

# Ocean Country Partnership Programme

## Recommendations for future MPA awareness raising and marine environmental educational tools in Ghana

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# List of Acronyms

EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GFRA	Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity
HM	Hen Mpoano
MPA	Marine Protected Area
USAID	United State Agency for International Development

# 1. Introduction

Education and awareness-raising are essential instruments for promoting sustainable development and behavioural change (Tilbury, 2011). They represent tools for bridging scientific knowledge, policy development, and community engagement in the context of marine conservation (Bennett and Satterfield, 2018). Effective communication of marine conservation activities helps to ensure that stakeholders understand and advocate for sustainable practices and policies (Cvitanovic, McDonald, and Hobday, 2016). The conduct of education and awareness-raising activities in marine conservation has historically evolved along with conservation practices in many African nations. Early conservation efforts were founded on traditional ecological knowledge that had been passed down through the centuries (Diawuo and Issifu, 2015).

This knowledge is an embodiment of customs, taboos, and rituals that constitute unspoken guidelines that safeguarded certain marine life and habitats. However, contemporary awareness-raising activities have made use of modern resources such as community-based management programs and educational campaigns to deliver key messages to conservation stakeholders. The establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the active engagement and education of stakeholders are both essential for their implementation and sustainability, and both of these factors are critical to the success of MPAs.

Education and awareness raising at all levels; local, regional and national is the foundation of good MPA management as it increases awareness, deepens knowledge of stakeholders, and encourages active engagement in marine conservation. Furthermore, through audience specific activities, education and awareness raising ensures stakeholder recognition of MPAs in diverse ecological, economic, and cultural contexts. This understanding is essential for addressing disputes, fostering agreement, and securing broad backing for conservation efforts. Awareness raising and education goes beyond mere knowledge; it galvanizes action by equipping people and communities to make informed choices and assume responsibility for conservation initiatives.

It is noteworthy that education and awareness raising is not limited to mere information dissemination as it serves as a mechanism for cultivating discourse, establishing trust, and forging productive collaborations. Understanding the repercussions of unsustainable actions and the advantage of marine conservation motivates needed behaviour change. Educational programs in Ghana aimed at curbing unlawful fishing techniques have resulted in a notable transition to sustainable ways, advantageous for both fishermen and the environment (GFRA, 2024). By integrating educational activities with participatory methods, the establishment of MPAs and the conversations around it may transform into inclusive environments where conservation objectives and community requirements converge.

This review aims to identify recommendations for future MPA awareness raising activities and marine environmental education resources to enhance knowledge and understanding on the value and importance of marine conservation in Ghana. This review is organized into three sections. Section 2 explores the challenges or gaps pertaining to MPA awareness raising and marine environmental education campaigns in Ghana. Section 3 outlines a three-tiered recommendation framework focussing on strategies for promoting MPA awareness and educational campaigns across implementation scales ranging from local to national levels. In Section 4, a national framework for MPA awareness raising is proposed with short, medium and longer-term actions. Section 5 identifies the key steps needed to support the implementation of a national framework for MPA awareness raising.

## 2. Summary of Key Gaps in Education and Awareness Raising

Campaigns aimed at raising awareness about marine conservation often fail to achieve the long-lasting behavioural changes necessary for the successful implementation of MPAs. Reports on marine awareness raising programmes and projects implemented over the past decades in Ghana were reviewed to better understand the gaps in education and awareness raising activities. Relevant resources for the review, predominantly project reports and related publications, were collected through online search and in-person solicitation from project partners and government institutions. Subsequently, keyword extraction as well as content analysis techniques were employed to extract critical topics based on topics pertaining to reported gaps, challenges, issues and the citizens' levels of appreciation of marine literacy from identified literature. Other key search terms used included challenges of engagement, lack of access to information, as well as stakeholder engagement and participation.

In total, eight (8) literature resources were sourced for this analysis. Table 1 shows a complete list of reference materials and the sources from which they were obtained.

