



A BRIEF ON THE COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR BLUE ECONOMY IN LAKE VICTORIA REGION

KENYA DEVOLUTION PROGRAMME (KDP) - TIMIZA UGATUZI



INTRODUCTION

The Lake Victoria Region (LVR) is a geographical watershed shared between Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. These watershed area covers 183,000 km² of which Kenya occupies 22% of the watershed (equivalent to 40260 km²). At the centre of the region is Lake Victoria with an area of 68,859 km² and the second largest fresh water lake in Africa and second globally. Kenya has 6% (equivalent to 4,132 km²) of this global blue resource. It is important to note that the region is hydrologically delineated based on surface and underground water that drains into Lake Victoria (EAC, 2005). This therefore, makes it one of the largest blue resource in East Africa comprising of the lakes, rivers, wetlands, dams, springs.

These blue resources inevitably support sectors that contribute to the blue economy. Simply put, blue economy entails sustainable economic activities that take place around, inside and on these blue resources. Such activities include fisheries, mining, bio-prospecting, ports, harbours, tourism and hospitality, landing sites, irrigation agriculture, maritime transport inter alia. These activities depict the multi-sector nature of blue economy and therefore the need for a comprehensive collaborative framework for synergy and complementarity.

The potential of blue economy was realised way back in 1997 when the East African Cooperation developed its first Development Strategy (1997 – 2000). The Strategy was designated as an economic growth zone to be exploited in a coordinated way for the benefits of all East Africans. This specific pronouncement signified two important aspects namely: the huge blue economy base in the region and the need to have a coordinated approach in harnessing the resource for the region's economic growth.

This success story offers an overview of how key stakeholders in the Lake Victoria Region have turned this vision into reality by creating and executing a collaborative framework that fosters cooperation and partnerships between state and non-state actors, aimed at harnessing and managing the significant potential of the blue economy in the region.

THE PERCENTAGE OF LAKE VICTORIA'S TOTAL AREA THAT LIES WITHIN KENYA—COVERS 4,132 KM² OF THE LAKE'S 68,859 KM². REWORD

Since the declaration in 1997 that designated the region as an economic growth zone, progress in turning this vision into reality has been limited. Nevertheless, efforts were made at the regional level to establish an institutional and legal framework for coordination, specifically through the Protocol for Sustainable Development of the Lake Victoria Basin. Unfortunately, little action has taken place at the county level where implementation is expected to happen.

The Sustainable Blue Economy Conference (SBEC) held in Nairobi in 2018 served as a catalyst for some of the initiatives that were already emerging in the Lake Region. The conference highlighted the potential of leveraging the inland water blue economy for economic development, livelihood enhancement, job creation, and environmental conservation. The Kenya Devolution Programme (KDP), with funding from the UK Government, embarked on a mission to support stakeholders in the Lake Region to capitalise on the significant opportunities presented by the blue resources. However, it became clear that, despite the vast potential of the blue economy in the area—further evidenced by the blue economy capacity needs assessment conducted by KDP—there was a critical need to unite all stakeholders, both state and non-state, to foster synergy, collaboration, and partnerships in the sustainable management of blue resources.

This need is particularly important given the diverse range of participants engaged in blue economy activities, projects, and programmes, alongside the significant demand necessary to drive sustainable development in the region.

POTENTIAL AND OPPORTUNITIES OF BLUE ECONOMY IN THE LAKE VICTORIA REGION (LVR)



THE JOURNEY TOWARDS THE COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK



The Kenya Devolution Programme (KDP), in close collaboration with the Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA), initiated a significant journey to engage various stakeholders in the region invested in the blue economy's development. This effort culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) in 2021, which aimed to foster cooperation and partnerships for the sustainable management and development of the blue economy in the lake region.

The MOC was endorsed by over forty entities, including Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), counties within the Lake Region Economic Bloc, Universities, Research Institutions, Regional Organisations, and Private Sector representatives.

This was a landmark achievement! Following this, the heads of these entities formed an institutional framework, establishing an Executive Committee (Ex-Com) responsible for oversight, comprised of the Chief Executive Officers of the participating entities, as well as a Technical Committee (Tech-Com) tasked with coordinating the MOC's implementation. This Technical Committee is now known as the Multi-Agency Technical Committee (MATC).

