

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Policy guidance for a post-COVID strategic approach to coastal and marine conservation in West Africa

- Cabo-Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal -

Introduction

The second and last phase (2020-2022) of MAVA's work started in a very particular situation: all countries supported by MAVA were hit by the COVID19 crisis, with tremendous impacts on the health, social, economic and environmental context. The operational capacities of our partners were also affected. This crisis came on top of the already acute environmental crisis and also exacerbated the inequalities and inadequacies that already existed in various other areas. However, this crisis was also a moment of collective awareness of the need to change our ways of life and production. We know that the effects of this crisis will last a long time and even beyond the closure of MAVA.

As a complement to the actions that the foundation is already supporting within the framework of the conservation outcome action plans (OAPs), there is now an extraordinary opportunity to contribute or even to influence this collective effort by governments, funders, civil society, local communities and corporate actors aimed at "readjusting the target", towards sustainable approaches to the recovery of the region.

In this perspective, understanding the context created in the West African region by the COVID pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis is thus fundamental for directing efforts towards sustainable interventions for supporting the economy and the society, without compromising the long-term conservation of biodiversity and the resource base.

The proposed study will allow to formulate strategic recommendations which will serve as a reference for key players involved in marine and coastal conservation and will guide interventions in this area in the short and medium term.

Context

The MAVA Foundation supports partner organizations for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in coastal West Africa through eight Outcome Action Plans (OAPs) on the following topics: Sea turtles (AO1), Coastal Wetlands & waterbirds (AO2), Cabo-Verde Seabirds (AO3), Offshore oil and gas (AO4), Coastal infrastructures (AO5), Seagrass (AO6), Seabirds and sea turtle bycatch (AO7), Small pelagic fisheries (AO8). The period 2020-2022 is the second and last phase of the OAPs, involving the implementation of nearly 20 projects in seven coastal West African countries¹.

Since the begin of 2020, the world is going through a multi-dimensional crisis situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic: aside from an already acute environmental crisis, we are confronted with a health crisis with important human costs and considerable effects on the economy and the societies. In MAVA funded OAPs specifically, the overall immediate impact of the pandemic was swift, widespread and destabilizing. Organisations had to implement changes in operations and program activities. Field interventions stopped abruptly due to COVID-19; some of the communities and NGOs that were dependent on revenue from ecotourism were hard hit as the flow of tourist reduced drastically. The financial impacts on the organizations are becoming more visible now, as the crisis

¹ Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Gambia

persists. It is still unknown how long the crisis will last globally, however the severe social and economic impacts in most countries, including in the West Africa region, will most probably endure long after.

Containment measures that were taken in the countries had huge consequences to the economy, including sectors such as tourism and fisheries, that are important sources of income, or extractive activities & agriculture, but also particularly the informal sector which accounts for approximately 50% of national output and over 80% of employment in the region.

In light of these challenges, we cannot return to business as usual. This crisis also led to an increased awareness by part of the public, economic players and decision-makers of the need to protect biodiversity and the importance of more autonomy in agricultural & fishery production and in energy resources among others. Countries have already started taking measures and developing plans to reactivate the economic activities, especially for mobilizing finances to compensate for losses and to incentivize the revitalization of productive activities. Recovery plans are a priority for countries and the real risk is that the economic urgency will override other concerns, including probably the environmental and sustainability issues.

Objectives

The West Africa Program wishes to conduct a strategic reflection that will serve as a reference and guide the work of its partners in West Africa in particular and other actors in marine and coastal conservation in general in the coming years and over the years and beyond.

The overall direction of the proposed strategic approach is to explore the options for a socio-economic recovery paradigm that is based on sustainability. It is important to focus on understanding the economic aspects of the recovery efforts that will follow, and how to respond to and engage with those efforts. Which will be the investment priorities? Who will be the actors of the processes? What production and trade models will be pursued? etc.

The core objectives will be as follows:

1. Understand the context and trends of economic recovery in the region and in each concerned country, with focus on the ecosystems where the MAVA foundation operates but also beyond, in the more general context;
2. Identify specific drivers (e.g. investment policies) and policy targets and topics that the implementation phase over the period should address;
3. Identify opportunities for influencing investment and economic decisions and their application at national level;
4. Identify key actors and networks to work or coordinate with at the regional and national level; expand networks and actors to those who are active in the area of sustainable development (including development NGOs/INGOs and associations);
5. Distil lessons and policy orientations that could be integrated in current and future coastal and marine conservation interventions (e.g. for national advocacy and support to stakeholders).

Methodological approach and deliverables

The experience of the pandemic and its impact have not been the same for all countries and the recovery dynamics are also different. It will be useful and pertinent to adopt a country² and priority sector specific approach.

