The PRCM partners confirm their commitment to good governance of the coast

Annual report 2015
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## Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>MPA</td>
<td>Marine Protected Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>APPEL</td>
<td>Alliance of Parliamentarians and Local Elected Representatives for Environmental Protection in West Africa Coastline Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADEPA</td>
<td>West Africa Association for Artisanal Fishing Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAOPA</td>
<td>African Artisanal Fishing Confederation</td>
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<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Conference of Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Convention on Biological Diversity</td>
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<td>INDC</td>
<td>Intended Nationally Determined Contributions</td>
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<td>RSC</td>
<td>Regional Steering Committee</td>
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<td>SRFC</td>
<td>Sub-Regional Fishery Commissions</td>
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<td>FIBA</td>
<td>Banc d’Arguin International Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IUU</td>
<td>Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>PRCM</td>
<td>Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation</td>
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<td>RAMPAO</td>
<td>West Africa Regional MPA Network</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>UEMOA</td>
<td>West Africa Economic and Monetary Union</td>
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<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>UMC</td>
<td>Mobilisation and Coordination Unit of PRCM</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITLOS</td>
<td>International Tribunal for the Law of Sea</td>
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<td>WWF</td>
<td>Worldwide Fund for Nature</td>
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Without any doubt, it was the Ebola outbreak that most deeply affected two of PRCM member countries, i.e. Guinea and Sierra Leone, preventing them from attending activities organised at the regional level. The shutting down of WWF WAMER Office has also had significant consequences for the institutional architecture of the Partnership, in a magnitude proportional to the amount of interventions it used to carry. The merger of FIBA and MAVA, however, did not entail any negative impact, as the Partnership would continue to benefit from the key contribution of both foundations through their combined strengths. Another positive event likely to open up funding perspectives for the Partnership was the creation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

In addition to its routine activities captured in this report, PRCM was able to participate in a number of initiatives, including the request for advisory opinion submitted by the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), which rallied a great deal of stakeholders and resulted into a meaningful outcome. The same level of commitment was demonstrated for participation in various congresses and conventions, particularly COP 21 or the Abidjan Convention meeting.

PRCM was also involved in the organisation of the 8th regional coastal and marine Forum on the theme “Stakeholders of the coastline: let’s join forces to overcome climate change challenges!” This event took place from 2nd to 5th November 2015 in Praia, Cabo Verde with 218 people in attendance. Several recommendations emerged from the Forum and their implementation would be closely monitored.

The support fund for civil society organisations as well the creation of PRCM national platforms were instrumental in conducting activities on the ground for the benefit of NGOs and fostering dynamic collaboration. Efforts put into communication, including through social media, have facilitated these processes and made it possible to involve the general public in dealing with marine and coastal conservation issues across the region.
Vision and missions of the Partnership

The vision of PRCM is to “Promote the conservation of a healthy coastal and marine environment for the well-being of West African communities”.

Its missions are to:

- Mobilise and build stakeholders’ capacities and skills;
- Foster dialogue and develop a common understanding among the various categories of players involved in the coastal and marine zone;
- Support, through its network of partners, the coherence and coordination of active interventions at the regional, national and local level;
- Conduct policy advocacy to strengthen the conservation and management of the coastal and marine zone;
- Work to ensure that policies and agreements are consistent and harmonised at the national, regional and international level;
- Harness technical and financial resources in a sustainable manner through active representation with international institutions and cooperation agencies;
- Leverage, capitalise on and share findings from research, indigenous knowledge and good practices.
Priority intervention areas:

For the period 2012-2017, the Partnership has been pursuing its actions in four priority areas, as follows:

- Coastal and marine governance: strengthen good governance processes in the conservation of ecosystems and coastal and marine resources;
- Conservation of the coastal and marine zone and sustainable management of its resources. The objective is to effectively promote and implement tools and mechanisms for coastal and marine conservation, as well as for the sustainable management and optimum use of its resources;
- Review, prevention and management of risks and challenges associated with the coastal and marine zone. This aims to gain a deeper understanding of the risks and issues confronting the coastline, take account of such risks and issues at the different levels of planning and intervention and consider means to mitigate their negative impact;
- Mobilisation and Co-ordination of the Partnership: The purpose of this area is to extend, sustain, leverage and co-ordinate the Partnership in order to attain its goals;

Although its interventions are guided by the abovementioned four areas, the Partnership remains as flexible and dynamic as possible in order to include new opportunities and priorities, as and when deemed relevant. Central to PRCM activities are the facilitation of discussions between partners, the co-ordination of their interventions, and lobbying and advocacy with target groups. The Partnership also aims to ensure that the approaches and interventions of its members remain coherent.
Events with impact on PRCM’s activities

Several events that took place in 2015 have had important implications for PRCM’s activities. A number of changes have occurred in partner institutions. WWF West Africa Office has closed down, creating a vacuum as significant as the interventions that this organisation used to carry out.

