

THE GREAT BLUE WALL

Building a Thriving
Ocean Future in
Africa and Beyond
Years (2021-2025)



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FOREWORD

REIMAGINING OCEAN STEWARDSHIP FOR AFRICA AND THE WORLD

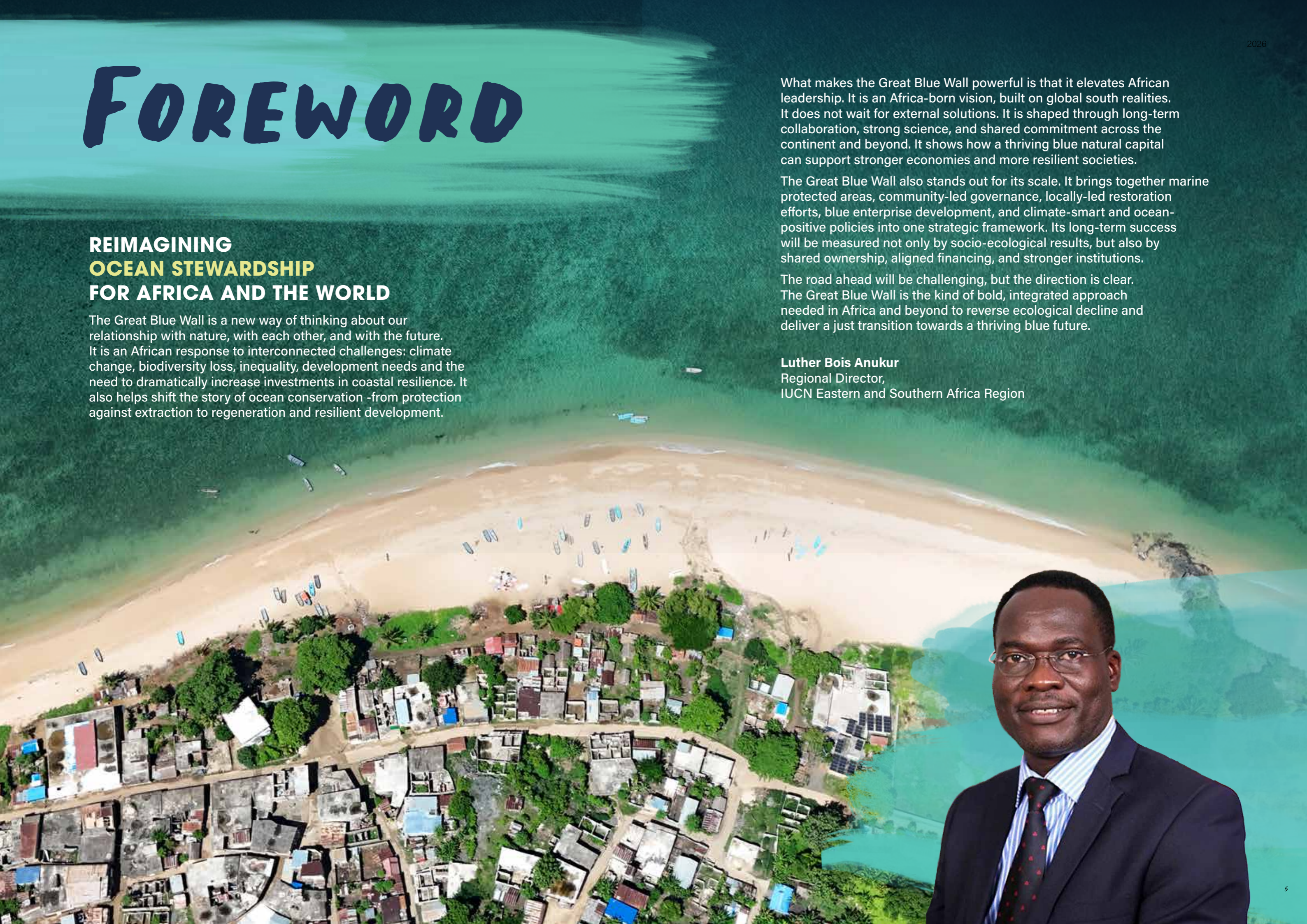
The Great Blue Wall is a new way of thinking about our relationship with nature, with each other, and with the future. It is an African response to interconnected challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss, inequality, development needs and the need to dramatically increase investments in coastal resilience. It also helps shift the story of ocean conservation -from protection against extraction to regeneration and resilient development.

What makes the Great Blue Wall powerful is that it elevates African leadership. It is an Africa-born vision, built on global south realities. It does not wait for external solutions. It is shaped through long-term collaboration, strong science, and shared commitment across the continent and beyond. It shows how a thriving blue natural capital can support stronger economies and more resilient societies.

The Great Blue Wall also stands out for its scale. It brings together marine protected areas, community-led governance, locally-led restoration efforts, blue enterprise development, and climate-smart and ocean-positive policies into one strategic framework. Its long-term success will be measured not only by socio-ecological results, but also by shared ownership, aligned financing, and stronger institutions.

The road ahead will be challenging, but the direction is clear. The Great Blue Wall is the kind of bold, integrated approach needed in Africa and beyond to reverse ecological decline and deliver a just transition towards a thriving blue future.

Luther Bois Anukur
Regional Director,
IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Region



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

From vision to action: the Great Blue Wall is delivering measurable results across the Continent.



83,000+ km²

OF MARINE & COASTAL AREAS SUPPORTED across eight regenerative seascapes



22,500 km²

AREA UNDER IMPROVED MANAGEMENT through MPAs, LMMAs and OECMs



175,780 ha

COASTAL & MARINE ECOSYSTEMS RESTORED, PROTECTED OR COMMITTED TO PROTECTION



112,735 People

LIVELIHOODS STRENGTHENED across participating countries



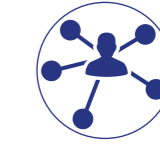
1,300+ Jobs

CREATED through restoration, fisheries, circular economy & blue enterprises



USD 80M+

MOBILIZED in climate, conservation and sustainable blue economy finance



100+

ENTERPRISES & VENTURES Supported through innovation, circular economy & regenerative blue economy initiatives

OUR REACH DRIVES CHANGE



Healthy coastal ecosystems and marine habitats



Sustainable livelihoods and blue economy



Climate resilience and nature-positive development



45% WOMEN | 30% YOUTH

PARTICIPATION across supported livelihood and enterprise initiatives



WHERE WE WORK

11 countries

COLLABORATING toward a shared vision for ocean regeneration in the Western Indian Ocean

8 seascapes

REGENERATIVE Large-scale ocean landscapes for people nature and climate.

COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS & HABITATS

- Protecting and restoring critical ecosystems.
- Expanding and improving marine and coastal protection.
- Securing nature for people and climate resilience.



PEOPLE & LIVELIHOODS

- Strengthening livelihoods and well-being.
- Creating jobs and economic opportunities.
- Building capacity and empowering communities.



FINANCE & ENTERPRISE

- Mobilizing finance for climate conservation and sustainable blue economy.
- Supporting enterprises and ventures that drive innovation and inclusive blue growth.



PARTNERSHIPS & REGIONAL ACTION

- Mobilizing partners across government, civil society, science, communities and private sector.
- Collaborating toward a shared vision for ocean regeneration in the Western Indian Ocean.



Figures presented in this report reflect the collective contribution of the Great Blue Wall partnership and aligned initiatives between 2021–2025. Results are based on aggregated information from partner reporting, programme documentation, government commitments, and validated technical datasets. See Methodology & Attribution Note (p. 65) for indicator definitions, interpretations, and reporting approach.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world is at a critical inflection point, where the climate crisis, biodiversity decline and growing socio-economic disparities are revealing the inadequacies of our current development model. Incremental solutions and sustainable approaches have not delivered the systemic transformation needed to reverse planetary decline.

The Great Blue Wall (GBW) is an Africa-born response to this challenge.

Launched in 2021 at UNFCCC COP26, in Glasgow, UK the Great Blue Wall is a movement working to accelerate ocean regeneration and resilient blue economies. It brings together governments, civil society, scientists, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), youth, and private sector actors around a shared vision: restoring ocean health while strengthening climate resilience, livelihoods, and inclusive development.

At the heart of the initiative is the development of Regenerative Seascapes, connected coastal and marine systems where critical ecosystems and habitats are protected and restored, local communities are empowered, and regenerative blue economies can thrive. Through this approach, the Great Blue Wall is helping shift ocean governance away from fragmented and extractive models toward long-term socio-ecological resilience and regeneration.

Since its launch, the initiative has supported measurable progress across conservation, livelihoods, partnerships, and international cooperation. Across eight regenerative seascapes in five countries, partners have contributed to strengthening management systems, restoring critical ecosystems, supporting ocean livelihoods and enterprises, mobilizing finance, and advancing community-led stewardship and governance.

The GBW movement, endorsed by African member states through the Moroni Declaration (2023) and the Africa Climate Summit's Nairobi Declaration (2023), is increasingly recognized as a flagship Africa-born movement for ocean regeneration, climate resilience, and regenerative blue economies, directly contributing to the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063. By connecting community leadership with subnational, national, regional and international policy, the Great Blue Wall offers a pathway to connect global ambition to local action and a blueprint for a future in which humanity and the ocean thrive together.

This report captures the first phase of the Great Blue Wall journey (2021-2025), demonstrating how ocean regeneration, climate resilience, and inclusive development can advance together across African the African continent and beyond through South-South cooperation and global south leadership.

The first phase of the Great Blue Wall has indeed demonstrated that regenerative seascapes can serve as a practical delivery model for climate resilience, inclusive ocean governance, and regenerative blue economy development. The next phase will be about moving from a portfolio of pioneering seascapes to a connected regional and global implementation architecture.

ABOUT THE GREAT BLUE WALL

Born in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), the Great Blue Wall (GBW) is a movement working to accelerate ocean regeneration and resilient blue economies across the region and beyond. It provides a shared framework for conservation, restoration, climate resilience, and regenerative development, enabling countries and partners to collaborate at the scale the ocean demands.

At its core, the GBW seeks to establish a connected network of regenerative seascapes, large-scale coastal and marine systems that are equitably governed, effectively managed, designed to restore socio-ecological resilience and accelerate the development of a regenerative blue economy.

The initiative responds directly to three interconnected challenges shaping the region and the planet: climate change, biodiversity loss, and growing socio-economic vulnerability. Its 2030 ambition reflects the scale and urgency of the situation, including supporting the conservation of at least 30% (2 million km²) of the Western Indian Ocean, protecting and restoring 2 million hectares of critical coastal and marine ecosystems, and advancing regenerative blue economies capable of supporting the livelihoods of at least 2 million coastal community members.



The Great Blue Wall is grounded in the principle that long-term ocean resilience and regeneration depend on local and national leadership, regional cooperation, traditional knowledge, science, and inclusive participatory governance. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women, youth, governments, scientists, civil society, and private sector actors all play a role in shaping regenerative seascapes and advancing shared stewardship of marine and coastal resources.

Since its launch at COP26 in 2021, the initiative has continued to gain momentum as a platform for African and Global South leadership on ambitious ocean action. Endorsed through regional and continental processes, including the Moroni Declaration and the African Union's Agenda 2063, the GBW is helping position the Western Indian Ocean and the African continent

as a leading region for regenerative ocean governance and blue economy transformation.

Today, the Great Blue Wall is being spearheaded by Western Indian Ocean countries including Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania (including, Zanzibar), while collaboration and support are increasingly extending to African island and coastal states such as Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Namibia and Angola. Bringing together more than 120 partners across governments, communities, research institutions, civil society, philanthropy, and the private sector, the initiative provides a practical and integrated pathway to advance conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable and regenerative livelihoods.

WE OFTEN TAKE THE
OCEAN FOR GRANTED,
BUT IT IS THE
SILENT ENGINE
OF OUR
SURVIVAL.

