



CONCEPT NOTE

III EDITION - GROWING BLUE CONFERENCE:

***A Platform for Permanent Regional Dialogue on
Ocean and Blue Economy***

(May 2026)

I. BACKGROUND

1. The importance of Seas and Oceans for humanity as a source of life, oxygen production, ecosystem support, climate regulation, food production, employment, and as freshwater reserve has been globally recognized, particularly by the United Nations through the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
2. The transboundary nature of Seas and Oceans means that growing challenges related to global threats such as climate change, population growth, degradation of the marine environment, biodiversity loss, high pollution risks, and the proliferation of plastic waste combined with maritime security concerns require harmonized and coordinated approaches among the various nations that share this resource or are indirectly connected to it. This is particularly relevant in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region, especially the Mozambique Channel, which is rich in biodiversity and coastal marine ecosystems that are under constant conservation threat.
3. The intense use of the WIO region as a maritime transport route, for fisheries exploitation, as well as the advent of hydrocarbon exploration, requires a coordinated and integrated approach. This is especially relevant considering the persistence of illegal fishing and other illicit activities due to weak national monitoring capacity, exacerbated by limited institutional capacity. These factors, among others, demand strong collaboration among countries in line with national, regional, continental, and international legal and policy instruments.
4. In this context, recognizing the challenges related to scientific knowledge, innovation, and technological development, and the need to mobilize investments for both institutional capacity building and financing of strategic projects essential for Blue Economy development, Mozambique established the “Crescendo Azul/Growing Blue” platform, having already held two editions of the conference in 2019 (Maputo) and 2021 (Vilankulo, Inhambane).
5. Experiences from the two editions indicated that the *Crescendo Azul/Growing Blue* platform can contribute to implement the regional marine and blue economy development agenda, a field considered globally as a new frontier of renaissance.
6. For Africa, particular emphasis is placed on the African Union’s 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS 2050) and the African Blue Economy Strategy (2019). Beyond increasing understanding of other relevant international frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), these strategies lay foundations for structured maritime cooperation aimed at proclaiming Oceans as catalyzers of sustainable development and maritime security, and promote collaboration through intersectoral and inter-agency approach for effective integrated coastal and marine management.

7. Translating global, continental, and regional agendas into concrete guidelines and collective actions for an effective sustainable blue development is the driving force behind the CRESCENDO AZUL/Growing Blue CONFERENCE.
8. For this purpose, the GROWING BLUE initiative, beyond joining the global movement launched by the United Nations on oceans under SDG 14, aims to contribute specifically to the African Union agenda and serve as a permanent platform for regional dialogue, recognizing science and technology as key for blue economy development.

II. OBJECTIVES

i. General Objective

9. To assess progress achieved in promoting and integrating the development of ocean's economy within the context of the blue economy, based on science and technology.

ii. Specific Objectives

Considering the dynamic nature of the blue economy agenda in Africa, the specific objectives are:

- a. Engage the private sector and mobilize investments for a sustainable blue economy
- b. Promote partnerships between marine science research institutions to support ocean governance and knowledge
- c. Promote blue tourism and blue infrastructure for economic development
- d. Enhance collaboration to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and marine litter
- e. Continuous reflection on the sustainable use of the ocean in the region
- f. Empower coastal communities in marine conservation and restoration
- g. Consolidate the Growing Blue initiative as a Permanent Regional Dialogue Mechanism on ocean and sustainable blue economy.

III. EXPECTED RESULTS

- a) Sharing of experiences and progress on models and approaches for implementing Blue Economy initiatives to maximize ocean potential, such as Marine Spatial Planning.
- b) Commitments made by various national and international stakeholders to develop scientific and technology capacity and financing mechanisms that address national and regional blue growth needs.
- c) Identification of elements to enhance a shared development vision around the Indian Ocean as a common resource, and convergence of actions to fulfill commitments to achieve SDG14 goals.

- d) Strengthened cooperation to anchor the Blue Economy in strong regional collaboration through structured approaches, integrated models, and operational (institutional and financial) mechanisms.
- e) Mapping of challenges and opportunities for intervention by different actors, public and private, in the conception and implementation of Blue Economy Development Strategies in the region.

IV. METHODOLOGY

- 10. For each edition of *Crescendo Azul*, a theme shall be approved reflecting the focus given to Ocean governance and Blue Economy at regional and global level during the period of the event.
- 11. Agenda topics will be determined during the organization of each edition and should be aligned with the conference theme and the five (5) permanent thematic areas:
 - 1. Ocean Governance and Sustainability
 - 2. Ocean and Innovation
 - 3. Ocean Innovation and Carbon Sequestration
 - 4. Ocean Energy
 - 5. Mechanisms and Strategies for Financing the Blue Economy.
- 12. Specific topics within these areas will include pressing and current national and global issues such as: *energy transition; climate change; conservation of marine biodiversity; carbon credits; blue tourism and infrastructure; decarbonization of maritime transport; circular economy; marine pollution (particularly plastic waste); sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, ocean literacy, etc.*
- 13. For the effective implementation of *Crescendo Azul* activities, a multisectoral technical working team is established, to also coordinate budget estimates, mobilize financial resources and partners.
- 14. Logistical aspects will be coordinated by the sector responsible for oceans and blue economy, in coordination with the Inter-ministerial Commission for Major National and International Events (CIGENI) under the Ministry responsible for International Cooperation, ensuring the involvement of relevant sectors in defining the agenda of the conference.

V. PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

- 16. The “CRESCENDO AZUL/Growing Blue” Conference aims to gather - for two days in a hybrid format (presential e virtual) - representatives from national, regional, and international entities with diverse interests and competencies in blue economy sectors and ocean governance. Participants will include high level leaders, policymakers, implementers, private sector, donors, financial institutions, academic and research institutions, and civil society organizations engaged in marine and coastal activities.

VI. ORGANIZATION

17. The conference is organized by the Government of Mozambique through the ministry responsible for ocean and blue economy matters, under the coordination of CIGENI, with support from national and international partners.
18. Theme of the Conference, 2026 - *Blue Future: Accelerating Economic Sustainability.*
19. Event Date: 11 -12 June 2026, City of Maputo, Mozambique.
20. The conference will include related side events.

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