The merger of FIBA and MAVA has equally impacted the institutional landscape of PRCM, although this process, conducted in close collaboration with relevant partners, did not entail any serious disruption. MAVA Foundation reiterated its interest in supporting the Partnership, as explained by its Chair at the merging ceremony: “in the context of this merger, partners will continue to benefit not only
from the financial strength and mobilisation capacity of MAVA but also the expertise and field experience of FIBA. The combined strengths of both Institutions within MAVA will result into more and better services to our partners”.

The Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) has experienced and still experiences instability owing to the difficulties encountered in recruiting its Permanent Secretary. This cripples SRFC, as a PRCM’s key and dynamic partner, and has negative consequences for the financing and implementation of its action programme.

With regard to financial resources recently made available in the area of environment, the creation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) appears promising for PRCM’s partners. As a funding mechanism established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, the GCF is indeed the most important multilateral fund dedicated to climate change control and will focus on those developing countries that are most vulnerable to climate change effects.

Health wise, the EBOLA outbreak, that raged throughout 2015, hard hit two countries in PRCM’s intervention area, i.e. Guinea and Sierra Leone. Travelling to and from these countries became difficult, which made it almost impossible for the representatives of both countries to participate in regional activities organised under PRCM.
PRCM and its partners implemented a range of activities in 2015.

These aimed at:

- Contributing to coastal and marine governance;
- Assisting PRCM member countries to honour their obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- Supporting civil society organisations and other PRCM’s partners;
- Strengthening cooperation with regional organisations;
- Mobilising and coordinating the Partnership;
- Leveraging resources for conservation in West Africa.

Support to the seizure of ITLOS jurisdiction over IUU fishing-related issues

Along with its members and partners, PRCM launched a number of processes between. The first such process was the advisory opinion requested by the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).

Aware of the magnitude of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing and considering Article 33 of the Convention on minimum conditions of access signed in 2012 by member states and the resolution of the Conference of Ministers adopted at its 14th special session held on 28th March 2013 in Dakar, SRFC seized the jurisdiction of ITLOS for an advisory opinion on issues and concerns confronting member states in respect of IUU fishing. With the
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financial support of PRCM and WWF, meetings were organised between experts and SRFC Coordination Committee to, on the one hand, approve the information required for the explanatory statement and, on the other, prepare the oral statement and mobilise many stakeholders in the sub-region as well as technical partners to attend the audience that took place from 2nd to 5th September 2014 in Hamburg, Germany.

In April of last year, ITLOS delivered its advisory opinion on the obligations and responsibilities of the flag state in case of IUU fishing involving vessels flying its flag, as well on the rights and obligations of the coastal state in the management of shared stocks or stocks of common interest.

Although not binding, the advisory opinion has several consequences for SRFC member states. Indeed, it will allow member states to derive a greater benefit from the effective implementation of relevant sub-regional (Convention on minimal conditions of access) and international (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) legal instruments.

Following the issuance of that opinion, PRCM and WWF, under the aegis of the SRFC, organised in June 2015 in Dakar, Senegal an international workshop that brought together the representatives of several international organisations and SRFC member states as well non member states confronted with IUU fishing. The objective was to identify short, medium and long term actions required at the national, regional and international level to implement the advisory opinion.

A plan of action was drafted at the end of the deliberations, with all stakeholders urged to synergise their efforts. Participants called for the creation of a compensation fund for victims of IUU fishing, the adoption of legislative, regulatory and administrative measures as well as for deterrent sanctions to ensure that vessels of the flag state are not involved in IUU fishing.

Actions proposed included assisting SRFC member states to fulfil their obligations; transposing international and sub-regional regulations into national legislations; building institutional capacities with a view to the effective enforcement of laws and regulations on fishing, in particular penalties; registering vessels at the country and sub-regional level; harmonising shared stocks management rules; and ensuring access to international support funds for the implementation of international instruments, etc.
Finally, in the wake of this international workshop and following a recommendation from participants, national workshops were organised at the national level in Guinea, Cabo Verde and the Gambia, always with the support of PRCM, to disseminate the advisory opinion.