WHETHER YOU ARE ON THE COAST
OR HUNDREDS OF MILES INLAND,
THE OCEAN SHAPES LIFE ON EARTH.

IT PRODUCES OVER HALF OF THE
WORLD'S OXYGEN, ABSORBS NEARLY
ONE-THIRD OF HUMAN-GENERATED
CARBON EMISSIONS, REGULATES CLIMATE
SYSTEMS, AND SUSTAINS ECONOMIES,
CULTURES, AND LIVELIHOODS ACROSS THE
GLOBE.

IN AFRICA, THE OCEAN IS MORE THAN
A NATURAL RESOURCE. IT IS A SOURCE
OF FOOD, IDENTITY, RESILIENCE, TRADE,
AND OPPORTUNITY FOR MILLIONS OF
PEOPLE.

PROTECTING AND RESTORING OCEAN
SYSTEMS IS THEREFORE NOT ONLY AN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPERATIVE, BUT A
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND HUMAN ONE.



THE GREAT BLUE WALL APPROACH

Bringing together ecological recovery, social equity and economic prosperity, the Great Blue Wall rests on four interconnected pillars:



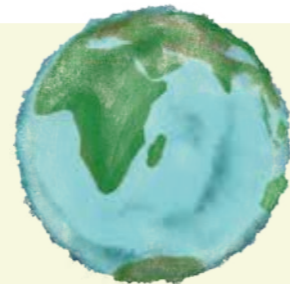
1

BLUE PEOPLE

INCLUSIVE OCEAN

- Governance • Equity
- Rights • IPLC
- Gender • Youth

Focuses on ensuring ocean governance and management is locally-led, equitable, participatory, and inclusive of local stakeholders, in particular Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and youth.



2

BLUE PLANET

RESILIENT OCEAN

- Ecosystems
- Habitats • Species
- Socio-ecological Systems

Aims to conserve and restore ecosystems, habitats, and species to strengthen the socio-ecological resilience of ocean systems.



3

BLUE PROSPERITY

PRODUCTIVE OCEAN

- Food Systems
- Value Chains
- Markets

Promotes sustainable and regenerative blue economies through resilient production systems, inclusive value chains, fair market access and innovation.



4

BLUE PARTNERSHIPS

CONNECTED OCEAN

- Institutional
- Technical • Social
- Ecological Connectivity

Builds institutional, social, and ecological connectivity from local to international levels to foster collaboration and enhance impact.

THESE PILLARS ARE BROUGHT TOGETHER THROUGH THE FOLLOWING ENABLERS

POLICY & DIPLOMACY

Strengthens ocean governance and collaboration across international, regional, national, and subnational levels.

INNOVATION

Harnessing research, new technologies, and creative approaches that transform how ocean systems are managed and valued.

TRANSFORMATION

Seeks systemic change—social, economic, and political—to realize a regenerative and resilient blue future.

MOVEMENT BUILDING

Unites diverse actors through catalytic coalitions, shared calls to action, and collective declarations to accelerate impact.

SCIENCE & KNOWLEDGE

Bridges modern and frontier science with Indigenous and local knowledge to guide evidence-based, culturally grounded action.

JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY

Advances social, ecological, and climate justice through inclusive, participatory governance at all levels.

COMMUNICATION & STORYTELLING

Amplifies ocean narratives that inspire awareness, accountability, and action locally, nationally, and globally.

FINANCE

Mobilizes diverse funding streams—grants, blended finance, public and private capital—to enable direct and equitable access to blue investments.

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

ONE PEOPLE, ONE PLANET, ONE OCEAN,
ONE FUTURE: LESSONS FROM THE GREAT BLUE WALL



SYLVIA EARLE
Marine biologist & Oceanographer, CEO, Mission Blue. IUCN Patron of Nature, Great Blue Wall High Level Champion

JAMES ALIX MICHEL
Former President of the Republic of Seychelles, Great Blue Wall High Level Champion

The ocean- our planet's blue heart- is in peril. Its rhythms are changing. The ocean's chemistry and temperature are shifting. Coral reefs are dying. The abundance and diversity of ocean wildlife are declining. Fisheries are declining. Not only coastal communities, but all of us, everywhere on Earth, are facing existential threats.

Because there is only one ocean- and it connects us all.

Yet, amidst this crisis, the ocean also offers one of the most powerful solutions of our time. People differ about many things but are coming together to safeguard the future of life in the sea, and therefore, the prosperity of life on Earth.

Across the Western Indian Ocean and beyond, a different story is taking shape. One not defined by decline, but by regeneration. Not by fragmentation, but by connection. Not by short-term extraction, but by long-term stewardship. One that shows what becomes possible when people, science, and leadership come together around a shared vision for the future of the ocean.

The Great Blue Wall is part of that story.

It is not simply an initiative, but a movement -born in the Western Indian Ocean -that is reimagining how we care for the ocean and how we value its role in our lives. Through regenerative seascapes -connected ocean and coastal ecosystems that function as a socio-ecological corridor across the region it is connecting conservation, livelihoods, and climate resilience into a single, integrated approach.

In doing so, it reflects a deeper truth: we are one people on one planet, sustained and connected by one ocean.

What is most powerful is not only the ambition, but what is already being realised.

Across the region, communities are restoring mangroves and seagrass meadows, strengthening fisheries, and building new regenerative blue economy opportunities. Women are leading enterprises and conservation efforts. Young people are stepping forward as scientists, innovators, and storytellers. These are not isolated successes; they are part of a wider shift toward systems that are inclusive, resilient, regenerative and grounded in place.

The Great Blue Wall reminds us that regeneration is not a distant goal. It is something that can begin now and grow.

By protecting and restoring these systems at scale, the initiative aims to help conserve at least 30% of the ocean by 2030, while restoring critical ecosystems and developing regenerative blue economies.

The journey is still unfolding and much remains to be done. But the foundations are in place -knowledge, partnerships, and momentum are already driving change. What matters now is how we carry this forward: investing in people, strengthening collaboration, and scaling what works.

This is our moment to act -supporting those on the front lines and recognising that the health of the ocean is inseparable from the future of humanity.

We share one future, and it depends on what we choose to do next.

The ocean has given us everything. Now, we must protect and restore it, ensuring its life-sustaining power endures -for all life on Earth.

THE GREAT BLUE WALL IS A BLUEPRINT FOR RESILIENCE AND REGENERATION

The Great Blue Wall (GBW) is a visionary, Africa-led response to the interconnected crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and economic vulnerability in coastal communities. It is more than a conservation effort; it is a strategic framework for building resilient blue economies, safeguarding marine biodiversity, and empowering millions who depend on the ocean for their livelihoods.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa and IUCN played a foundational role by providing critical economic analysis and advocacy to transform this vision into an actionable blueprint. UNECA worked to position the GBW not just as an environmental necessity, but as a compelling economic opportunity for sustainable development and climate resilience in Africa. We now call on all partners to unite and scale investments to turn this bold ambition into tangible prosperity for people and planet.

Nassim Oulmane
Chief of the Natural Resources, Green and Blue Economy Section
UNECA



EVIDENCE FOR BETTER OCEAN DECISIONS

For the Western Indian Ocean, the Great Blue Wall is important not only for what it seeks to achieve, but for how it is being built. Its strength lies in creating space for science, local knowledge, and regional collaboration to inform better decisions for coasts and oceans under growing pressure. This matters because lasting stewardship depends on more than ambition alone; it depends on evidence, trusted partnerships and the ability to learn across places and over time. The Great Blue Wall is not just a call to act, but a reminder that stronger ocean futures must also be informed, inclusive and grounded in knowledge.

Dr Arthur Tuda
Executive Secretary of WIOMSA

REGENERATIVE SEASCAPES

Regenerative Seascapes are coastal and marine subnational jurisdictions designed to restore ecosystems, strengthen climate resilience, and support sustainable livelihoods through integrated socio-ecological approaches.

They focus on rebuilding coastal and marine natural capital while supporting regenerative blue economies through sustainable enterprises, local economic activities, and institutions that create positive outcomes for communities, climate resilience, and ocean health.

Unlike approaches that focus only on reducing environmental harm, Regenerative Seascapes seek to generate net-positive outcomes that strengthen both ecosystems and communities over the long term.

AT THEIR CORE, REGENERATIVE SEASCAPES:

EMPOWER PEOPLE:

Strengthen local agency, cultural identity, diversity, and well-being.

RESTORE NATURE:

Protect and regenerate ecosystems, species, and ecological integrity.

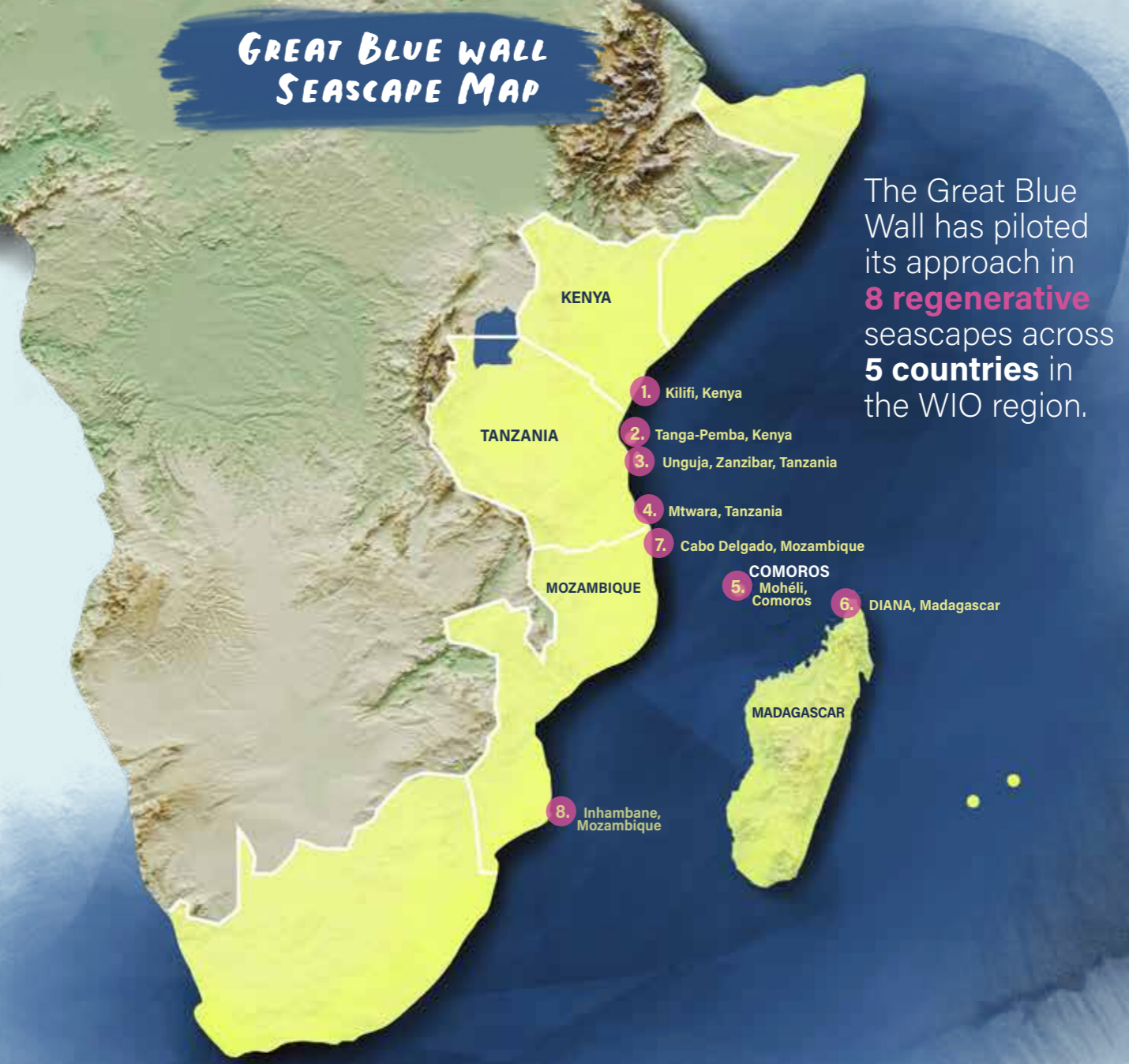
BUILD REGENERATIVE ECONOMIES:

Foster inclusive, locally driven economies connected to sustainable global opportunities.

