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The marine and coastal environment of the African Atlantic coast is home to a wide range of biodiversity hotspots and highly productive ecosystems, on which communities rely for food security, livelihoods, and climate change resilience. Nevertheless, the health of these environments is in widespread and rapid decline due to human activities.

With the overarching aim to reduce the pressures and impacts of human activities on marine and coastal biodiversity, since 2016 the MAMI WATA project strengthens national and regional capacities for Integrated Ocean Management (IOM). IOM brings together all relevant government bodies, sectors and stakeholders in a holistic approach for a more effective and sustainable management of oceanic resources to ensure socioeconomic development.



In order to support regional to local action for capturing the value of marine and coastal ecosystems, the project adopts a dual approach:

- applying State of the Marine Environment (SoME) reporting, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), and defining Ecologically and Biologically Significant marine Areas (EBSA), within a holistic IOM framework, and
- developing national and regional capacity through training and technical cooperation.

MAMI WATA is implementing three pilot projects in countries of the Abidjan Convention: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Each pilot project has the overarching goal of working towards a more sustainable use of the marine and coastal resources, that benefits people and nature:

- Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management Project (GIZMaC) (Benin),
- Integrated Management of the Marine and Coastal Area from Abidjan to Assinie (GIAMAA) (Côte d'Ivoire), and
- Ecosystem-based approach to Integrated Marine and Coastal Environment Management (EIMCEM) (Ghana).

The national pilot projects are supported by three regional Centres of Expertise:

- the Centre for Environmental Monitoring (Dakar, Senegal) for EBSAs;

- the Environment Protection Agency (Freetown, Sierra Leone) for SoME;
- the International Ocean Institute – African Region (Cape Town, South Africa) for MSP.

These Centres provide support in developing capacity for each of the three tools through dedicated training and technical expertise.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has successfully moved many of its activities online, complementing physical meetings and events where possible. As a result, significant outputs relevant for decision-making have been achieved over the past 12 months. The project was further granted a six-month extension to compensate for COVID-19-related delays towards the finalisation of the project's activities strengthening the regional capacity and implementation of Integrated Ocean Management until June 2021.

The MAMI WATA project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), and implemented by the Abidjan Convention Secretariat (UNEP) and GRID-Arendal (Norway). For more information, visit the project website [mamiwataproject.org](https://mamiwataproject.org) and follow us on twitter [@MamiWataProject](https://twitter.com/MamiWataProject)

