

## WORKING PAPER

# A regional assessment of Our Ocean Conference commitment implementation in Africa

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## Highlights

- The ocean underpins biodiversity, economic prosperity, food security, and cultural heritage across Africa. This working paper assesses the implementation of Our Ocean Conference (OOC) commitments to ocean action in the region to understand how they translate into real ocean conservation, restoration, knowledge, capacity, and investment outcomes.
- Since 2014, the OOC has mobilized 364 commitments across the continent, equivalent to a collective financial pledge of US\$14.3 billion. This has created a legacy of ocean impact, with approximately 78 percent of commitments complete or in progress and up to \$5.8 billion in delivered finance.
- Commitment implementation is strongest in the sustainable fisheries, maritime security, and sustainable blue economy action areas, reflecting regional priorities. Opportunities remain to accelerate the delivery and implementation of outstanding pledges and deliver new commitments that fill specific regional and thematic gaps.
- As African leadership in global environmental policy grows, there is a significant opportunity for the continent to elevate and deliver on its ocean priorities. Increasing engagement and African-led commitment mobilization, particularly by governments and private sector partners, should be a priority as OOC enters its second decade.

## Executive summary

### Background

**Africa's marine and coastal resources and biodiversity are critical to the lives and livelihoods of millions of people.** Thirty-eight African countries are coastal or island states, representing over 13 million square kilometers of exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The growth of the sustainable blue economy has emerged as a regional policy priority to generate development and prosperity (AU-IBAR 2019). In particular, fisheries and aquaculture provide a vital source of nutrition and livelihoods for millions (FAO 2024). Sustainable management of Africa's ocean resources is essential for the health of people, nature, and climate.

**Key challenges to sustainable ocean governance include climate change; maritime insecurity; illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; marine pollution; and habitat degradation** (IOC-UNESCO 2022). Tackling these requires coordinated policy, investment, research, and governance across sectors and geographies. To achieve equitable outcomes, it is important that solutions center the rights and needs of coastal communities and Indigenous Peoples who have long played an important role as the stewards of Africa's ocean resources (Okafor-Yarwood et al. 2020).

**The OOC is a key annual forum for governments and organizations to generate new commitments to ocean action.** Voluntary OOC commitments include a diversity of actions, such as financial pledges, marine conservation initiatives, policy announcements, youth engagement, capacity-building, and more.

## About this working paper

**This publication assesses the extent to which international ocean commitments have been implemented in Africa and the enabling factors and barriers that influence their effectiveness.** The analysis combines data from the online Our Ocean Commitment Tracker (WRI 2026), case study surveys, and an exploratory review of academic literature. The Commitment Tracker data include 18 variables per commitment, and each is categorized by commitment makers as “complete,” “in progress,” or “not started.” OOC commitments were included if they were made by an African country or organization or by an external country or organization but referencing action or investment in the region.

**We identify OOC commitment case studies that have been successfully implemented in Africa across governance scales and subregions.** All case studies featured in this working paper were verified using secondary data. Enabling conditions and barriers are assessed across eight implementation principles, aligned with sustainable ocean planning core attributes (Ocean Panel 2021). We also identify thematic, geographic, and sectoral gaps in Africa's OOC commitments to inform future ocean policy, investment, and conservation priorities.

## Limitations

**This paper relies on self-reported data. Analysis is predicated on the assumption of accurate self-reporting and may be impacted by inconsistent reporting standards.** The large scope and diversity of countries, organizations, and their respective commitments resulted in varying data availability and quality. Selected examples are illustrative and do not necessarily capture the full diversity of implementation experiences, governance contexts, or barriers shaping ocean action in Africa. As many commitments are still ongoing, these findings represent a snapshot of progress as of May 2026.

## Key findings

**A total of 364 OOC commitments have been pledged across the Africa region since 2014 across six action areas.** These include sustainable fisheries, the sustainable blue economy, marine pollution, maritime security, marine protected areas, and the ocean-climate nexus. This equates to a cumulative finance pledge of \$14.3 billion. African commitments represent 12 percent of global OOC commitments and 8 percent of total pledged finance, aligning closely with Africa's proportion of global EEZ area (9 percent) and global coastal population (12 percent) (Cosby et al. 2024).

**Progress tracking shows that 40 percent of commitments are complete (147 commitments), 38 percent remain in progress (139 commitments), and 22 percent have not started (78 commitments).** These progress rates are comparable to global OOC commitment implementation (+/- 4 percent) (Table ES-1). Commitments are evenly distributed between the six action areas, ranging from 11 percent to 24 percent of the total. The highest number of commitments are made under the sustainable fisheries action area (88 commitments), and the highest cumulative financial pledge is in the sustainable blue economy (\$5.1 billion) reflecting regional ocean priorities (Figure ES-1). Within these, actions to address IUU fishing and support for small and medium enterprises emerged as particularly active areas of work. Conversely, the ocean-climate nexus and maritime security action areas received fewer commitments.

**OOO commitments are concentrated in East and West Africa (148 and 115 commitments, respectively), and many are cross-regional commitments (115 commitments).** Relatively fewer commitments are implemented in the North and Central Africa subregions (73 commitments). Approximately 30 percent of commitments are related to actions in small island developing states. Commitment makers are primarily government organizations (50 percent) and civil society (40 percent), with comparatively fewer private sector commitment makers than the global dataset. Notably, the majority of commitments are made by countries and organizations based *outside* of Africa. This reflects a broader landscape of resource availability, stakeholder priorities, external influence, power, and partnerships that shape ocean action and investment across the continent.

**Selected case studies highlight the availability of ocean data (including both scientific and traditional knowledge), responsive and participatory project design, and political support as key enabling factors to drive impact.** The availability and deployment of sustainable financing mechanisms at all scales, as well as sufficient institutional, human, and technical capacity, are reported as common barriers to effective commitment implementation.

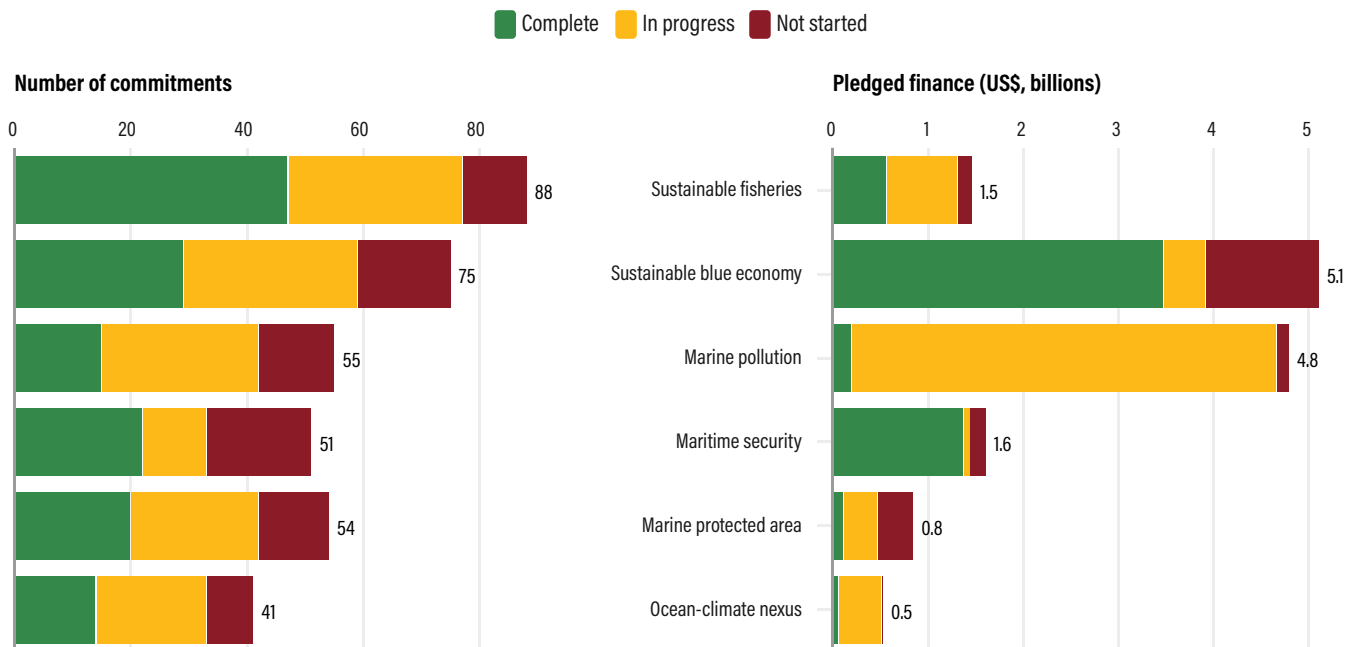
Table ES-1 | Summary of OOC commitments

INDICATOR		AFRICAN OOC COMMITMENTS	GLOBAL OOC COMMITMENTS
Total commitments		364	2,900
Total pledged finance		\$14.3 billion	\$169.2 billion
Commitment implementation progress	Reported complete (commitments, %, delivered finance)	147	1,200
		40%	41%
		\$5.7 billion	\$26.5 billion
	Reported in progress (commitments, %, pledged finance)	139	1,179
		38%	41%
		\$6.5 billion	\$112.4 billion
	Reported not started (commitments, %, pledged finance)	78	521
		22%	18%
		\$2.0 billion	\$28.8 billion

Notes: Global commitment data sourced from the "Our Ocean Conference Commitment Implementation Progress Update: 2025–2026" (Lee-Emery and Cuddy 2026). All dollars are in US dollars. OOC = Our Ocean Conference.

Source: WRI authors.

Figure ES-1 | Summary of African OOC commitments and investment by action area, disaggregated by implementation status



Source: WRI authors.

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## Conclusions and recommendations

**Looking forward, greater engagement and mobilization of commitments from African organizations and countries will be key to strengthen the OOC over the next decade.** This includes encouraging a shift to greater leadership, ownership, and priority shaping by African countries and civil society in commitment design and delivery while also addressing the challenges that have limited engagement and commitments from the region. Gaps and opportunities for future commitments, specific to the continent, include a greater focus on ocean-climate action, sustained local capacity-building, sustainable domestic and international finance pipelines, and longer-term commitment implementation. Africa has an existing wealth of international coordination platforms and community-led ocean governance models that can provide best practices and lessons for other world regions. With ambitious and coordinated action, Africa's sustainable blue economy can deliver economic prosperity, community and climate resilience, and regional leadership to shape global environmental governance.

## Introduction

### An ocean of potential across Africa

Across Africa, the ocean is a vital resource for economic prosperity, food security, biodiversity, community and cultural heritage, climate resilience, and more (AU 2025). Thirty-eight of the 54 African countries are coastal or island states. This includes over 30,000 kilometers (km) of coastline and over 13 million km<sup>2</sup> of exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The African blue economy was projected to generate an estimated US\$300 billion in revenue and 49 million jobs in 2018 (UNECA 2016), equivalent to approximately 11 percent of regional gross domestic product (GDP) (IMF 2019). Maritime trade accounts for over 90 percent of imports and exports (UNECA 2016), and African fisheries represent 6 percent of global fishery and aquaculture catch (FAO 2024). By 2030, the African Union projects the blue economy to grow to \$405 billion and 57 million jobs (AU-IBAR 2019).

However, coastal and island states in Africa face mounting pressures from climate change, pollution, and the overexploitation of marine resources (IOC-UNESCO 2024). Despite the region generating only 3.6 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (IEA 2023), coastal communities and economies are highly vulnerable to climate risks. The impact of climate change is projected to cost sub-Saharan Africa up to 5 percent of its GDP per year over the next decade, impacting all aspects of coastal life—from nutrition and food security to flood risk (WMO 2024). Barriers to achieving sustainable ocean governance in Africa include limited access to finance, low cross-sectoral cooperation, weak institutions and enforcement, and low ocean literacy and data availability (AU 2025).

To meet these challenges, a range of international policies and coordination platforms have been established (Table 1). Key policy initiatives include the African Union's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy (AU 2012) and Agenda 2063, which lays out a 50-year development blueprint, framing the ocean economy as a "major contributor to continental transformation and growth" (AUC 2015, 3). The most recent Agenda 2063 progress report described modest but improving performance toward "Goal 6: Blue/Ocean Economy for Accelerated Economic Growth" (AUC and AUDA-NEPAD 2022). Additionally, the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap outlines nine priority ocean actions for African countries by 2030 (IOC-UNESCO 2022). Finally, the five Regional Seas Conventions play a critical role in strengthening international ocean coordination and cooperation among neighboring countries.