Fundamentally, Regenerative Seascapes are built on collaboration, bringing communities, governments, scientists, and partners together around a shared vision for long-term ocean and community resilience.



GREAT BLUE WALL SEASCAPE MAP



The Great Blue Wall has piloted its approach in **8 regenerative** seascapes across **5 countries** in the WIO region.

- 1. Kilifi, Kenya
- 2. Tanga-Pemba, Kenya
- 3. Unguja, Zanzibar, Tanzania
- 4. Mtwara, Tanzania
- 7. Cabo Delgado, Mozambique
- 5. Mohéli, Comoros
- 6. DIANA, Madagascar
- 8. Inhambane, Mozambique

GREAT BLUE WALL NETWORK OF SEASCAPES

The Great Blue Wall is spearheading the establishment of a network of regenerative seascapes where conservation, livelihoods, and climate resilience are being strengthened together.

The eight seascapes describe below are located across five countries and represent diverse ecological systems, cultures, economies, and governance contexts, while contributing to a shared regional vision for ocean regeneration.

KILIFI SEASCAPE (KENYA)

OVERVIEW

Scale 4,873 km ²	Population 704K	Ecosystems Mangroves, reefs, seagrass, forests, dunes	Key Species Turtles, dolphins, humpbacks	Key Managed Areas Watamu Marine Park; Watamu Marine Reserve	Improved Management 1795 km ² Watamu & Malindi marine parks/reserves
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BLUE ECONOMY FOCUS

- Ecotourism, fisheries
- Mangrove apiculture
- Mariculture (mud crab, shrimp, milkfish)

WHY THIS SEASCAPE MATTERS

- Integrated MPA + community system
- Connected coastal ecosystem network
- Strong shift to nature-based livelihoods



TANGA-PEMBA SEASCAPE (TANZANIA)

OVERVIEW

Scale 7,038 km ²	Population 481,000K	Ecosystems Reefs, seagrass, mangroves, coastal forests	Key Species Coelacanth, turtles, dugongs	Key Managed Areas 7 MPAs
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BLUE ECONOMY FOCUS

- Seaweed, fish, crab, sea cucumber farming
- Community ecotourism

WHY THIS SEASCAPE MATTERS

- Mainland-Zanzibar system
- Transboundary conservation corridor
- Strong aquaculture-livelihood link

NORTHEAST UNGUJA SEASCAPE (ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA)

OVERVIEW

Scale 507 km ²	Population 70-80K	Ecosystems Reefs, lagoons, seagrass, mangroves	Key Species Turtles, dolphins	Key Managed Areas 2
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BLUE ECONOMY FOCUS

- Seaweed farming (women-led)
- Artisanal fisheries
- Coastal tourism

WHY THIS SEASCAPE MATTERS

- Dense population and conservation balance
- Strong presence of women-led seaweed farming,
- Represents a critical tourism-fisheries interface zone,



MTWARA SEASCAPE (TANZANIA)

OVERVIEW

Scale 1,571 km ²	Population 305K	Ecosystems Mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, estuaries/lagoons	Key Species Turtles, dolphins	Key Managed Areas 1 MPA 29 BMUs
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EMERGING GBW SEASCAPE

BLUE ECONOMY FOCUS

- Seaweed farming, fisheries
- Aquaculture & coastal trade

WHY THIS SEASCAPE MATTERS

- Key fisheries-dependent region
- Strong mangrove nursery systems
- High potential for nature-based aquaculture expansion to diversify household incomes and reduce resource dependency on capture fisheries.

MOHELI SEASCAPE (COMOROS)

OVERVIEW

Scale 290 km ² <small>100% of the seascape is under active, improved management protocol</small>	Population 52,000K	Ecosystems Mangroves, reefs, seagrass	Key Species Turtles, dolphins, humpbacks	Protected Areas Mohéli National Park	Key Managed Areas 1 MPA 5 LMMAs
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MOHELI IS A UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE AND A PRIMARY SITE FOR THE GREAT BLUE WALL.

BLUE ECONOMY FOCUS

Fisheries, tourism.
Community enterprises.

WHY THIS SEASCAPE MATTERS

- 100% Management Coverage:
- A Global Biodiversity Anchor:
- **Deep Social Integration:**
By involving 30% of the population in NbS implementation and research, Mohéli represents the GBW's gold standard for community-led stewardship.

CABO DELGADO SEASCAPE (MOZAMBIQUE)

OVERVIEW

Scale 27520km ²	Population ~500,000K	Ecosystems Mangroves, reefs, seagrass, dunes	Key Species Turtles, dolphins,	Improved Management 25 km ² 1 MPA 9 LMMAs
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BLUE ECONOMY FOCUS

Fisheries, aquaculture.
Beekeeping, horticulture.
Crab fattening, ecotouris.

WHY THIS SEASCAPE MATTERS

- Community-led resource management
- Integrated land-sea livelihoods
- Mangrove pressure reduction (clean energy)



DIANA SEASCAPE (MADAGASCAR)

OVERVIEW

Scale 17,000 km ²	Population 296,400K <small>coastal residents</small>	Ecosystems Mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, coastal forests, lagoons	Key Species Whale sharks, humpback whales, sea turtles, dolphins, reef sharks	Protected Areas 7 MPAs, 20 LMMAs
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BLUE ECONOMY FOCUS

Sustainable fisheries and value addition.
Marine Ecotourism.
Nature-based enterprises and Regenerative Livelihoods.

WHY THIS SEASCAPE MATTERS

- One of the largest seascapes in the Great Blue Wall.
- Recognized as both a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) and an Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA)
- Supports globally significant marine megafauna.
- Extensive network of MPAs and LMMAs enabling national conservation and community co-management



INHAMBANE SEASCAPE (MOZAMBIQUE)

OVERVIEW

Scale 29,793 km ²	Population 1,547,906 <small>coastal inhabitants in the province</small>	Ecosystems Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Seagrass Meadows	Key Species Dugongs, whale sharks, manta rays	Improved Management 12,196 km ² Bazaruto NP + coastal sanctuary
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BLUE ECONOMY FOCUS

Fisheries & cold-chain logistics to increase value for artisanal fishers.
Seaweed, beekeeping.
High-value ecotourism.

WHY THIS SEASCAPE MATTERS

- "Marine Serengeti" of WIO
- High-density megafauna hotspot
- Large-scale NbS model

SECTION I

BLUE PEOPLE

*GOVERNING THE OCEAN TOGETHER,
EMPOWERING THOSE WHO DEPEND
ON IT MOST.*

Inclusive and participatory Ocean governance is fundamental to sustaining both marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on them. Strengthening inclusive governance systems that recognise and support Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) is essential for long-term resilience.

Our work in ocean governance particularly focuses on supporting community networks, such as the MIHARI LMMA movement in Madagascar. As such, one of our key priorities in our work has been strengthening community-led ocean governance. Our work in support of community networks, such as the MIHARI network in Madagascar, and the creation of the WIO LMMA Alliance, reflects growing momentum to connect grassroots stewardship initiatives across the region. Today, the Great Blue Wall contributes at a regional scale on strengthening partnerships, participatory governance frameworks and policies, and collaboration that connect local action with regional ambition and global impact.

As such, we are actively supporting countries to advance progress on the 30x30 CBD GBF target by spearheading the development of a regional strategy for large-scale regenerative seascapes. This approach builds on lessons and experience from related efforts led by Global South countries, including Fiji and Indonesia, where similar models have demonstrated the value and impact of coordinated, large-scale regenerative ocean management. Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Kenya have spearheaded this approach on the African continent, helping strengthen and further enhance approaches that can now be replicated across the region and beyond.



SECTION I

ENSURING OCEAN GOVERNANCE IS EQUITABLE, PARTICIPATORY, AND INCLUSIVE OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS, IN PARTICULAR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, LOCAL COMMUNITIES, WOMEN, AND YOUTH.

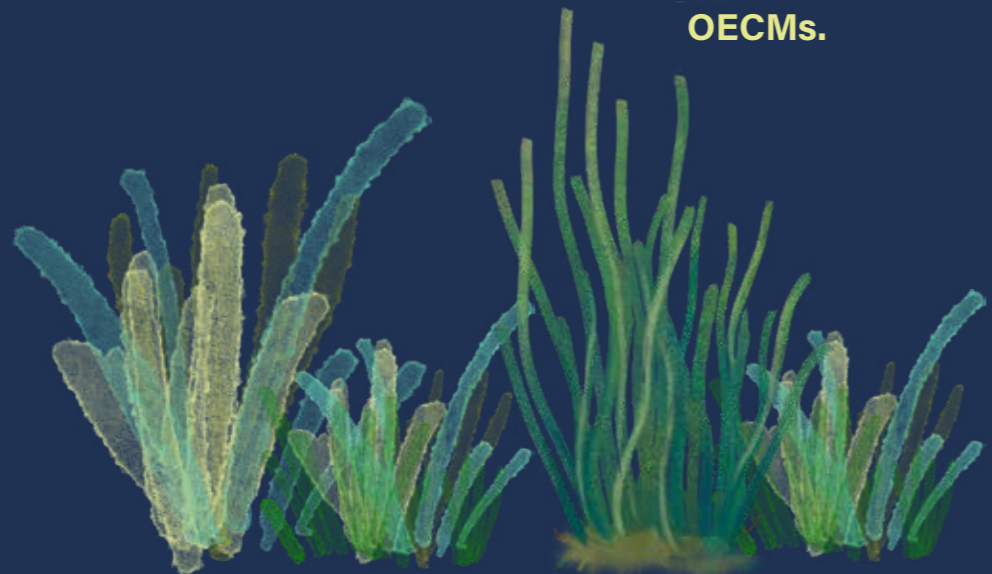
For generations, communities across Africa have built their identities, livelihoods and cultures around the ocean. Marine ecosystems provide food, income and a deep sense of belonging, forming the backbone of coastal economies. Yet despite this enduring relationship, many communities have remained marginalised from decision-making, including marine governance, climate negotiations and opportunities shaping their resources and futures.

The Blue People pillar focuses on ensuring that coastal communities play a central role in ocean governance, conservation, and regenerative blue economy development. By strengthening locally led stewardship, inclusive participatory governance systems, and regional collaboration, this pillar helps translate global ocean commitments into action grounded in local realities.

Through this approach, the Great Blue Wall is strengthening connected systems of marine and coastal protection and conservation, community governance, and locally led stewardship across regenerative seascapes.

During the 2021-2025 period, GBW partners have supported over 83,000 km² of marine and coastal areas supported across 8 regenerative seascapes.

This includes 22,500 km² under improved management through a network of MPAs, LMMAs and OECMs.



