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Réseau Régional d'Aires Marines Protégées en Afrique de l'Ouest



Strategic Guidelines and Work Plan of RAMPAO

2013 - 2016

The RAMPAO strategic guidelines and work plan are aimed at harmoniously sustaining the efforts undertaken by the various stakeholders towards improving the consistency and operation of the Network, with the view to attaining the set objectives.

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List of Acronyms

MPA	Marine Protected Area
CMPA	Community Marine Protected Area
BIOCOS	Project for the management of West African marine and costal biodiversity through the strengthening of conservation and monitoring initiatives in Marine Protected Areas
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCLME	Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem
CEPIA	Working together on fishery management integrating MPAs
CSR	Sub regional Commission on Fisheries
DAMP	Department of Community Marine Protected Areas
DAPL	Department of Protected Areas of Mauritania's Littoral
DPN	Department of National Parks of Senegal
EBSAs	Ecologically and Biologically Significant Sites
FIBA	International Banc d'Arguin Foundation
IMPAC	International Marine Protected Areas Congress
MAIA	Atlantic Arc Marine Protected Area Network
MedPAN	Network of managers of Marine Protected Areas of the Mediterranean
OGUIDAP	Guinean Office of Protected Areas
OMVS	Organization for the Development of the Senegal River
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PNBA	National Park of Banc d'Arguin
PRCM	Regional Program for the Conservation of West African coastal and marine areas
RAMPAO	Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas in West Africa
RAPPAM	Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Areas Management
RBTDS	Cross border biosphere reserve of the lower delta of the Senegal River
SNS	National Sacred Sites
SOI	Sustainable Ocean Initiative
UICN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
WAMER	West Africa Marine Eco-region Office
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. Context

The marine and coastal areas produce vital resources for a large section of riparian communities that depend on these resources for their food security. They also represent a major pillar for economies of West African coastal States. The marine and coastal area has therefore a strategic importance on the economic, environmental and social fronts.

Generally marked by a rich biodiversity, such areas harbor many rare species, threatened or endangered, seeking refuge there. Among other endangered species, there are the monk seals (forming in Cape Blanc in Mauritania the largest reproductive colony in the world); the green turtles and the caouanne turtles (found in two of the biggest egg-laying sites that are the beaches of the Palao Islands in Guinea Bissau and the Boa Vista Beach in Cape Verde), but also the wading birds (forming there the biggest rallies in the winter). Moreover, the eco-region host major populations of manatees, cetaceans, hippopotami, crocodiles and colonial marine birds.

All these species are often associated to various critical habitats including mangroves, mudflats, marine herbal communities, coral floors and seamounts. The diversity and distribution of habitats, notably the marine herbal communities and seamounts are not well known. The West African marine and coastal area is also marked by a high biological productivity owing to the presence of upwelling phenomena and the existence of various favorable natural coastal environments such as the estuaries, the rias, the marine herbal communities and the mangroves.

However, like the situation prevailing worldwide, marine and coastal areas suffer a multiform pressure leading to a progressive deterioration of their status. Even if marine and coastal ecosystems in West Africa are relatively well preserved and the biodiversity situation rather satisfactory, the status of some resources, notably species of commercial interest and some habitats, is quite worrisome.

To remedy this situation, various management measures have been undertaken, mainly the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPA). Well managed, the latter are considered today as one of the most effective tools for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources. Today, a significant proportion of critical habitats for the reproduction of renewable natural resources or major biodiversity sites benefit from a special protection status. Actually, more than thirty (30) MPAs and four (4) areas with other protection rules have been identified in the marine and coastal area of six countries of the sub region. Several MPAs¹ are also being created in the sub region, notably one in Mauritania, four in Sierra Leone, three in Guinea, and six in Senegal.

Yet, given the particularities of the marine environment, it appears that MPAs cannot, in isolation, appropriately face the various factors of resource deterioration, mainly when it comes to migratory species, shared resources, cross border habitats and the mobility of users, notably fishing communities.

Thus, the various stakeholders active in the conservation of the coastal and marine area of West African countries have adopted a concerted approach to face the many common challenges that are: the need to have a different management of the coastal area and the resources, the conservation of the structure and function of the marine and coastal ecosystem at regional level.

¹ In Guinea Conakry (Rio Pongo (Coastal Ramsar site), The Konkoure Delta (Coastal Ramsar site) and the estuary of Mélécoré) in Mauritania (Baie d'Etoile), in Senegal (around the Cape Verde peninsula, the lower Northern Coast (between Mbour and Yenn), the lower Southern Coast (Mbodiène – Mbaling), the Major Saloum Delta (Palmarin-Sangomar, Gandoul, Laga), Casamance (Petit- Cassa, Tabor), and the Major Coast (Mboro, Lompoul)), and in Sierra Leone (Yawri Bay, Sherbro River Estuary, Sierre Leone River Estuary, and Scarces River Estuary).