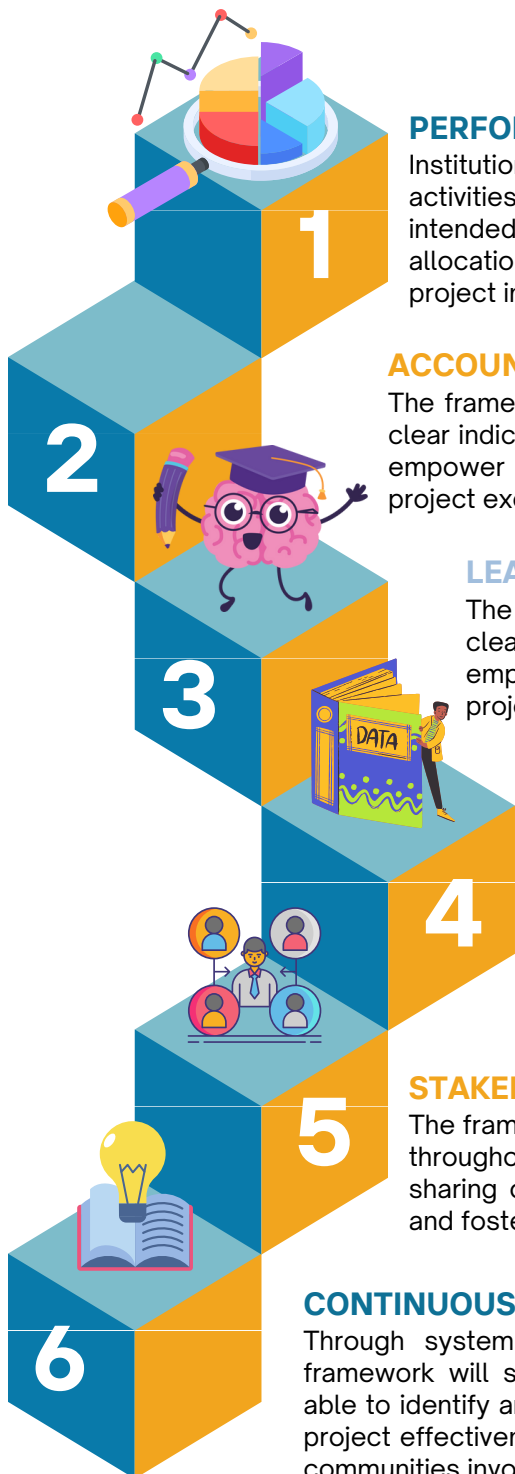
The MATC's first mission was to create a five-year action plan to support the MOC's objectives, referred to as the Multi-Agency Action Plan (MAP). **The plan outlined and prioritised programmes and projects for each institution across the following fourteen thematic areas:**

1. Protection of water towers
2. Environment protection and management
3. Climate change adaptation and mitigation
4. Lake Victoria development and inland water transportation
5. Standardization of facilities supporting blue economy services
6. Fishing and aquaculture
7. Infrastructure development
8. Transboundary challenges and interventions
9. Trade and investment
10. Safety and security
11. Governance and legislations
12. Tourism, cultural and aquatic sports
13. Capacity building, training, research and development
14. Production capacity enhancement



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

With the Memorandum of Collaboration established and backed by both the Executive Committee (Ex-Com) and the Multi-Agency Technical Committee (MATC), along with support from the Kenya Devolution Programme (KDP), it was time to initiate the implementation of the Multi-Agency Action Plan (MAP). The first step involved technical assistance to enhance the MATC's capacity in the Blue Economy, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL). This entailed development of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework to help the institutions to systematically document the design, implementation and tracking of results in Blue Economy work. Specifically, the framework will serve the following purposes.



PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Institutions and counties will conduct regular assessments of project activities to evaluate progress, ensure targets are met, and verify that intended results are achieved. This proactive monitoring will aid in resource allocation, risk mitigation, and addressing challenges encountered during project implementation.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The framework will foster accountability and transparency by establishing clear indicators and benchmarks for measuring project performance. It will empower stakeholders to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of project execution, ensuring responsible use of resources.

LEARNING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

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EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

Monitoring and evaluation efforts will produce data and insights regarding the outcomes and impacts of blue economy projects. This evidence is vital for decision-makers within institutions and counties, enabling them to make informed choices and allocate resources effectively. The MEL framework will ensure that decisions are grounded in reliable evidence rather than assumptions or anecdotal data.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The framework will promote stakeholder engagement and communication throughout the project implementation process. Regular reporting and sharing of monitoring and evaluation findings will enhance transparency and foster collaboration among stakeholders.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Through systematic data collection and analysis of project performance, the framework will support continuous improvement. Institutions and counties will be able to identify areas requiring adjustments or corrective actions, thereby enhancing project effectiveness and maximizing positive impacts on the blue economy and the communities involved.

Furthermore, the Kenya Devolution Programme has supported the MATC develop a technology-driven Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system specifically for the Lake Victoria Region. This system will assist the institutions and counties in streamlining data collection, facilitating real-time monitoring of key indicators and performance metrics, enabling data-driven decision-making, and fostering institutional learning and knowledge sharing.

