

Strengthening Climate Resilience in Africa's Marine and Coastal Zones Through Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA)

Community of Practice Statement

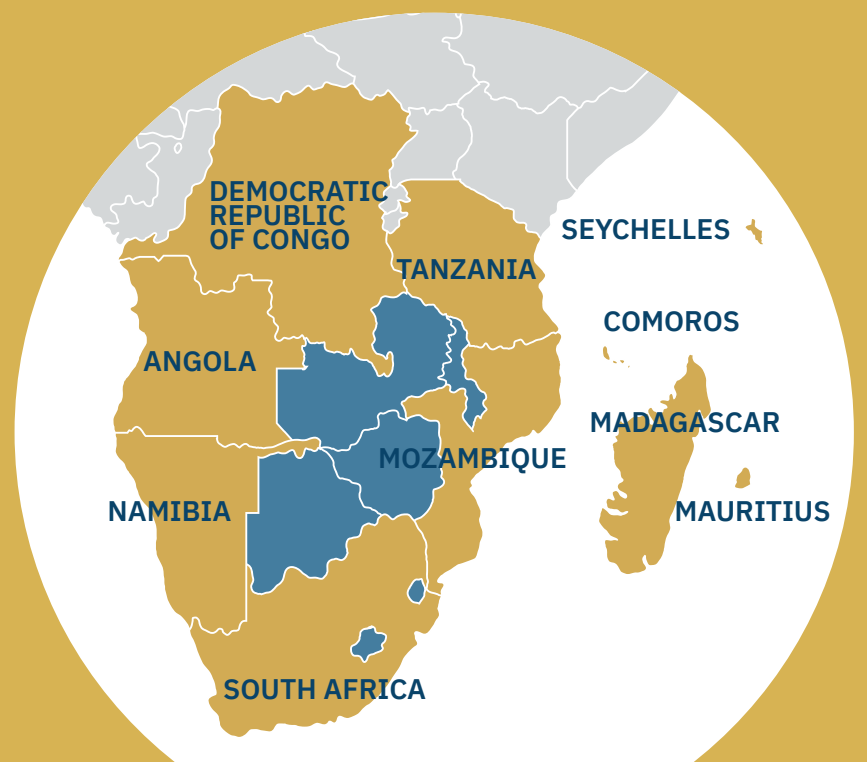
ABOUT THIS PROJECT STATEMENT

The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) has supported the development of this community of practice statement as a key component of the project "Strengthening Marine and Coastal Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the National Climate Responses of SADC's Coastal States." The project was overseen by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat and implemented through the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus funding programme. One of the key results of the project was the establishment of a Community of Practice on Marine and Coastal EbA in Southern Africa.

This statement has emerged from inputs provided by community of practice members at an in-person workshop hosted by SAIIA in Cape Town, South Africa from the 18-19 April 2023, as well as from the research conducted through the project.

CONTEXT

- Ocean ecosystems are increasingly impacted by climate change through more severe tropical storms, sea level rise and a number of other drivers. Yet, where marine and coastal ecosystems are protected, sustainably managed and restored, they can also help communities adapt to climate change impacts and sequester large amounts of carbon. Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) is the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. EbA involves governing and managing ecosystems to enhance their resilience to climate shocks and stresses – maintaining, and where possible, improving the quality and quantity of ecosystem services they provide to society – and thus supporting the ability of communities to adapt to current and future climate risks.
- Despite their value, marine and coastal ecosystems are being degraded at a rapid rate.
- Coastal and island African countries are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as their communities are reliant on marine and coastal ecosystems to support their economies and the livelihoods of their people.
- Besides climate adaptation, EbA contributes to achieving more sustainable forms of development, strengthening job and livelihoods opportunities as well as contributing to biodiversity outcomes.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

SADC stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, NGOs, researchers and communities, should work collaboratively in order to:

- 1** Integrate targeted and time-frame specific marine and coastal EbA interventions within Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- 2** Align climate, biodiversity, and ocean-related policies by mainstreaming EbA interventions across policy processes.
- 3** Include local communities in EbA project design and implementation from inception and inclusively develop policies that recognise communities' tenure rights, strengthen community-based natural resource management, and support the creation of sustainable coastal livelihoods.
- 4** Emphasize gender inclusion in EbA policy and project design and develop meaningful interventions that address gender equity, while recognising traditional cultural values of local communities.
- 5** Create targeted platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration for EbA projects, which include stakeholders from government, the private sector, civil society organisations, researchers and community representatives.
- 6** Identify and formally recognize national EbA champions in each SADC country and establish regional mechanisms for knowledge sharing, including local and indigenous knowledge, both within the SADC region and beyond.
- 7** Enhance the capacity of governments and other stakeholders to support and implement EbA projects through training and skills development, including in the area of resource mobilisation.
- 8** Develop a SADC-level resource mobilisation plan to support long-term sustainable and innovative EbA investments that can be replicated and scaled throughout the region.
- 9** Design a regional SADC EbA strategy that accounts for similarities and differences across all coastal and island states, paying special attention to the needs of coastal communities.