At a national scale, countries are developing a variety of ocean governance policies, including marine spatial planning activities (27 countries) (IOC-UNESCO 2024), national blue economy strategies (16 countries) (March et al. 2024), Sustainable Ocean Plans (11 countries) (Ocean Panel 2026; WRI 2025), and the designation of marine protected areas (MPAs; currently covering 2.49 million km<sup>2</sup>) (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN 2026). Across the continent, Indigenous Peoples and local communities play a prominent role in ocean management through both formal governance frameworks and informal rules and norms (Box 1).

### Mobilizing action through the OOC

Ambitious and coordinated ocean policy, investment, and governance is needed to sustainably manage the ocean for future generations. The OOC is an annual forum for governments and organizations to generate commitments to ocean action. These voluntary commitments include financial pledges, marine conservation initiatives, policy or partnership announcements, research and monitoring programs, capacity-building, and more. To date, 2,900 commitments have been made, equivalent to \$169.2 billion in cumulative pledged funds (Lee-Emery and Cuddy, 2026). OOC commitments are structured across six action areas and aligned with Africa's continental ocean policy strategies (Figure 1).

The use of voluntary commitments as mechanisms to drive ocean action presents a range of benefits and drawbacks (Brown Weiss 2014). Although voluntary commitments are not a replacement for robust legislation and binding international agreements, they allow countries and organizations to elevate and advance their self-identified priorities on the global stage, and they can often provide greater flexibility and faster impact than more formal multilateral processes.

Table 1 | Africa's international ocean governance policy landscape

GLOBAL OCEAN POLICY			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Development Goals (SDG14)</li> <li>• International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships</li> <li>• Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</li> <li>• Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures and the Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations under the World Trade Organization</li> <li>• Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity</li> <li>• United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea</li> <li>• Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic</li> <li>• International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction</li> <li>• Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing</li> <li>• Convention on Migratory Species</li> <li>• Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species</li> <li>• Commonwealth Blue Charter and Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration</li> <li>• Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter</li> <li>• International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation</li> </ul>	
AFRICAN UNION (AU) CONTINENTAL POLICY	REGIONAL SEAS CONVENTIONS AND ACTION PLANS	SUBREGIONAL OCEAN POLICY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Africa Agenda 2063</li> <li>• Africa Blue Economy Strategy</li> <li>• Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture</li> <li>• African Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050</li> <li>• Abuja Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries</li> <li>• AU Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan</li> <li>• African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety, and Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barcelona Convention <i>Mediterranean</i></li> <li>• Abidjan Convention <i>West Africa</i></li> <li>• Nairobi Convention <i>East Africa</i></li> <li>• Benguela Current Convention <i>Southern Africa</i></li> <li>• Jeddah Convention <i>Red Sea and Gulf of Aden</i></li> </ul>	<p>ECCAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocol on the Strategy to Secure ECCAS States' Vital Interests at Sea</li> </ul> <p>ECOWAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECOWAS Blue Economy Strategic Framework</li> <li>• ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy</li> <li>• Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development</li> </ul> <p>COMESA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMESA Blue Economy Strategy</li> </ul> <p>IGAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IGAD Blue Economy Strategy</li> </ul> <p>EAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EAC Blue Economy Strategy and Action Plan</li> </ul> <p>SADC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SADC Protocol on Fisheries</li> <li>• Integrated Maritime Security Strategy</li> </ul>	<p>Other policy declarations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yaoundé Declaration on Maritime Safety and Security</li> <li>• Yaoundé Declaration (on Sustainable Ocean Management)</li> <li>• Djibouti Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Declaration on Maritime Safety and Security (ECCAS, ECOWAS, GGC)</li> <li>• Tripoli Declaration on Environmental Action in Africa</li> <li>• Moroni Declaration for Ocean and Climate Action</li> <li>• Libreville Declaration on Health and Environment</li> <li>• Bamako Convention on Hazardous Waste</li> <li>• Addis Ababa Declaration on Accelerating Global Climate Solutions</li> </ul>
REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas</li> <li>• South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation</li> <li>• Indian Ocean Tuna Commission</li> <li>• Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources</li> <li>• South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission</li> <li>• Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna</li> <li>• General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean</li> <li>• Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement</li> </ul>			

Notes: COMESA = Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; EAC = East African Community; ECCAS = Economic Community of Central African States; ECOWAS = Economic Community of West African States; GGC = Gulf of Guinea Commission; IGAD = Intergovernmental Authority on Development; SADC = Southern African Development Community.

Source: WRI authors.

**Box 1 | Coastal communities and ocean equity across Africa**

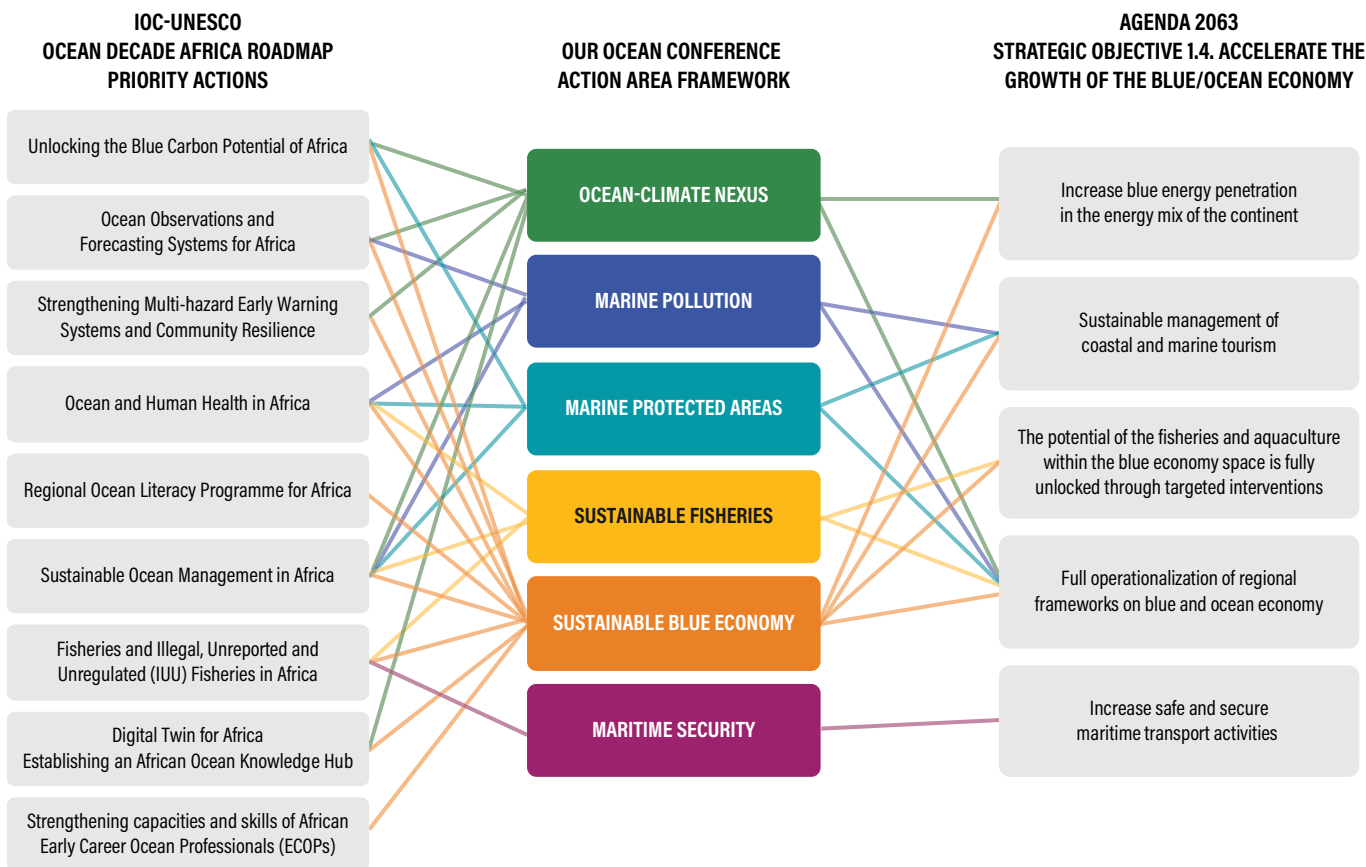
Africa's Indigenous Peoples and local communities are key stewards of coastal and marine ecosystems. Recognizing and integrating Indigenous and local knowledge systems, valuing cultural and social dimensions of ocean ecosystems, and ensuring diverse perspectives in ocean management can foster more equitable outcomes and healthier, more sustainable marine systems.<sup>a</sup>

The historical roots of conservation and extraction in Africa, often tied to colonial governance, have in many places marginalized the inputs of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making.<sup>b</sup> Top-down approaches from national government and international actors, even with good intentions, can overwhelm or sideline local expertise, preferences, and management strategies.<sup>c</sup>

Cocreating and adopting ocean management strategies that place Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the heart of decision-making can help overcome these challenges.<sup>b</sup> Beyond marine protected areas, other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), including locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) present alternative pathways to achieve ocean benefits while upholding cultural heritage, traditional practices, and community values.<sup>d</sup> These support sustainable ocean management outcomes *and* community ownership, balancing conservation objectives with local needs and sustainable small-scale fishing activities.

Sources: a. Österblom et al. 2023; b. Baron-Aguilar et al. 2025; c. Spalding et al. 2023; d. Maini et al. 2023; Rocliffe et al. 2014.

Figure 1 | **OOC thematic alignment with Africa's continental ocean policy priorities**



Note: IOC-UNESCO = Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Source: WRI authors.

## Methods

In this publication, we answer the following research questions (RQs):

- **RQ1.** What is the current landscape of OOC commitments to sustainable ocean action across the African continent?
- **RQ2.** To what extent have these commitments been implemented since 2014?
- **RQ3.** What are the key barriers to commitment implementation and enabling conditions that facilitate successful ocean outcomes in the region?

We combined data from the OOC online commitment tracker, a commitment implementation survey, and secondary sources. Subregional analysis adopts the United Nations M49 country classification standard.

### Our Ocean Commitment Tracker (RQ1 and RQ2)

Since 2018, the OOC has used an online platform to register, monitor, and report progress on OOC commitments. Each year, countries and organizations that have previously made commitments are prompted to provide progress updates on their impact. Data contain the following variables per commitment: year pledged, title, description, progress updates, implementation status, expected deadline, year of completion, pledged funds, delivered funds, ocean basin, commitment maker, and the country and region of the commitment maker.

Commitment data were exported in May 2026. This included all submissions by African governments or organizations as well as any commitments that reference activities across the continent, its subregions, or countries. This study includes several cross-regional commitments that could not be geographically disaggregated at subregional level; for example, an ocean conservation financing commitment citing activities in Africa generally or the Global South.

### Survey responses (RQ2 and RQ3)

Commitment implementation surveys were distributed between November 2025 and February 2026 to 89 countries and organizations with commitments (see Appendix A). Questions were aligned with the sustainable ocean planning core attributes framework developed by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel 2021) (Figure 2). This framework uses common monitoring and evaluation criteria and was flexible enough to apply across diverse organizations, actions, and geographies. To increase usability, the core attributes framework was consolidated, the language was simplified, and it was adapted into a question format.

Each target country and organization received at least three calls to participate. Case study submissions were received from 22 countries and organizations.

Case study commitments were drawn from survey respondents who reported close alignment with the core attributes. The final selection considered survey data, platform data, and secondary online sources and was verified by the selected countries and organizations. Where additional information was needed, case study interviews were conducted with interested organizations. Artificial intelligence tools (ChatGPT-5.5) were used to support interview transcription, translation, and summaries and were reviewed by subject matter experts.

### Limitations

This report relies primarily on self-reported data by commitment-making countries and organizations. This can result in inconsistencies in reporting standards, interpretation of progress categories, and possible reporting bias. Although an exploratory literature review supported secondary verification, this was not possible for all commitments and may not include all relevant academic or gray literature on ocean governance and implementation in the region. Therefore, the authors assume that self-reported progress updates are accurate. We also note that the availability and quality of public documentation varied substantially across commitments.

