



Concept Note

**BUSINESS LEADERSHIP FORUM
(BLF) ON SUSTAINABLE BLUE
ECONOMY IN THE BENGUELA
CURRENT LARGE MARINE
ECOSYSTEM (BCLME)**





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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BCC

The Benguela Current Convention (BCC) is a treaty between the Governments of Angola, Namibia and South Africa (the Parties) that established the first multi-sectoral intergovernmental organisation in the world based on the Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) approach to ocean governance. The Convention represents the countries' recognition of the unique character of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME), the richness and complexity of its biological and physical functioning, its significance for the socio-economic development and for the well-being of the people depending on it and the threats to it. The Parties are guided by the objective and principles of the Convention. Please access a copy of the Convention [here](#).

The objective of the Convention is, to promote a coordinated approach to the long-term conservation, protection, rehabilitation, enhancement and sustainable use of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem BCLME, in order to provide economic, environmental and social benefits. The Principles include:

- The cooperation, collaboration and sovereign equality principle;
- Sustainable use and management of the marine resources;
- The precautionary principle;
- The prevention, avoidance and mitigation of pollution;
- The polluter pays principle; and
- Protection of biodiversity in the marine environment and conservation of the marine eco-system.

The BCC covers the following sectors as represented by government ministries: fisheries, transport, biodiversity and environment, and minerals and mining. The Convention is implemented through a multi-sectoral Strategic Action Programme (SAP) that addresses national, regional and global ocean governance and sustainable development priorities. The Convention Secretariat based in Swakopmund, Namibia provides services to the Ministerial Conference, the Commission and its subsidiary bodies to facilitate the execution of their functions, including implementation of the SAP. The key thematic areas under the SAP include:

- Living marine resources
- Non-living marine resources
- Productivity and environmental variability
- Pollution
- Ecosystem health and biodiversity
- Human dimensions
- Enhance the economic development potential
- Governance

2. IMPORTANCE OF OCEANS AND THE BCLME

The sixty-six (66) Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) around the world generate annual net economic benefits to the tune of USD12 trillion. Maritime transport is the backbone of international trade and the global economy. Over 80% of the volume of international trade in goods, and over 70% in value (USD) is carried by sea, and the percentage is even higher for many developing countries.

The ocean provides between 50-80% of global oxygen supply, and it is estimated that about 25% of global greenhouse gas emissions are captured and sequestered by marine biodiversity, contributing toward climate change mitigation. To preserve these essential benefits to humanity, efforts are underway globally to protect at least 30% of the oceans by 2030.

The BCLME is one of the four major coastal upwelling ecosystems in the world, characterised by high productivity, and globally important living, and regionally important non-living marine resources such as diamonds and oil. The estimated annual value of the BCLME's ocean industries is more than USD250 billion, demonstrating the ecosystem's role in the socio-economic well-being of almost 40 million people. Ocean industries employ close to 1 million people directly with more than 5 million indirect beneficiaries (e.g., up- and downstream goods and services).

For the sustainable use of marine resources and to contribute to global targets under the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement, all three countries are advancing their Blue Economy development agendas. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and the identification and description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) are modern ocean governance and ecosystem protection approaches that aim to balance conservation with economic development. As demonstration of commitment towards blue economy, the presidents of the respective BCC Parties have made specific commitments to drive ocean governance at national levels.

3. RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE

The BCC recognises the importance of collaboration with the private sector for sustainable utilisation, conservation and protection of the BCLME. Private sector participation is indispensable for successful ocean governance given the significant measurable positive social and economic impacts generated by marine and coastal industries. The private sector has technical skills and technological capacities for sustainable blue economy development, and to unlock innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable ocean protection; improved marine resources monitoring and management.

Economic activities by the private sector create a need for a flexible approach to ocean governance. Ocean use is expanding in intensity, duration and geographic extent. Private sector participation in policy and management consultations and processes is critical given the potential impacts that changes may have on operations, and social and economic benefits. Partnerships between the BCC and the private sector can catalyze lasting solutions, and facilitate an acceleration toward positive transformational changes on environmental, social and economic issues.