² The selected countries are Cabo-Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal

Globally, the work in this stage includes the following main tasks and outcomes:

Objective 1. Context

Desktop research :

Based particularly on recent documents and grey literature relevant to the topics, compile information from expert networks and individuals who have been analysing the economic, social and environmental impacts of the COVID crisis at the regional and national level and the responses originating from a range of actors – Regional bodies (eg ECOWAS), governments, local entrepreneurs, economic actors, producer communities, civil society organizations, etc. The universe of expert networks and individuals will include MAVA partners working at regional and national levels;

Mapping of relevant actors:

Based on desktop research and direct surveys and enquiries to MAVA and other relevant partners and key policy and research hubs, identify the interventions sectors from MAVA and its partners for which it is relevant to deepen the analysis for developing strategic responses;

Targeted interviews to researchers, NGOs, community leaders, networks and experts;

- Conduct targeted interviews with a sample of key actors in the selected geographies, for a closer understanding of the processes and the perceptions of stakeholders about the dimensions and implications of the crisis and the responses and expectations of stakeholders;
- Summarize the key elements and lessons of the analysis, share them with relevant networks and public, and elicit feedback for ongoing refinement of the generated knowledge.

Objective 2. Drivers

- Based on the identification of geographies for deeper analysis, **screen the range of drivers** that are expected to shape the process of economic recovery and change, including economic and other policies, and assess the thematic aspects or dimensions of such processes in relation to the areas of work of MAVA and its partners;
- **Construct an analytical thematic/geographical matrix** to map out the potential targets for the implementation of actions to influence the processes of economic and social change in the post-COVID phase;
- Estimate the **potential environmental and social impacts** of the identified drivers on the priority ecosystems, with a view to assessing the possible responses and tools to influence change;

Objective 3. Opportunities for influencing

- **Group discussions with OAP partners and MAVA staff** around thematic issues (e.g. small-scale fisheries, tourism, infrastructures, extractives ... etc.);
- Using the analytical matrices on economic and policy drivers and their potential impacts on ecosystems and geographies, organize targeted consultations and **group discussions with partners and stakeholders** in the key selected geographies, to identify opportunities and possible ways of responding to actions of the drivers;
- Identify the economic and policy processes **at the regional level**, that can be targeted by partners and stakeholders in support of their actions in the priority geographies;
- Explore application in the selected country, of the **Green Stimulus Index** tool developed by Vivid Economics ;
- Apply the **Green Economy Policy Tracker** (<https://greeneconomytracker.org/>) to assess the issues in selected countries;
- Develop (or recommend/identify) approaches and tools around **environmental and social safeguards** that could help counter the negative effects of the economic recovery processes, such as:
 - Avoid lowering down of the environmental standards in national and regional policies;
 - Work towards more stringent standards for sensitive areas...

Objective 4. Stakeholders

- In priority geographies, **map out stakeholders**, networks, leaders, communicators and others with whom partners could engage for mobilizing social actions on the agenda for influencing post-COVID policies and strategies;

Objective 5. Lessons and policy orientations

Preparation of **briefs summarizing key lessons** and questions for reflection and action;

- Jointly with partners and stakeholders from priority geographies and expert networks, distil lessons from the process for wider sharing and exchanging nationally and regionally.

The study will produce the following deliverables:

- a. A document containing the **lessons and policy guidance** for a post-COVID strategic approach (approximately 20 p);
- b. A series of **policy and technical briefs** (3 to 5) on selected key topics, for rapid dissemination among key audiences.

Timeframe

The strategic guidance will be developed over **30 working days** over a period of maximum three months starting 1st April 2021.

Application

The mandate will be carried out by a dedicated team of consultants for each country.

The team of consultants must demonstrate the following cumulative qualifications:

- have experience of at least 10 years in the field of natural resource economics or equivalent
- at least five years of expertise in natural resource management / biodiversity conservation
- have proven solid experience in economic analysis;
- fluency in the official languages of the countries concerned is essential (French for Mauritania and Senegal and Portuguese for Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde);
- knowledge of the economic context of the country and of the West African sub-region.

Applications may be presented in in English or French; the report will be made in the official language of the country, with an executive summary of the report in English or French.

Application file

The application file must include:

- a technical proposal which will specify the country concerned, the approach to be adopted and the proposed work plan
- a financial proposal with details of the costs;
- CVs of team members with details of expertise in the relevant field.
- References of completed similar work.

Date and duration of the study

Applications must be sent, no later than 15th March 2021, by email to

sokhna.ndiaye@fondationmava.org with in the subject line, the mention "MAVA AO - Post COVID".