In addition, this data is inherently skewed toward those that participate in the OOC. As a large proportion of the OOC commitments are made by organizations and countries based in the Global North, the platform data and survey responses lean toward these perspectives.

Due to the scope of the dataset, diversity of organizations, and short timelines, data collection was a considerable challenge. The case study survey received a 27 percent response rate, primarily from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Selected examples are illustrative of ocean action but do not necessarily capture the full diversity of implementation experiences, governance contexts, or barriers across Africa.

The official language of the OOC and this research was conducted in English. Participation from countries and organizations that speak French, Portuguese, and other languages was therefore considerably lower. With additional time and resources, the OOC Secretariat would be able to conduct deeper analysis and accountability tracking to further assess the real-world impact of OOC commitments.

Figure 2 | **Adapted sustainable ocean planning core attributes framework to assess OOC commitment implementation**



Source: WRI authors, adapted from the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel 2021).

## Results and discussion

### Evaluating implementation progress across Africa

Since 2014, 364 OOC commitments were made by African countries and organizations or by external partners supporting ocean initiatives across the region, 67 percent of which have reported at least one progress update. As of May 2026, 40 percent of all African commitments are reported as complete, 38 percent are in progress, and 22 percent have not started (Figure 3).<sup>1</sup> These progress rates are comparable to global OOC commitment implementation (+/- 4 percent).

African commitments equate to a combined financial pledge of \$14.3 billion, with \$12.3 billion associated with in progress or complete commitments. Complete commitments account for approximately \$5.8 billion in delivered funds for ocean action.

Compared to the global OOC dataset, African commitments represent 12 percent of commitment by number and 8 percent of pledged finance. This aligns closely with Africa’s proportion of global EEZ areas (9 percent) and proportion of the world’s coastal population (12 percent) (Cosby et al. 2024). For further comparisons of OOC commitment implementation and finance between different world regions, see Lee-Emery et al. (2025).

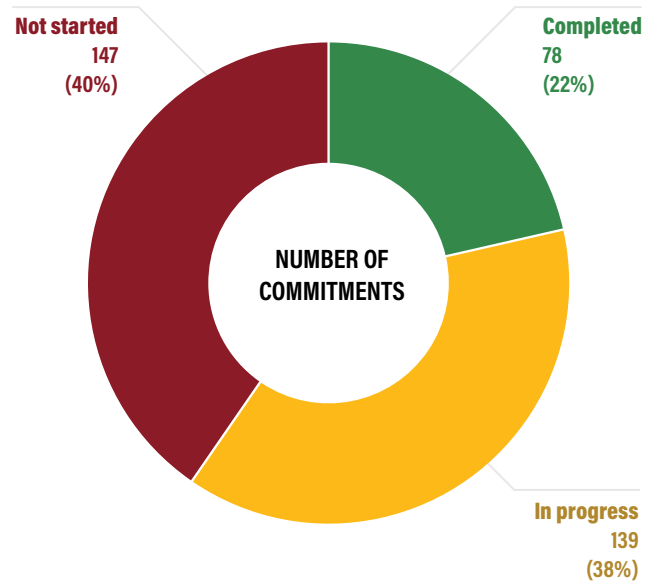
The high proportion of commitments currently underway suggests that many initiatives are progressing through multiyear implementation (Figure 4). At the same time, “not started” commitments highlight areas where additional

resources or coordination may help accelerate delivery. Of the “not started” commitments, the highest numbers were in the sustainable blue economy and maritime security action areas. Commitments that remain “not started” or “in progress” over many years are typically a result of stalled implementation (see “Strengths and barriers to implementation”) and/or a lack of reporting.

Commitment implementation is ongoing across the six OOC action areas, with completion rates for each between 27 percent and 53 percent (Figures 6 and 7). With the highest number of individual commitments (58), the sustainable fisheries action area emerged as a continental priority. This action area also has the strongest record of delivery, with 53 percent of commitments completed. Sustainable blue economy commitments mobilized the most finance with an estimated dispersal of up to \$3.4 billion. The ocean-climate nexus received the fewest number of commitments and finance, deviating from the global dataset. These relatively low levels of investment are illustrative of the broader gaps in global climate mitigation and adaptation finance across Africa.

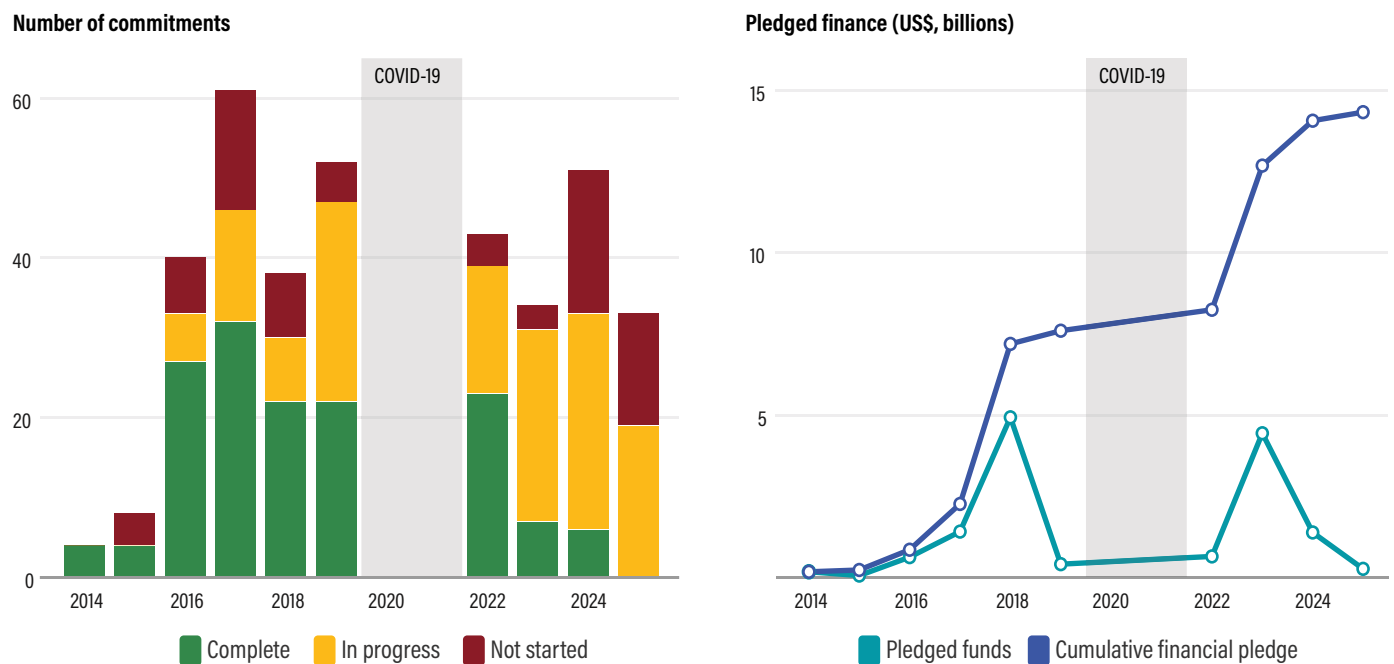
Equity considerations are more prevalent than in the global OOC dataset, with 11 percent of commitments referencing gender and/or youth outcomes (up from 6 percent globally). These include dedicated funding for women’s livelihoods, programs to mainstream gender in environmental and fisheries policy, and initiatives to improve ocean literacy.

Figure 3 | Commitment implementation progress



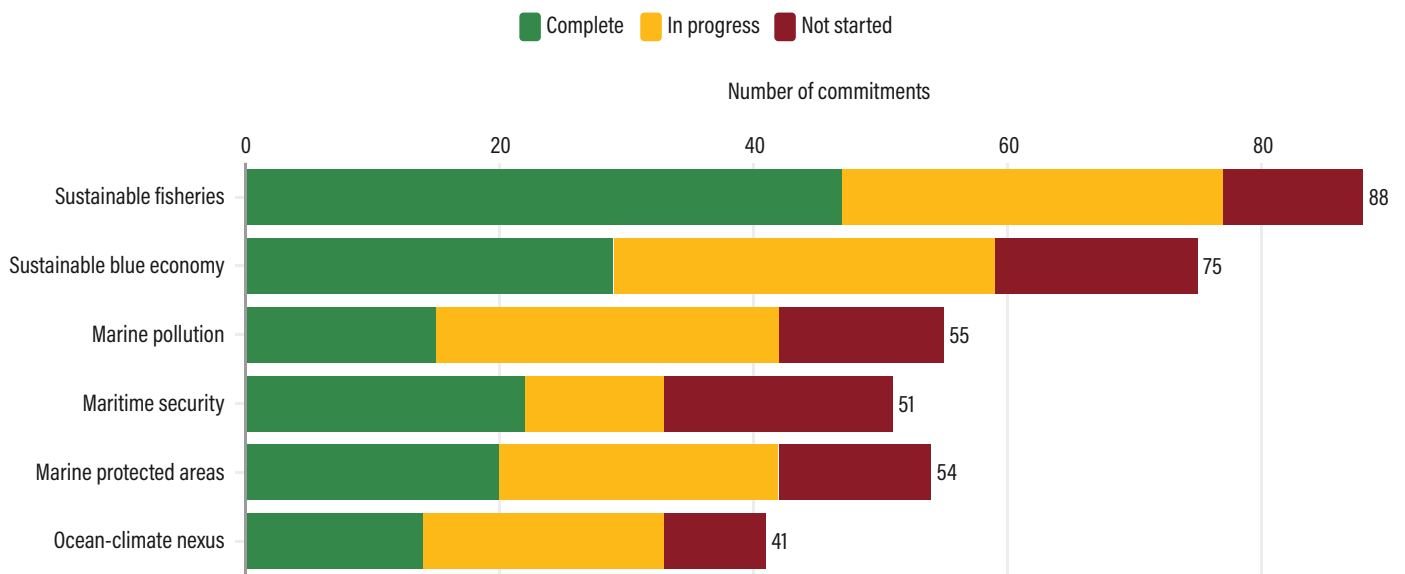
Source: WRI authors.

Figure 4 | Number of African OOC commitments, cumulative pledged finance, and progress by year (2014-2025)



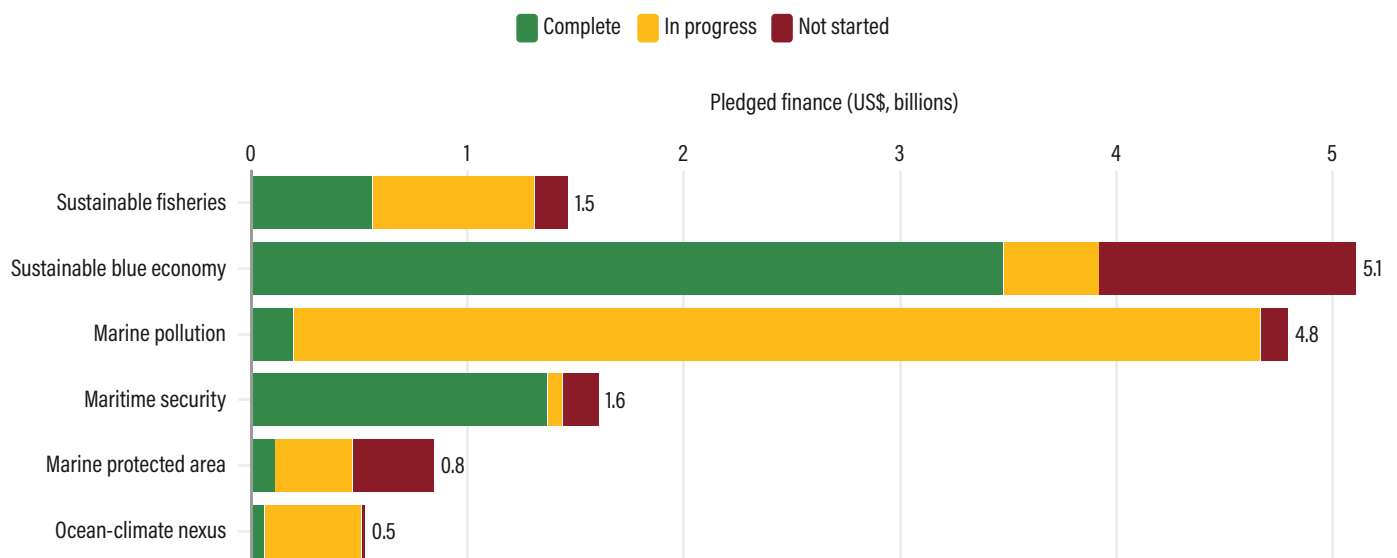
Note: Our Ocean Conferences were suspended in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Source: WRI authors.