BLUE PEOPLE IMPACT



83,000+ km²
OF MARINE & COASTAL
AREAS SUPPORTED
across 8 regenerative
seascapes



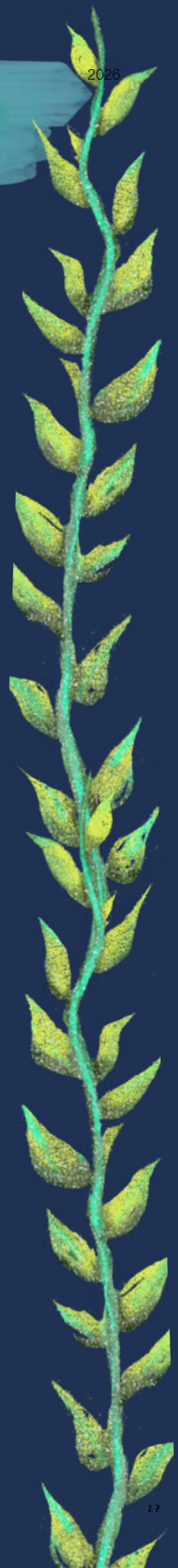
22,500 km²
AREA UNDER IMPROVED
MANAGEMENT through
MPAs, LMMAs and
OECMs



Over **155,000** people
HAVE BEEN REACHED through
awareness and governance
strengthening initiatives
supporting these systems.

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

- 8 priority seascapes under integrated management
- 25+ locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) supported
- 5 marine protected areas (MPAs) strengthened
- 5 countries implementing community co-management frameworks



SECTION I

POLICY & DIPLOMACY

The Blue People pillar aims to improve ocean governance so it reflects the rights and the visibility of the people who depend on the ocean. For many years, small-scale fishers and coastal communities' voices were isolated, because decisions were often made in distant places through top-down processes. This is now changing. In Tanga–Pemba (Tanzania) and Cabo Delgado (Mozambique) Seascapes, communities are directly involved in managing coastal and marine resources, supporting both conservation and sustainable use by and for local stakeholders. The Blue People pillar is also supporting policy reform and the development of governance frameworks. Through the Locally Empowered Area Protection (LEAP) project, work with the Government of Tanzania and Mozambique has helped progress a review of fisheries regulations to strengthen co-management.

In Mozambique, the LEAP project is actively leveraging the national fisheries law that legally recognizes community fisheries councils (CCPs). This grants local fishers the right to designate their own community management areas, establish no-take zones, and spearhead community-based management of marine resources.

JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY

Across the Great Blue Wall's regenerative seascapes, the Blue People pillar is backing community-led conservation based on local priorities, knowledge and lived experience. Fishers, elders, youth and local authorities are working together to manage and restore nearshore ecosystems, with protection measures being locally led and co-designed, not imposed.

These efforts are supported through multi-stakeholder platforms that bring together local actors to define shared priorities, develop seascape roadmaps, and guide decision-making.

Women and youth are also increasingly playing a critical and central role in this movement, leading restoration activities, piloting sustainable livelihoods, and combining indigenous knowledge with scientific tools. Women are now heading beach management units and grassroots initiatives, strengthening ecosystem recovery and local agency.

These shifts are increasingly being embedded within formal governance systems through seascape steering committees, community representation mechanisms, and dedicated local restoration planning processes.

COMMUNICATION & STORYTELLING

The Blue People pillar recognises that whose stories are told shapes whose priorities are heard. Storytelling is therefore treated as an integral part of systems change. Through programmes such as the Voices of the Sea Fellowship, coastal youth build skills to tell their own stories through film, radio and digital media; documenting local knowledge, traditions and lived experience. In 2024, 120 young storytellers were trained across Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Comoros. Their work has reached audiences at major global events such as COP28, appeared on local and regional television, and been used in local school curriculum, playing a critical role in helping make ocean policy more accessible and locally grounded.



CASE STUDY

COASTAL COMMUNITIES RESTORE OCEANS AND BUILD RESILIENCE WITH REGENERATIVE SEASCAPES

The Regenerative Seascapes for People, Climate and Nature (ReSea) programme was launched in 2023 as a flagship project of the Great Blue Wall, with support from Global Affairs Canada. Co-Led by IUCN and Mission Inclusion, in partnership with Caring for Conservation, WIOMSA, BFA Global and local organizations across 5 countries, ReSea operates in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Comoros, and Madagascar. The project aims to strengthen climate resilience and improve livelihoods for 350,000 coastal residents by embedding Nature-based Solutions in governance, supporting regenerative sustainable livelihoods, and promoting the leadership of women and youth.

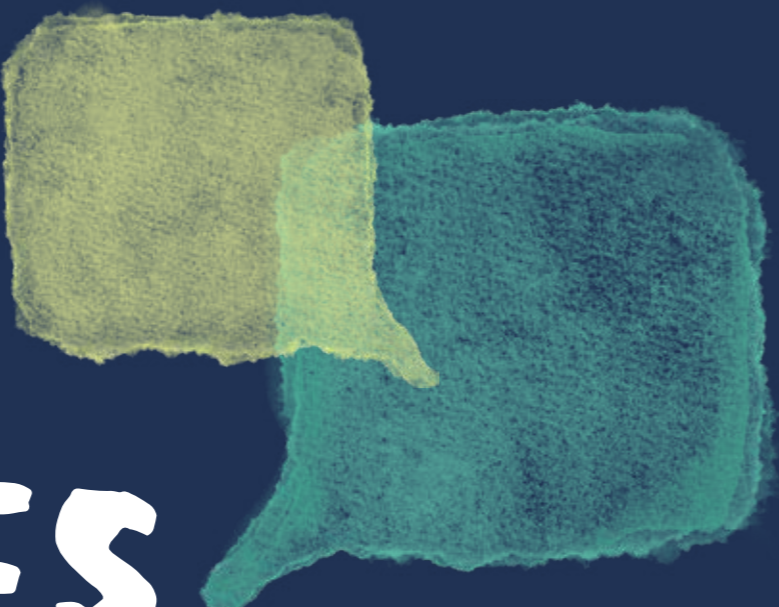
ReSea focuses on five regenerative seascapes, including the Kilifi Seascape (Kenya), the Diana Seascape (Madagascar), the Tanga–Pemba Seascape (Tanzania), the Inhambane Seascape (Mozambique), and the Mohéli Seascape (Comoros).

A core strength of ReSea is its emphasis on inclusive governance and policy reform. In Madagascar and

Comoros, the project has supported the establishment of Great Blue Wall Seascape Steering Committees formalized through regional decrees and bringing together national and subnational government agencies, civil society, and community representatives. In Comoros this has been complemented by the establishment of a national-level GBW Steering Committee to strengthen Coordination and alignment across seascapes.

On the ground, Nature-based Solutions are already delivering early results, with 41,700 km² under improved management or restoration and growing engagement from governments, communities, and science-to-policy platforms across participating seascapes

Community empowerment underpins the project. Across sites, training has strengthened local leadership, resource stewardship, and participation, reaching 260 community members, including 62 women. In Mozambique, eight women have emerged as conservation advocates, leading local campaigns to protect mangroves and seagrasses and increasing compliance with conservation measures.



SECTION I
VOICES
FROM THE
GREAT BLUE WALL



"We highly appreciate International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Great Blue Wall partnership for creating meaningful opportunities for coastal communities and for ensuring that local voices are genuinely heard and included in decision-making processes. The approach of bringing together communities across the Western Indian Ocean through the establishment of the WIO LMMA Network has created a strong platform for collaboration, shared learning, and collective action to address common challenges affecting marine and coastal resources. Furthermore, the establishment of LMMA networks at the national level has strengthened unity among coastaommunities and enhanced collective efforts toward the conservation and sustainable utilization of marine resources.

*NURU SAID SALUM, REGIONAL COORDINATOR,
MWAMBAAO COASTAL COMMUNITY NETWORK*



Collaborative approaches, such as the Great Blue Wall, that combine community restoration and policy advocacy are essential to advancing nature-based solutions."

*DR. JULIE MULONGA, REGIONAL DIRECTOR,
WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL EASTERN AFRICA*



"The partnership with IUCN and the Great Blue Wall has strengthened Madagascar's LMMAs and reinforced the value of cross-regional collaboration and shared learning across the Western Indian Ocean."

*GUY CELESTIN RAKOTOVAO
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT - MIHARI NETWORK*



Through support from the Great Blue Wall, AMA has been able to work with local communities — from fishers to teachers and artisans — who now lead ocean conservation action by themselves. By managing their own resources and livelihoods, they are seeing better fish catches, stronger incomes, and healthier coastal communities.

*TOMÁS LANGA,
CEO, AMA, MOZAMBIQUE*



"The establishment of the WIO LMMA Alliance reflects the growing recognition of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities within the Great Blue Wall initiative."

*MALIDADI LANGA,
CHAIR OF AICA - AFRICA ALLIANCE OF IPLC*

TOGETHER, WE RISE.

The ocean shapes lives, economies, and identities. Mangroves protect coastlines, coastal dunes defend communities from storms, seagrass meadows sustain fisheries, and coral reefs shelter biodiversity. Yet these ecosystems face growing pressure from climate change, coastal development, and unsustainable use.

Over the past years, driving action under the Blue Planet pillar of the Great Blue Wall has been both a responsibility and a powerful reminder of what collective action in this region can achieve.

We have witnessed how restoration is driven not only by science, but also by communities working to understand, protect, and restore ecosystems.

The opportunities are powerful. The Western Indian Ocean is home to extraordinary people, scientists, practitioners, governments, and communities, who know their ecosystems and work tirelessly to understand and protect them. Through the Great Blue Wall, the Blue Planet pillar has strengthened the foundations needed to scale conservation: science, knowledge, governance, partnerships, and finance.

Together with our partners, we have supported conservation efforts across the region, achieving tangible progress. Regional efforts have strengthened the science base for ocean restoration and

resilience, including the first Western Indian Ocean Red List of Ecosystems and regional ecosystem assessments for mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs.

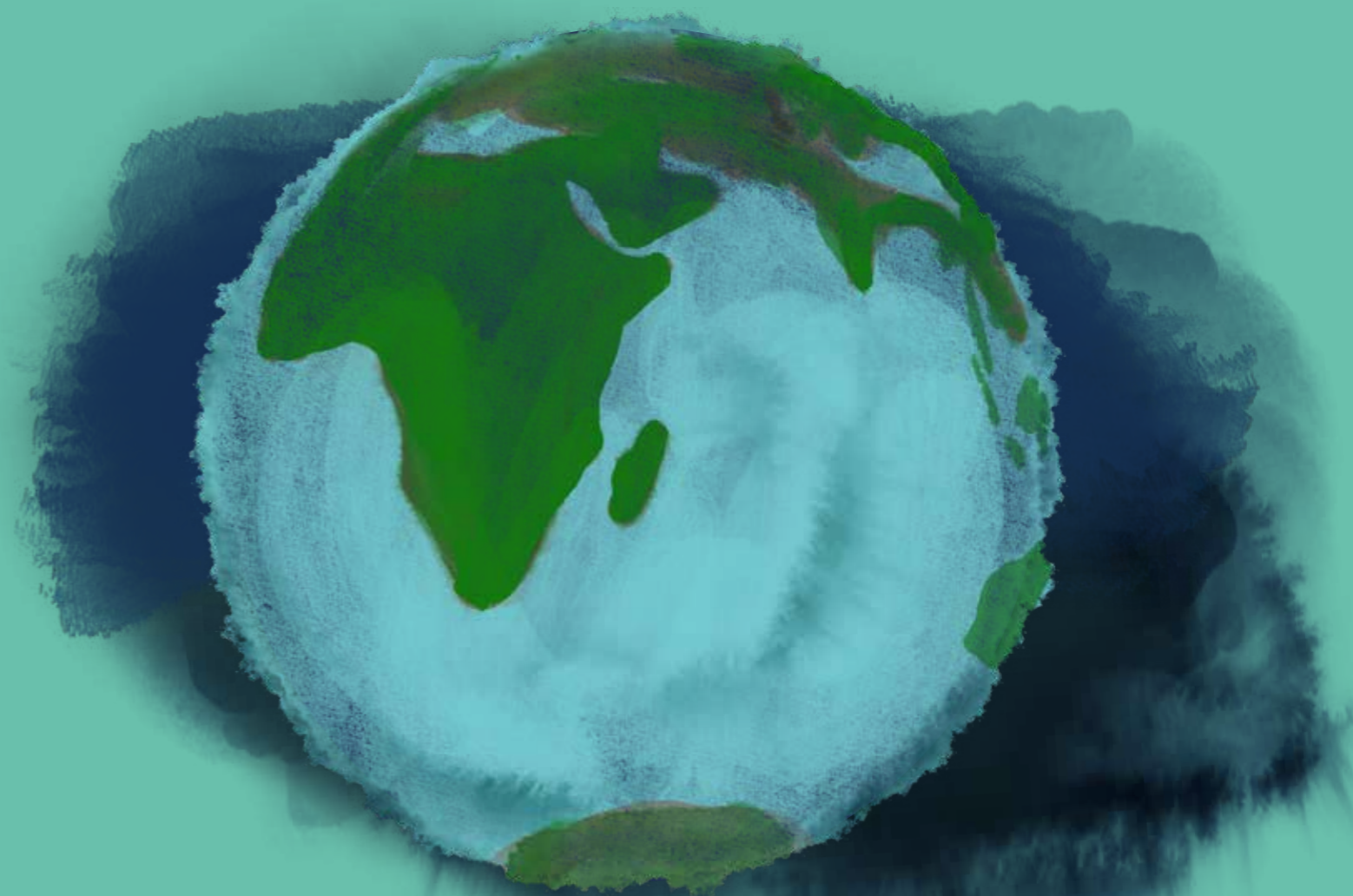
Over 400 practitioners have been trained on the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions (NbS), and regional engagement has reached more than 1,600 stakeholders across 11 countries. Soon, for the first time, funding will flow directly to seagrass conservation and blue economy initiatives, empowering local communities to lead solutions on the front line.

