

FROM STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION TO CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE BENGUELA CURRENT COMMISSION

Over the past ten years a strategic action program has guided the Benguela Current Commission and its predecessors in implementing a portfolio of projects that have primarily concentrated on scientific research but which have included capacity building elements and an institutional building endeavour, the Strategic Action Program Implementation (SAP-IMP) project, funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and executed by United Nations Operational Services (UNOPS) with the purpose of ensuring that the Benguela Current Commission (BCC) is sustainable by project end- December 2013.

In the current portfolio of projects, the primary one is the Science Program, funded by the Norwegian Government and which includes 18 specific Fisheries orientated projects. This is complemented by the Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries (EAF)- Nansen project, executed by the Fisheries and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the European Union (EU) funded EcoFish project.

This period has culminated in the signing of the Benguela Current Convention providing a new Governance framework and mandate for the BCC to work under, with an added emphasis on knowledge based management decision making and implementation (Convention Implementation).

The next five year plan will require the BCC to implement the spirit of the Convention. In order to do so, a new trans-boundary diagnostic analysis, to update the one ten years previously, has led to an Implementation Plan (IP) with more than 100 activities, for which resources are being sought.

The portfolio of probable resources for the next five years includes the continuation of the EcoFish project; a GEF funded, FAO Climate Change project entitled "Enhancing Climate Change Resilience in the Benguela Current Fisheries System"; a Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) funded project entitled, "Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME)", and the probable continuation of the Science Program and the EAF- NANSEN project.

These efforts will be complemented by a new GEF application for a five year project to be executed directly by the BCC. The project objective is "To implement the Benguela Current Convention and accompanying strategic action programs for a co-ordinated regional approach to the long term conservation, protection, rehabilitation, enhancement and sustainable use of the BCLME, to provide economic, environmental and social benefits and wellbeing."

The challenges to be addressed in the short to mid-term are: treaty ratification; managing the possible 400% growth of the Secretariat portfolio; charting the path from research to management outcomes including decision making and implementing actions timeously through current and new decision making and governance models; ensuring extra-national and intra-national equity; adapting to change including climate change; addressing multi-sector issues including environment, mining and transport; expanding the concept of science further to include environmental economics and wellbeing science and ensuring Secretariat resilience by implementing flexible internal governance systems and ensuring sufficient resources.

In conclusion, the BCC has a long track record of achievement culminating in the signing of the Benguela Current Convention. This has opened up opportunities for a significant increase in growth, which should include a shift from science to governance, the use of development of best practise,

the chance to implement fully all the principles of sustainable development as a global leader to ensure positive ecosystem and social change in the marine sector.