Figure 5 | Number of commitments by action area, disaggregated by implementation status



Source: WRI authors.

Figure 6 | Pledged finance by action area, disaggregated by implementation status



Source: WRI authors.

These commitments are concentrated in the sustainable fisheries and sustainable blue economy action areas, reflecting the vital role of women in fishery value chains across the continent— particularly in postharvest fishery processing, distribution, marketing, and trade (Okafor-Yarwood et al. 2024). Thirty-four percent of African commitments mobilized action in least developed countries (LDCs), and 30 percent of

commitments were implemented in small island developing states (SIDS). Ocean commitments and investment in SIDS are concentrated in the Indian Ocean, particularly in the Seychelles and Mauritius.

## Implementation progress and investment by subregion

Commitments are delivering impact across all African subregions. Implementation progress at the subregional level reflects the varying ocean policy priorities of countries and organizations (Figure 7). Approximately 115 commitments (32 percent) are larger scale and implemented across multiple countries and subregions.<sup>2</sup>

East Africa shows a high level of ocean ambition with 148 commitments, and the highest number of completed commitments by subregion (55). This reflects a record of strong engagement in global and regional ocean initiatives and sustained participation in the OOC.

West Africa is also a regional hub for ocean action with 115 commitments. Home to the productive Atlantic and Gulf of Guinea fisheries, which face high rates of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, these pledges are concentrated in the sustainable fisheries action area (38 commitments).

Southern Africa has 69 commitments and reported the highest subregional completion rate (45 percent). These are largely within the sustainable blue economy and sustainable fisheries action areas (15 and 22 commitments, respectively).

North and Central Africa account for 44 and 29 commitments, respectively. Commitments in North Africa are focused on marine pollution and MPAs. Central Africa has fewer coastal states and received just 2 commitments in the marine pollution and climate change action areas.

## Who are the OOC commitment makers?

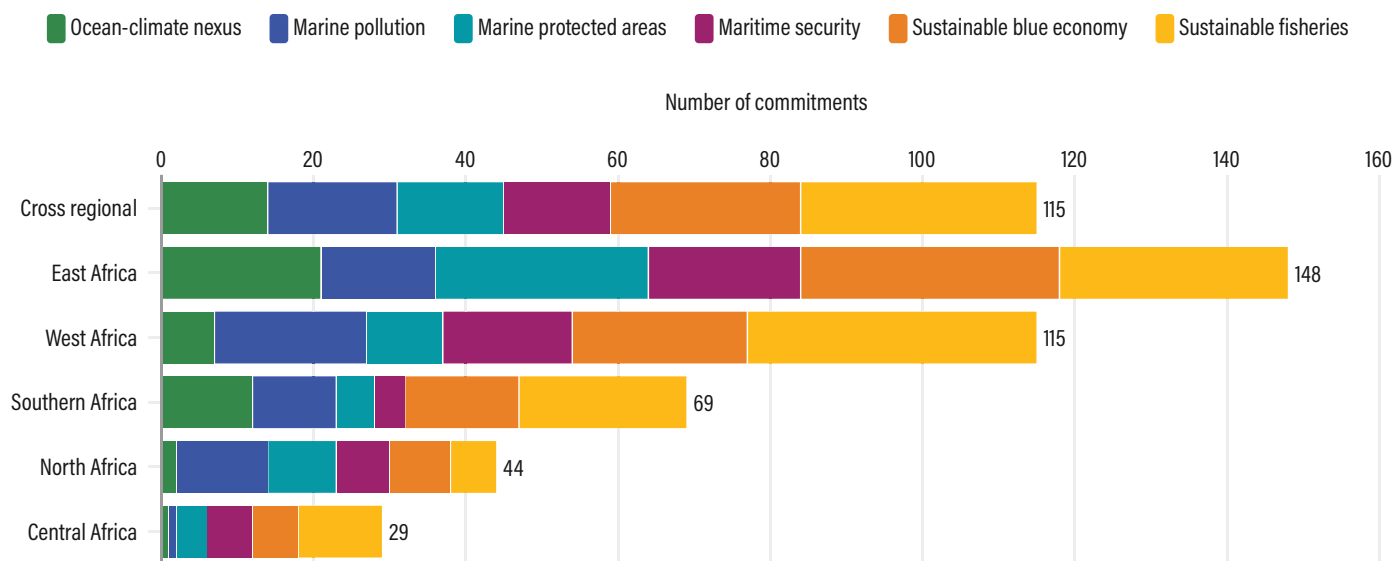
Commitments have been made by 112 countries and organizations (see Appendix A). Consistent with the global study, governments remain the most prevalent sector by number of pledges (50 percent) while representing 30 percent of commitment makers. In contrast, NGOs account for the largest number of organizations (49 percent) but only 21 percent of commitments (Figure 8). Intergovernmental organizations have made 24 percent of African commitments, compared to 12 percent globally.

Notably, over two-thirds of the organizations making commitments *in* Africa are based *outside* of Africa.<sup>3</sup> This reflects the influence of external partners in the continent’s blue economy and marine conservation efforts, their history of engagement with the OOC, and global power dynamics and interest in African marine resources.

Among other factors, the underrepresentation of African-led commitments in the OOC process may reflect resource availability within the region itself to underpin new announcements and comparatively limited participation in the OOC process to date. In part, lower engagement can also be ascribed to travel and financial barriers to participating in multilateral mechanisms and conferences over the last decade.

Looking forward, greater engagement and resourcing for self-identified and -implemented commitments by African governments and civil society based in the continent should be a priority. This is needed to ensure ocean action is grounded in local knowledge, priorities, and expertise (Strand et al. 2024).

Figure 7 | Distribution of OOC commitments across subregions, disaggregated by action area



Source: WRI authors.

For external organizations, resources and activities should align with or follow African-led policy and development road maps to ensure that action is coordinated with the established ambitions and priorities of countries, communities, and the continent as a whole (IOC-UNESCO 2022).

## Enabling factors and barriers to implementation

Implementation survey respondents generally provided very positive responses in their application of the sustainable ocean planning core attributes (Figure 9). Almost half (45 percent) of responding organizations agreed or strongly agreed with the application of all eight principles ( $\geq 70/100$  score). Table 2 summarizes common barriers and solutions identified across the continent, disaggregated by core attribute.

The highest-ranked principle is “responsive” action, meaning commitment activities meet the environmental, social, and economic needs of local communities, ecosystems, and other stakeholders. Organizations and countries cited mechanisms such as participatory project design and continuous consultation and feedback through implementation. Projects commonly included capacity-building and training programs to strengthen ocean management at a range of scales, including for government agencies and traditional and community management bodies.

Organizations and countries ranked strong agreement with “knowledge-based” action. Interestingly, this conflicts with previous studies of ocean action in Africa (and even other surveyed organizations in this study) that describe the availability of ocean data as a *barrier* to effective implementation (IOC-UNESCO 2022). One explanation for this could be that although local baseline data are available to implement-

ers, data gaps persist at higher spatial scales. Even in cases where data can be sparse or lower resolution, local communities and stakeholders can often clearly identify the problems they face. It may also reflect the reality of survey respondents actively working to develop tools and solutions to increase data collection.

“Sustainable finance” had the lowest levels of agreement from respondents and is clearly identified as a systemic barrier to implementation. Organizations highlighted access to sufficient quantity and quality of finance, timely deployment of funds, and the long-term sustainability of financing as challenges. Many projects submitted as OOC commitments rely on short-term, project-based grant funding and/or public finance. Additionally, whereas organizations and governments may have access to small-scale pilot funding, opportunities to access multiyear, diversified, and predictable finance are limited. This is particularly acute for commitments being implemented in more remote areas and through locally led initiatives.

Limited infrastructure, equipment, and human and technical capacity were also highlighted as key barriers. Respondents reported that implementation is constrained by gaps in technical skills and “brain drain,” coupled with a lack of specialized research equipment and infrastructure. This lack of infrastructure, finance, and capacity means that, although Africa has some of the richest marine ecosystems in the world, many countries currently capture only a small share of their value.

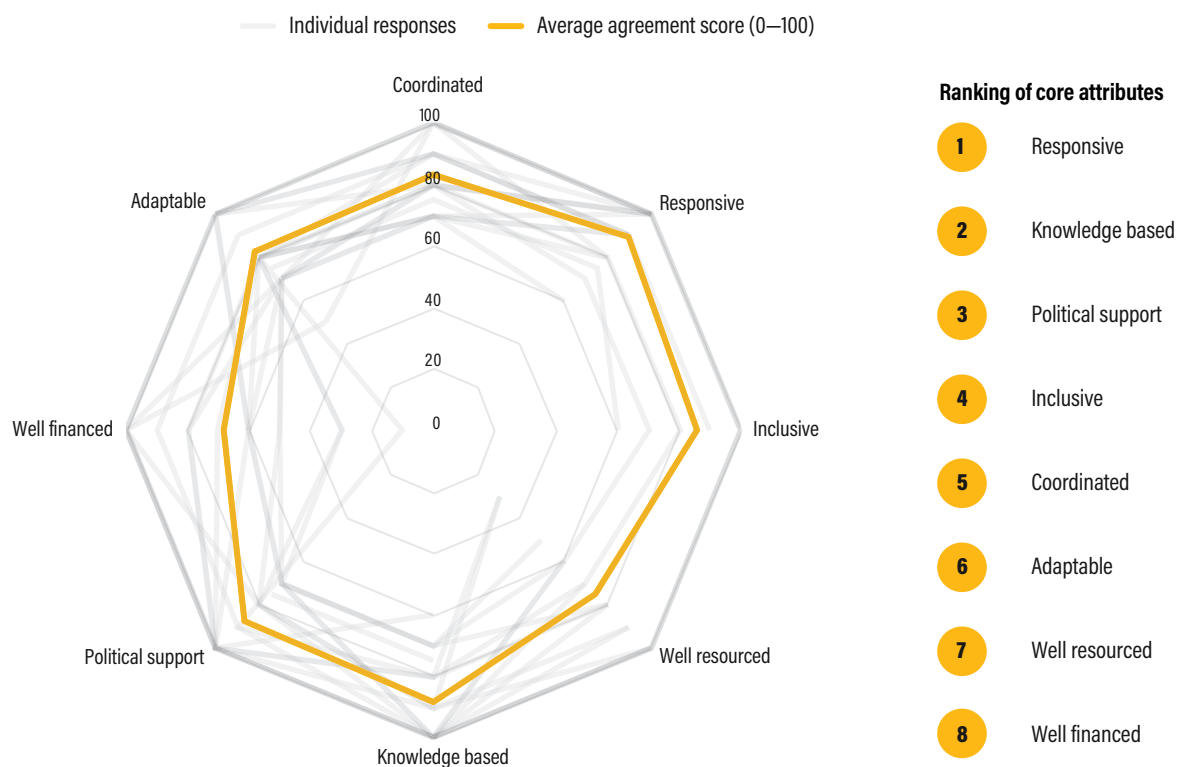
Taken together, these findings suggest that African OOC commitments demonstrate strong local relevance and effective implementation where action is underway, but they remain constrained by systemic gaps in sustainable finance, infrastructure, and capacity.

Figure 8 | **Commitment-making organizations and number of commitments by sector**



Source: WRI authors.

Figure 9 | **Reported commitment implementation alignment with sustainable ocean planning core attributes (n = 22)**



Source: WRI authors.