We still have a long way to go. Restoring nature at this scale requires patience, unity, and trust, time to understand the ecology of our coasts, and to grow solutions together, like the mangrove seeds, seeds of hope we have planted, together. Nature has already shown us the way forward. The challenge now is scaling and accelerating action at the pace the moment demands

The Great Blue Wall embodies a shared regional ambition: a future where science, collaboration, and community leadership restore the ocean that sustains us, and where people and nature rise stronger together.

SECTION II

BLUE PLANET



SECTION II

CONSERVING AND RESTORING CRITICAL BLUE ECOSYSTEMS TO STRENGTHEN THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES AND OCEANS

Critical blue ecosystems such as coastal dunes, tidal marshes, mangroves forests, seagrasses meadows, kelp forests and coral reefs are among the planet's most biodiverse and valuable ecosystems. They protect coastlines and infrastructures, sustain fisheries and livelihoods, and support the wellbeing of coastal communities. Globally, these ecosystems are valued at USD 24+ trillion and generate USD 2.5 trillion each year, with their importance rising as the blue economy approaches USD 3 trillion by 2030¹.

In the WIO, these ecosystems underpin the resilience and prosperity of more than 60 million coastal residents² and generate an estimated USD25 billion annually through jobs, income and food security³. But accelerating climate impacts and unsustainable practices are driving rapid decline; sea-level rise, coral bleaching and falling fish stocks are already eroding these benefits.

The Great Blue Wall (GBW)'s Blue Planet pillar is grounded in the understanding that lasting resilience

comes when ecosystem health, development and inclusive governance work together. Through the blue planet pillar, the GBW advances protection and restoration of critical blue ecosystems, including the protection and restoration of at least 2 million hectares of coastal and marine habitats in the WIO capable of storing up to 100 million tons of CO₂.

During the 2021 - 2025 period, GBW partners have supported conservation efforts spanning an area of 175,780 hectares of coastal and marine ecosystems.

This effort is reinforced by national commitments, including Seychelles' pledge to protect 100% of its seagrass ecosystems by 2030, as announced at UNFCCC COP28 by President Ramkalawan⁴ during a Heads of State Great Blue Wall event.

BLUE PLANET IMPACT

Restoration and Protection Frameworks are now active across all Five GBW Seascales, anchoring large-scale ecosystem recovery and blue carbon gains, and contributing toward the 2-Million-Hectare Restoration and Protection Ambition by 2030.



175,780 ha

COASTAL & MARINE ECOSYSTEMS RESTORED, PROTECTED OR COMMITTED TO PROTECTION

ECOSYSTEMS SUPPORTED

- Mangroves
- Seagrass Meadows
- Coral Reefs
- Coastal Dune Systems

RESTORATION AND PROTECTION

Seychelles

160,000-ha Seagrass ecosystems committed for protection under national climate commitments

Kenya, Mozambique & Tanzania

15,500-ha Mangrove and seagrass restoration initiatives aligned with national biodiversity strategies

RESTORATION IN ACTION

Implemented through initiatives including:

- LEAP
- ReSea
- Bahari Mali
- CRCC



SECTION II

SCIENCE & KNOWLEDGE

During the 2021–2025 period, the Great Blue Wall's Blue Planet pillar strengthened the science and governance needed to restore Western Indian Ocean ecosystems, turning evidence into policy and accelerating regional collaboration. A key milestone was the production of the first Western Indian Ocean Red List of Ecosystems (mangroves, seagrasses and coral reefs), which is already helping guide national planning and investment decisions.

Across the region, governments received technical support to integrate nature-based solutions (NbS) into climate adaptation plans, protected area management and national policies; reflecting growing recognition that healthy ecosystems underpin resilience for people, nature and local economies. At the same time, governance is shifting toward regenerative seascapes, managing ecosystems as connected systems rather than isolated sites.

Capacity and coordination also expanded, with more than 150 people trained on the IUCN Global Standard for nature-based solutions (NbS) for Climate Adaptation and more than 500 people reached across the WIO region. Partnerships with the WIO Marine Science Network and the WIO Mangrove Network strengthened regional alignment, alongside new efforts to coordinate seagrass and coral reef action. Flagship outputs include the WIOCOR Regional Seagrass Technical Status Report (covering nine countries) and expanded mangrove mapping and monitoring supported by the LEAP and Save Our Mangroves Now projects. The Blue Planet pillar has also strengthened the region's global voice, engaging with more than 1,600 stakeholders and decision makers across 11 countries.

TRANSFORMATION & FINANCE

The Blue Planet pillar shows how restoration can be financed and scaled by linking ecosystem recovery with livelihoods and blue value chains. Mangroves are a strong entry point; benefits are visible quickly and can attract climate finance. Across Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, 160 ha have been restored, with 70 ha under rehabilitation. In Mozambique,

the Coastal Resilience to Climate Change project and the Locally Empowered Areas of Protection (LEAP) projects restored 124 ha while supporting more than 2,400 households through improved food security and diversified livelihoods.

Seagrass finance is accelerating. The WIOCOR project is supporting 15 community organisations across five countries through sub-grants for seagrass conservation and restoration. In parallel, IUCN has launched a USD 1 million seagrass grants programme in Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, Comoros, and Mozambique to build capacity and develop a pipeline of community-led, investable projects under the GBW Capacity Building Programme.

CASE STUDY

ROOTS OF RESILIENCE: BUILDING THE GREAT BLUE WALL THROUGH MANGROVES AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Over the past decade, the Save Our Mangroves Now! (SOMN) initiative laid the foundation for what is emerging as one of Africa's most ambitious ocean conservation movements: the Great Blue Wall (GBW). Working across the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), home to approximately 5% of the world's mangroves, SOMN demonstrated how coordinated action linking science, communities, and policy can transform how coastal ecosystems are valued and managed

Launched in 2016 with the urgent goal of securing a future for mangroves, SOMN elevated these coastal forests as central to climate resilience, biodiversity, and livelihoods. Partners in Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, and Mozambique built knowledge, partnerships, and governance structures to enable large-scale action. Scientific assessments, blue carbon mapping, and policy support helped embed mangroves within national climate and biodiversity commitments.

In Kenya, SOMN helped operationalize the National and County Mangrove Management Committee, contributed to five legal instruments including the Lamu County Climate Change Act (2022) and Lamu Forest Policy (2021), and revised the national biodiversity strategy to include coastal ecosystems.

In Mozambique, the National Mangrove Strategy supported by SOMN guided the restoration of 5,000 hectares of mangroves, while strengthening national governance through the creation of a National Mangrove Council and provincial coordination structures.

Regionally, SOMN fostered collaboration via the Western Indian Ocean Mangrove Network (WIOMN), producing a Regional Mangrove Action Plan and a shared vision for resilient mangroves by 2050. The knowledge, partnerships, and governance systems built through SOMN now provide an important foundation for scaling restoration, mobilizing finance, and advancing the Great Blue Wall across the Western Indian Ocean.

Internationally, in the Action Agenda framework of the UNFCCC CoPs, SOMN, through the GBW engagement, has contributed to the development of the Mangrove Breakthrough which has largely contributed to positioning Ocean-based Climate Solutions at the core of the Global Climate Action Agenda.

Today, Mangroves are increasingly recognized not only as climate assets, but as engines of coastal resilience, livelihoods, and ocean regeneration.



SECTION II

VOICES FROM THE GREAT BLUE WALL



"IUCN, under the Great Blue Wall, has been a great partner to the Namibia Nature Foundation throughout the early work on the BBNJ Agreement and the scoping of the Walvis Ridge as a potential high seas MPA. The team's expertise, support, and strategic guidance have helped to build vital momentum around the High Seas Treaty in Namibia. The team is truly committed to ensuring the success of every initiative that they are involved in. Their collaborative approach exemplifies genuine partnership and always placing African States' national priorities at the forefront."

*SHARON KAHUNDA, GRANTS MANAGER,
NAMIBIA NATURE FOUNDATION*



"Collaborating with IUCN on the BBNJ workshop in Namibia was an exceptional experience. Their knowledgeable and dedicated team brought impressive expertise and a strong network of experts, making the workshop highly impactful and dynamic."

*JUDITH BROWN, PROJECT DIRECTOR,
BLUE MARINE FOUNDATION*



"At a time when the ocean is central to climate, biodiversity, and human well-being, the Great Blue Wall demonstrates that transformative change emerges from collective ambition. By bringing together communities, science, finance, and governance, this initiative offers a compelling model for ocean stewardship in the 21st century."

*JOACHIM CLAUDET,
RESEARCH DIRECTOR, CNRS*



"It is essential to accelerate the implementation of Nature-based Solutions to curb coastal erosion more flexible, and it is equally urgent to accelerate the formalization of Community Fisheries Councils (CCPs) and Community-Managed Fishing Areas (LMMAs), so that communities may have greater power in managing the ecosystem and their resources. The Great Blue Wall plays a strategic role in accelerating these efforts."

*PAULINO DMOÍNE, PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR OF TERRITORIAL
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT OF INHAMBANE,
INHAMBANE SEASCAPE, MOZAMBIQUE*



"Since the start of the GBW, CORDIO has promoted the centrality of the seascape approach — the need to assure the sustainability of all social and economic activities within the critical ecosystems of the Western Indian Ocean coastline and islands. Through our focus on the dependence of local fisheries and tourism on coral reefs, the vulnerability of these socio-ecological systems to climate change, and the need for local, national, and regional governance to build resilience, we've been honoured to partner with everyone in the GBW to deliver meaningful outcomes for the people and ecosystems of our coastline."

*DAVID OBUA PHD, MBS
CHAIR, IPBES (INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLATFORM
ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES);
FOUNDING DIRECTOR, CORDIO*

SECTION III

BLUE PROSPERITY

REIMAGING OCEAN IMPACT: PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF REGENERATION

The relationship between people and the ocean is one of the oldest on Earth, and one of the most consequential we have yet to get right. The dominant narrative has long framed conservation and development as opposites: protect the ocean from people or exploit it for them.