In attendance in each of these workshops were legal counsels from Ministries in charge of fisheries, fishery managers, counsellors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, magistrates, Parliamentarians and fishing professionals. These workshops enabled participants to gain a better understanding of international legal instruments on fishing and assess the relevancy of their national legislation in the light of the international legal environment of the fishing sector.

Central to presentations were feedbacks on the advisory opinion and the action plan contemplated by the SRFC. Moreover, these workshops provided an opportunity to discuss mechanisms of cooperation between flag states, port states and coastal states in collecting, identifying and submitting evidence in case of IUU fishing.

As a follow up to the recommendations made at the workshop on ITLOS advisory opinion, PRCM supported a **training session for legal practitioners** on environmental law, through the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Senegal, in collaboration with the Abidjan Convention Secretariat and US AFRICO. Representatives of countries in the sub-region as well as academia and internationally recognised experts participated in the training during which 16 topics were covered, including dispute settlement under environmental law, the principles and conceptions of environmental law and environmental protection schemes, as well as international legal protection for the marine environment.

Legal practitioners and experts recommended the creation of a regional tribunal for environment and the harmonisation of national legislations, with some degree of toughening. They also called for the review of legislative and regulatory texts on the environment as well as for the development of a community environmental code and corresponding national legislations.
Support to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in PRCM member countries

Following the shutting down of West Africa WWF WAMPO Office, PRCM has been entrusted with the implementation of the project “Supporting PRCM member countries in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity”.

This project intends, with the financial backing of MAVA, to accompany PRCM member countries in stepping up the efforts already undertaken by party states to dimplement the Convention on Biological Diversity. Specifically, the project will reinforce efforts aimed at promoting a well-managed network of protected areas and improving the legal and political framework, based on the Aichi Targets.

Gambia, in collaboration with RAMPAO, on the identification and description of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in the sub-region. This workshop was a follow-up to the process launched in April 2013 by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity during a meeting held in Swakopmund, Namibia, whereby about fifteen marine EBSAs were identified and described in PRCM member countries.

Participants, among whom MPA managers representing PRCM member countries, researchers and CBD focal points, discussed ways for expanding the description of sites identified in 2013 and came up with additional sites. It was recommended, inter alia, to consider the issue of marine EBSAs in the development of national strategies for the creation and management of MPAs and/or updating of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP).

A roadmap for EBSAs identification and creation was developed during the workshop to guide the process in PRCM member countries. It would be implemented by a regional task force also set up on the occasion of the workshop in Banjul.

In May, PRCM supported the organisation of APPEL’s General Assembly meeting. To take advantage of the presence of West African Parliamentarians in Nouakchott, Mauritania, the CBD Project recruited an international consultant to highlight the challenges of the Nagoya Protocol for West Africa and the need for countries in this region to ratify the Protocol.
Moreover, the CBD project was officially launched on the margin of the General Assembly meeting, with the Steering Committee holding its first meeting in the presence of all CBD focal points in beneficiary countries (except for Sierra Leone), the donor’s representative and IUCN.

Following the Nouakchott workshop, specific support was extended to Mauritania for the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity. The highlight of this celebration was the plantation of halophyte plants on the coastal dune in the vicinity of Nouakchott.

In July, the Project Coordination Committee invited proposals from PRCM member countries in order to assist in implementing the CBD and achieving the Aichi Targets. Proposals submitted, for a budget of not more than € 25,000 each, were reviewed by the Committee and implementation contracts were signed with most countries.
Support initiatives for civil society organisations and other partners of PRCM

Part of PRCM’s financial resources serves to support conservation, advocacy or communication actions initiated by member organisations. Funding was provided on the basis of whether these actions promote biodiversity conservation or the good governance of coastal and marine resources.

It is in this framework that the “Support fund for civil society organisations (FAOSC)” was set up in 2013. The Support Fund is primarily meant for PRCM member organisations. Projects to be financed must contribute concretely to the improved conservation status of coastal species and habitats, pursue the sustainable management and governance of marine and coastal resources through relevant and innovative solutions, and advocate natural and indigenous solutions under community strategies for risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

In October, PRCM issued a call for proposals for the implementation of micro-projects worth €7,000 to €10,000 each in the 7 member countries.