In this prospect, a regional strategy for the marine protected areas in West Africa was developed in 2002 by different groups of stakeholders. The common vision formulated in this regard is that of “*a consistent network of marine protected areas in West Africa, managed by strong institutions, under a participatory approach, promoting natural and cultural diversity to contribute to the sustainable development of the region.*” The Strategy Paper represents a reference document that has governed the various interventions aimed at establishing and strengthening the MPAs and the creation of a regional network of MPAs in West Africa, as part of the regional marine and coastal area conservation program (PRCM).

During the past few years, the establishment of regional networks of representative and operational MPAs has also been the subject of many institutional recommendations, notably the ones stemming from various conferences of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Summit for Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), the 5th Global Congress of IUCN on parks (Durban 2003) and the different Global Congresses on MPAs (IMPAC₁ / Geelong, Australia 2005; IMPAC₂/Washington, USA 2009; IMPAC₃/Marseilles, France). The rise in the number of protected areas has also been addressed in the Strategic Plan for biological diversity 2011/2020 of CBD and its Aichi Objectives for biodiversity. Thus, the States have undertaken to protect at least 10 percent of the marine area and 17 percent of the territorial waters by 2020, in a bid to ensure resilience of the ecosystems and boost that capacity to keep providing essential services, thus preserving biodiversity of life on the planet and contributing to the well-being of mankind and poverty alleviation.

The establishment of the Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas in West Africa (RAMPAO) is the offshoot of the joint efforts and willpower of national and regional stakeholders in West Africa, and addresses in concrete terms the international recommendations and the governments’ undertakings in this connection.

2. RAMPAO

2.1. Strategic objectives of RAMPAO

The RAMPAO network was officially set up during the constituent assembly held in April 2007 in Praia, Cape Verde. It is the culmination of a long consultation and reflection process marked by formal and informal discussions amongst the various stakeholders involved in the creation and management of MPAs in the sub-region.

Global Objective of RAMPAO

The prime objective of the RAMPAO Network is to “*ensure, throughout the West African marine ecoregion encompassing Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, The Gambia, Cape Verde and Sierra Leone, the maintaining of a consistent set of critical habitats conducive for the dynamic functioning of ecological processes, which is essential for the regeneration of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity for the benefit of societies.*”

The Network’s strategic objectives are:

- a. Establish a network of MPAs representative of ecosystems and critical habitats necessary for the renewable of fishery resources, the rehabilitation and restoration of these critical habitats and the conservation of biodiversity;
- b. Promote exchanges and mutual learning among members in fields related to MPA management;
- c. Create synergies amongst MPAs on issues of common interest, with the view to arousing economies of scale;

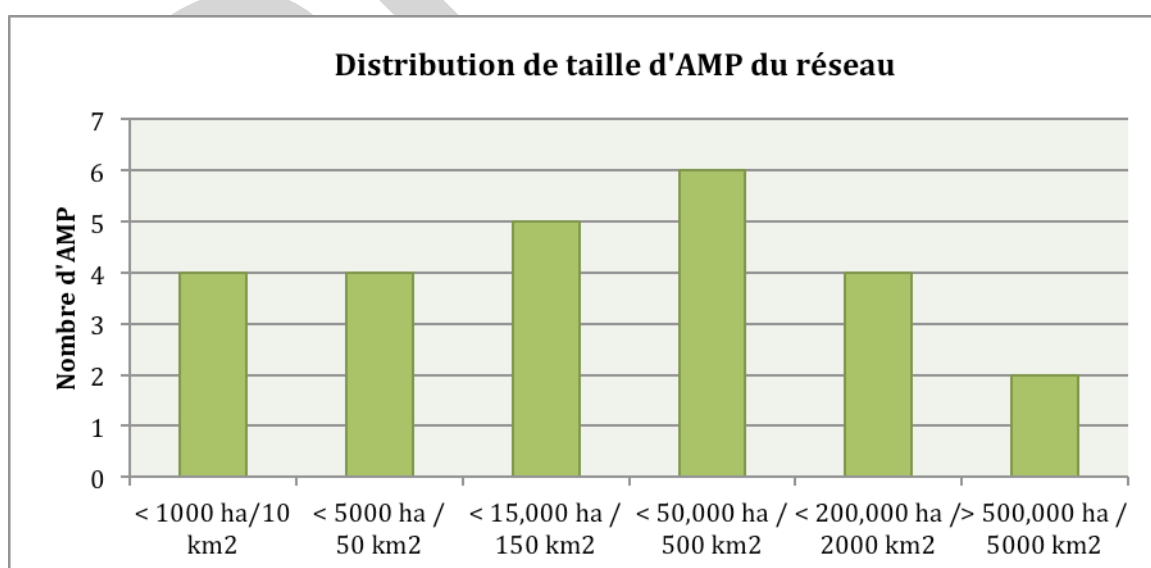
- d. Make operational MPAs of the region to prop up a proper management of natural resources of the marine and coastal area and boost socio-economic development ;
- e. Promote exchanges of experiences in the creation of new MPAs in the region; and;
- f. Build mutual capacities in terms of advocacy, the defense of interests and the representation of MPAs of the region at international level.