**Table 1: Resources for gap analysis of marine education and awareness raising activities**

Relevant materials on marine awareness raising activities in Ghana		
Type of Resource	Document Title	Source
Project report	Coastal and marine conservation drive project report.	Online
	Sustaining marine ecosystem through community education in Ghana	Hen Mpoano Directory
	USAID-Ghana GFRA Annual Progress Report	Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity (GFRA)
	Stakeholder engagements towards the establishment of the Greater Cape Three Point MPA.	
	Regional workshop on the establishment of MPAs in the Greater Cape Three Point Area	
	Educational campaigns on the benefits of MPAs	
	MPA training and outreach materials	
Government report	National strategy for marine conservation and awareness raising	MoFAD

The gap analysis revealed that long-term strategies and metrics to gauge behavioural change, as well as long-term financing to expand educational outreach outside of pilot towns, are lacking (Lighthouse Foundation, 2022). Lack of integration of current education initiatives into a national framework on marine awareness raising and the underserving of many coastal communities' results in disparities in messaging and geographic reach. There is ineffective coordination amongst significant marine conservation groups. Government agencies tend to operate in silos, which makes it difficult to collaborate with NGOs and private sector partners (MoFAD, 2023). Institutional competency is further hampered by a lack of inter-agency communication channels, limited funding, and inadequate technical expertise. These challenges make awareness-raising strategies fragmented and less successful (HM, 2022).

Additionally, traditional leaders, such as chiefs and queen mothers, are important in community decision-making, yet they are commonly overlooked in MPA awareness initiatives (HM, 2022). They have little role in developing and carrying out awareness raising campaigns, while having a big influence on community norms and habits. Furthermore, communities frequently lack the resources necessary to maintain or actively participate in MPA-related activities. Awareness efforts that focus on disseminating information frequently ignore the practical aspects of community readiness, such as assertiveness and offering fishermen alternative revenue streams or training them to adapt

to new regulations (USAID-GFRA, 2023). Communities struggle to turn knowledge into meaningful action as a result of this lack of preparation, which leaves them without a sense of control over conservation initiatives.

Also, many awareness campaigns are donor-dependent and have limited sustainability when project financing expires (HM, 2022). A loop of starting projects over with every new funding opportunity is created by this dependence on external resources, which results in fragmentation and lack of continuity in some cases. Moreover, the absence of strong frameworks for monitoring and evaluation makes it difficult to quantify long-term success or improve plans (USAID-GFRA, 2023). This problem is made worse by the lack of self-sustaining, community-led approaches.

Lastly, there are a number of organizations working in the marine conservation space, but efforts are not coordinated. It is a situation where everyone is doing their own work according to the objectives of the donor or organization. USAID, the World Bank, FAO, the Norwegian government, the EU, and the Korean government are all very much active in the space, but rarely collaborate. The overreliance on short-term funding also hinders the scalability and sustainability of existing initiatives. A very important issue to also note is the message fatigue that is created by these un-coordinated efforts.

### 3. Recommendations

MPAs are crucial for protecting marine ecosystems, ensuring the viability of fisheries, and preserving biodiversity. Nonetheless, MPAs carry considerable socio-economic consequences, especially for coastal fishing communities that may face limitations on their access to specific fishing areas. In the absence of effective awareness campaigns and significant changes in behaviour, the successful implementation of MPAs may encounter opposition from fishers, processors, and other stakeholders reliant on marine resources for their livelihoods.

It is clear that a multi-tiered strategy that includes local, regional, and national levels is needed. It is important to interact directly with fishermen and communities at the local level in order to build trust, improve knowledge, and promote changes in behaviour. Regional interventions may improve these projects by harmonizing messages, increase technical competence, and encourage cooperation across districts. A cohesive framework at the national level is crucial for coordinating activities, standardizing messaging, and incorporating marine conservation into national policies and educational systems. A summary of the recommendations from the remainder of this section is provided in Table 2.

#### 3.1. Local-Level Interventions

- Building Trust and Community Ownership



Local-level actions are the first step in raising awareness of MPAs and changing behaviour. These programmes, which directly involve fishermen, processors, traditional leaders, and other community members who are most affected by MPAs, aim to ensure long-term compliance and sustainability. Their objectives are to build trust, increase capacity, and incorporate socioeconomic and cultural elements into MPA awareness campaigns. Trust building and community participation are core principles of participatory methodologies designed and employed by Hen Mpoano for community engagement in the proposed GCTP MPA. For instance, through the co-creation and implementation of a community engagement plan within the proposed MPA participating communities, fishers recommended the protection of fish habitats and nursery grounds. This provided the entry for follow-up community dialogues on MPA options and benefits.