Out of the 27 proposals submitted, 18 were short-listed. Eventually, a total of 4 proposals were selected for funding, as follows:

- “Monitoring and conservation of humpback whales in Bao Vista”, by BIOS-CV, a Cabo-Verde-based NGO;
- “Waste management in the Natural Park of Lagoas de Cufada”, implemented by the Palmeiringa NGO in Guinea Bissau;
- “Contributing to the rehabilitation of ecologically and economically significant species in the lower delta of Mauritania”, by the Nafore NGO in Mauritania;
- “Protecting sea turtles’ nesting sites” by AMISO in Mauritania.

PRCM also launched “Innovation for conservation” a regional initiative seeking to support the development of projects based on best conservation practices across PRCM member countries. The main aim was to assist organisations with best project ideas to put together documents meeting standards generally accepted by donors and therefore likely to catch their attention. Palmeirinha in Guinea Bissau and the Maio Biodiversidade Foundation in Cabo Verde were the recipients of this initiative. Not only were financial resources provided to promoters to facilitate consultation
among stakeholders and collect upstream information needed to make a case for and define the baseline situation of the project, but also and mainly coaching was offered to relevant organisations to enhance the technical content of their proposals, with a view to directing them towards donors working on the issues concerned.

As part of the facilitation of regional initiatives, the marine and coastal programme of IUCN Office for West and Central Africa and Wetlands International Africa also received technical and financial support from PRCM to draw up a regional strategy for the sustainable management of mangroves.

Indeed, to address the many threats confronting mangroves and consolidate achievements made by IUCN and Wetlands International Africa during Phase II of the Partnership (including the signing in 2010, by Ministers in charge of Environment in the 6 countries concerned, of a Charter on the protection and sustainable management of mangroves as well as the related actions plans), PRCM hosted a process of consultation with its partners on the issue.

This consultation with both organisations operating at the regional level (IUCN, Wetlands International, Abidjan Convention Secretariat and RAMSAR Convention Secretariat) and those working at the national level enabled the development of strategic guidelines for the sustainable management of mangroves based on projects already completed or underway and the identification of gaps requiring joint actions.

These guidelines were approved during a regional workshop held in Dakar, Senegal in October, in the presence of representatives of non PRCM member countries and WABIC - a new USAID’s conservation programme partly devoted to this issue. The opportunity was seized to share information on the status of mangroves, legal frameworks, stakeholder mapping, the identification of priority intervention areas and particularly the effective implementation of the regional Charter, which would be integrated and extended as part of an additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention.

On a totally different subject, the Network of Parliamentarians for environment and the struggle against desertification and poverty (RPALCDP) launched, with the support of PRCM, the “7 wonders of Cabo Verde” (7MCV). In Cabo Verde, a project developed in two phases.

Phase I, from 2012 to 2013, consisted in the study of slightly over 400 sites across the country, with the volunteer
involvement of local stakeholders, while Phase II, supported by PRCM, involved the technical, scientific, cultural and environmental description of those sites as well as the publication of a catalogue.

This project is a good example of civic participation in the identification of national heritage gems, as it developed in citizens a feeling of pride and a positive attitude towards the conservation of the archipelago’s sites and landscapes. The Praia Forum provided an opportunity for the official launch of the catalogue in the presence of national authorities.

“Climate: head in the air and feet on the ground” is another outreach initiative supported by PRCM and implemented by “Collectif En Haut!”. As a participatory exercise on resilience to climate change, this project focused on awareness-raising and communication using aerial and ground photography in order to highlight local perceptions about climate change as well as current and advisable resilience practices.

The project was implemented in various areas (Nouakchott in Mauritania, Maio island in Cabo Verde, and Palmarin in Senegal) and gathered a hundred young people involved in community work around photography and landscape observation workshops. In a way, these young people will serve as relay agents.
to increase the impact of the workshops using the project outcome. The participatory approach built on aerial photographs taken with kites and training in ground shooting in order to interconnect the various scales of landscape observation. It therefore enabled to take a creative and collective look at key issues of climate change adaptation.

The photographs taken were exhibited in November during PRCM Forum in Praia and COP 21 in Paris (at the Francophonie booth). The President of BiodiverCités, a Mauritanian NGO associated with the process in Mauritania, also presented this initiative during a side event organised by PRCM on the margin of the climate discussions.