Table 2 | **Summary of common commitment implementation barriers and solutions**

CORE ATTRIBUTE	COMMON BARRIERS	REPORTED SOLUTIONS
<b>Responsive to economic, environmental, and social conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow policy processes cannot meet rapidly changing environmental, social, and economic challenges (such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and fishery stock decline)</li> <li>Misalignment of community, donor, and implementing partner timelines, expectations, and objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption of comanagement approaches that center local ocean governance and decision-making</li> <li>Iterative codesign of projects with direct participants</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widespread spatial and temporal data gaps, particularly related to specialized data, such as fish stocks, key habitats, and water quality</li> <li>Limited quality and quantity of ocean science infrastructure, research laboratories, vessels, equipment, and maintenance capacity</li> <li>Prevalence of one-off or short-term trainings and “parachute science” projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-term investment in ocean science and training, and the creation of peer networks to enable knowledge sharing</li> <li>Creation and deployment of context- and resource-specific research and monitoring equipment</li> <li>Development of real-time standardized ocean data systems and participatory data collection tools</li> <li>Training and partnerships to strengthen science-policy linkages and turn data into action at all scales</li> </ul>
<b>Political support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ocean issues are not recognized as a political priority</li> <li>Policy inconsistency between ministries and sectors</li> <li>Bureaucracy and regular changes in political leadership</li> <li>Weak enforcement and contested political incentives (i.e., conflict between industrial fishing industry and small-scale fishers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstration of concrete, data-driven results to build political confidence and endorsement</li> <li>Policy reform to embed ocean issues across national development plans and targets such as nationally determined contributions (NDCs)</li> <li>International political endorsements and regional declarations to align country action and promote accountability</li> </ul>

Table 2 | Summary of common commitment implementation barriers and solutions (cont.)

CORE ATTRIBUTE	COMMON BARRIERS	REPORTED SOLUTIONS
<b>Inclusive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on national-level priorities over local community priorities</li> <li>• Underrepresentation of women, youth, and small-scale fishers in decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted interventions and allocation of resources to support local ocean leadership development, coalition building, youth empowerment, and gender-transformative outcomes</li> <li>• Development and uptake of accessible digital tools and technology</li> <li>• Recognition, respect, and integration of local and traditional knowledge and knowledge holders</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmented ocean mandates, policy, resource availability, and incentives between government ministries</li> <li>• Projects working in silos with poor communication between civil society, local communities, and government agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multistakeholder platforms to share planning and knowledge between communities, civil society, government, private sector, and technical experts</li> <li>• Development of regional networks with regular knowledge sharing at working level for ocean practitioners</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donor processes lack flexibility in project timelines and budgets; rigid activity plans are often not suited to local realities, particularly in remote or low infrastructure settings</li> <li>• The effectiveness of planned interventions is affected by rapidly changing and/or unexpected environmental and external pressures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular and ongoing stakeholder consultation and feedback mechanisms</li> <li>• Climate resilience and adaptation measures built into project design</li> <li>• Flexible budgets and contingency planning</li> <li>• Continuous knowledge creation, monitoring, evaluation and learning used to inform decision-making</li> </ul>
<b>Well financed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High dependence on external donor and philanthropic funding sources</li> <li>• Short project cycles and a lack of resources for long-term monitoring and enforcement</li> <li>• Lack of intermediate finance for small businesses transitioning from grant recipients to viable private investment propositions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable public finance commitments from governments to underpin baseline levels of marine and coastal resource management</li> <li>• Incubator programs and capacity-building for small businesses, including training on investor and donor fundraising</li> <li>• Use of blue finance instruments such as blue bonds, blended finance, and credits alongside traditional grants</li> </ul>
<b>Well resourced (nonfinancial)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of specialized equipment, including patrol vessels and safety gear</li> <li>• Shortages of trained technical staff, ocean scientists, and employment opportunities</li> <li>• Poor infrastructure and intermittent road, electricity, and internet services in some coastal areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term human capacity and education investment for ocean professionals, particularly early career practitioners</li> <li>• Institutional capacity-building programs with implementing partners, public agencies, and local communities</li> <li>• Inclusion of coastal communities in broader sustainable development programs and investment</li> </ul>

Note: Implementation barriers and solutions were consolidated from Our Ocean Conference implementation survey responses (22 organizations) and case study interviews (6 organizations).

Source: WRI authors.

## African ocean leadership, trends, and opportunities

This section highlights notable trends within each OOC action area specific to Africa, as well as case studies of exemplary OOC commitments from this region. Examples are drawn from survey responses, combined with OOC platform progress updates, and secondary sources.

### Sustainable fisheries

The sustainable fisheries action area includes 88 commitments (Table 3) and \$1.5 billion in pledged finance. Interventions to address IUU fishing account for most sustainable fisheries

commitments (60 percent), including vessel monitoring and enforcement activities. This reflects the significant pressure that African fisheries face from IUU fishing, particularly in West Africa (Belhabib et al. 2019).

Twenty-two commitments refer to aquaculture, including initiatives to improve animal health and develop sustainable feedstocks. Although per capita aquatic food consumption across the continent remains less than half the global average (FAO 2024), aquaculture is among the fastest-growing food sectors globally and already employs over 1.2 million

African aquafarmers (World Bank Group 2022). With rapid population growth expected across the region in coming years, responsible aquaculture development presents a significant opportunity to meet growing demand.

Commitments from small-scale fisheries included policy development, training to strengthen local governance, value chain investment, and research. Increasing fishery and market access for local operators, sustainable livelihoods development, and enhanced fishery transparency are clear opportunities for future commitments. This is particularly important because foreign vessels currently account for around 60 percent of industrial fishing in the region (Li et al. 2021).

## Sustainable blue economy

The sustainable blue economy action area includes 75 commitments (Table 4) and \$5.1 billion in pledged finance. Commitments focus on investment in fisheries, tourism, and ocean infrastructure. Compared to the global dataset, there are far fewer commitments focused on shipping, biotechnology, and offshore renewable energy, reflecting the nascency of these sectors in African economies and opportunities for growth.

Africa's blue economy has enormous potential and is projected to increase from \$296 billion to \$576 billion by 2063, supporting 78 million jobs (AU-IBAR 2019). Mobilizing action to deliver this growth will require long-term infrastructure and supply chain investment as well as scaling up ocean research and public-private partnerships. Whole-of-government

Table 3 | **OOO sustainable fisheries commitments in Africa**

### BUILDING REGIONAL SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES COALITIONS

The **African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fishers** (CAOPA) unites 27 fisher organizations across 29 countries and represents over 20,000 fishers. The confederation leads multistakeholder platforms, advocating with government partners in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar, and Senegal. Collaborations to develop national-level artisanal fisher policy plans have helped to elevate local priorities, such as improved landing sites, reducing postharvest losses, and equitable access to resources, with annual reviews to track implementation. Additional activities include investment in training, youth leadership, and women's economic empowerment for small-scale fishers.

### IMPROVING VALUE CHAIN TRANSPARENCY THROUGH DATA

Through its Our Ocean Conference (OOO) commitments, the South African organization **ABALOBI** is strengthening fisheries management through fisher-led data systems and digital tools. These enable real-time fishery monitoring across the value chain and have improved transparency in coastal communities across Kenya, South Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean region. ABALOBI's MONITOR platform enables collection of fishery catch, effort, and ecological data between communities and decision-makers. Additional interventions to increase market access and financial inclusion for fishers have strengthened coastal livelihoods, particularly for women and young people.

### ALIGNING NATIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE POLICY WITH THE AFRICAN UNION'S AGENDA 2063

In 2014, African leaders adopted the African Union's **Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture**. To support implementation, the **FishGov1** and **FishGov2** programs have worked over the last decade to align national and international fishery policies in African countries. These initiatives also strengthened Africa's unified voice in global fisheries and aquaculture policy and multilateral forums. This work is supported by a US\$13 million OOO financial commitment by the European Union.

### REMOTE SENSING TOOLS AND FISHING VESSEL TRACKING TO COMBAT IUU FISHING

**Global Fishing Watch (GFW)** promotes fisheries transparency and has strengthened the monitoring, control, and surveillance of fishing vessels in West, Central, and East Africa. GFW provides free satellite vessel tracking and supports the exchange of vessel monitoring systems and port inspection information. It also provides analysis reports to support sea-based patrols to tackle IUU fishing in Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, and Senegal and at the level of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission, enabling efficient use of patrol assets where resources are limited. Together with Trygg Mat Tracking, GFW has also supported implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement in 10 African countries. Since 2022, GFW has trained over 500 practitioners from 25 African countries.

### PARTICIPATORY FISHERIES GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY SURVEILLANCE

The **Global Toolkit for Participatory Fisheries Governance**, developed by the **Environmental Justice Foundation**, aims to empower small-scale fishing communities across 15 countries in the fight against IUU fishing and to achieve secure, sustainable, legal and ethical fisheries. Built on the experiences of small-scale fishers in Ghana, Liberia, and Senegal, the tool kit supports fishery governance through enhanced community surveillance and by strengthening community- and national-level small-scale fisher organizations through capacity-building and technical and financial support. This includes the rollout of the DASE mobile app, which allows artisanal fishers to gather geotagged footage of illegal fishing activities to inform law enforcement. The establishment of community comanagement associations and support to national associations, such as the Network of Women in Artisanal Fishing in Senegal (REFEPAS), amplify local concerns at a national level and influence policy. This OOO commitment is funded by the European Union.

Notes: CAOPA = Confédération Africaine des Organisations Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale; IUU = illegal, unreported, and unregulated; REFEPAS = Réseau des Femmes de la Pêche Artisanale au Sénégal.

Source: WRI authors, based on 2026 survey responses, OOO Commitment Tracker data, and verified where possible with respective organizations.

approaches, such as Sustainable Ocean Plans, present one policy solution to improve economic coordination across scales and stakeholders (Ocean Panel 2021).

Young private sector entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) underpin Africa’s blue economy, accounting for over 90 percent of businesses and almost 80 percent of total employment in the region (LSEG 2018). Further commitments to support SME development is a clear opportunity for delivering meaningful ocean action.

## Marine pollution

The marine pollution action area includes 55 commitments (Table 5) and \$4.8 billion in pledged finance. Actions to address plastic pollution account for 75 percent of marine pollution commitments, including investment in waste infrastructure, community cleanup activities, circular economy

initiatives, and government policy measures such as plastic import bans. This includes an international multibillion-dollar waste management investment, financed by European multi-lateral development banks, which is in progress.

Total waste generation is expected to triple in sub-Saharan Africa by 2050 due to rapid urbanization and changing consumption habits (Kaza et al. 2018). Greater investment is needed to tackle these challenges, scale solutions, and reduce the impact of marine pollution across the region.

Very few OOC commitments are dedicated to tackling other types of marine pollution, such as discarded fishing gear, chemical pollution, and noise pollution. This gap represents a clear opportunity, which could include beach certification schemes for tourist sites; improving management of organic, mining, and industrial waste and stormwater flows; and strengthening oil spill response capacity.

Table 4 | **OOC sustainable blue economy commitments in Africa**

### OCEAN DATA IN MAURITIUS<sup>a</sup>

Blue economy decision-making must be informed by reliable knowledge and data. Through the Our Ocean Conference (OOC), Mauritius launched the **Ocean Observatory E-platform**, improving national ocean data accessibility, coverage, and standardization. This was followed by an ongoing commitment to develop a marine spatial plan, including conducting resource surveys to better understand marine biodiversity, ecosystems, and fish stocks.

### STRENGTHENING BLUE ECONOMY OCEAN GOVERNANCE

The European Union has committed to strengthening regional ocean governance through the **West Africa Sustainable Ocean Programme** and **Central Africa Regional Ocean Programme**, making a combined financial pledge equivalent to over \$100 million. This includes blue economy support across sustainable fisheries, industry development, actions to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and more.

### MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS MOBILIZING BLUE FINANCE<sup>b</sup>

The World Bank committed over \$1 billion to advance the sustainable blue economy through the **PROBLUE program**. In Gambia, the Tourism Diversification and Resilience Program has improved understanding of climate risks for coastal tourism providers. In Somalia and Somaliland, PROBLUE supported research on coastal livelihoods and climate resilience alongside conflict-sensitive community engagement. Additional country support includes development of a Sustainable Ocean Plan in Namibia and blue economy research and analysis in São Tomé and Príncipe and in Somalia.