In the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), where more than 60 million people live within 100 km of the coast, rising sea levels, coral bleaching, intensifying climate events, and declining fish stocks signal that our marine asset base is eroding, and failing the people who depend on it. This is the central paradox: while the ocean generates over USD 2.5 trillion annually, the systems we use

to manage and finance it often drive its decline and fail to reach those on the frontlines. The question is whether we have the ambition to shift toward systems that serve both people and nature.

The Blue Prosperity pillar challenges this false dichotomy, placing people at the centre of regeneration and advancing a regenerative blue economy as a pathway to both conservation and development.

What does this look like at scale? Three shifts underpin this transition.

First, building the productive foundations of a regenerative blue economy.

Entrepreneurs and regenerative enterprises are developing solutions in aquaculture, circular economy systems, blue foods, ocean technology, and restoration-linked livelihoods. Scaling these efforts requires stronger investment pipelines, market access, innovation, entrepreneurship support, and governance systems that enable regeneration over extraction.

Second, rethinking finance to enable regeneration.

Financing systems often continue to favour extractive economic models over long-term ecosystem and community resilience. The Blue Prosperity pillar is helping build

alternative financing pathways and fiscal frameworks that support and reward regenerative enterprises, inclusivity, innovation, and sustainable blue economies

Third, advancing policy frameworks for systemic change.

Progress such as the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) demonstrates what collective ambition can achieve. African countries are playing a leading role. Through the GBW BBNJ Africa project, efforts are underway to strengthen regional coherence, support Centres of Excellence, and build readiness for implementation. At the same time, the GBW is supporting policy ambition for the regenerative blue economy through coalition-building and technical support.



SECTION III

PROMOTING REGENERATIVE BLUE ECONOMIES THROUGH INNOVATION, BLUE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS, EFFECTIVE POLICY, INCLUSIVE VALUE CHAINS, INNOVATIVE FINANCE AND FAIR MARKET ACCESS.



The Blue Prosperity pillar recognises people and economic activities as driving forces of long-term socio-ecological regeneration. It advances a regenerative blue economy as a critical enabler of conservation outcomes and inclusive economic transformation.

By linking ocean conservation with livelihoods, enterprise development, regenerative finance and innovation, the Blue Prosperity pillar supports regenerative blue economies that strengthen both people and ecosystems.

During the 2021–2025 period, GBW partners supported 112,735 people with strengthened livelihoods and economic opportunities across participating countries, including 1300+ jobs created benefitting an estimated 36,648 household members. These opportunities were delivered through inclusive approaches that prioritised women, youth, and vulnerable groups across participating seascapes.

BLUE PROSPERITY IMPACT



112,735 People

LIVELIHOODS STRENGTHENED across participating countries



1,300+ Jobs

CREATED through restoration, fisheries, circular economy & blue enterprises



45% WOMEN | 30% youth

PARTICIPATION across supported livelihood and enterprise initiatives



100+ enterprises & ventures

SUPPORTED through innovation, circular economy & regenerative blue economy initiatives



CIRCULAR ECONOMY & INNOVATION

Support provided for:

- Recycling enterprises
- Ocean innovation
- Nature-based enterprises
- Community-led businesses

FINANCE MOBILIZED

USD 80M+

Climate, conservation, and regenerative blue economy finance mobilized

Catalytic Funding

- IslandPlas community grants
- WIOCOR restoration grants
- Ecopreneurs seed funding
- Venture acceleration support

1,300+ BLUE JOBS CREATED

Driven By Major Initiatives Including:

- ReSea (71,000 people)
- LEAP (12,000+ people)
- CRCC (5,000 people)

100+ ENTERPRISES & VENTURES SUPPORTED

Key Initiatives

- Africa Blue Wave Programme
- GBW Ecopreneurs Challenge
- MarPlastics (circular economy)
- IslandPlas

Independent partner analyses, including OceanHub Africa (2021–2025), indicate comparable trends in enterprise growth, employment, and environmental outcomes across the region.

SECTION III

INNOVATION & THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY: SCALING REGENERATIVE MARKETS

Innovation under the Great Blue Wall is supporting a new generation of enterprises and regenerative business models that connect ocean restoration with sustainable economic opportunities.

The GBW has addressed the critical gap in blue entrepreneurship through a multi-tiered portfolio of focused Venture Building programs and Incubators:

THE GBW ECOPRENEURS CHALLENGE

This flagship incubator is already delivering on the ground impact, having incubated 7 high-impact start-ups across nine WIO countries, including pioneers like Kumbatia Seafood, Seaweed Cafe, Seawater Solutions, Captain Fanplastic, and Whaleseeker

Targeted Investment: Specifically for this challenge, USD 200,000 in seed funding has been leveraged to date, with a clear strategic target to scale this mobilization to USD 2 million by 2027.

Global Access: The visible showcasing of these ventures at COP28 has successfully positioned African ocean enterprises at the very forefront of emerging global climate and nature finance markets.

BROADENING THE BLUE PIPELINE

To further diversify the regional regenerative blue economy, the GBW is driving two other distinct venture-building programs:

Africa Blue Wave Programme: Currently fueling the development of 17 tech-enabled ventures to create a pipeline of scalable digital-marine solutions.

MarPlasticcs Initiatives: Investing in 7 circular ventures focused on turning plastic waste streams into sustainable, restored-value products.

DIGITIZING CONSERVATION (THE TECH4NATURE PARTNERSHIP)

This innovative approach is supported by frontier technology to de-risk investments and drive adaptive management at a regional scale. In partnership with Huawei, the GBW is supporting the deployment of:

AI-enabled acoustic monitoring and underwater imaging.

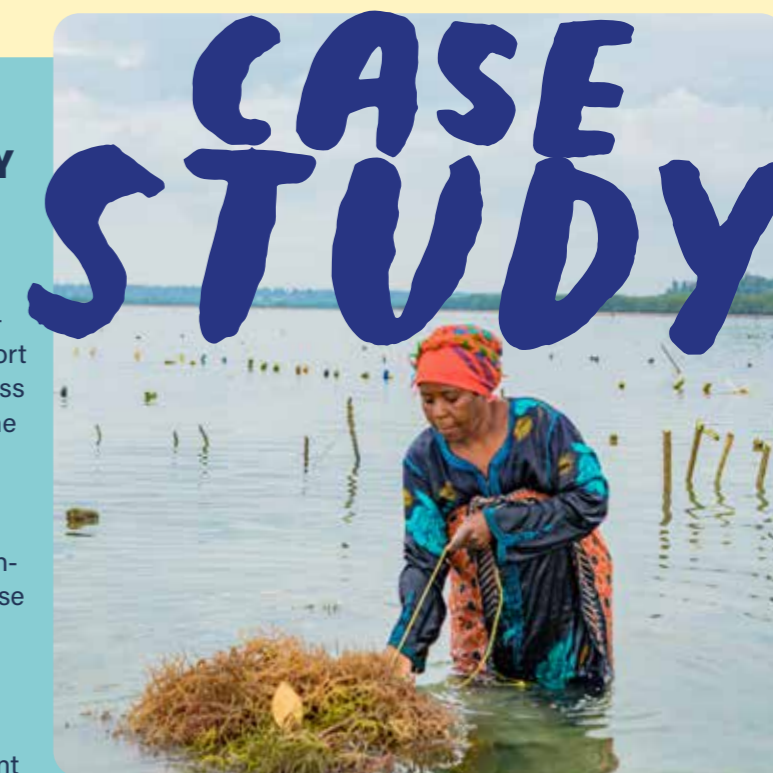
Real-time data systems in critical sites like Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Park, generating the high-fidelity transparency that is essential for attracting large-scale, naturepositive capital.

FINANCE

The Blue Prosperity pillar supports a transition toward inclusive and regenerative blue economies by strengthening practical financing mechanisms for ocean restoration, sustainable livelihoods, and blue enterprise development. Through blended finance, community grants, innovation funding, and entrepreneurship support, initiatives such as LEAP, MARPLASTICCs, IslandPlas, Bahari Mali, ReSea and WIOCOR are helping coastal communities and local enterprises access capital, technical support, and market opportunities. Across the region, regenerative ventures linked to aquaculture, circular economy solutions, eco-tourism, and restoration-based livelihoods are beginning to scale, while regional blue finance frameworks and mechanisms are positioning ocean conservation as a long-term economic investment.

POLICY AND DIPLOMACY

The Blue Prosperity pillar strengthens the policy and diplomatic foundations for resilient coastal livelihoods and regenerative blue economies. Through the Bahari Mali project, Tanzania and Zanzibar established the region's first operational ocean acidification monitoring system, enabling Western Indian Ocean countries to submit SDG 14.2 ocean acidification data to the United Nations for the first time while supporting countries to improve fisheries management and national climate modelling. The Great Blue Wall also strengthened capacity across 11 countries on the new Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty, including support for ratification in countries such as Kenya, Madagascar and Comoros. It also helped improve implementation readiness in other countries, including Seychelles and Mauritius, through several regional workshops organised in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Nairobi Convention and the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN DOALOS).



ECOPRENEURS DRIVE OCEAN INNOVATION AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ACROSS THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN

The Great Blue Wall Ecopreneurs Challenge (2022–2023) was a regional accelerator designed to support ocean innovation and regenerative livelihoods across the Western Indian Ocean. Implemented across nine countries in partnership with the World Economic Forum's Uplink platform and Ocean Hub Africa and supported by the Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for Europe and Africa the project supported seven high-impact ventures advancing ocean-positive enterprise solutions.

Over a six-month acceleration program, innovators received tailored support to strengthen investment readiness and increase impact, including investment readiness support, market access guidance, and technical mentoring. In Tanzania, Healthy Seaweed received targeted coaching to support product certification and market expansion. In Madagascar, Reef Pulse expanded its conservation impact by deploying acoustic monitoring technology to better understand and protect coral reef ecosystems.

Community benefits were tangible. Women were supported in sustainable seaweed farming, artisanal fishers improved income stability through enhanced cold chain infrastructure, and communities gained access to clean water through Omiflo's nature-based wastewater treatment solutions. A defining feature was the focus on local leadership and finance access: African entrepreneurs were positioned as drivers of a regenerative blue economy, and each venture was introduced to at least three strategic investors

or partners, strengthening credibility at national and regional levels.

The impact continued beyond the programme. The cohort was showcased at UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai, where innovators began forming international partnerships. Following the programme, five ventures have secured funding, up to USD 7.4 million and some are negotiating new funding rounds. Revenues have increased multi-fold, rising from the hundred thousand USD range to seven hundred thousand USD across three ventures. For participants such as Nancy Iraba, CEO of Healthy Seaweed, the challenge was transformative, opening access to partners, investors and global platforms that had previously been out of reach.

VOICES

FROM THE GREAT BLUE WALL



"The Great Blue Wall Challenge was highly catalytic for our business. The visibility and early-stage financing enabled us to obtain key food certifications, which opened the door to major supermarkets and helped us build credibility with customers and investors. At our stage at the time, the challenge served as a powerful accelerator."

NANCY IRABA,
Co-FOUNDER & CEO, SEAWEEED CAFÉ



"The Great Blue Wall is one of Africa's most important opportunities to show that ocean protection, coastal resilience and entrepreneurship can reinforce one another. Through OceanHub Africa, we are proud to help translate this vision into locally grounded solutions that strengthen communities, restore ecosystems and build a more regenerative blue economy across the Western Indian Ocean."

ALEXIS GROSSKOPF,
FOUNDER & CEO, OCEANHUB AFRICA



"As ocean degradation increasingly threatens the industries and communities that depend on it, a regenerative blue economy is no longer optional. Realising it demands place-based implementation, where governance, investment and community stewardship converge at the seascape scale for measurable and investable progress. The GBW demonstrates what is possible."