Training session on kyte-based aerial photography
In Sierra Leone, the National Environmental Protection Authority requested PRCM’s assistance to map out areas sensitive to pollution risks. Indeed, Sierra Leone has been involved in offshore oil exploration since 2011, and an inter-ministerial Committee has been created to see that appropriate decisions are taken. Under the leadership of Wetlands International and the technical expertise of the Centre for Ecological Monitoring, therefore, the Partnership was leveraged to secure from UNDP National Office the co-funding required to develop the vulnerability map and build capacities for updating such a map. With this assistance, a significant database was developed on the distinctive features of the coastline, sensitive biological resources, including coastal plants, salt marshes, wetlands, estuaries and fish reproductive areas, as well as key socio-economic significant areas (fishing zones and tourist sites), conservation areas such as nationally and internationally significant marine protected areas.
In 2015, **PRCM** reinforced its collaboration with a number of sub-regional organisations, particularly the Abidjan Convention and OIF Institute for sustainable development (IFDD), through the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the **Abidjan Convention** Secretariat as well as through the development of a common project and organisation of climate-related events jointly with **IFDD**.

Areas covered by the memorandum of understanding are the prevention and management of offshore oil and gas exploration-related risks, the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems through an additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention on mangrove protection, ocean governance, the creation of marine protected areas and support to their effective management, the promotion of integrated coastal management and coastal erosion control.

**PRCM** is already collaborating closely with the Abidjan Convention Secretariat to develop three additional protocols to address environmental norms and standards in the area of offshore oil and gas exploration, mangrove conservation and coastal integrated management.

A joint **PRCM**-Abidjan Convention project was submitted to MAVA and received positive consideration. With a budget of over €300,000, this project aims at supporting the process of consultation among **PRCM** member countries on the future additional protocol to the **Abidjan Convention dealing with environmental norms and standards in the area of offshore oil and gas exploration** and on the implementation of capacity building actions for **PRCM** member countries. At the technical level, **PRCM** participated in the drafting of this protocol during workshops organised in February and October 2015 respectively in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea and Praia, Cabo Verde.

Alongside IFDD and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Senegal, **PRCM** was associated in the organisation of a workshop held from 12 to 14 April 2015 in Dakar around the theme “**Methodological support to the development of Intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs)**”, as part of a national inclusive and multi-stakeholder process, thereby contributing to reinforcing the capacities of its member countries and those of
other African French-speaking countries in international negotiations on environment and sustainable development. The workshop enabled participants to gain a clear understanding of the issues and scope of INDCs as well as the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and those of the United Nations Convention on desertification control. Moreover, participants were provided with tools to identify key sectors and priorities, take stock of potential areas for reduced greenhouse gas effects and assess requirements in terms of adaptation, capacity building and technology transfer.

In addition, PRCM and IFDD joined efforts at COP 21 held in Paris from 30th November to 11th December, as they co-organised a side event on “Marine protected areas in Africa as tools of resilience to climate change”. This was an opportunity for PRCM stakeholders to showcase the key functions of West Africa MPAs, as ocean governance tools and drivers of climate change resilience.

Still as part of its efforts to synergize with similar regional initiatives, PRCM actively participated in the meetings of the Steering Committee of such projects as GoWAMER, CCLME and MESA (ECOWAS Coastal & Marine Resources Management Centre Monitoring for Environment & Security in Africa).

This provides a good illustration of PRCM’s effective involvement in the governance of regional initiatives related to the West Africa coastline conservation.

At the invitation of the Regional Office of Wetlands International Africa, PRCM participated in a workshop on the blue carbon initiative that was organised from 23rd to 25th September 2015 in Zanzibar, Tanzania by Conservation International, IUCN, UNESCO and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. The representative of PRCM presented the state of play of knowledge, past experiences and current and future initiatives for improved mangrove conservation across PRCM/ CCLME intervention area. Also in attendance, in addition to PRCM, were Guinea Bissau and the Dakar University Institute of environmental invited by Wetlands International Africa. In this regard, PRCM and its partners intend to develop project concepts on the blue carbon in the sub-region.
Mobilisation and co-ordination of the Partnership

As of 31st December 2015, the Partnership boasted a membership of 77 people distributed into 6 Colleges comprising civil society organisations, networks of Parliamentarians, national public agencies, professional fishing organisations, research and education organisations and international organisations.

The table below shows the distribution of members:

- Civil society organisations: 38
- Networks of Parliamentarians: 5
- Professional fishing organisations: 7
- International organisations: 8
- National public agencies: 9
- Research and education organisations: 10
The 8th Marine and Coastal Forum was a highlight in the mobilisation of members and other PRCM’s partners. With 218 participants in attendance, the 8th PRCM Forum took place from 2nd to 5th November 2016 in Praia, Cabo Verde around the theme « Stakeholders of the Coastline: let’s join forces to overcome climate change challenges! ».