2.2. Configuration

RAMPAO currently groups 26 member MPAs distributed in five of the seven countries of PRCM having diversified objectives and management/governance modes. In fact, it groups national parks, nature reserves, MPAs and Community MPAs, a wild life sanctuary, an area of the community autochthon heritage (See map in Annex 1).

MPAs in the Network currently cover 2,721,859 ha, representing 93.10% of the surface area of about 30 MPAs existing in West African marine and coastal eco-region (Table 1). In addition, it has been identified in the geographic space of the Network three (3) biosphere reserves (BR) including a cross border reserve between Mauritania and Senegal, as well as about 1/3 of the 18 coastal wetlands of international significance existing in the seven countries covered. The size of MPAs of the Network varies a lot, going from 10 square kilometers to over 1,000 square kilometers. Yet, about 44% of them have a surface area below 100 square kilometers and more than half of them cover between 100 and 500 square kilometers (Figure 1). The same trends are observed on the seven other MPAs of the sub region that are yet to join the Network.

The distance from one MPA to another is one of the numerous criteria in the analysis of connectivity amongst MPAs of a network. The approach adopted in the analysis of ecological lacunas uses, as a rule of thumb for RAMPAO, an ideal minimal distance of 50 km and a maximal distance of 250 km. Based on this rule of thumb, we can note that in the Network, there are several MPAs in one country and even across different countries, that are separated by minimal distances below 50 km, as the crow flies. This has been observed in Senegal, in the Gambia, in Guinea Bissau, in Guinea Conakry, but also between Senegal and the Gambia and between Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry. **Out of the 26 member MPAs of the Network, 16 (62%) are separated from at least another MPA by a distance lower or equal to 50 km.**



A first eco-regional analysis (WWF, 2005) has identified some sites of major importance for biodiversity conservation in the sub-region. It is worth noting that a major part of these sites identified as part of

the study are now protected within a MPA and have been integrated in RAMPAO. However, this analysis has not covered all countries of the region. Apart from the absence of Sierra Leone, there are some habitats that are critical for marine biodiversity conservation, such as the corals and seamounts identified in Cape Verde and others identified in Guinea Conakry.

Table 1

MPA	Status	Year created	Year of admission to RAMPAO	Surface area (ha)	Country	Total surface area / country (ha)
National Park of Banc d'Arguin	National Park	1976	2007	1 170 000.00	Mauritania	1 186 378.00
Satellite reserve of Cap Blanc	Satellite Reserve	1986	2007	378	Mauritania	
National Park of Diawling	National Park	1991	2007	16 000.00	Mauritania	
National Park of Langue de Barbarie	National Park	1976	2007	2 000,00	Senegal	202 318.00
National Park of Madeleine Islands	National Park	1976	2007	450	Senegal	
National Park of Saloum Delta	National Park	1976	2007	76 000.00	Senegal	
Natural Reserve of Popenguine	Nature Reserve	1986	2007	1 181.00	Senegal	
Community-based MPA of Bamboung	Community MPA	2004	2010	6 800.00	Senegal	
MPA of Kayar	MPA	2004	2010	17 100.00	Senegal	
MPA of Joal-Fadiouth	MPA	2004	2010	17 400.00	Senegal	
MPA of Abéné	MPA	2004	2010	11 900.00	Senegal	
MPA of Saint Louis	MPA	2004	2011	49 600.00	Senegal	
APAC_Kawawana	APAC	2010	2011	9 487.00	Senegal	
RNC Palmarin	Community Nature Reserve	2011	2011	10 400.00	Senegal	
Niumi National Park	National Park	1986	2007	4 940.00	The Gambia	33 552.00
Tanji River and Bijol Islands Bird Reserve	Reserve	1993	2007	612	The Gambia	
Bao Bolon Wetland Reserve	Wetland	1996	2007	22 000.00	The Gambia	
Tanbi Wetland Complex	Wetland	2000	2007	6 000.00	The Gambia	
Parque Natural dos Tarrafes de Cacheu	National Park	1997	2007	80 000.00	Guinea Bissau	446 980.00
Parque Nacional de Orango	National Park	2000	2007	158 200.00	Guinea Bissau	
Parque Nac. Marinho de Joao Vieira e Poilao	National Park	2000	2007	49 513.00	Guinea Bissau	
AMP communautaire des îles Urok	Community MPA	2005	2007	54 500.00	Guinea Bissau	
Parque Nacional de Cantanchez	National Park	2008	2008	104 767.00	Guinea Bissau	
Tristao	Directed Nature Reserve	2009	2010	850 000.00	Guinea Conakry	852 667.00
Alcatraz	Undeveloped Nature Reserve	2009	2010	2 654.00	Guinea Conakry	
Wild life sanctuary of Loos Islands	Wild life Sanctuary	1992	2010	13	Guinea Conakry	
Total RAMPAO MPAs						2 721 895.00