- Participatory Awareness Campaigns

Use community theatrical experience like flash mob drama, radio drama series, and visual storytelling like USAID GFRA's murals and video screenings to communicate the ecological and socio-economic benefits of MPAs (USAID, 2014). Additionally, peer-to-peer engagements that centre on folk lore storytelling, posters and jingles in languages understood by fishers. In the Greater Cape Three Points Area (GCTPA), Hen Mpoano organized screenings of underwater videos of benthic habitats and fish species at evening town hall meetings. This approach enhanced awareness of local marine biodiversity and heightened conservation interests among local fisher folk.

- Community Monitoring and Data Collection

Fisheries managers and wildlife officers can train community members to monitor fish stocks, biodiversity, and illegal fishing activities. Using participatory mapping, culturally significant areas for conservation can be identified as a starting point. Lessons from the fisheries Landing Beach Enforcement Committees (LaBECs) model, where fishers support detection and reporting of illegal fishing activities, can be adapted and applied to monitoring and data collection on fish stocks.

- Behaviour Change Through Incentives

Introduce financial and social incentives for compliant fishers, such as access to new fishing gear, microloans, or aquaculture training. According to the Quaye (2024), Responsible Fishing Awards Scheme, introduced by the MoFAD/FC in partnership with the USAID GFRA, can be leveraged to recognize compliant communities.

## 3.2. Regional-Level Interventions

- Scaling Awareness and Building Capacity

Regional-level activities are essential for scaling local successes, improving community collaboration, and ensuring that MPA messages are consistent. The GCTPA in the Western Region of Ghana is a primary target for these projects due to its ecological

significance and vulnerability to illegal fishing practices. Hen Mpoano held regional level outreach events during the 2024 World Oceans Day to highlight the importance of marine conservation. In attendance were Chiefs, government officials and community leaders who pledged their support for marine conservation.

- Regional Media Engagement

Broadcast multilingual radio and TV programs to amplify MPA messaging across coastal regions. Incorporate Q&A sessions and testimonies from fishers to enhance credibility. This can follow the format of panel radio discussions on topical fisheries issues such as the closed fishing season, IUU fishing prevention and implementation of other fisheries management measures.

- Technical Capacity Building for Regional Officers

Train regional fisheries/environment officers on MPA governance, community engagement, and enforcement strategies.

- Inter-Community Dialogues and Peer Learning

Facilitate regional dialogues between fishers, processors, and traditional leaders to exchange best practices and address shared challenges. Regional fisheries dialogues implemented by past USAID fisheries projects provide examples for such activities. NGOs working in the marine sector can convene and facilitate such dialogues.

### 3.3. National-Level Interventions

- Ensuring Policy Coherence and Scalability

National-level steps are necessary to ensure that MPA awareness campaigns have consistent policies, funding, and the opportunity to grow. A coherent framework ensures that local and regional measures operate together with national efforts, such as the National MPA Awareness Raising Strategy, and addresses gaps in coordination and sustainability.

- National Media Campaigns

Launch nationwide campaigns using TV, radio, and social media to highlight MPA benefits and the need for compliance. These can be done through providing grants to media houses to compile and air stories on MPAs. Also hold training programs for the media on MPAs to improve their understanding and reportage on MPA related issues. This would help garner public support for the creation of MPAs. USAID GFRA (USAID-GFRA, 2023)

and Hen Mpoano (HM, 2022) have wide experience in partnering with the media to advance fisheries education and awareness raising.

- **Integrate Marine Conservation into Education**

Embed marine conservation topics into the national curriculum at all levels, supported by educational materials. Also, curate creative and engaging programs targeted at students to develop interests in marine conservation. The University of Cape Coast and University of Ghana implement training programs which mainstream marine conservation to curriculum. The Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences of UCC implements a programme which aims to introduce pupils between the ages of 8 and 12 years to marine biodiversity. The approach taken include field visits and utilization of basic equipment for collecting and observing field samples (DIS, 2024)

- **National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

Establish a robust framework to evaluate the effectiveness of MPA awareness campaigns and behaviour-change initiatives.