As a one-off event in the sub-region, the Forum is an opportunity for interaction among actors involved in coastal and marine governance. More importantly, it is an opportunity for reviewing policy priorities and engaging partners with a view to concerted actions. To address the main topic, three types of meetings were organised. In this way, three Conferences of Leaders enabled 11 political figures and academic scholars to review, in their respective fields, topical climate issues and provide insights into climate change guidelines and/or strategic priorities.

Closely related to the subject matters of the Conferences of Leaders were 8 workshops and 15 side events during which participants delved into introductory topics and exchanged experiences from research and field actions. In addition to these technical discussions, partners gathered in 16 parallel sessions to share the outcome of their research and various activities and explore the links between climate and coastal and marine management.
In their final declaration, participants pledged to work towards accelerating adaptation and mitigation measures likely to reduce climate change effects on the coastal and marine zone. They called on member countries and the international community to promote forward-looking approaches to territories and economic sectors within the coastal and marine zone. Expressing their confidence in the processes underway, they highlighted the need to focus on local initiatives spearheaded by community members in the implementation of solutions suited to each context. As part of the preparations for COP 21 and given the outcome expected from this conference, PRCM requested decision-makers to give consideration to marine ecosystems, hitherto missing on the international agenda, prioritise regional approaches such as those advocated by PRCM and gear strategic priorities of climate financing mechanisms and instruments towards coastal and marine zones.

Concretely, participants urged PRCM’s partners to intensify research programmes and activities aimed at monitoring the evolution of the West Africa coastline; adopt pilot, innovative and resilient models of tourist complexes compatible with the specificities of the West Africa coastline; support environmental education, including by incorporating it in school curricula; ensure the strengthening of the West Africa Network of Marine Protected Areas (RAMPAO); and finally prioritise those ecosystem conservation initiatives that play a particular role in mitigating the impact of climate changes, such as mangroves, seabed grass, coral formations and coastal forests.

To ensure a better understanding of coastal issues in its member countries, PRCM set out, since 2014, to create national consultation platforms. As a follow-up to one of the recommendations of the 2013 Forum held in Dakar, these platforms are intended to facilitate dialogue between national partners and promote joint initiatives capturing each country’s priorities. They will also serve to monitor emerging issues, alert to unsustainable practices and conduct collective advocacy actions in order to sway coastal and marine policies.

Following Mauritania, Guinea and Guinea Bissau, the national platform of Cabo Verde was officially launched in March 2015 during a meeting organised at the National Assembly, in the presence of about twenty participants representing government agencies, civil society organisations, fishery and research professionals. The University of Praia was requested to act as the secretariat of this platform.
To help the various Colleges thrive, a capacity building training session was organised on 21-23 January in Dakar, Senegal for leaders from civil society. The training gathered about thirty leaders of associations involved in conservation and of organisations of fishery professionals. The presentation of case studies and group work enabled to structure advocacy actions to be undertaken and provided participants with tools for planning, implementing and assessing those actions.

2015 was also an eventful year for the College of professional fishery organisations whose running has been entrusted with the African Confederation of artisanal fishing organizations (CAOPA). Following its general assembly meeting held in November in Marrakech, Morocco, CAOPA began the preparations for the celebration of an African year of fishing. To this end, CAOPA gathered its partners and members in June 2015 in Saly, Senegal in a regional workshop around the theme “Towards an African Year of Fishing”.

PRCM contributed technically and financially to this workshop and reiterated its availability and commitment to support this advocacy action, including by mobilising its members, networks and platform for the attainment of these objectives.

Moreover, the Mobilisation and Coordination Unit of PRCM organised a meeting of the College of fishery professionals which was attended by members of CAOPA Bureau and officials of national apex organizations.

CAOPA also inaugurated its Head Office in Mbour in the presence of the Minister of Fishery and Maritime Economy of Senegal, which marked another milestone towards its institutionalisation following its creation in 2010 in the Gambia.

In another vein but still in connection with the coordination of stakeholders, PRCM was requested to provide provisional technical and administrative backing to RAMPAO. Indeed, recent developments in the institutional landscape of RAMPAO’s traditional administrative and financial partners (following the merger of FIBA, that used to assist RAMPAO on the administrative plane, with MAVA, as one of its main donor) prompted quick reflection on the changes in the structure and operation of this network. Further discussions were held through a study on the empowerment of RAMPAO, conducted in 2015.