ALFREDO GIRON,
HEAD OF OCEAN, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM



The Great Blue Wall initiative is an example of one the best ways to illustrate the real value that our ocean brings to people. Too often we think of infrastructure as something that human endeavour imposes on nature- whereas our seascapes provide us with some of the most resilient infrastructure to deliver livelihoods and protection. The Great Blue Wall rethinks the way in which we tackle growth in a way which is truly regenerative.

JEAN-PAUL ADAM, FORMER MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES, DIRECTOR FOR POLICY, MONITORING AND ADVOCACY, UNITED NATIONS



"The Great Blue Wall partnership empowered communities and internally displaced families in Mecufi to take greater ownership of their natural resources and future livelihoods. Working together in the LEAP project, we strengthened local governance, restored vital ecosystems, and created sustainable income opportunities that are reducing pressure on marine resources while improving resilience and hope for coastal communities hosting internally displaced people."

AGOSTINHO MAMADE,
CEO, AGA KHAN FOUNDATION, MOZAMBIQUE



Through a Decision of the 11th Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention, the Convention acknowledges its partnership with IUCN to accelerate the Great Blue Wall Initiative as one of the initiatives in support of integrated ocean governance in the WIO region. By working together to leverage crucial resources to support accelerated climate and biodiversity action, the initiative among others will scale up nature-based solutions, enhance regional ocean governance, and build climate resilience for coastal communities across the Western Indian Ocean."

DR. JARED BOSIRE,
HEAD, UNEP NAIROBI CONVENTION

OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS TO DELIVER GLOBAL OCEAN GOALS

Achieving global ocean goals by 2030 will require new kind of partnerships, broader, bolder, and more inclusive than anything we've seen before. The challenges facing the ocean today, from climate change to pollution and collapsing fisheries, cannot be solved by conservation organisations working alone. Instead, success depends on "new and unconventional partnerships" that bring together governments, local communities, businesses, researchers, youth, and new sectors such as new technologies, finance, storytelling.

The Great Blue Wall illustrates what this future looks like. It builds genuine partnerships. Partnerships that shift from consultation to true co-creation - sharing power, moving beyond borders and ocean basins, bringing in finance, data, and enabling joint decision-making with key stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth, as well as subnational governments who are central to ocean stewardship.

At the same time, new alliances are being built with financial institutions, investors and innovators to unlock the regenerative potential of entrepreneurship, finance, nature-related markets and other investment tools that can fund large-scale restoration and regenerative blue

economies. Strong collaboration with governments, regional bodies and global agreements such as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement and soon to come Plastics treaty is also essential to turn political commitments into action.

Finally, partnerships must embrace technology, data and storytelling, using AI, local data systems, citizen science, and creative communication to inspire a wider ocean movement across Africa and globally.

Ultimately, the GBW is anchored in a "blue ambition loop", where leadership and action from local governments, indigenous people and local communities, civil society organisations, researchers, and the private sector inspire national governments to not only raise policy ambition but to establish the enabling conditions to unlock local regenerative action at both scale and speed. National Governments also join forces at regional level by strengthening ocean cooperation and collaboration which ultimately enhance global blue diplomacy efforts driving ocean ambition and action.

In a rapidly changing world, these transformative, cross sectoral partnerships are the key to restoring ocean health, supporting people's lives and livelihoods, and establish the necessary coalition of the willing to build together a thriving blue future by 2030 and beyond.

SECTION IV BLUE PARTNERSHIPS





BUILDING CONNECTIVITY FOR OCEAN ACTION.

Since its launch, the Great Blue Wall has convened 120+ partners across 11 countries and seascapes, governments, regional bodies, civil society, research institutions, impact investors and IUCN Members. The GBW seeks to move beyond fragmented, project-by-project approaches toward shared regional frameworks for ocean governance, conservation, and regenerative development

The Blue Partnerships pillar focuses on strengthening coordination, shared learning, and regional collaboration across governments, communities, research institutions, civil society, and the private sector. This plays an instrumental role in connecting local action with regional and global ocean priorities.

Ultimately, the Blue Partnership pillar aims at jointly establishing and strengthening a shared delivery architecture, mobilizing financing towards ocean regeneration, strengthening policy coherence, and creating a platform for South-South leadership and cooperation.

During the 2021-2025 period, this approach has contributed to mobilising over USD 80 million in support of the GBW partnership. This has contributed to several important outcomes, including the adoption or updating of seven national

and regional policy frameworks, the establishment of three major coalitions, and the training of more than 2,700 leaders and practitioners. Working with institutional and development partners, the GBW is helping to build a future that is regenerative, equitable and resilient for both people and nature.

BLUE PARTNERSHIPS IMPACT

Partnerships are the backbone of the Great Blue Wall - aligning governments, communities, science, and finance to deliver impact at scale.



USD 80M+
MOBILIZED in climate, conservation and sustainable blue economy finance



120+ PARTNERS
ENGAGED across governments, civil society, science, communities & private sector.



11 COUNTRIES
ENGAGED

KNOWLEDGE & COORDINATION

Shared Knowledge Systems

- Standardized seascape profiling established
- Regional and south-south learning exchanges convened
- Shared reporting and evidence systems developed
- Science and policy coordination strengthened

Movement Building

Founding member of the World Economic Forum Global Future Council of Regenerative Blue Economy

Strategic Advisor to the 100% Alliance and the Global Ocean Coalition for Cities and Regions

Guided the development of the Africa - Europe Cooperation framework on Ocean Governance and Blue Economy

Led the Ocean Action Agenda at the inaugural Africa Climate Summit

Played an instrumental role in supporting Comoros's Chairmanship of the African Union in 2023 and its effort to elevate the importance of ocean action.

Coordinated the Ocean Action Agenda at UNFCCC CoP30 on behalf of the High Level Climate Champions and the COP30 Presidency.

Supported members in their effort to develop IUCN's new resolution on Regenerative Blue Economy which led to the integration of the Regenerative Blue Economy as a priority area of work in IUCN's new 20-years strategy.

POLICY & GOVERNANCE

Regional Policy Influence

- Contributions to BBNJ and regional ocean governance processes
- National policy alignment on restoration and circular economy
- LMMA approaches strengthened across the WIO

FINANCE

Since its inception, the Great Blue Wall partnership network has contributed to mobilizing over USD 80 million in new funding for ocean action in the region (funding that otherwise would not have been directed to either ocean regeneration or the region) by aligning national and regional priorities and promoting a shared regional voice and ambition. But financing in the Western Indian Ocean still relies heavily on public and philanthropic funding, with limited private investment and few revenue-generating models. Scaling delivery will require stronger partnership-led pipelines of bankable projects and wider use of blended finance tools, including blue bonds, debt-for-nature swaps, impact investments, long-term conservation financing models, blue carbon and biodiversity credits, payments for ecosystem services, and wider fiscal and financial reform and innovation. Many of these approaches are still at an early stage and will need stronger coordination, technical support and investor engagement to reach the scale needed to achieve the GBW's goals.

INNOVATION

The Great Blue Wall demonstrates how stewardship and opportunity can align through partnerships between communities, governments, the private sector, and regional institutions. Initiatives such as IslandPlas and MARPLASTICCs show how regional collaboration can advance circular economy solutions and strengthen policy reform to address marine plastic pollution. While IslandPlas is supporting circular value chains, enterprise development, and community-based recycling systems across African Island States, MARPLASTICCs has helped strengthen Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks and plastic policy reform across the region.

COMMUNICATION & STORYTELLING

Impactful storytelling helps build a shared identity and accelerate action by increasing visibility and accountability. It is part of how change happens. It determines whose realities are visible, how evidence is understood, and how action moves from communities to policy and investment. It connects lived experience, science, and governance, shaping a shared regional narrative for ocean action.

A defining moment in this approach was the engagement of the Great Blue Expedition in Seychelles between January and March 2025. The expedition brought together scientists, conservation practitioners, and communities. It did more than generate data. It captured how restoration, stewardship, and resilience are experienced in real life across seascapes.

The stories and evidence generated now feed into a growing regional archive used to influence policy, catalyse funding and inspire replication across the region and beyond. The expedition also delivered notable scientific achievements with local partners, including documentation of rare endemic turtle doves and evidence of the remarkable return of seabird populations after decades of invasive species eradication.

Storytelling within the Great Blue Wall is becoming part of the system itself, linking science, communities, policy, and finance so that ocean action is not only implemented, but understood, valued, and sustained.



CASE STUDY

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PEOPLECENTRED OCEAN GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Locally Empowered Area Protection (LEAP) project (2019–2025) has been a foundational catalyst for the Great Blue Wall, demonstrating how inclusive partnerships can strengthen ocean governance, conservation, and resilient livelihoods across the Western Indian Ocean.

LEAP has built and strengthened alliances that connect communities, governments, civil society, research institutions, and the private sector—translating collaboration into tangible local outcomes.

In Mozambique, the project supported community-led marine management in Cabo Delgado, helping formalize Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) while engaging host communities, internally displaced people, women, and youth in coastal governance and alternative livelihoods.

In Seychelles, LEAP supported more inclusive and collaborative approaches to marine governance, helping strengthen co-management models between government, civil society, and private sector actors.

In Kenya and Tanzania, the project strengthened community participation in reef monitoring, environmental awareness, and local stewardship, while supporting youth engagement in coastal conservation.

Together, these partnerships have helped lay the foundation for the Great Blue Wall by demonstrating how locally rooted collaboration can strengthen ocean governance, ecosystem resilience, and coastal livelihoods across the Western Indian Ocean and beyond.

SECTION IV VOICES FROM THE GREAT BLUE WALL



“Mission inclusion's engagement in the Great Blue Wall is rooted in a simple but essential belief: conservation efforts must be designed with, and led by, the communities who depend on coastal and marine ecosystems. Through ReSea, we are showing, alongside our partners, that women's leadership, inclusive governance and community-based solutions are not secondary to conservation outcomes; they are essential conditions for real and lasting impact. The Great Blue Wall has the potential to be a powerful platform to connect biodiversity protection, climate resilience and gender equality in ways that are locally anchored, inclusive and transformative.”

ANDRÉANNE MARTEL,
DIRECTOR RESEA PROJECT, MISSION INCLUSION.



“Since the adoption of the Moroni Declaration in June 2023, the Great Blue Wall initiative has enabled the Union of the Comoros to launch several key actions aimed at the sustainable management of marine ecosystems and associated resources. These efforts are already yielding concrete results, particularly in terms of inclusive governance, nature based solutions, and regenerative blue economy. The Government of the Union of the Comoros thus expresses its commitment to building on these achievements, replicating them on a larger scale and expanding the regenerative seascape approach as well as regional cooperation to enhance the resilience of the oceans and coastal communities.”

H.E. MR ABUBACAR BEN MAHAMOUD
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, UNION OF THE COMOROS



“The Great Blue Wall initiative reflects the power of collective action in protecting our oceans, strengthening climate resilience, and improving livelihoods for coastal communities. Tanzania remains committed to advancing sustainable environmental management and supporting regional partnerships that secure the future of our blue economy for generations to come.”

DR. IMMACULATE SWARE SEMESI, DIRECTOR GENERAL,
*NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (NEMC)
TANZANIA*



“The Great Blue Wall partnership advances community-led, evidence-based solutions and unlocks sustainable finance for nature.”

DR. SEIF HAMISI, EAST AFRICA MANAGING DIRECTOR,
CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL



“The Great Blue Wall partnership, through the LEAP project helped Seychelles establish groundbreaking co-management frameworks, strengthened protection for critical marine and wetland ecosystems, and created a model where government, communities, and civil society jointly shape conservation decisions for lasting impact.”

DR. NIRMAL SHAH, CEO, NATURE SEYCHELLES



“Ten years after the Paris Agreement, we are entering an implementation era and an accountability time for Governments. The Great Blue Wall is demonstrating concrete Global South leadership in implementing ocean-based solutions to tackle both the climate and the biodiversity crisis.”