**Table 2: Recommended interventions to improve awareness raising campaigns.**

Recommended Actions and Tools				
Scale of Intervention	Recommendation Action	Tools	Implementers	Beneficiaries
<b>Local-Level Interventions</b>	Build Trust and Community Ownership.  Tailor Capacity Building for Local Human Capital.	Visual aids, role-playing, and storytelling.	NGOs, MoFAD/FC zonal and district fisheries officers, fishers.	Fishers, processors, and youth in communities in the GCTPA like Axim, Dixcove, and Princes Town, etc.
	Participatory Awareness Campaigns.	Peer-to-peer engagements (e.g. folk lore storytelling) Posters, jingles in languages understood by fishers.	Fishers, fisher associations, traditional authorities, MoFAD/FC zonal and district fisheries officers, and youth groups.	Fishers, community members, including women and youth.
	Community Monitoring and Data Collection.	Training on participatory mapping. to monitor illegal fishing activities	Universities (e.g., UCC), MoFAD/FC zonal and district officers.	Fishers, Fisher associations.
	Behaviour Change Through Incentives.	Financial and social incentives, fishing awards scheme.	MoFAD/FC, Private sector, NGOs, Development Partners in partnership with microfinance institutions.	Fishers and fishing communities.
<b>Regional Level Interventions</b>	Scaling Awareness and Building Capacity.	Broadcast multilingual radio and TV programs.	NGOs, Development Partners, MoFAD/FC.	Journalists and media houses, the general public, community members.

	Technical Capacity Building for Regional Officers.	Community engagement through local durbars.	Universities (e.g., UCC, UG, KNUST, RMU), Hen Mpoano, USAID GFRA.	Regional fisheries officers.
	Inter-Community Dialogues and Peer Learning.	Regional dialogues between fishers, processors, and traditional leaders.	MoFAD/FC, Regional fisher associations and councils of traditional leaders.	Fishers, processors, and local leaders across the region.
<b>National Level Interventions</b>	Ensure Policy Coherence and Scalability.  Develop a National MPA Awareness Framework.	Coherent National Framework.	MoFAD/FC, NGOs, fisher associations, and universities.	Fishers, fish processors, traditional heads, general community members (women and youth).
	National Media Campaigns.	TV, radio, and social media.	MoFAD/FC, national media outlets, Development partners and NGOs.	Fishers, fisher associations, coastal communities, MPA communities, public.
	Integrate Marine Conservation into Education.	National curriculum across educational levels.	Ministry of Education, MoFAD/FC, UCC, UG, RMU, Development partners, NGOs.	Ghanaian students in the basic and secondary levels.

## 4. Towards a National Framework for MPA Awareness Raising

In Ghana, the establishment of MPAs, especially in the GCTP region, provides a transformative opportunity for the sustainable management of fisheries and conservation of marine biodiversity. However, achieving success requires not just increasing awareness but also making fundamental changes to behaviour in support of conservation objectives.

Combining national, municipal, and regional initiatives into a coherent plan would enable Ghana to develop conditions appropriate for MPA success. Harmonizing these initiatives relies on a national framework for MPA awareness raising and education. Such a framework would ensure that all stakeholders from all levels are ready to engage effectively, link policies with on-the-ground realities, and provide long-term finance.

The formulation of a strategy for raising awareness and educating the public about MPAs in Ghana presents a significant opportunity to create a thorough, coordinated, and behaviour-focused framework. The framework presented herein synthesizes global best practices, principles of Social and Behaviour Change (SBC), and the distinctive socio-cultural and ecological contexts of Ghana, thereby enhancing the efficacy of MPAs as instruments for marine conservation and the sustainable management of fisheries.

The overall goal of this proposed framework is to cultivate a knowledgeable, involved, and empowered citizenry that actively endorses and engages in the sustainable stewardship of Ghana's marine resources via MPAs (see Figure 1). The framework is structured according to strategies, interventions and outcomes situated at the local, regional and national levels of governance. Short term strategies will cover communication and behavioural change interventions. In the medium term, capacity building and strategic messaging, which leverages media as a key channel, will be aligned with the development of MPA management capabilities and outreach. In the long term, sustainable funding opportunities as well as monitoring and evaluation strategies are necessary to achieve desired conservation outcomes.