Reserva Marinha Integral de Santa Luzia	Marine Nature Reserve	2003	-	105 000.00	Cape Verde	
Baia de Sal /Murdeira		2003	-	2 063.00	Cape Verde	107 063.00
Nature reserve of community interest of Somone	Community Nature Reserve	1999	-	700.00	Senegal	
Bird Refuge of Kalissaye	Bird Refuge	1978	-	16.00	Senegal	
National Park of Lower Casamance	National Park	1970	-	5 000.00	Senegal	5 716.00
National Park of Cufada lagunas	National Park	2000	-	89 000.00	Guinea Bissau	89 000.00
AMP Rio Kapatchez	Ramsar Site	1992	-	20 000.00	Guinea	20 000.00
MPAs YET TO INTEGRATE RAMPAO						221 779.00

Total MPAs yet to become members				201 779.00	6.90%
Total surface area under protection (MPA)				2 923 674.00	
Surface area covered by RAMPAO				2 721 895.00	93.10%

MPAs of the West African sub-region are on the whole located in the territorial waters of the countries concerned, where they **cover about 8.5% of the area**, basically alongside the littoral. If we consider the entire exclusive economic area of the seven countries, this proportion falls below 1% (0.8%). **No MPA in deep sea has been identified in the seven countries of the sub region.**

2.3. Functionality of the Network

In a context marked by a rising multiform pressure exerted on the environment in general, and the marine and coastal resources in particular, an increased awareness has emerged in West Africa coupled with a strong involvement of stakeholders as to the needs in conservation and management of coastal resources and the potential role that MPAs and the Network can play. Some great strides have been made in several MPAs, notably in terms of involvement of the different players in the MPA creation process, the development and update of the management plans, **capacity-building in various fields such as surveillance, participatory management and monitoring of MPA effectiveness**. Many mutual strengthening actions are rolled out between the different MPAs and their communities: **exchange visits** that make it possible to capitalize on individual experiences, **common training sessions** staged at regional level on various themes and which contribute to step up MPA management.

Today, the strengthening of RAMPAO builds on natural and cultural diversity, the recognition of its relevance and the affirmed willpower of its stakeholders, the support of the political authorities of the countries concerned and a diversified regional and international partnership. This experience also arouses the attention of various players at international level. Some note-worthy efforts have been deployed and key progress recorded in the countries, in terms of promotion of **cross border management** of shared resources, notably between Mauritania and Senegal, with the creation of the Cross border Biosphere Reserve of the Senegal River Delta, and between Senegal, and the Gambia with the support to the implementation of the protocol on the management of the Saloum-Niumi Complex and the recent nomination of this complex as 1st cross border Ramsar Site in Africa. Some reflections have been underway during the past few years on the creation of other cross border MPAs, particularly between Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau (Cacine-Tristao area) and between Senegal and Guinea Bissau (Casamence – Cacheu).

However, a few **shortcomings have been noted at the institutional level, notably in relation to the legal framework**, not to mention the lack of clear definition of the institutional competences in terms of MPA management. Besides, the **insufficient capacities of stakeholders and institutions** affect MPA management mechanisms. On the other hand, relevant criteria for the creation and management of MPAs are lacking, often due to a **lack of information on the value of MPAs** (biological, cultural, economic, etc.). Countries are yet to define shared guidelines for the conservation of habitats and species at regional level.

The **effective establishment of evaluation systems meant to size up the efficiency of MPA management** is marred by weak links existing between research institutions and MPAs, which makes it difficult or even impossible to define the effects and impacts of the establishment of these MPAs, and identify clearly the existing or possible risks likely to derive from other modes of management of resources (hydrocarbons, mining, tourism, etc.). Furthermore, the **lack of quantified economic data on the contribution of MPAs to national economies** does not facilitate the development of solid arguments in favor of the promotion and integration of MPAs in sectoral policies of the countries (fishery, tourism, development of the littoral...). We have also noted, on the whole, that most of the MPAs suffer from under-funding, which affects their management and undermines the attainment of the objectives.

In order for the Network to fully play its role, in a functional and coherent manner, it is therefore essential to develop a common work plan, conduct a systematic analysis on the existing lacunas, in terms of MPA connectivity, notably regarding the migratory species and cross border habitats, representativeness of the different habitats and institutional capacities. The establishment of a regional system for the evaluation of MPAs management efficiency will help monitor the attainment of RAMPAO objectives.