GAUTHIER CARLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE OCEAN & CLIMATE PLATFORM

THE ROAD AHEAD FOR THE GREAT BLUE WALL

The Great Blue Wall (GBW) has laid a bold, locally-led foundation for regenerative seascape development and inclusive ocean stewardship in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). As the initiative enters its next phase, the coming years will focus on scaling implementation, strengthening partnerships, and deepening impact across the African continent and beyond.

The Great Blue Wall is now entering a phase where ambition translates into scaled out delivery.

SPEARHEADING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GLOBAL NETWORK OF REGENERATIVE SEASCAPES

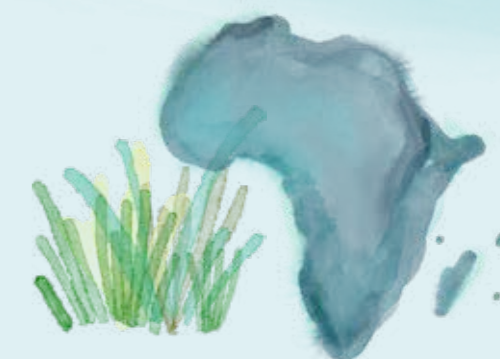
From inception to scale out: Expanding the successful regenerative seascape approach into global network of regenerative seascapes

Nature-based solutions at scale: Expanding restoration and conservation across mangroves, seagrasses, coral reefs, dunes, and coastal forests through integrated multi-ecosystem conservation approaches.

Science-informed action: Strengthening Ocean science, elevating Indigenous and traditional knowledge, and leveraging digital innovation to support evidence-based conservation and restoration.

ACCELERATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGENERATIVE BLUE ECONOMY

Locally led and locally grounded economic transformation: Empowering coastal communities and entrepreneurs to lead ocean-based enterprises, including fisheries, seaweed farming, ecotourism, and conservation finance while engaging with larger corporates to unlock the regenerative potential of their operations and ambition.



Unlocking ocean finance: Expanding blended finance, direct access and innovative investment mechanisms that support long-term regenerative outcomes for nature, climate and people.

Policy integration: Embedding regenerative blue economy principles into ocean governance, national planning, fiscal policies and marine spatial frameworks.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION

GBW as a pathway to bridge global ambition to local impact: Supporting the Great Blue Wall as a Inter-regional movement for regenerative ocean governance and regenerative blue economy transformation.

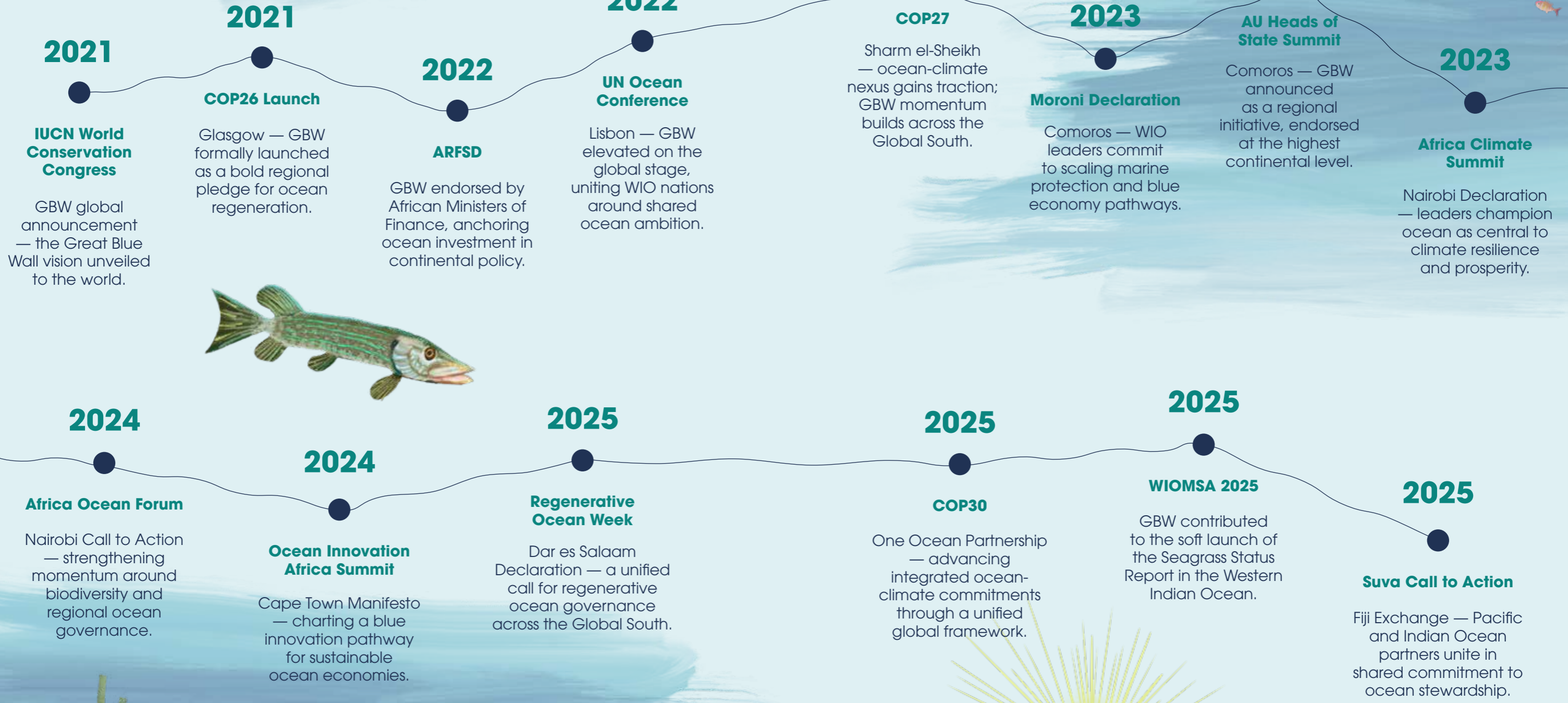
Global South leadership: Elevating the role of Global South countries in global ocean governance through a shared vision and commitment that reconciles ocean conservation with development through a regenerative blue development approach.

South-South collaboration: Strengthening South-South learning and collaboration, regional cooperation, and shared leadership in global ocean governance.



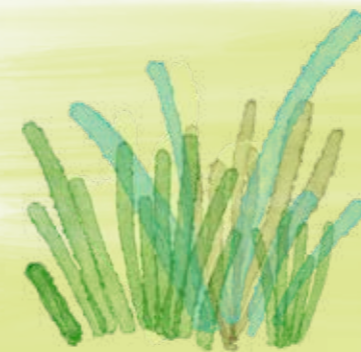
GREAT BLUE WALL *IN MOTION*

Tracing the Great Blue Wall's rise from regional vision to Global South ocean leadership, 2021-2025.



BUILDING THE GREAT BLUE WALL TOGETHER

The progress reflected throughout this report has been made possible through the support of financial partners and collaborators who continue to invest in a shared vision for resilient oceans, thriving coastal communities, and regenerative seascapes.



The Great Blue Wall acknowledges and thanks the partners whose support continues to strengthen cooperation, innovation, conservation, development and long-term ocean resilience and regeneration

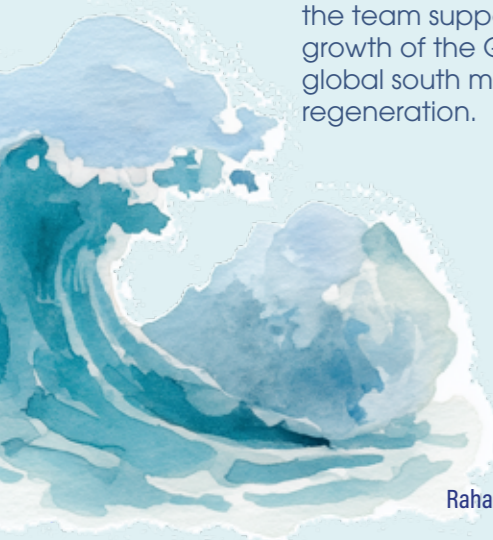


COORDINATING THE GREAT BLUE WALL

The Great Blue Wall is supported by a multidisciplinary team working across partnerships, science, communications, policy, monitoring, and implementation support.

Working closely with governments, communities, technical partners, and regional institutions, the team helps connect local action to a shared vision and global ambition for resilient oceans and thriving coastal communities.

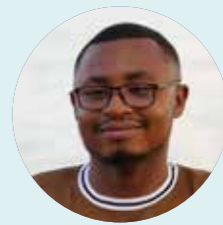
Through collaboration, coordination, direct financial support and knowledge exchange, the team supports the continued growth of the Great Blue Wall as a global south movement for ocean regeneration.



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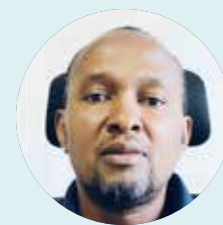
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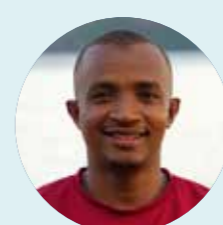
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METHODOLOGY & Attribution Note

The impact figures presented in this report reflect the collective contribution of the Great Blue Wall partnership during its first phase of implementation from 2021 to 2025. The results are derived from aggregated information across IUCN-led and partner-led programmes, national and regional initiatives, project reporting, partner submissions, government commitments, and technical datasets available at the time of publication.

The Great Blue Wall is a regional partnership platform and movement rather than a single project. As such, results are reported using a contribution-based approach. Figures therefore include outcomes directly delivered by IUCN and its partners, as well as outcomes enabled, aligned, accelerated, supported, or made more visible through the Great Blue Wall framework where a clear programmatic, institutional, financial, technical, or policy linkage exists.

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT:

Marine and coastal areas supported

Refers to marine and coastal areas within regenerative seascapes where Great Blue Wall partners actively support conservation, restoration, governance, livelihoods, science, policy, finance, or partnership-building activities.

Area under improved management

Refers to marine and coastal areas where management effectiveness, stewardship, co-management arrangements, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs), or Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) have been strengthened through Great Blue Wall-supported action.

Ecosystems restored, protected, or committed to protection

Includes ecosystems already restored, under active restoration, formally protected, or publicly committed for restoration or protection through government or partner-led initiatives connected to the Great Blue Wall partnership.

People with strengthened livelihoods

Includes individuals reached through livelihood diversification, sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, restoration-based employment, circular economy activities, enterprise support, training, market access, or regenerative blue economy opportunities.

Jobs created

Refers to direct employment and income-generating opportunities supported through restoration, fisheries, circular economy, blue enterprise, and community-based livelihood activities.

Practitioners and leaders equipped

Refers to individuals trained, mentored, or supported through technical capacity strengthening, leadership development, knowledge exchange, governance support, or regenerative seascape learning initiatives.

Finance mobilized

Includes grants, catalytic investments, public finance, philanthropic support, technical cooperation, enterprise financing, and other resources directed toward ocean regeneration, climate resilience, conservation, circular economy, and regenerative blue economy initiatives connected to the Great Blue Wall partnership.

Enterprises and ventures supported

Includes start-ups, community enterprises, circular economy ventures, blue food businesses, restoration-linked enterprises, and innovation initiatives receiving financial, technical, incubation, acceleration, or market support through Great Blue Wall-aligned programmes.

Partners engaged

Refers to institutions, governments, civil society organizations, research institutions, community groups, private sector actors, and regional bodies actively collaborating within the Great Blue Wall partnership framework.

The figures presented in this report should be understood as a measure of the Great Blue Wall's contribution to a broader regional movement for ocean regeneration, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and inclusive coastal development across the continent. As a partnership platform rather than a single project or institution, the Great Blue Wall reflects collective action across governments, communities, civil society, research.