Below is a core set of supporting objectives to achieve this goal:

- Enhance comprehension and awareness of MPAs among a variety of stakeholders, encompassing fishers, processors, youth, policymakers, and coastal communities.
- Cultivate favourable attitudes and perceptions regarding MPAs by highlighting their ecological, economic, and social advantages.
- Encourage modifications in behaviour that foster adherence to MPA regulations and the embrace of sustainable fishing methodologies.
- Enhance the capabilities of institutions to formulate, execute, and maintain impactful communication and outreach strategies.

- Guarantee that MPA awareness-raising and educational initiatives are comprehensive, engaging, and culturally pertinent.

To provide support and orientation towards the achievement of the proposed goals and objectives of the framework, the following guiding principles in Table 3 have been suggested in the bid to sustain awareness and public education about MPAs.

**Table 3: Guiding principles to support the implementation of the proposed framework.**

Guiding Principles for Framework Implementation	
Principles	Description
Behaviour-Centred Design	All activities should aim to influence specific behaviours by addressing barriers, motivations, and cultural norms.
Inclusivity	Efforts must engage all key stakeholder groups, including women, youth, and marginalized communities, to ensure broad participation and ownership.
Cultural Relevance	Messages and methods should reflect local languages, values, and traditions to resonate with target audiences
Sustainability	The strategy should include long-term planning, capacity building, and financial sustainability to ensure continued impact.
Collaboration	Partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, CSOs, private sector actors, and local leaders are essential for effective implementation.