During the 6th RAMPAO General Assembly meeting held on 1-2 October in Banjul, the findings of this study and previous
consultations as well as a proposed roadmap for RAMPAO empowerment were presented to its members and partners who adopted a series of decisions aimed at an in-depth reshuffle of the network, including:

- launching an empowerment process that should lead to the creation of an independent regional or international organisation within two years at most, based on a roadmap developed for that purpose;
- defining a two-year transitional period from January 2016 for the implementation of the RAMPAO empowerment roadmap; and
- entrusting RAMPAO technical and administrative operationalisation to PRM during the transitional period.

With this backing to RAMPAO, effective since January 2016, **PRCM** will have an opportunity to be in the service of one of its members’ platforms and increase synergies with all MPA initiatives in the sub-region.
Several fundraising actions benefiting PRCM and its members were undertaken in 2015, including:

- Resource mobilisation with MAVA, after a joint project paper was put together with the Abidjan Convention for developing an additional protocol on the norms and standards of oil and gas exploration;

- Submission of a project following a call for proposals by Fondation Ensemble on behalf of a few MPA members of RAMPAO and support to 4 organisations for the transmission of their applications, which proved unsuccessful;

- Launch of initiatives in a consortium with the Cetecima Firm, under the European Regional Development Fund – Maderes Açores-Canarie for the presentation of an ecotourism project in Cabo Verde, Senegal and Mauritania and another one on the observation of cetaceans;

- Development and successful submission to MAVA of an action plan for RAMPAO 3-month transitional period, corresponding to the first term of 2016;

- Development of a research project jointly with IRD for marine spatial mapping. This project was submitted to MAVA but did not receive a positive consideration, as it was found to be too distant from the priorities of the Foundation’s new strategy. Nevertheless, it will be submitted to the Abidjan Convention;

- Collaboration with WWF with a view to a second phase of the support project for the advisory opinion delivered by ITLOS on IUU fishing at SRFC’s request. The second phase should focus on how to operationalize the advisory opinion. A funding request sent to MAVA is being tabled;

- Involvement in a collaboration process under MESA (ECOWAS) in order to submit a project to the UE on IUU fishing control;

- Establishment of preliminary contacts with FFEM in order to identify a project of interest dealing with marine protected areas and ecosystems conservation, as a whole;

- Preliminary discussions with the GOWAMER Project on scope for involving PRCM and its members in the implementation of the programme’s activities.

Moreover, in an effort to help national partners access funding available, PRCM and the Centre for Ecological Monitoring organised an information and training workshop on the Green Climate Fund (GCF), from 17th to 19th September. The workshop gathered GCF national focal points, climate focal points and officials from environmental directorates.
in the 7 member countries and sought to inform partners about the objectives of and modalities for access to GCF. A number of challenges must be addressed to access GCF resources, such as complying with fiduciary standards as well as environmental and social safeguard measures in the implementation process; integrating the gender dimension in all activities; implementing an effective and functional monitoring and evaluation system; understanding the project development cycle, from design to closure through implementation; drafting a procedures manual, etc. At the end of the discussions, participants agreed to set up a discussion and exchange forum in order for each country to keep abreast of progress made in other countries. During these fundraising activities, the Mobilisation and Co-ordination Unit encountered difficulties with the contracting process owing to its lack of legal status.

It is worth mentioning that several fundraising avenues are being explored, such as through:

- Support to the mangrove initiative, to source funding from MAVA, AFD and in a near future the UE, WABIC, UEMOA, ECOWAS and the African Development Bank;
- Transformation of the EBSA roadmap into a fundraising project;
- Development of a comprehensive situational analysis paper and a logical framework for designing a GEF project on RBTDS;
- Maintenance and strengthening of contacts with FFEM, which has acquired a significant amount of working experience in West Africa and shows interest for the intervention area.

Overall, PRCM will need to be more proactive in raising funds and identifying new donors.
Using several communication tools and media, PRCM continued to regularly inform relevant stakeholders on the implementation status of its activities and those of its members within the coastal and marine zone.

These tools primarily target PRCM members, technical and financial partners as well as players operating on the West Africa coastline, with a view to facilitating experience exchange, keeping them abreast as a group and updating their knowledge on coastal issues.