The BCC proposes a formalized "BCLME Business Leadership Forum" (BCLME-BLF) that can serve as an effective platform for inclusive and participatory evidence-based management and policy making to achieve sustainable blue economy outcomes.

The objective of the BCLME-BLF would be, **to ensure ecosystem sustainability for the wellbeing of the people and economic sectors of the BCLME**. The Forum would facilitate and enable the integration of economic sectors within countries and at LME scale to:

- harness Blue Economy opportunities,
- jointly address challenges, and
- optimise the environmental, social and economic benefits.

4. THE BCC'S VALUE PROPOSITION

Achieving a balance between "Blue Growth" and a healthy large marine ecosystem requires meaningful involvement and participation by all stakeholders, specifically the private sector. For private sector partners, the BCC offers to administer the functions of the Business Leadership Forum and to implement jointly agreed actions to address specific sector and cross-sector priorities. The value creation would include, among others:

- Harmonization of the sustainability objectives of different sectors and within sectors across the LME.
- Access to key events, consultations and information on current and emerging ocean governance issues, trends and approaches directly relevant to sectors.
- Ensuring the consideration of private sector contributions for the improvement of policies, laws and regulations.
- Scaling positive social and environmental impacts by pooling Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Social Impact resources.
- Visibility of private sector efforts and investments in environmental protection and management, and of the tangible social and economic benefits generated at local and national levels.

The BLF will engage with the sector leadership mechanisms in each country (e.g., of industry associations, umbrella bodies, unions), with an aim to cover the entire spectrum of ocean and industry stakeholders as identified below.



Direct Ocean Users: Industries that depend directly on the ocean for the extraction or production of goods (e.g. fish, oil and gas, renewable energy, seabed minerals) and the use of ocean space for the provision of services (e.g. shipping, marine and cruise tourism, submarine cables).



Ocean User Support Industries: The ecosystem of sectors that depend on the direct ocean users for their existence (e.g. shipping and shipbuilding, suppliers of marine fuels, maritime electronics, logistics, crew training, etc.) or drive the need for ocean industry economic activities (e.g. the primary industries, manufacturers or retailers that transport commodities, materials or products by sea).



Providers of the Ocean Economy "Infrastructure": This includes the financial, insurance, legal and other service sectors that enable ocean industries to develop and operate.

By engaging the above stakeholders, the BCC will gain better knowledge of sector value chains, their role players, and of the impacts of entire value chains, not only of the direct ocean users. By consulting with stakeholders involved in value chains, the BCC and the private sector can jointly address the full scope of priority issues across an entire value chain. For e.g., engaging suppliers of fishing nets, providers of underwater net monitoring technology, and fishing companies to reduce the incidence of losing fishing gear at sea. Another example, engaging the manufacturers and suppliers of ballast water treatment systems, service and maintenance agents, regulators and shipping companies to ensure appropriate and affordable solutions that can enable compliance.

5. MODE OF ENGAGEMENT

BCC envisages a one-day consultative session with the marine and coastal private sector in the BCLME Region on **27 – 28 October 2022**. The BCC will present mandate and share results from its work over the past 5 years, with relevance to the private sector. Interactive panel sessions will follow on synergistic approaches to strengthen involvement of the marine and coastal industries in ocean governance (1) policy-making and regulatory processes in the marine sphere (2) how the private sector could contribute towards improve ocean management and sustainability, and (3) how best to harness blue economy and through an effective ocean governance system. Join us!

6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The BCLME Business Leadership Forum stands to become a continental leader and LME pioneer for the preservation of life-supporting ecosystem services and to harness Blue Economic potential in a sustainable, inclusive and equitable way. The following outcomes are expected to emanate from the forum;

- Collaborative joint agreements to strengthen research and management of transboundary marine species;
- Joint partnerships and harmonized approaches to respond to oil spills in the BCLME;
- Prioritization of climate mitigation technologies within the marine sphere.

For further details, kindly contact Ms. Thandiwe Gxaba, BCC Acting Executive Secretary at thandiwe@benguelacc.org or Ms. Fransina Shihepo at fransina.shihepo@undp.org

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