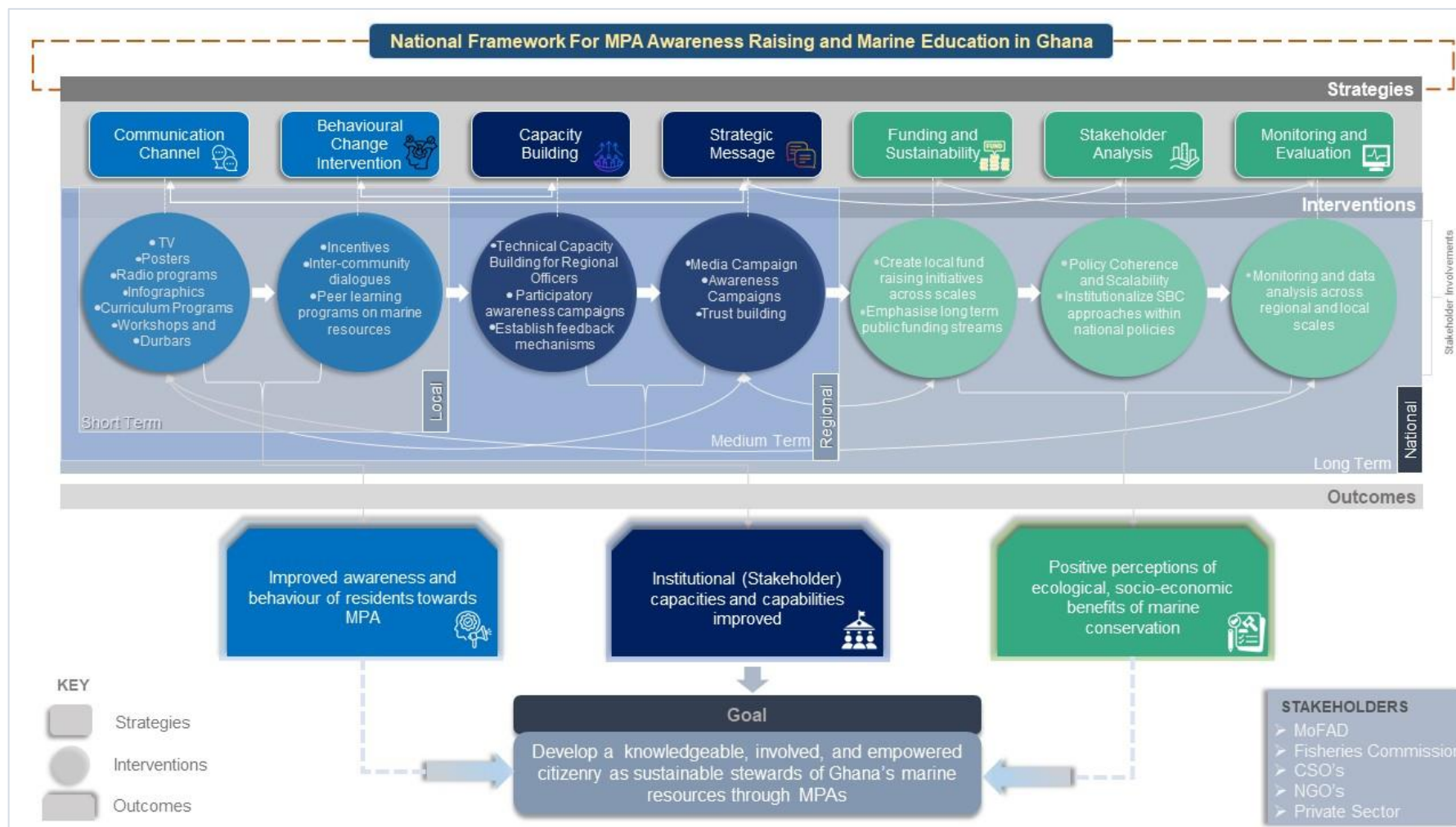


Figure 1: Framework for National MPA awareness raising in Ghana.



## 4.1. Validation of the Framework for National MPA Awareness Raising

A workshop was held to validate the framework for national MPA awareness raising (see Figures 2 and 3 below for pictures of the validation workshop). A graphical representation of the framework for national MPA awareness raising was presented (see Figure 1 above). Following the presentation of the framework, participants were divided in three groups to critically assess the framework in light of its overall feasibility and identify potential improvements. The discussion revolved around three key questions:

- a) Is the framework relevant/feasible?
- b) What are the weaknesses and how could the framework be improved?
- c) How can we make the framework functional and sustainable?

Consequently, the insights and recommendations generated from these discussions should be carefully considered in the review of the framework.

All groups agreed that the framework was relevant and feasible for implementation. However, participants emphasised the importance of securing sustainable financing/funding and ensuring active, continuous stakeholder participation as critical factors for the successful implementation of the framework. They noted that without adequate and long-term financial support, efforts to operationalise the framework may be hindered or short-lived. To this end, participants identified several potential funding sources that could be explored, including national government allocations, bilateral development assistance, and philanthropic contributions from foundations and private donors. Additionally, they highlighted the need for coordinated resource mobilisation efforts and strategic partnerships to leverage these funding streams effectively. Active stakeholder participation—particularly from grassroots communities, civil society organisations, and local institutions—was also seen as essential not only for legitimacy and ownership but also for the practical application of the framework on the ground.

Furthermore, participants recommended that the implementation of the framework should be approached with flexibility and structured around short-, medium-, and long-term actions and campaigns. They emphasised that a phased implementation strategy would allow for the gradual rollout of different components of the framework, making it more manageable and adaptable to varying contexts and resource availability. This approach was seen as beneficial for addressing immediate priorities while laying the groundwork for sustained, long-term impact. Participants also noted that organising activities across different timeframes would not compromise the coherence of the framework, as long as the linkages between strategies are clearly defined and consistently communicated. Ensuring alignment across these phases was viewed as essential to maintaining strategic direction and momentum throughout the implementation process.

Some participants suggested the need to simplify the framework to ensure accessibility for a broader audience. They noted that the current framework contains information that may be difficult for local communities, fisher folk constituencies and other grassroots stakeholders to fully grasp. Simplifying the content, using clearer language, and incorporating visual aids or practical examples were among the recommendations shared to improve comprehension and promote wider engagement with the framework. Some believed that socialisation of the framework among a wider audience of grassroots stakeholders will be necessary to solicit additional buy-in. They emphasized that many local actors, including community members, traditional authorities, local organizations, and other on-the-ground stakeholders, may not yet be familiar with the framework or its objectives. By organizing targeted outreach, awareness-raising sessions, and participatory discussions, the framework can be better understood, and stakeholders are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and commitment. This process was seen as essential for building trust, aligning expectations, and ensuring the successful implementation of the framework at the community level.

Participants also suggested improvements to the visual representation of the framework, particularly regarding the use of arrows, symbols, and keys to enhance clarity and readability. It was noted that further consultations will be necessary for detailed discussions of the framework in order to build common understanding of the flow or sequence of its components and how they interrelate, especially for stakeholders who may rely more on visual guidance than textual explanations.

