided by the ecosystem. Fishing, tourism and oil and gas reserves represent the major commercial opportunities in West Africa. Other activities conducted in the coastal zone are of considerable economic importance, examples include: mangrove rice farming, forestry and salt farming. Technologies, innovations, engineering and consulting opportunities exist to aid governments to make better decisions and to implement the best legislation and policies. The private sector can also enhance the lives of the local communities through creating jobs and by aiding in the sustainable development of the West African Ocean.



Oil spill data from a simulated oil spill in the North Sea using OSIS. Source: LIFE02 ENV/DK/000151

The Atlantic Ocean (off the coast of West African) provides a multitude of economic benefits for the local coastal communities, however overexploitation of these benefits and the disregard for the environment will erode any future economic benefit that the ocean may offer. The private sector has a significant role to play in conserving



Fishing Boat landing sites in Porto Novo, Cotonou, Benin. Photo by: Jean-François Levasseur

Challenges

The Guinea Ocean Current runs parallel to the West Coast of Africa and is warming at an alarming rate due to Climate Change. This results in increased winds, creating higher intensity waves, and consequently changes in ocean life, amongst other aspects this greatly affects the West African fishing industry (Philander 2001). Vessels have to travel further to catch fish as fish numbers have deteriorated (Daniels et al 2016). Further compounding the impact of climate change on local fishing enterprises is the advancement of technology of the larger international fishing organisations with technologies such as sonar devices, airborne optical lasers and remote sensing which makes it harder for local companies to compete for fish. The impact of this competition is further exacerbated by the invasions of ever-increasing numbers of illegal fishing vessels.

Another prominent resource from the Ocean off the coast of West Africa is its wealth of fuel resources (oil and gas), which is challenged with correct management, so that exploitation does not threaten the ecosystem services.

Marine pollution affects coastal communities health, fisheries and tourism sectors. This in turn affects the economic opportunities of local businesses and artisanal fishermen and women.

Potential Solutions

A number of economic opportunities exist for local business in developing West Africa's seas sustainably. For instance local companies can collect data on the sources, volumes, and effects of marine pollution throughout the region in order to assist local and national governments to draft the appropriate legislation, regulation, and enforcement functions for the fishing sector. Technologies can be designed and implemented to help identify oil spills, wastewater and solid waste discharges, to aid in clean up and prevention. Engineering and consulting companies can aid the oil and gas sectors to develop their operations sustainably taking the environment into account. The tourist industry can implement ecological and sustainable practices while educating on the needs to conserve the seas. This sector has tremendous potential to create jobs, boost inclusive economic growth across the continent, and reduce poverty.

BEST PRACTICE

Improving oil spill detection in the North Sea – North West Europe

The private sector has a significant role to play in preserving the Atlantic Ocean through technological innovations and implementation that can bring economic profitability and environmental sustainability. For example, a system developed by OSIS International, a small medium sized enterprise (SME), allowed for the identification of oil spills from offshore installations (OSIS), to enhance the information available for decision-making for corrective

action and to provide opportunities for efficient clean up operations.

The OSIS system allows for improved and continuous monitoring that is more effective and less costly than the current use of aerial surveillance. The OSIS system is also cheaper and more accurate than systems based on conventional satellite imagery. The project won the best LIFE (EU Programme) project of 2006 (EU LIFE+, 2006).

REFERENCES

- African Development Bank (AFD). 2016. *Africa Tourism Monitor 2015: Tourism in Africa is on the rise, but has not yet reached its full potential*. <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/article/africa-tourism-monitor-2015-tourism-in-africa-is-on-the-rise-but-has-not-yet-reached-its-full-potential-15284/>
- Daniels, A., Gutiérrez, M., Fanjul, G., Guereña, A., Matheson, I. and Watkins, K. (2016) *Western Africa's missing fish*. Overseas Development Institute. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Miren_Gutierrez/publication/304566790_Western_Africas_Missing_Fish/links/5773786708aeef01a0b6691f.pdf
- Energy Information Administration (EIA). 2016. *International Energy Outlook 2016*. [www.eia.gov/forecasts/ieo/pdf/0484\(2016\).pdf](http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/ieo/pdf/0484(2016).pdf)
- EU LIFE+. 2006. *Best LIFE-Environment Projects 2005-2006*. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/bestprojects/documents/bestenv06_lr.pdf
- Philander, S. G. "Atlantic Ocean equatorial currents." *Ocean Currents: A Derivative of the Encyclopedia of Ocean Sciences* (2001): 54-58.

The West Africa Coastal Areas Management Program (WACA) is a convening platform that aims to assist West African countries to sustainably manage their coastal areas and enhance socio-economic resilience to the effects of climate change. The program also seeks to facilitate access to technical expertise and financial resources for participating countries.



West Africa Coastal Areas
Management Program