3. Monitoring of the implementation of the Work Plan 2008-2012 / Summary evaluation of the gains and weaknesses

After its creation in 2007, the Network has developed a common work plan to fully play its role in a functional and coherent manner. The main objective of the RAMPAO work plan is to support and strengthen, in a coherent and synergic way, the efforts undertaken by the various stakeholders towards improving the consistency and the functional aspect of RAMPAO, with the view to attaining its objectives. This plan has been executed by the members and different stakeholders and partners, and the results of the activities carried out are listed hereafter.

Component 1 – Improving the diversity and representativeness of ecosystems and critical habitats, notably through the integration of new sites/regions/countries hitherto poorly or not represented

Results 1 – Representative samples of critical habitats essential for the biodiversity conservation preserved

The analysis of the ecological lacunas of RAMPAO has highlighted the current situation and the shortcomings of the Network in terms of spatial distribution of MPAs, but also the level of representativeness in the conservation of critical habitats and connectivity. As part of the identification of the Economically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) conducted by the CBD Secretariat, RAMPAO has participated in two workshops staged by CBD during which the lacuna analysis results were capitalized for the description of these sites in West Africa.

The Network has also supported member countries by putting at their disposal useful information and data stemming from the ecological analysis of RAMPAO, thus enabling them to present sites during the EBSA workshop held in Namibia in April 2013. The Network will profit by this process to complete its database and update the lacuna analysis. RAMPAO's participation in this process made it possible to better understand the EBSA stakes in marine areas and build on the results for a better coherence of the Network, while gaining elements likely to help in the creation of new Marine Protected Areas. These activities also support national stakeholders in the application of international undertakings such as those in relation with the Aichi Targets of CBD.

The support to the creation of new MPAs in the sub region has yielded mitigated results, even if the implemented projects have undoubtedly made it possible to further and strengthen the gains of the ongoing processes. Processes have been finalized in Guinea, with the official designation of the Tristao and Alcatraz Islands MPAs, but the process is still in progress in Senegal (Petit Kassa) and in Point Saint Georges in Sierra Leone.

Studies conducted in Cape Verde and in the bird refuge of Kalissaye in Casamance were aimed at contributing to the integration of migration corridors in the Network, through appropriate conservation mechanisms, but their impacts are still limited.

Results 2 – The Network effectively contributed to the maintaining of fishery resources and the conservation of viable rare or endangered populations of heritage species for the benefit of the population of the sub region

It is difficult to establish the **Network's contribution in maintaining fishery resources**. However, the maintaining of critical habitats and ecosystems for the renewal of species, the protection of fish nursery and grow-out areas, and the reduction (in spite of all difficulties) of the direct pressure on the resources undoubtedly contribute to the maintaining of the resources. On the whole, this result is yet to be established clearly, mainly in view of some lacunas existing in the Network, such as the ones related to the integration of migration corridors and the non-inclusion of some protected areas in the Network.

As part of the CEPIA Project (Working together for fishery management integrating MPAs), a preliminary work started in June 2013 by a MPA – Fishing Work Group, through a collaboration between RAMPAO, the Sub Regional Commission on Fisheries and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Work Group pondered over the usefulness of MPAs as a fishery management tool. New initiatives were recommended to step up collaboration between MPA managers and representatives of fishermen, integrating one part related to governance, but also to make use of the tools towards strengthening consultation, scientific research, participatory supervision and monitoring systems, etc. A synthesis of the reflections and recommendations stemming from this meeting is available at www.rampao.org. Other reflections are in progress as part of the Demonstration N.4 Project of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME) that organizes meetings bringing together MPA and fishery stakeholders.

As to the contribution to the conservation of viable populations of heritage species that are threatened or endangered, some satisfactory results have been secured thanks to the support of projects carried out by various stakeholders, with a special attention now given to some species such as the manatees, marine turtles, monk seals and some fish and bird species.

The study conducted on the sacred natural sites in four countries (Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry) has yielded recommendations aimed at a better consideration of the local knowledge and traditional practices in terms of sustainable management of marine and coastal resources, in the framework of the reflection on the consistency and representativeness of RAMPAO.

Several scientific studies addressing the effects of MPAs and the Network on the resources, and others assessing the economic and social services of MPAs in West Africa have been conducted under various projects. Site assessment, economic and social studies and many other studies have been carried out. Some note-worthy examples include the study on the ecological value of the bird refuge of Kalissaye and the monitoring of flamingos at the National Park of Diawling.

Result 3 – The main ecological processes (spatial or temporary) known in the sub region are maintained and strengthened

The analysis of the maintaining and strengthening of the main ecological processes (spatial or temporary) known in the sub region shows that key sites are taken into account, protection measures implemented and systems adopted for the ecological monitoring in and around MPAs of the Network. Progress has been made notably in the creation of the MPAs of Kawana and Tristao – Alcatraz. However, for several sites like Rio Kapatchez in Guinea and Yawri Bay in Sierra Leone, the integration into the Network is yet to be done.