Finally, it was suggested that the framework should be part of a yet to be developed national management plan for MPAs to ensure long-term sustainability.

Overall, no modifications were made to the framework following the validation workshop, as the general feedback indicated acceptance among participants. While no changes to the framework itself were deemed necessary, key concerns highlighted during the workshop centred around its implementation and sustainability. These concerns have been summarised above and should be considered should the framework be taken forward or applied in future work.



Figure 2: A group photo of participants at the validation workshop.





Figure 3: Participants input and discussion session at the validation workshop.

## 5. Key steps towards implementation of a National Framework for MPA Awareness Raising

- **Stakeholder Analysis**

An exhaustive stakeholder analysis will delineate and rank target groups, including primary stakeholders: fishers, fish processors, youth, and leaders of coastal communities; secondary stakeholders include individuals such as policymakers, enforcement agencies, researchers, and media personnel, NGOs, CSOs, development collaborators and the private sector. The mapping must evaluate each group's knowledge levels, attitudes, behaviours, and communication preferences to customize messages and methodologies with precision.

- **Strategic Messaging**

The strategy should formulate precise, focused communications about MPAs, their objectives, and associated regulations. It should emphasise the advantages of MPAs, including the enhancement of fish populations, the enhancement of community livelihoods, and the bolstering of climate resilience. Highlight the significance of stakeholders as guardians of marine resources. It is essential to focus on the pride exhibited by both fishers and members of the community.

- **Communication Channels**

To achieve extensive reach and engagement, the strategy should incorporate a combination of conventional and contemporary communication channels, including mass media, digital platforms, and community outreach programs that exemplify peer-to-peer education and training facilitated by fishers. Utilizing visual tools, such as murals, is of utmost importance. The experiences of the GFRA in this context could be utilized effectively. The utilization of previously employed tools, such as jingles and posters, ought to be sustained.

- **Behaviour Change Interventions**

Engaging stakeholders in the design and implementation of MPAs is essential for fostering a sense of ownership and accountability. Incentive programs provide concrete benefits, such as subsidized fishing equipment or opportunities for alternative livelihoods, in exchange for compliance with MPA regulations. It is important to use positive reinforcement to acknowledge and honor community members who adopt sustainable practices through awards and public recognition. Leverage respected local figures, including community leaders and accomplished fishers, to showcase the benefits of MPAs will be invaluable.



The GFRA, in collaboration with Hen Mpoano, has successfully identified and trained champions of MPAs.

- **Capacity Building**

It is crucial to establish a specialized communication unit within relevant government agencies with explicit mandate to establish and manage MPAs. This unit should concentrate on training personnel in social behaviour change principles, participatory communication, and effective monitoring and evaluation strategies. The FC has a corporate affairs unit made up of enthusiastic young officer's eager to broaden their knowledge. Their skills can be further developed in this area. The GFRA has already conducted several communication training sessions to enhance its capabilities. Additionally, non-governmental and civil society organisations can benefit from training workshops designed to sharpen their skills in designing and executing social and behaviour change campaigns. Providing community leaders with the essential skills to serve as ambassadors for MPA awareness and education will be highly valuable.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is essential to establish key performance indicators. This will facilitate the assessment of potential enhancements in understanding regarding MPAs among stakeholders, alongside favourable transformations in perspectives toward marine conservation. The incorporation of feedback into iterative planning cycles is of paramount importance. The strategy ought to be regarded as a dynamic document, necessitating regular review and updates informed by insights derived from monitoring and evaluation processes.

- **Funding and Sustainability**

The strategy should encompass a specific allocation of resources for communication and outreach initiatives, addressing the creation of materials, the implementation of campaigns, the enhancement of capacities, and the assessment of outcomes. To guarantee commitment and long-term viability, it is imperative for the Government to allocate resources within the budgets designated for MPA implementation. While development partners and international conservation organizations offer funding for marine education, it is imperative to avoid overreliance on this support. It would be wise to cultivate economical tools and strategies to diminish dependence on external financing.