### SUPPORTING BLUE ECONOMY ENTREPRENEURS

OceanHub Africa is turning OOC commitments into practical blue economy pathways across Africa. Its work supports coastal communities to formalize enterprises, diversify incomes, and build resilience while also backing scalable start-ups that can shift industries from within, from sustainable seafood and seaweed to circular waste, clean shipping, and ocean data. Through its **“support, connect, and invest” model**, OceanHub Africa links business training, market access, partnerships, and catalytic finance so ocean-positive ventures can grow beyond pilots. Since launch, it has supported 149 ocean-impact businesses across 43 countries, mobilized over \$20 million, and contributed to 1,735 blue jobs.

### BLUE ECONOMY INVESTMENT IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Marine ecosystems are the economic backbone of small island developing states (SIDS), sustaining fisheries, tourism, and coastal resilience, yet their true value remains largely absent from financial and policy decisions. The Global Environment Facility’s **Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program** invests \$135.6 million across 15 SIDS to change this, embedding ecosystem valuation and natural capital accounting into national marine governance and planning. In African island nations, including Cabo Verde, the Comoros, the Maldives, Mauritius, and the Seychelles, the program scales up marine nature-based solutions across fisheries, tourism, and coastal management, using the valued wealth of marine ecosystems to unlock private investment and drive sustainable blue economy development.

Notes: a. This section is based on data from the OC commitment platform and World Bank (2024); b. This section is based on data from the OC commitment platform. All dollars are in US dollars.

Source: WRI authors, based on 2026 survey responses, OOC Commitment Tracker data, and verified where possible with respective organizations.

Table 5 | OOC marine pollution commitments in Africa

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO REDUCE PLASTIC POLLUTION**

The Sustainable Seas Trust's **Zero Waste to the Seas of Africa** project supports system-based, locally driven solutions to reduce marine litter. The initiative has developed detailed waste profiles for all 54 African countries, alongside a suite of research, policy, and practical implementation guides. It also developed a custom curriculum-aligned school program based on 20 years of experience in environmental education and behavior change. By the end of 2026 this will be implemented across 22 schools, reaching approximately 28,600 learners. Its **Operation Clean Spot** platform, piloted in Nelson Mandela Bay and now scaled to multiple communities, strengthens existing waste management value chains, integrates citizen science, and supports measurable reductions in litter and plastic leakage, with pilot results demonstrating 50–80 percent litter reductions at monitored sites. The initiative is supported by the government of Norway through Our Ocean Conference (OOC) commitments in 2025.

**MITIGATING UNDERWATER NOISE POLLUTION FROM SHIPPING**

Underwater noise from shipping disrupts marine animals' ability to communicate, navigate, and detect threats. The **Global Partnership for Mitigation of Underwater Noise from Shipping (GloNoise)** by the Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme, and International Maritime Organization is addressing this by building national and regional capacity. South Africa, as the lead pilot country, has completed a national baseline noise assessment and deployed coastal hydrophones. Madagascar participates as a twinning partner, cosponsoring submissions at the International Maritime Organization and strengthening regional engagement on this emerging threat to Africa's ocean health.

**LOCAL ACTION TO REDUCE POLLUTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

Beyond Plastic Med funds projects aimed at reducing plastic pollution across the Mediterranean region. It supports local stakeholders by providing financial assistance and opportunities for knowledge sharing within communities. In Tunisia, the ongoing **BeMed+ project**, implemented with Notre Grand Bleu and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, aims to develop and implement an action plan in Monastir to reduce plastic pollution in three key sectors (sport; hotels, restaurants, and cafés; and waste management) in close collaboration with local municipalities.

**ENHANCING WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE<sup>a</sup>**

The **Clean Ocean Initiative**, by the European Investment Bank and other international finance institutions, is a US\$2 billion multilateral financing mechanism to reduce marine litter through improved waste management infrastructure. Investments focus on foundational urban infrastructure (wastewater, solid waste, and stormwater solutions) that support public and environmental health and coastal resilience. In South Africa, investments in Cape Town wastewater treatment facilities are reducing effluent and plastic pollution entering coastal waters. Wastewater investments in Alexandria, Egypt, benefit over 1.5 million people and reduce marine pollution into the Mediterranean. In West Africa, a \$50 million investment in stormwater infrastructure in Cotonou, Benin, is reducing marine pollution discharged into the Gulf of Guinea.

**ADDRESSING ABANDONED, LOST, AND DISCARDED FISHING GEAR**

The **Global Ghost Gear Initiative** pledged to expand its regional impact and scale investment to prevent and remediate abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear. The initiative has grown significantly since the 2019 OOC commitment and now provides grant funding across four African countries. In Nigeria, the Stand Out for Environment Restoration initiative trained community ghost gear retrievers in eight communities to recover 2 million tons of waste and supports local women to convert recovered fishing nets into textiles. Go Green Malawi collected over 8 tons of fishing nets, which were repurposed into paving blocks. The Environment and Food Foundation in Cameroon focused on education and prevention, reaching more than 1,000 students and conducting shoreline cleanups. Finally, the Uganda Junior Rangers collected 40 tons of discarded gear through net collection kiosks and ran awareness campaigns that reached over 100,000 community members.

Note: a. This section is based on AFD (2023), Bitsadze (2025), and EIB (2023).

Source: WRI authors, based on 2026 survey responses, OOC Commitment Tracker data, and verified where possible with respective organizations.

## Maritime security

The maritime security action area includes 51 commitments (Table 6) and \$1.6 billion in pledged finance. Maritime security underpins the effectiveness of ocean governance; therefore, tackling issues of IUU fishing, trafficking, corruption, and environmental crime is critical for sustainable ocean outcomes. Capacity-building, partnerships, and training initiatives are a common theme (42 commitments), including collaboration with coast guards (11 commitments). This prioritization reflects challenges in financing and monitoring capacity to surveil Africa's vast coastlines. Counterpiracy activities are referenced in 6 commitments in the Gulf of Guinea and Horn of Africa subregions. Notably, approximately 90 percent of

maritime security commitments came from organizations and countries based outside of Africa. This reflects the importance of cross-regional capacity-building and information exchange as well as the international implications of security challenges linked to global trade and fishery supply chains.

The 2050 AIM Strategy identifies transnational organized crime, IUU fishing, environmental crime, natural disasters, weak legal frameworks, and a lack of data as key regional maritime security priorities (AU 2012)—all opportunities for future ambitious OOC commitments.

Table 6 | **OOO maritime security commitments in Africa**

**STRENGTHENING MARITIME SECURITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA**

The government of Japan has long supported maritime enforcement across the Horn of Africa. Its assistance includes providing training in Somalia for maintaining vessels and equipment, strengthening legal and institutional frameworks, and enhancing port security in Somali ports. It also builds counterpiracy capacity by delivering maritime law enforcement, communications, and maintenance training, and it supports regional **Centers of Excellence** in Djibouti and the Seychelles. These efforts improve maritime domain awareness, strengthen patrol and prosecution capabilities, and promote regional cooperation to counter piracy and maritime crime in the Horn of Africa.

**MARITIME SECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA**

The **Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network** aims to improve safety and maritime security in 19 countries through the Yaoundé Architecture Regional Information Sharing network. Additionally, \$48 million in financial commitments by the European Union seek to strengthen implementation of the Integrated Maritime Strategy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West and Central Africa Port Security initiative. This aimed to identify and close port security vulnerabilities and improve disaster preparedness and response.

**COMBATING MARITIME CRIME IN THE INDIAN OCEAN**

The **Program for the Promotion of Maritime Safety** (MASE) is countering piracy and improving security along the southeastern African coastline and in the Indian Ocean. The program supports alternative livelihood initiatives in coastal piracy regions of Somalia, builds investigative and monitoring capacity at national and regional levels, and disrupts illicit financial flows to combat money laundering. This initiative is achieved through Our Ocean Conference commitments, including a \$42 million investment by the European Union.

**ADDRESSING CRIME IN THE FISHERIES VALUE CHAIN**

The **FishNET** program of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime supports countries to address crimes in the fisheries sector by strengthening legal and policy frameworks, enhancing the capacity of criminal justice and law enforcement actors across the fisheries value chain, and addressing corruption. In its current phase, the program supports nine countries in Africa. It has advanced legislative reforms in two countries and trained over 400 officials across priority countries. The program has strengthened multiagency cooperation, supported corruption risk management processes, and contributed to global awareness and policy discussions on complementing fisheries management with a criminal justice approach.

**DIRECT INTERNATIONAL PORT OFFICER KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

Stop Illegal Fishing works to tackle illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing across Africa. The **FISH-i Africa Task Force** provided the first informal, operational information-sharing network for regional monitoring, control, and surveillance officers in southern and eastern Africa. This empowered officers to quickly and directly exchange vessel and operator information between countries and strengthen accountability. The **Southern African Development Community Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre**, which builds on FISH-i, is developing a regional register of fishing vessels. This register will require minimum transparency standards, such as International Maritime Organization numbers and vessel data to increase understanding of fishing efforts across the region.

Note: All dollars are in US dollars.

Source: WRI authors, based on 2026 survey responses, OOC Commitment Tracker data, and verified where possible with respective organizations.

**Marine protected areas**

The MPAs action area includes 54 commitments (Table 7) and \$842 million in pledged finance. MPAs have become increasingly central to African marine conservation strategies (Chukwuka et al. 2025) and play a vital role in protecting coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass meadows. Despite examples of subregional conservation leadership, including over 500,000 km<sup>2</sup> of protected area in the Western Indian Ocean (UNEP and WIOMSA 2021), progress toward the 30x30 target remains slow at a continental scale. Although several island countries have whole-EEZ marine spatial planning, the majority of African coastal countries have protected less than 5 percent of their EEZs (Marine Conservation Institute 2026).

The majority of MPA commitments are government policy announcements as well as conservation finance pledges. Although local governance and community-led approaches are increasing in prevalence across the continent, they remain underrepresented within this dataset. Eight MPA commitments referenced community-led approaches, whereas solutions such as other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) are only referenced in three commitments, representing an opportunity for future prioritization and resourcing.

Table 7 | **OOO marine protected areas commitments in Africa****GHANA'S INAUGURAL MARINE PROTECTED AREA**

In 2025, the government of Ghana approved the establishment of its first marine protected area (MPA) at **Greater Cape Three Points**, followed by its formal designation in 2026. This milestone marks a turning point in the nation's commitment to ocean stewardship. Covering nearly 704 square kilometers (km<sup>2</sup>) of coastal waters in the Western Region, Greater Cape Three Points represents one of Ghana's most ecologically and biologically significant marine environments. Its nutrient-rich upwelling waters provide critical breeding and nursery grounds for key fish species, including sardinella, anchovy, and mackerel. This landmark designation will support the restoration of precious marine ecosystems and safeguard the livelihoods of 21 coastal communities. The MPA is envisioned as a mixed-use spatial management zone rather than a blanket prohibition on fishing. This approach will sustain local livelihoods, permit low-impact fishing activities, and establish localized no-take zones while working in collaboration with scientific partners to monitor fish stocks and support habitat restoration. Coastal communities have been actively involved in the design of the MPA and will comanage it alongside the government and relevant partners, ensuring that environmental protection is not only effective but also equitable and locally led.

**CROSS-BORDER MARINE CONSERVATION IN EAST AFRICA**

Critical marine habitats and ecosystems are not confined to political borders. A coalition of civil society, research organizations, and government partners is working to strengthen transboundary marine protection and coordination across Kwale County, Kenya, and Tanga, Tanzania. The **Kenya-Tanzania Marine Transboundary Conservation Area** has made significant progress, with most of the technical planning now completed. Collaboration between the Nairobi Convention, the Western Indian Ocean Marine Sciences Association (WIOMSA), the Kenya Wildlife Service, and Tanzania's Marine Parks and Reserves Unit has resulted in a shared transboundary MPA proposal for governments. The Nairobi Convention and bilateral discussions between Kenya and Tanzania have reaffirmed support for establishing the area. The process now requires high-level political and diplomatic engagement to enable full implementation. Next steps include aligning legal frameworks, establishing permanent governance structures, securing sustainable financing, and finalizing a bilateral agreement.

**EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE SEYCHELLES<sup>a</sup>**

The Seychelles exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is among the largest in the world and includes two United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Sites. In 2025, the Seychelles delivered on the 2016 commitment to designate 400,000 km<sup>2</sup> of MPA by approving the **Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan**. The plan protects 32.6 percent of the Seychelles' EEZ and is built on a decade of participatory planning, informed by hundreds of technical and public consultations. This comprehensive marine spatial plan was financed by a debt swap of US\$27 million in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and other creditors.