In 2015, PRCM’s website www.prcmarine.org registered 7,096 users, with 31,783 pages visited. Forty (40) messages were sent through an emailing platform to 810 people on average, with a checking rate close to 30% for each message disseminated. These were about topical issues, calls for contribution, calls for tenders, calls for proposals and newsletters.

PRCM is also on Facebook and Twitter and boasted 45,179 fans (up from 9,230 fans in 2014) and 1,150 followers respectively in December 2015. It also has a You Tube account where are posted on a regular basis short interviews conducted with members during the Partnership’s events as well as awareness-raising films and press stories on its activities.

As from 2016, PRCM will be present on Instagram, an application for sharing instant pictures increasingly used by businesses and organisations.

Two types of newsletters are disseminated periodically. In 2015, four issues of the PRCM Letter were sent out, covering latest news about the Partnership and members. In addition, 3 issues of the information letter “Focus” were published, with the first one devoted to migratory birds and the two others to climate changes.

It should be reminded that the information letter reviews specific issues related to the West Africa coastal and marine zone and presents them in a rather simplified summary, with illustrations and references to more comprehensive documents as well as to partners’ activities in that area.

In terms of capitalisation, “Small initiatives for a great cause”, a FIBA-authored book, provides an overview of lessons learnt from activities conducted with the help of the Support Fund for Civil Society Organisations (FAOSC). This book also highlights FAOSC’s usefulness in building stakeholders’ capacities through “tailored” training sessions.

Furthermore, PRCM jointly with the Centre for Ecological Monitoring embarked upon the development of a geographical
information system on the habitats and resources of its member countries. The outcome of this process was the creation of a database and an interactive map (webmapping) on the habitats and resources found in the coastal and marine zone of PRCM’s intervention area.

In the current context characterised by similar requirements among stakeholders for reliable geographical information, it is PRCM’s ambition to lay the groundwork for a common data repository within its intervention area, based on such tools. To ensure better sharing and ownership of the tools at hand, PRCM organised a regional training workshop for 14 experts from the 7 member countries from 17th to 19th March. Topics included Quantum GIS, an open software for geographical information systems management and an online interactive map http://www.sig-prcmweb.org/. The exchange and capacity building sessions were hosted by the Centre for Ecological Monitoring, as a stakeholder of this process. The workshop was the culmination of an exercise started in 2013 with the objective of creating, at the ecoregion level, an online geospatial data platform on coastal and marine habitats and resources.
Difficulties and lessons learnt

The main difficulty encountered over the year was that a number of countries became locked away as a result of the Ebola outbreak but also of irregular and/or lack of flights to the capital cities of these countries, thereby limiting partners’ participation in regional meetings, such as the Praia Forum that many representatives could not attend in spite of all the efforts of the Organising Committee.

PRCM’s accomplishments include the professionalisation of the coastal and marine Forum as evidenced by its being held consistently (8th edition since 2004), the level of inputs and its recognition by stakeholders as a one-off platform for experience dissemination and exchange.

This is a milestone in the construction of the Partnership as it enables to foster long term links between institutions, people and the various categories of stakeholders who are to build together an eco-regional vision of the West Africa coastal zone. Improvements are still required, however, especially in terms of the monitoring of the Forum’s recommendations.

PRCM’s support to the request submitted by SRFC to ITLOS for an advisory opinion has had positive effects. Indeed, this opinion helped to create an environment conducive to discussions with member states and other organisations working to intensify the struggle against IUU fishing in the sub-region. Subsequent workshops contributed to create awareness on the need to urgently undertake surveillance at sea and harmonise legislations in various countries. In this context, PRCM played an effective role as facilitator, catalyst and coordinator of regional initiatives.

There was a continuation of efforts over the year to reinforce the capacities of the stakeholders of the coastline, which is a key raison d’être of PRCM. As a matter of fact, the ever increasing number of requests in this regard provided a sufficient reason for recruiting a capacity building officer within the Mobilisation and Co-ordination Unit.
Ways forward

In 2016, one and half year will remain to the end of PRCM’s current phase that started in 2012. It is therefore time for a mid-term review and forward planning.

An organisational diagnosis was launched this year with a view to a greater effectiveness of the current structure. The challenge in the months ahead will be to work out solutions for increasing the Partnership’s autonomy and sustainability at both the financial and institutional level, while keeping the momentum of collaboration with its members.

Following the approval of the diagnosis outcome, guidelines will have to be developed on the Partnership’s architecture. It is only thereafter that a fundraising strategy and an institutional communication plan will be prepared to diversify financial partnerships and better promote PRCM’s model and missions.