As to the promotion and establishment of systems for ecological monitoring in a around MPAs, some campaigns for the follow-up of species such as manatees, marine turtles, monk seals, shells, some fish and marine bird species have been conducted in the Network's member countries.

Activities not completed and to be conducted in the period 2013 -2016

- Disseminating and promoting results of the analyses of ecological lacunas, and developing issues related to the connectivity of the various significant sites for heritage or endangered species ;
- Furthering the support to the creation of MPAs started as part of the work plan 2008 – 2012, and integrating critical sites in the Network, with an emphasis on potential MPA sites in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cape Verde;
- Pursuing the reflection on the strengthening of RAMPAO's role in the maintaining of fishery resources, notably through the formalization and operationalization of the MPA – Fishing Work Group and the integration of all stakeholders active on the issue;
- Updating the existing information on the ancient and new sites of the Network and providing support to stock-taking on the new MPAs;
- Continuing efforts for the integration of migration corridors in the Network, including the support to the identification of Economically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) at national and regional level.

Component 2 – Strengthening management capacities to improve the functionality and governance of MPAs of the region

Result 4 – Human capacities of local managers and stakeholders active in key aspects of MPA management are strengthened through exchanges and capitalization of best experiences

Several training workshops have been held on themes of common interest and in relation to MPA management, and the strengthening of the Network's capacities. Staged as part of various projects, these workshops were held at local, national and regional level and enabled various stakeholders to exchange views on themes that help strengthen the sites and the Network.

Many exchanges between managers, local users and administrative officials took place as part of several projects and fostered the building of human capacities of these players in key domains related to MPA management and the capitalization of best practices. In addition, these projects were marked by the production of brochures, guides and tools designed for the capitalization of successful

experiences in terms of effective management. Some Task Forces have been put in place on different themes (see Annex 2), which facilitated the establishment of a pool of regional expertise on issues related to MPA management, notably on:

- The evaluation of the effectiveness of management, in collaboration with the West and Central Africa Program (PACO) and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of the IUCN;
- Maritime surveillance in MPAs, in collaboration with the French National Office on Hunting and Wild Life (ONCFS);
- Development of MPA management plans ;
- Participatory management of MPAs, in collaboration with IUCN and the Commission on social and economic policies (CEESP) (regional).

However, the mobilization of experts to address the needs in capacity building is still a main challenge at the end of the projects that have funded their establishment.

Result 5 - MPAs of the Network are fairly and effectively managed

As to the fair and efficient management of the Network's MPAs, various activities have been carried out as part of results at several levels. Concerning the promotion and support to the institutionalization of participatory management mechanisms in MPAs and the involvement of various stakeholders in MPA management, we can affirm that the result is widely attained with the establishment of participatory management entities in MPAs including Tristao, Bamboung, Joal, Nuimi, St Louis, Kayar, Abene and Loos Island, while management committees integrating a variety of users are now common place.

Some tools aimed at stepping up the efficiency of MPA management have been put in place under various projects. Thus, through evaluation exercises assessing the efficiency of the Network's MPAs (RAPPAM, June 2009 and November 2011 at regional level), MPAs analyzed their management and identified strengths and weaknesses. Several MPAs have secured support to develop management plans and step up their management. These include Tristao – Alcatraz, Santa Luzia, Kawawana, and Rio Kapatchez, not to mention the support to a concerted management of MPAs of Guinea Bissau and participatory management of Bamboung.

Moreover, management tools such as the methodological guides (guide for the development of management plans, business plans, maritime surveillance guide, and shared governance) have been produced and disseminated. However, a larger diffusion and training on these tools should be undertaken to boost the transfer of competence.

As to the promotion of the development of sustainable economic alternatives in and around MPAs, a capitalization study has been conducted on mechanisms for the funding of MPAs in West Africa and proposals made for the strengthening of their sustainability. This document is articulated in 3 parts: (a) analysis of the current funding and the funding stakes for MPAs of the region; (b) synthesis of international experiences on MPAs' traditional and innovative funding mechanisms; (c) methodological framework for MPA assessment and recommendations. The results of the first phase of this study stressed the need to develop business plans in MPAs, a process that has already been launched by the BioCos Project (FIBA). Several MPAs have secured support from various projects to develop their business plans, notably in Guinea Bissau, in Senegal and in the Gambia. Lastly, some works have been done on some financial mechanisms, such as the payment for environmental services at PNBA (a publication is expected shortly on the issue), and on ecotourism on various sites.

Activities not completed and to be continued over the period 2013 -2016

- Stepping up the capitalization of the tools developed as part of the project, like the toolbox for sustainable funding;
- Establishing a coherent capacity-building strategy that mobilizes regional experts and resources.