It's important to highlight that the Collaborative Framework for the Lake Victoria Region is built on the Memorandum of Collaboration, where the signatories recognise the significance of teamwork among their organisations to generate synergy in promoting and ensuring the coordinated development of the region's Blue Economy activities for the advantage of local, national, and regional communities. As such, the parties involved in the MOC have willingly engaged in partnership across various sectors, including Infrastructure, Transport, Tourism, Cultural and Aquatic Sports, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Governance and Legislation, Standardisation, Trade and Investment, Environmental and Natural Resource Management, Research and Development, as well as initiatives aimed at addressing climate change and resilience.





OUTCOMES OF THE COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

A number of projects have been implemented under the collaborative framework by agencies, private sector, universities and counties governments. These have nonetheless not been captured due to previously lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework. The institutions have now been trained to use the automated Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system. Furthermore, the collaborative framework is gradually addressing problems associated with sector approach which have led to siloism in the implementation of projects and programmes. The framework has introduced an integrative approach that is holistic and involves many related players or stakeholders.

The framework has successfully established a foundation that fosters collaboration and partnerships among MDAs, the private sector, academia, and research institutions, among others, to promote the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Lake Victoria Region. Furthermore, it has created a platform for both state and non-state actors within the blue economy sector to collaborate and share information and experiences.

For the Lake Region Economic Bloc, this collaborative framework serves as a mechanism for achieving its mission of harnessing opportunities and increasing long term benefits of sustainable use of the blue economy resources. Notably, it has enhanced cooperation and partnerships that have led to sustainable complementarity and synergy among various sectors within the blue economy. Through these partnerships, leveraging essential resources has become feasible. The recent successful investment conference and roundtable discussions in Homa Bay and Busia Counties, respectively, are the results of collaboration among MDAs, partners, and the private sector. Under the guidance of the Executive Committee and the coordination of the MATC, the collaborative framework recognises the significant potential that the blue economy holds for County Governments, particularly in enhancing revenue generation and contributing to economic growth.

LESSONS LEARNT



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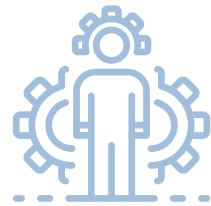
PRIORITISING STAKEHOLDER AWARENESS

When introducing a new concept like the Blue Economy (BE), prioritising stakeholder awareness is essential before launching any initiatives. This was demonstrated when KDP introduced blue economy to the MATC and Counties, where extensive sensitisation and awareness significantly influenced the mainstreaming of BE in the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) and Annual Development Plans (ADPs).

2

COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

A collaborative framework is vital for the success of multidisciplinary and multi-sector initiatives like BE. It effectively dismantles the silo mentality often prevalent in programming.



3



MONITORING & EVALUATION

A comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework is crucial for ensuring the sustainability and ownership of a collaborative framework. This tool also aids in generating essential data and information for evidence-based policy formulation, decision-making, and resource leveraging.

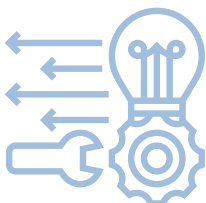
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EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

An effective governance structure is critical for the success and sustainability of any collaborative framework, as it fosters transparency and ownership of the action plans developed for implementation.



5



THE PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRATION

The three key principles of integration, a multi-sector approach, and cooperation/partnership are fundamental to the success of any BE activities, projects, and programmes. It is important that these principles serve as the foundation of any collaborative framework.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance the effectiveness of a collaborative framework within the Lake Victoria Region (LVR) and ensure the sustainability of initiatives outlined in the multi-agency action plan, the following recommendations are proposed:

	<p>It is essential to foster robust collaboration between the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), private sector entities, academia, research organisations, and other parties involved in the framework, alongside the counties. This joint effort is vital for the sustainability of planned initiatives.</p>
	<p>Building the capacity of the Executive Committee (Ex-Com) is crucial, and it should be further integrated with County leadership at the County Executive Committee (CEC) level. Given that counties are the primary implementers of all initiatives within their jurisdiction, this alignment is vital, as outlined by the principle of subsidiarity.</p>
	<p>The newly launched Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework should be institutionalised across all Lake Region Economic Bloc (LREB) counties. The LREB Secretariat should take responsibility for its implementation and sustainability, using this tool to track and provide vital information and data on all activities, projects, and programmes coordinated by the bloc.</p>
	<p>An urgent review of the Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) and the Multi-Agency Action Plan (MAP) is necessary to address emerging issues and to ensure that the county leadership is more integrated. Currently, counties are encompassed within the LREB but are not sufficiently visible, which diminishes their roles.</p>
	<p>A multi-sector forum should be established to facilitate interaction among parties to the MOC and a broader spectrum of stakeholders, enhancing collaboration and engagement across various sectors.</p>



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