**STRENGTHENING GLOBAL YOUTH ADVOCACY FOR MARINE CONSERVATION**

EarthEcho International works with youth to protect and restore the ocean, with a focus on advancing 30x30 goals. Through its **GenSea** digital community platform, EarthEcho has connected more than 3,300 young ocean advocates, ages 13–25, from 124 countries, providing year-round opportunities for networking, learning, and collective action. This includes monthly skill-building workshops, youth project grants (including in Kenya), and a High Seas Youth Ambassador program to support national youth-led advocacy campaigns (including in South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) to advance treaty ratification and implementation.

**CROSS-REGIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION FOR AFRICA**

The Great Blue Wall Initiative in the Western Indian Ocean has enabled the conservation and sustainable management of 56,000 km<sup>2</sup> of marine areas, including mangroves, seagrasses, coral reefs, and coastal dunes. More than 112,000 people, including women (45 percent) and youth (30 percent), have benefited from improved livelihoods, enterprise support, and comanagement systems, generating over 6,100 blue jobs. Convened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature the initiative has mobilized over US\$80 million, influenced seven national and regional policy frameworks, and established new governance bodies, including Kenya's National and County Mangrove Committees and Mozambique's National Mangrove Council. In 2023, the Moroni Declaration for Ocean and Climate Action in Africa, signed by 11 countries, formally recognized the Great Blue Wall as a flagship African-led initiative aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063, the UN Decade of Ocean Science, and the Global Biodiversity Framework.

*Note:* a. This section is based on Government of Seychelles (2024), Marine Conservation Institute (2026), and SeyCCAT (2024).

*Source:* WRI authors, based on 2026 survey responses, OOC Commitment Tracker data, and verified where possible with respective organizations.

## Ocean-climate nexus

The ocean-climate nexus action area includes 41 commitments (Table 8) and \$525 million in pledged finance. Key themes include actions to enhance climate adaptation and coastal resilience (13 commitments), improve ocean science and research (15 commitments), and tackle ocean acidification (6 commitments).

The preservation and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems was the focus of 16 commitments. Africa hosts over 20 percent of global mangrove coverage, concentrated in Western and Central Africa (Leal and Spalding 2024). Similarly, the region's seagrass meadows and coral systems are critical for sequestering carbon and protecting coastlines (Berumen et al. 2013; Bullock et al. 2021).

This action area has the smallest finance pledge, reflecting the persistent underrepresentation of climate finance to Africa. While the ocean is widely recognized as central to Africa’s climate vulnerability and resilience, it has yet to translate into sustained delivery through voluntary commitment platforms. Notably missing are commitments responding to growing climate risks such as ocean heat waves, sea level rise, human

displacement due to coastal degradation, and disaster risk reduction. Similarly, offshore energy and shipping decarbonization are clear gaps and present significant opportunities for investment and growth. Scaling up ocean-climate action across the continent, particularly through ambitious financial commitments and underpinned by research, should be a priority looking forward.

Table 8 | **OOO ocean-climate nexus commitments in Africa**

### SCALING CARBON AND BIODIVERSITY CREDITS

Healthy mangrove forests and seagrass meadows offer an array of ecosystem services, from carbon storage and fisheries benefits to increased resilience. Market-based models such as carbon and biodiversity credits can fund the protection of these vital ecosystems while also providing a source of income for communities. Since 2019, the **Vanga Blue Forest** community-based organization has been generating carbon credits through mangrove conservation, funding diverse community development projects. Now, the team is developing Vanga Seagrass Project under the umbrella of Vanga Blue Forest. This initiative is one of the first—and currently the most advanced—marine projects to undergo certification under any biodiversity standard. The project is led by the Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, and other government institutions. It is funded by the government of the United Kingdom with support from the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance.

### CLIMATE ADAPTATION IN AFRICAN MARITIME AND PORT TECHNOLOGY<sup>a</sup>

The **Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre for Africa** (MTCC Africa), based in Kenya, builds capacity for regional climate change mitigation in the shipping industry. MTCC Africa is part of a global network coordinating action across five regions. Now in its second project phase, MTCC Africa is focused on facilitating portside energy efficiency measures, retrofitting vessels, and promoting sustainable shipping practices, especially for least developed countries and small island developing states. The International Maritime Organization and European Union made Our Ocean Conference (OOO) commitments to support MTCC Africa in 2017 and 2023, equivalent to \$20 million.

### UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE RISK AND OCEAN VULNERABILITY

Coastal communities face interconnected climate risks that demand holistic, locally tailored assessment and action. Recognizing the need for multidimensional tools that consider climate risks across ecological, economic, and social systems, the Stimson Center designed the **Climate and Ocean Risk Vulnerability Index** (CORVI). CORVI is a decision-support tool that integrates quantitative and qualitative data to create a comprehensive, interdisciplinary picture of a coastal city’s climate risks. Since 2021, CORVI has been implemented in 16 coastal communities around the world, including in Toamasina, Madagascar; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and Mombasa, Kenya. With the CORVI results and recommendations, decision-makers can better target adaptation and resilience efforts.

### COASTAL WETLANDS AS A REGIONAL OCEAN CLIMATE SOLUTION

The protection and restoration of coastal wetlands represent a key pathway for some African nations to achieve their nationally determined contributions. In the Western Indian Ocean, The Pew Charitable Trusts—through national-level partnerships and the regional Large-scale Seagrass Mapping and Management Initiative—work with governments and scientific partners to translate OOO commitments into measurable action. By establishing comprehensive maps and carbon stock assessments, direct technical support, and capacity-strengthening programs, these partnerships provide the baseline data needed to integrate seagrass and mangrove conservation into national climate frameworks and regional ocean governance.

### TACKLING OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

The Ocean Foundation supports West African marine scientists through the **Building Capacity in Ocean Acidification Monitoring in the Gulf of Guinea (BIOTTA)** program and the Eastern Tropical Equatorial Atlantic Ocean Acidification Training Center, both led by the University of Ghana. Via the collaboration of an academic network in five countries and growing, this effort strengthens in-region ocean acidification expertise by enabling hands-on training, OceanTeacher Global Academy coursework, technical coordination staff, research funding, and specialized equipment. The Ocean Foundation’s OOO commitments have delivered over \$500,000 in ocean acidification research funding to Africa through the Ocean Science Equity Initiative.

Notes: a. This section is based on data from the OOO Commitment Tracker. All dollars are in US dollars.

Source: WRI authors, based on 2026 survey responses, OOO Commitment Tracker data, and verified where possible with respective organizations.

## Conclusion and way forward

The future of the ocean and the future of Africa are deeply interconnected. African ocean leadership through the OOC has generated a strong record of delivery, and roughly 80 percent of the region's commitments are ongoing or complete. Investment is being delivered across all African subregions, and the prominence of sustainable fisheries and blue economy actions echo existing regional policy priorities. OOC commitments have directly contributed toward each of the Ocean Decade Africa regional priorities; the Agenda 2063 Goal 6 targets; and Sustainable Development Goal 14.

### What conditions enable and impede ocean action

Countries and organizations clearly identify several factors that influence the effectiveness of commitments in the region. Commitments that performed best and delivered positive impacts have a few common criteria, including the following:

- A focus on long-term institutional capacity-building rather than short-term training.
- Use of accessible digital technologies at a range of scales to inform action and policy.
- Emphasis on building finance pipelines that enable businesses and communities to deliver change and sustain activities over time.

Taken together, successful commitments considered not only the ideal policy outcome for a singular project but also the human, financial, and resource architecture that must be in place for the best chance of sustained and meaningful long-term impact.

Equity considerations emerged more strongly in African commitments in comparison to the global commitment dataset, with a greater emphasis on the needs and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, SIDS, and LDCs in the design and implementation of actions.

Commitment makers highlighted tailored and inclusive approaches to project design, political support, and access to scientific and traditional knowledge as key to enabling successful implementation of their commitments. Best practices include comanagement governance models, iterative project design with local communities, equal and open collaboration between African and non-African partners, and reforms to embed ocean priorities in national development policy. The successful integration of comanagement approaches and inclusive action in Africa can provide key lessons and examples for partners in other world regions.

## Recommendations for future OOC commitments in Africa: A focus on finance and skill building

With Africa's population projected to increase by 1.1 billion by 2054 (UNDESA 2024), further investment in sustainable ocean governance across the OOC action areas is critical to safeguard ocean health for future generations while also sustainably utilizing marine and coastal resources. This will require prioritizing technical and vocational skills development and training that creates economic opportunities for Africa's young population and also sustained ocean investment to drive equitable job creation across blue economy sectors.

Despite the impressive scale of ocean action across the continent, insufficient finance remains a major barrier. Although figures for cross-sectoral ocean investment needs in Africa are unavailable, it is expected that \$175 billion per year is required globally to meet Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Under Water (Johansen and Vestvik 2020). Pathways to unlock ocean finance are diverse and actively being implemented across the region. This includes public financing, incubator programs and training for private sector actors and entrepreneurs, growing public-private partnerships, and blue finance mechanisms such as blue bonds and debt-for-nature swaps.

To support a sustainable pipeline of ocean investment in Africa, future OOCs should encourage African countries and organizations (and their global partners) to deliver ambitious financial pledges and serve as a platform to foster connections between implementing organizations and funders. This is especially critical in today's financing landscape, where investments that harm nature outweigh funding for nature-based solutions by a factor of 30 to 1 (UNEP 2026).

Further research should be conducted to identify specific continental and subregional ocean finance needs that reflect the diversity and value of African coastal economies and ecosystems. This will enable better contextualization as governments and organizations develop future ocean finance commitments through the OOC, the United Nations Ocean Conference, and other forums.

We noted that organizations are likely disincentivized from externally sharing the challenges they face, even under confidentiality. This may result in a disconnect between a reported "complete" commitment and verifiable long-term benefits for ocean health, communities, and economies; for example, an organization may consider its commitment "complete" at the conclusion of its project cycle or financial disbursement rather than when there are concrete changes in ocean health. This is likely a global challenge, not limited to Africa. Greater transparency and accountability around both challenges faced and best practices are needed to effectively scale solutions.

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## Ocean solutions for Africa by Africa

Despite the abundance of expertise, ambition, and innovative ocean solutions across Africa, the representation and influence of African actors within the OOC remains relatively low. A key finding of this report is that the majority of Africa-based commitments through the OOC platform have been made by governments and organizations that are not based in the region. While this reflects a rich diversity of active global partnerships, it also articulates the power imbalance between well-resourced organizations in the Global North and local implementing organizations in the Global South. This raises additional considerations around the role of external stakeholders versus local communities and governments in shaping and implementing ocean solutions and the extent to which commitments ultimately facilitate sustained benefits for African peoples, communities, and ecosystems.

Future OOCs should put a greater emphasis on mobilizing African-led commitments by African countries and organizations who are ultimately best positioned to meet local needs. This can be through either making OOC pledges themselves or as equal copartners rather than being positioned as the implementers of commitments from more-resourced partners. The OOC can also improve its engagement with actors across Africa, including through greater outreach, commitment mobilization, travel support, language services, and speaking opportunities to amplify regional perspectives and priorities.

Through the lens of OOC commitments, ocean action is unequally distributed across Africa, with fewer commitments in North and Central African countries. This geographic gap is a potential area of future focus for commitment makers at OOCs. Additionally, greater investment and commitments in the ocean-climate nexus, marine pollution, and MPA action areas are needed from both governments and civil society. Lastly, greater activation and ambition from the private sector will be key to realize continental blue economy priorities and policy objectives.

The 11th Our Ocean Conference, hosted for the first time on African soil by the government of Kenya, is an opportunity for the continent to build and sustain its emerging ocean leadership. The global community's attention is on African leadership in 2027 as the region prepares to host key upcoming forums, such as the International Marine Protected Areas Congress in Senegal and the 32nd UN Climate Change Conference in Ethiopia.

The prominent role of Africa's regional coordination platforms and economic blocs present model pathways to accelerate progress on transboundary cooperation. The Regional Seas Conventions (Nairobi, Abidjan, Barcelona, and Jeddah) are primed to be key drivers of Africa's implementation of the recently ratified High Seas Treaty.