Component 3 - Promotion of cross border cooperation and dialogue amongst institutions**Result 6 – Cross border cooperation and concerted management of shared resources amongst members of the Network are strengthened**

This component is centered on the promotion of cross border cooperation on the one hand, and on inter-institutional dialogue on the other, towards a concerted management of shared resources amongst member countries.

Several national institutions have been supported, with the view to stepping up dialogue, consultation and collaboration in terms of MPA management, notably: (i) the Guinea Office for Protected Areas (OGUIDAP) for the implementation of a national system for the monitoring of protected areas; (ii) the Department of National Parks (DPN in Senegal in collaboration with the Department of Maritime Fishery and the Department of Community Protected Marine Areas (DAMPC) on the development and validation of a national strategy for MPAs in Senegal; (iii) Guinea Bissau for the development of a business plan for IBAP and a funding strategy; (iv) the Department of Protected Areas and the Littoral (DAPL) in Mauritania, for the development of a national strategy for MPAs...

Concerning the support to the establishment of mechanisms of concerted management of shared resources and cross border spaces, emphasis was laid on cross border cooperation and concerted management of shared resources amongst all Network members. The celebration of awareness days on the Biosphere Reserve of the Lower Senegal River Delta (RBTDS) by Senegal and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on 11-12th January 2012 is a key example. In this regard, a workshop on the governance of RBTDS was staged with the support of IUCN to analyze the feasibility and terms for the implementation of a shared governance system, gathering representatives of the populations, local councils, protected areas, OMVS and development partners. The proposed governance system, already adopted by the Cross border Committee of RBTDS, was acclaimed by participants and shall be progressively put in place in a bid to enable stakeholders to participate in the decision making process concerning the management of natural resources.

Concerning the creation of cross border MPAs, the countries have not yet managed to create new cross border MPAs in the Network.

Component 4 - Improving the knowledge and developing decision-support tools through strengthened ties with research on biodiversity values, MPAs and the Network on the value of the various management options and the establishment of an information system on the Network**Result 7 – Information System on MPAs in West Africa is operational**

Concerning the ecological monitoring system within member MPAs, it is worth noting that several projects have contributed to the establishment of programs for the monitoring of several significant species having a special importance for MPAs and/or endangered in member MPAs. Thus, ecological monitoring systems have been put in place for the follow-up of biodiversity in the MPA of Santa Luzia in Cape Verde (Raso Island) and for the follow-up of marine turtles, hippopotami, manatees, gray parrots and water bird in Guinea Bissau. In Senegal, the Gambia and in Guinea Conakry, the ecological monitoring of shells and birds has continued. The reports of the different campaigns are available.

Projects implemented have also made it possible to undertake inventories on ecologically significant sites. Thus, several biological and ecological inventories have been conducted by teams of researchers as part of ecological baseline studies done in the various sites in Guinea (Kapatchez), Senegal (Casamance), Cape Verde (Santa Luzia, Mauritania and other countries).

Within the framework of the analysis of RAMPAO lacunas, the mapping of some MPA sites has been completed thanks to new data produced by RAMPAO and the ones collected from partners and available global databases.

The databases on MPAs have been updated. The MPA database and a geographic information system of the Network have been implemented, which made operational the information system on MPAs of RAMPAO. The database is fed by various general, ecological, socioeconomic and governance data on MPAs, while the cartographic database contains physical data and others related to the location of habitats and species present in member countries.

A sub regional training workshop in geomatics and the management of databases and geographic information systems for national entities of five countries has contributed to the strengthening of national capacities in terms of the use of the tools, the collection of geo-referenced spatial data.

In addition, some decision-support tools have been developed as part of several projects. The knowledge on marine and coastal resources in the region has markedly evolved thanks to partners' support. This progress enables managers to include in their management documents more reliable and detailed information, and this has definitely culminated in an improved content of the management documents. But, for that to lead to more sustainability of the operations, it is essential to ensure an efficient management, which is not yet the case.

Even though the improvement of the knowledge represents a major step forward in decision support, we can affirm that *the sustainability of interventions in terms of development, management and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in the sub region* has not been fully achieved.

Activities not completed and to be continued over the period 2013 -2016

- Contributing, through an improved production of reliable and detailed information, to the strengthening of the sustainability of interventions in terms of development, management and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in the sub region ;
- Ensuring access and update of the Access database and the MPA cartographic base of on the web site.

Component 5 – Strengthening the institutional capacities of the Network and its management bodies

Result 8 – RAMPAO's institutional operation and representation and mobilization capacities at international level are stepped up

The regular operation of RAMPAO organs has been assured, with the holding of three (3) General Assemblies in 2008, 2010 and 2011. The Assemblies marked the admission of new MPAs in the Network. Thus, ten new MPAs² have joined the Network between 2008 and 2012, including two from Guinea (not represented in RAMPAO in 2008), which has stepped up the diversity of the habitats covered by the Network.