## 5.1. Implementation Roadmap

MPAs implementation roadmaps have mostly focused on putting plans into action, establishing governance structures, enforcing regulations, and monitoring progress (UNEP, 2006). A proposed implementation guideline, specific actions to be undertaken

within a designated timeline, as well as recommended stakeholders to aid those strategies, are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Roadmap for implementing suggested framework.**

Timeline	Actions	Responsible Stakeholder
<b>Short-Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct stakeholder analysis and develop initial communication strategy and messaging.</li> <li>- Launch pilot campaigns in select coastal communities.</li> <li>- Train relevant government officials in SBC principles.</li> </ul>	MoFAD/FC, MESTI, WD.
<b>Medium-Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scale up campaigns to cover all coastal regions.</li> <li>- Establish community-based feedback mechanisms.</li> <li>- Develop partnerships with NGOs, CSOs, and the private sector.</li> </ul>	CSOs, NGOs, Private sector.
<b>Long-Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Institutionalize social and behavioural change (SBC) approaches within national fisheries policies.</li> <li>- Monitor and evaluate the impact of outreach efforts.</li> <li>- Ensure sustainable funding and continuous capacity building.</li> </ul>	MoFAD/FC, MESTI, WD.

This framework outlines a comprehensive approach for the development and execution of a robust strategy aimed at enhancing awareness of MPAs and advancing marine environmental education in Ghana. By prioritizing behaviour change, promoting inclusivity, and utilizing a variety of communication methods, the strategy will enhance understanding while also encouraging adherence and responsibility essential for the success of MPAs. Incorporating this framework into the MPA development process, along with sufficient funding and well-defined role assignments, will elevate Ghana to a prominent position in sustainable marine conservation.

## 6. Conclusion

Particularly in places like GCTPA, in Ghana's Western Region, which is rich in marine species and vital to the livelihoods of nearby populations, MPAs provide a strong measure for preserving biodiversity and maintaining fisheries. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of MPAs depends on efficient awareness-raising campaigns that transcend simple communication of MPA goals to promoting actual behaviour change. This change calls for coordinated interventions across the local, regional, and national levels that address the socio-economic and cultural reality of Ghana's coastal communities at all levels. By means of capacity building programs, participatory awareness campaigns, and community-led data gathering activities, customized interventions enable many stakeholders to understand the ecological and economic justifications for MPAs. These efforts are able to encourage both acceptance and responsibility for environmental preservation by using local knowledge and customs. Targeted incentives may encourage people to change their behaviour. Good examples from countries like Senegal and Madagascar demonstrate how much community engagement and cultural congruence influence whether or not a person achieves compliance (Richard and Ratsirarson, 2013; IUCN, 2018).

Coordination becomes especially important at the regional level to close the discrepancy between national policies and localized operations. Regional campaigns using media outlets—such as bilingual radio and TV shows—can boost awareness campaigns throughout many districts. Technical ability is developed and community cooperation is promoted via workshops and fisher-to-fisher discussions, hence establishing shared responsibility for MPA management. Strengthening regional coordination and expanding alternative livelihood projects would help regional stakeholders to support the necessary alignment with national objectives and solve common difficulties by means of alternative livelihood initiatives.

Establishing circumstances that improve the understanding and management of MPA is mostly dependent on the government because aligning different initiatives depends on a thorough effort aiming at raising awareness and educating the public about the MPA. This kind of approach should complement Ghana's National MPA Implementation Strategy to guarantee that local and regional initiatives have sufficient financing, consistent message, and well defined policies.

National campaigns stressing the ongoing advantages of MPAs for food security, eco-tourism, and climate resilience using television, radio, and social media might attract a larger audience including urban people and legislators. Including marine conservation subjects into the national school curriculum will help to produce a generation aware of environmental problems and integrate sustainable practices across institutions.

These multi-level actions are relevant. A coherent and well-funded national framework would provide uniformity across all tiers, therefore allowing stakeholders to cooperate towards sustainable marine resource management. Such a framework would link local, regional, and national stakeholders, standardize communication, and provide clear



procedures for funding, coordination, and accountability. Including behaviour-change strategies into this framework would not only ensure the success of its MPAs but also provide an example for inclusive and sustainable marine conservation in the region.

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## Ocean Country Partnership Programme

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) is a UK Government-led programme delivered under the Blue Planet Fund in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) eligible countries. Through this programme, Cefas, JNCC and MMO will provide technical assistance to support countries to tackle marine pollution, support sustainable seafood practices and establish designated, well-managed and enforced MPAs.



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