By delivering strong new commitments through the OOC, African governments and organizations can capitalize on this moment to place their region at the center of upcoming global ocean policy decisions. Through the current Agenda 2063 Implementation Plan (2024–33), Africa has the narrative, the strategy, and the institutional anchor inside the African Union to drive ocean transformation. It is important for regional OOC commitments to align with the existing policy initiatives and priorities set by the continent. This can also provide strong justification for partners to collaborate and provide additional support to “unblock” stalled commitments.

Africa's ocean future must be defined by its ambition, opportunity, expertise, and commitment to action—not simply by vulnerability. The continent is home to critical ocean biodiversity and ecosystems, growing technical expertise, a dynamic young population, and a demonstrated record of delivering on its commitments. Increasing African-led commitments, strengthening financing pipelines, equalizing relationships with partners, and elevating regional innovation and solutions will be essential to furthering ocean solutions on the continent. With deliberate investment, coordinated policy, and equitable partnerships, Africa is positioned not only to safeguard its marine ecosystems but also to shape the next era of global ocean governance.

## Appendix A

Table A-1 | List of OOC commitment makers by sector

<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Australia</li> <li>• Government of Austria</li> <li>• Government of Canada</li> <li>• Government of Cape Verde</li> <li>• Government of France</li> <li>• Government of Gabon</li> <li>• Government of Germany</li> <li>• Government of Ghana</li> <li>• Government of Ireland</li> <li>• Government of Israel</li> <li>• Government of Italy</li> <li>• Government of Japan</li> <li>• Government of Malta</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Mauritius</li> <li>• Government of Morocco</li> <li>• Government of Mozambique</li> <li>• Government of Namibia</li> <li>• Government of Norway</li> <li>• Government of Portugal</li> <li>• Government of Senegal</li> <li>• Government of Seychelles</li> <li>• Government of South Africa</li> <li>• Government of Spain</li> <li>• Government of Sweden</li> <li>• Government of the Republic of Congo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of the Republic of Korea</li> <li>• Government of the Republic of Tunisia</li> <li>• Government of the United Kingdom</li> <li>• Government of the United States</li> <li>• Government of Togo</li> <li>• Japan Agency for Marine–Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC)</li> <li>• Ocean Affairs Council</li> <li>• Prince Albert II of Monaco</li> <li>• Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund</li> </ul>
<b>NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABALOBI</li> <li>• AKO Foundation</li> <li>• Arms of Comfort Foundation</li> <li>• Beyond Plastic Med (BeMed)</li> <li>• Big Ocean States Initiative (BOSI)</li> <li>• Blue Finance</li> <li>• CAOPA (Confédération Africaine des Organisations Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale; African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries)</li> <li>• Climate Resilience and Adaptation Network (CRAN)</li> <li>• Community Economic Environmental Rights Initiative</li> <li>• Conservation International (CI)</li> <li>• EarthEcho International</li> <li>• Environmental Justice Foundation</li> <li>• Environmental Law Institute</li> <li>• FISH-i Africa</li> <li>• Global Fishing Watch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Ghost Gear Initiative</li> <li>• High Seas Alliance</li> <li>• International Pole &amp; Line Foundation</li> <li>• Sustainable Seas Trust</li> <li>• International Seafood Sustainability Foundation</li> <li>• International Union for Conservation of Nature</li> <li>• Island Conservation</li> <li>• Labour Health and Human Rights Development Centre</li> <li>• Local2030 Islands Network</li> <li>• Marine Stewardship Council</li> <li>• Nekton</li> <li>• New England Aquarium</li> <li>• OceanHub Africa</li> <li>• Ocean Policy Research Institute of Sasakawa Peace Foundation</li> <li>• Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA)</li> <li>• Oceans Beyond Piracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OLSPS</li> <li>• One Earth Future</li> <li>• Peace Boat</li> <li>• Rare</li> <li>• Reef Conservation</li> <li>• Safe Ocean Network</li> <li>• Santé et Nature</li> <li>• SeaChange/Absaroka Energy</li> <li>• Stimson Center</li> <li>• Stop Illegal Fishing</li> <li>• Tara Expeditions Foundation</li> <li>• The Nature Conservancy</li> <li>• The Ocean Foundation</li> <li>• The Pew Charitable Trusts</li> <li>• WildAid</li> <li>• Wildlife Conservation Society</li> <li>• WorldFish</li> <li>• World Wide Fund for Nature</li> </ul>
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Investment Bank</li> <li>• European Union</li> <li>• Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)</li> <li>• Global Environment Facility</li> <li>• Global Fund for Coral Reefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People Secretariat</li> <li>• Indian Ocean Commission</li> <li>• Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO)</li> <li>• International Labour Organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpol</li> <li>• Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans)</li> <li>• UN Environment Programme (UNEP)</li> <li>• UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)</li> <li>• World Bank</li> </ul>
<b>PHILANTHROPY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marisla Foundation</li> <li>• MAVA Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minderoo Foundation</li> <li>• Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REV Ocean</li> <li>• Shark Conservation Fund</li> </ul>
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eachmile Technologies</li> <li>• Empower</li> <li>• Inmarsat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laskaridis Shipping Co. Ltd.</li> <li>• Naval Energies</li> <li>• Ocean Bottle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolute Marine Energy</li> <li>• Saline Farming Group</li> <li>• Vulcan Inc.</li> </ul>

Source: WRI authors.

Table A-2 | **Implementation survey form**

NO.	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Do you consent to participating in this research study? <i>Your data and responses are private and confidential. Please see our full Consent Statement.</i>	Yes/No
2	Name:	Text
3	Organization:	Text
4	Contact email:	Email
5	Sector: government (national); government (subnational); private sector; intergovernmental organization; civil society; philanthropy; academia	Multiple choice
6	Please select your region(s) of implementation (M49 region classifications): Northern Africa; Eastern Africa; Southern Africa; Western Africa; Central Africa; High Seas	Multiple choice
7	Please select the focus of your Our Ocean Conference commitments. <i>Please select the same focus areas as registered on the commitment platform.</i> Ocean and climate change; MPAs and other conservation measures; marine pollution; sustainable fisheries; sustainable blue economy; maritime security	Multiple choice
8	Please briefly describe the impact and outcomes of your OOC commitment(s)?	Text
9	Please estimate the number of people directly benefiting from your commitment(s) implementation.	Number
<p><i>Please score your agreement with the following eight statements assessing the effectiveness of OOC commitment implementation by your government or organization. Where possible please provide details and context that informed your scoring.</i></p>		
10	<p>Actions taken to implement OOC commitments are <b>coordinated</b>.</p> <p><i>Actions taken to implement your commitments are well coordinated across relevant government agencies, civil society, private sector organizations, and local communities. There is effective information sharing between partners and clear designation of roles and responsibilities.</i></p>	<p>Likert Agreement Scale</p> <p><i>Strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree</i></p>
11	Please provide additional context to your scoring.	Text
12	<p>Actions taken to implement OOC commitments are <b>responsive</b>.</p> <p><i>Actions and project design are tailored to local ecosystems and the environmental, social, and economic context of communities. Actions taken to implement your commitments are responsive to the immediate, short- and medium-term needs of communities.</i></p>	<p>Likert Agreement Scale</p> <p><i>Strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree</i></p>
13	Please provide additional context to your scoring.	Text
14	<p>Actions taken to implement OOC commitments are <b>inclusive</b>.</p> <p><i>Actions taken to implement your commitments make efforts to include all relevant stakeholders' perspectives. During commitment implementation, your organization/government takes active measures to minimize harm and promote equitable outcomes, particularly for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities.</i></p>	<p>Likert Agreement Scale</p> <p><i>Strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree</i></p>
15	Please provide additional context to your scoring.	Text
16	<p>Actions taken to implement OOC commitments are <b>adaptable</b>.</p> <p><i>Your organization/government effectively adapts commitment implementation based on changing conditions and to meet long-term needs of communities, even if it requires deviating from the original implementation plan.</i></p>	<p>Likert Agreement Scale</p> <p><i>Strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree</i></p>
17	Please provide additional context to your scoring.	Text
18	<p>Actions taken to implement OOC commitments are <b>knowledge based</b>.</p> <p><i>Your organization/government relies on good-quality and timely scientific, local, and Indigenous knowledge and data when implementing your commitments.</i></p>	<p>Likert Agreement Scale</p> <p><i>Strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree</i></p>
19	Please provide additional context to your scoring.	Text

Table A-2 | **Implementation survey form (cont.)**

NO.	QUESTION	ANSWER
20	<p>Actions taken to implement OOC commitments have <b>political support</b>.</p> <p><i>The actions of your organization/government have support from relevant public agencies (including local, regional, and national government) to effectively implement your commitments. Your commitments are supported by political leaders to achieve their outcomes.</i></p>	<p>Likert Agreement Scale</p> <p><i>Strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree</i></p>
21	Please provide additional context to your scoring.	Text
22	<p>Actions taken to implement OOC commitments are <b>well financed</b>.</p> <p><i>Actions taken to implement your commitments are underpinned by sustainable and sufficient funding.</i></p>	<p>Likert Agreement Scale</p> <p><i>Strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree</i></p>
23	Please provide additional context to your scoring.	Text
24	<p>Actions taken to implement OOC commitments are <b>well resourced</b>.</p> <p><i>Your government/organization has access to sustained and sufficient nonfinancial resources, including equipment, infrastructure, technology, human capacity, and technical expertise to successfully implement your commitments.</i></p>	<p>Likert Agreement Scale</p> <p><i>Strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree</i></p>
25	Please provide additional context to your scoring.	Text
26	Would you be willing to participate in a Case Study interview?	Yes/No
27	Please share any additional barriers or enabling factors from implementing your commitments you have not covered in your responses.	Text
28	Would you like to join the OOC mailing list to receive updates about the 11th and future Our Ocean Conferences?	Yes/No

Source: WRI authors.

Table A-3 | African OOC commitments, pledged finance, and progress by year (2014-2025)

YEAR	NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS	PLEGGED FUNDS (US\$, MILLIONS)	IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS (BY NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS)		
			Complete (%)	In progress (%)	Not started (%)
2014	4	172	100	0	0
2015	8	56	50	0	50
2016	40	624	68	15	18
2017	61	1,411	52	23	25
2018	38	4,933	58	21	21
2019	52	407	42	48	10
2022	43	646	53	37	9
2023	34	4,442	21	71	9
2024	51	1,384	12	53	35
2025	33	263	0	58	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>14,339</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>22</b>

Note: Our Ocean Conferences were suspended in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: WRI authors.

## Abbreviations

<b>AIM</b>	Africa's Integrated Maritime	<b>LMMA</b>	locally managed marine area
<b>CAOPA</b>	Confédération Africaine des Organisations Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale (African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries)	<b>MPA</b>	marine protected area
<b>COMESA</b>	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	<b>MTCC</b>	Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre for Africa
<b>CORVI</b>	Climate and Ocean Risk Vulnerability Index	<b>NGO</b>	nongovernmental organization
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community	<b>OECM</b>	other effective area-based conservation measure
<b>ECCAS</b>	Economic Community of Central African States	<b>OOC</b>	Our Ocean Conference
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States	<b>REFEPAS</b>	Réseau des Femmes de la Pêche Artisanale au Sénégal (Network of Women in Artisanal Fishing in Senegal)
<b>EEZ</b>	exclusive economic zone	<b>RQ</b>	research question
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product	<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>GFW</b>	Global Fishing Watch	<b>SIDS</b>	small island developing states
<b>GGC</b>	Gulf of Guinea Commission	<b>SME</b>	small- and medium-sized enterprise
<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority on Development	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>IOC</b>	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission		
<b>IUU</b>	illegal, unreported, and unregulated		
<b>LDC</b>	least developed country		

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## Endnotes

1. *Complete* means the commitment has delivered its intended outcome; *in progress* means implementation activities are currently underway; *not started* means the commitment has been announced but implementation has not yet begun.
2. The large number of cross-regional commitments accounts for the difference between the total number of commitments and the sum of each subregion (i.e., a single OOC commitment is implemented in both West and East Africa).
3. International organizations are typically registered on the OOC platform as their country of origin or headquarters, even if they have cross-regional presence.

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