In terms of strengthening of the institutional framework, the official recognition of the Network by authorities of seven countries has been formalized through the signing of a Statement of Formal Recognition of the Network. The creation of a new organ (Advisory Council) and the installation of an independent Secretariat composed of a Secretary General, a Research and Database Officer and a Communication Manager are illustrative of the progress made as part of this objective.

² Tristao/Alcatraz, Loos Islands, Cantanhez, Joal, Bamboung, Abene, Kayar, Palmarin, Kawawana, Saint- Louis,

To ensure a more efficient outreach and communication approach within the Network, several tools have been put in place, notably the Newsletter providing information to its members, on a regular basis, and a web site that fosters communication with the Network's members.

RAMPAO has succeeded in developing partnership with other networks and institutions active in the conservation of marine and coastal resources throughout the world. The Network has participated in several international events and/or carried out many advocacy and communication activities.

Following are recent examples:

- In October 2012, the Network Chairman took part in a side event staged by PRCM on the occasion of 11th Conference of Parties of the Abidjan Convention in Hyderabad;
- In November 2012, RAMPAO participated in the 10th meeting of parties to the Convention related to cooperation in terms of protection and development of marine and coastal areas of West, Central and Southern Africa, alongside the Atlantic coast (Abidjan Convention). RAMPAO conducted advocacy to influence recommendations in favor of the Network, and participated in a side event of PRCM. A memorandum of understanding with the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention is being examine for signature ;
- A partnership convention has been signed with the Sub Region Convention on Fisheries ;
- With the signing of the Charter, RAMPAO now is member of the PRCM Partnership;
- RAMPAO has held a stand with IUCN during the Congress of the Network of MPA Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN);
- The Network was represented during a panel at the conference of the Network of North-Atlantic MPAs (MAIA);
- The Secretariat and several members of the Network took part in the 3rd Global Congress on MPAS (IMPAC₃).

4. Specific objectives of the Work Plan 2013-2016 and results expected by late 2016

Objectives of the Work Plan 2013 – 2016 lay emphasis on the consolidation of the gains and the progress made between 2008 and 2012, notably in connection with the stepping up of MPAs efficiency and the strengthening of institutional and financial capacities of the Network. The greater visibility of the Network and its impact on advocacy frameworks are given due heed.

The specific objectives and the results expected from the Work Plan 2013 – 2016 are:

Specific Objective 1 (SO 1) – Ensuring an efficient and sustainable management and governance of MPAs of the Network

- **Result 1 (R1)** – Capacities and skills of MPA managers and local stakeholders active in the key domains³ related to MPA management are strengthened
- **Result 2 (R2)** - The Network's efficiency in MPA management is improved

Specific Objective 2 (SO 2) – Improving the institutional and financial sustainability of the Network

³ These key domains of MPA management are defined in the capacity-building strategy intended for RAMPAO members 2014-2016

- **Result 3 (R3)** - Human, technical and material resources are mobilized for the benefit of the Secretariat and other RAMPAO organs ;
- **Result 4 (R4)** – Operational, participatory and efficient governance of the Network are put in place
- **Result 5 (R5)** - The Network is endowed with sustainable and diverse sources of funding
- **Result 6 (R6)** – MPAs of the Network are better equipped and assisted by RAMPAO in their search for funding.

Specific Objective 3 (SO31) – Improving the visibility of the Network and its members at local, national and international level and facilitating communication and exchanges among members

- **Result 7 (R7)** – Local, national and regional decision makers are better informed and aware of the threats on marine and coastal biodiversity in West Africa and on the value of RAMPAO and MPAs
- **Result 8 (R8)** – Communication and exchanges of experiences and practices among members are improved;
- **Result (R9)** - RAMPAO is better known and renowned on the national, regional and international scene ;
- **Result (R10)** – Advocacy and representation capacities of the Secretariat and member MPAs at national, regional and international level are strengthened.

Specific Objective 4 (SO41) – Contributing to decision making for the strengthening of the Network’s ecological function through the integration of new MPAs, and the improved management of member MPAs integrated in a territorial approach based on in-depth and reliable knowledge of the West African marine and coastal ecosystems

- **Result 11 (R11)** – Identification of coastal areas of regional interest (ecosystems, critical habitats, corridors to be conserved) is developed and refined ;
- **Result 12 (R12)**- Dialogue and collaboration between the environment sector and the other sectors, notably fishery, is effective and operational to the benefit of MPAs ;
- **Result 13 (R13)** – The impact of climate change on ecosystems and MPA communities, and the contribution of MPAs and the Network in the development of mitigation and adaptation strategies are better addressed and adaptation measures undertaken.

Details pertaining to monitoring indicators and activities associated to the results feature in the logical framework below: