

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The water is clear blue, and numerous small orange fish are scattered throughout. In the foreground, there are large, rounded, light-brown coral structures. A prominent fish with a yellow body and a dark vertical stripe is swimming in the center. Other colorful coral and smaller fish are visible in the background.

MPA Short Course

3. MPAs in Ghana

MPA Course Overview

~~1. Introduction to MPAs~~ ✓

~~2. MPAs around the world~~ ✓

3. MPAs in Ghana

4. MPA identification and regulation

5. MPA management planning & management

6. MPA monitoring

7. MPA & Marine Spatial Planning

8. Your Voice

You are here!



Learning Objectives

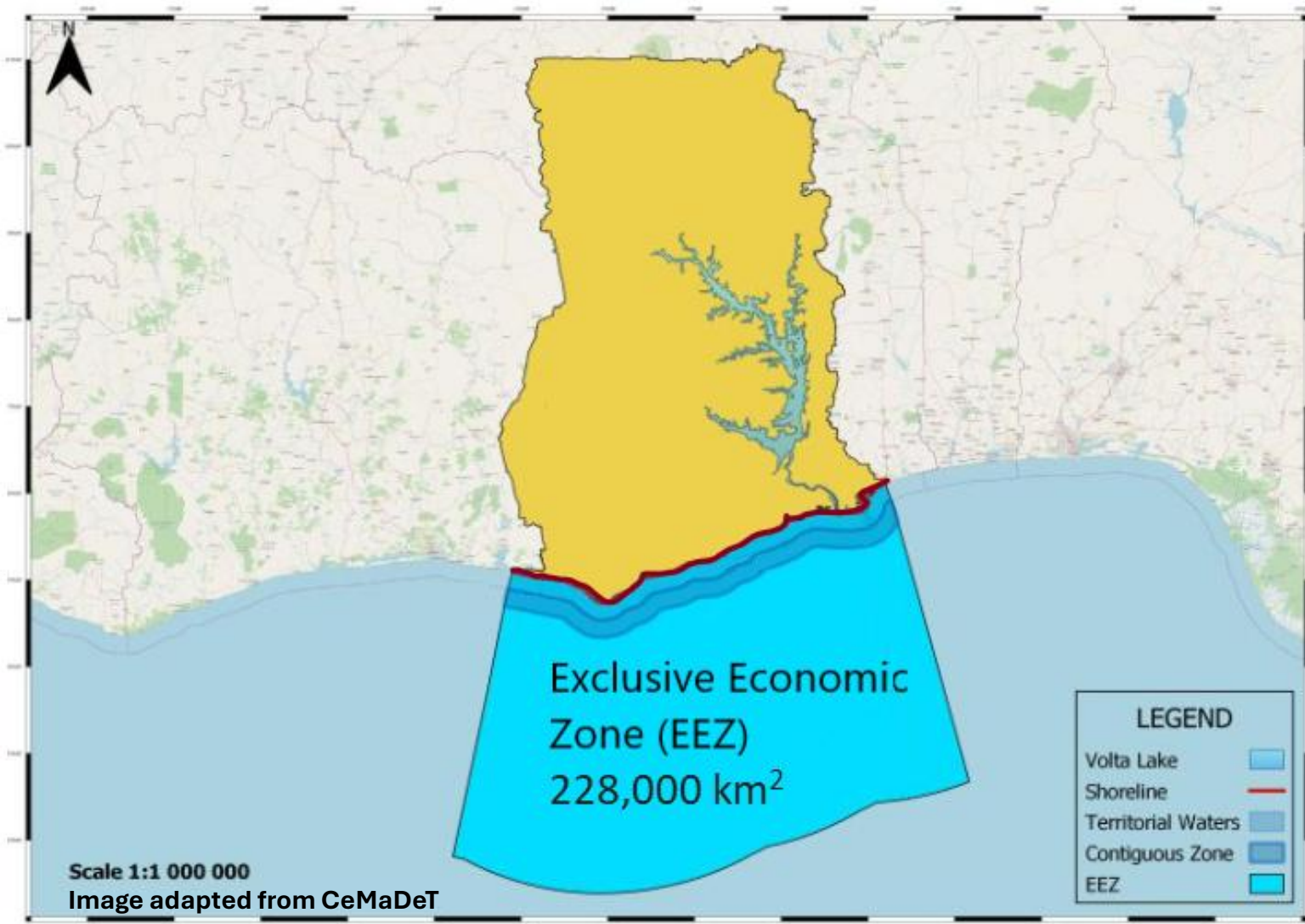
In this module, you will learn about:

- Ghana's marine environment & its:
 - contribution to national development;
 - threats that it faces; and
 - Marine conservation requirements
- The status of MPAs and other types of marine protection in Ghana



Credit: Getty Images

Ghana's Marine Environment



GHANA

Location: West Africa within the Gulf of Guinea

Coastline: 550km

EEZ: 228,000 km²

Continental shelf: 20,900 km²

Population (2023): ~33.8 million

Growth rate: 1.9%

Ghana's Marine Ecosystems

Mangroves



Credit: Ghana Wildlife Society

Wetlands



Credit: IUCN

Lagoons



Credit: BBC

Rocky beaches



© OCPP/JNCC

Sandy beaches



© OCPP/JNCC

Estuaries

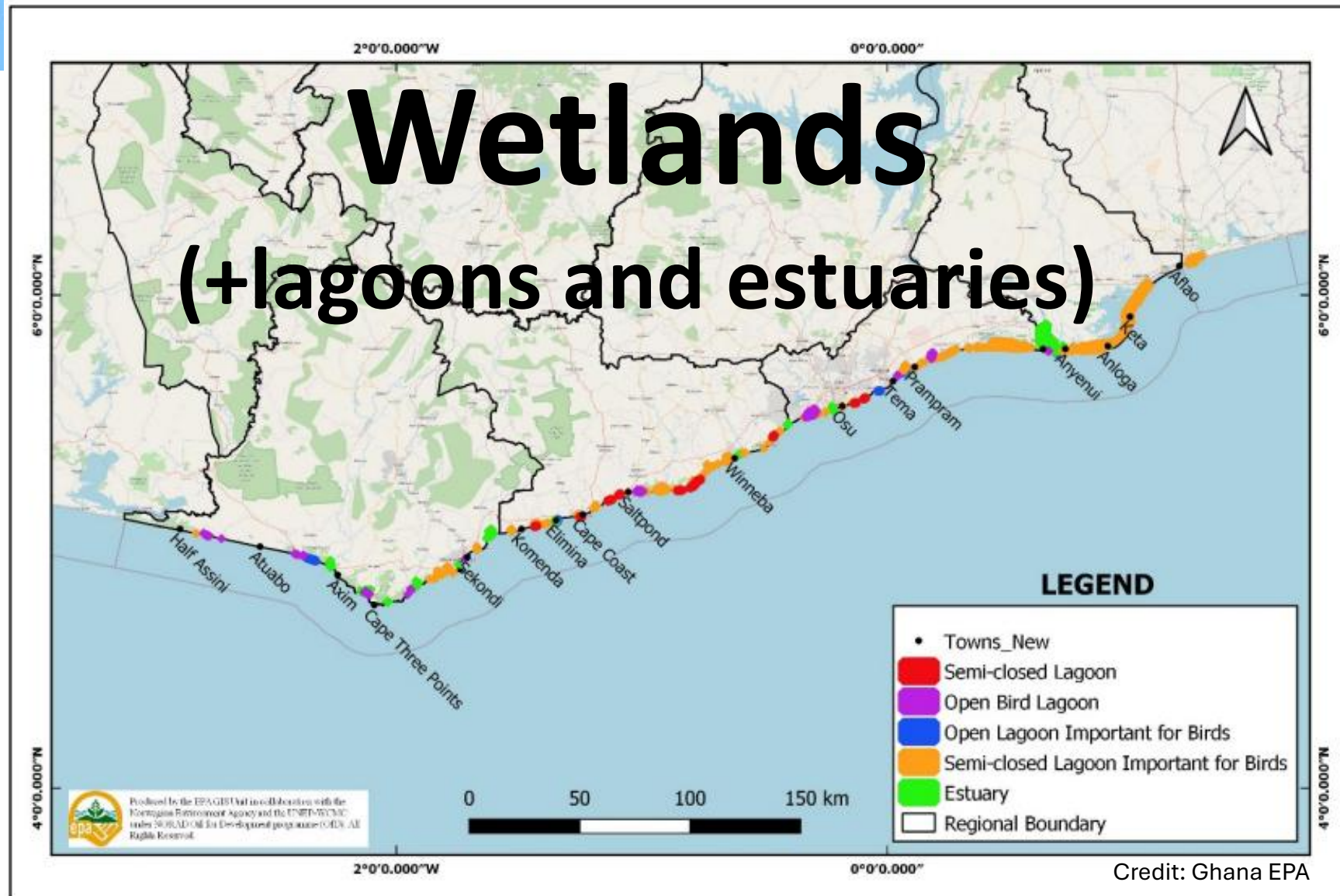


Credit: Google Earth

Ghana's Marine Ecosystems

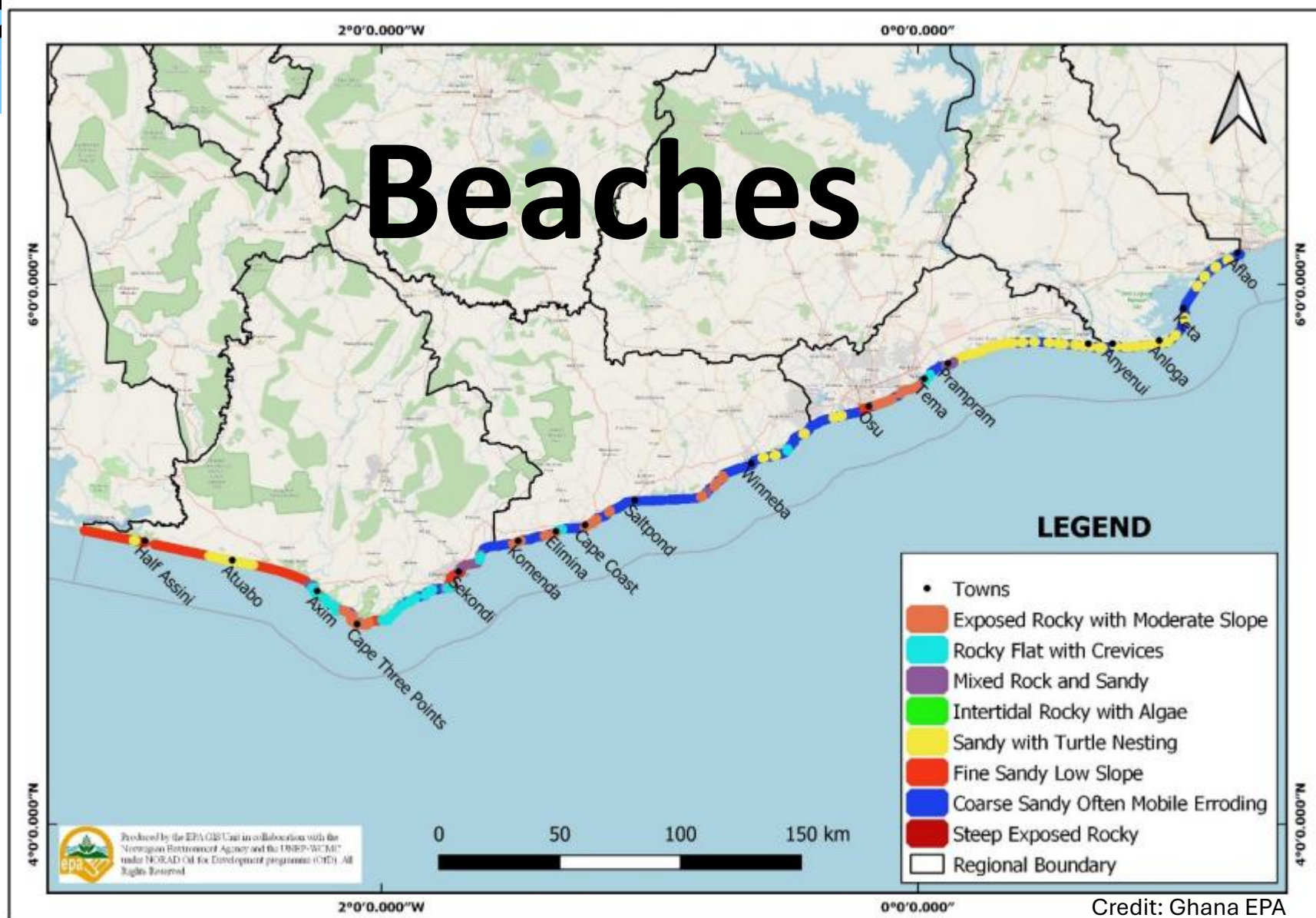


Ghana's Marine Ecosystems



Ghana's Marine Ecosystems

Beaches



Biodiversity & Ecological Functioning

Chuku et al., 2022. DOI: 10.3389/fmars.2022.884715



Mangrove Oysters Periwinkles Bloody Cockles Whelks



Round sardinella (*Sardinella aurita*), EPA 2020



Razor Clams Freshwater Clams Shrimps/Prawns Brown Mussels



Atlantic Blue Marlin (*Makaira nigricans*) EPA, 2020



Anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) EPA, 2020



Scalloped Hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*) EPA, 2020

Ecological importance :

- Major upwelling system
- Fisheries (coastal / pelagic, finfish and shellfish)
- Turtle nesting grounds
- Feeding grounds for resident and migrating bird species
- Wetland habitats for crocodiles and other reptiles



Migrating birds feeding on wetland / coastal environments, EPA, 2020



Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) EPA, 2020

Ecosystem Services

- Fisheries
- Urban development
- Salt production
- Timber & firewood
- Materials for thatching, fencing etc.
- Sand winning / mining
- Oil & gas
- Tourism and recreation



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fgwc-fish.org

Pressures on Ghana's Marine Environment

- **OVEREXPLOITATION**
- **CLIMATE CHANGE**
- **URBANISATION**
- **COASTAL EROSION AND FLOODING**
- **HABITAT DESTRUCTION**
- **POLLUTION**



Credit: NOAA Fisheries Collection

Pressures on Ghana's Marine Environment

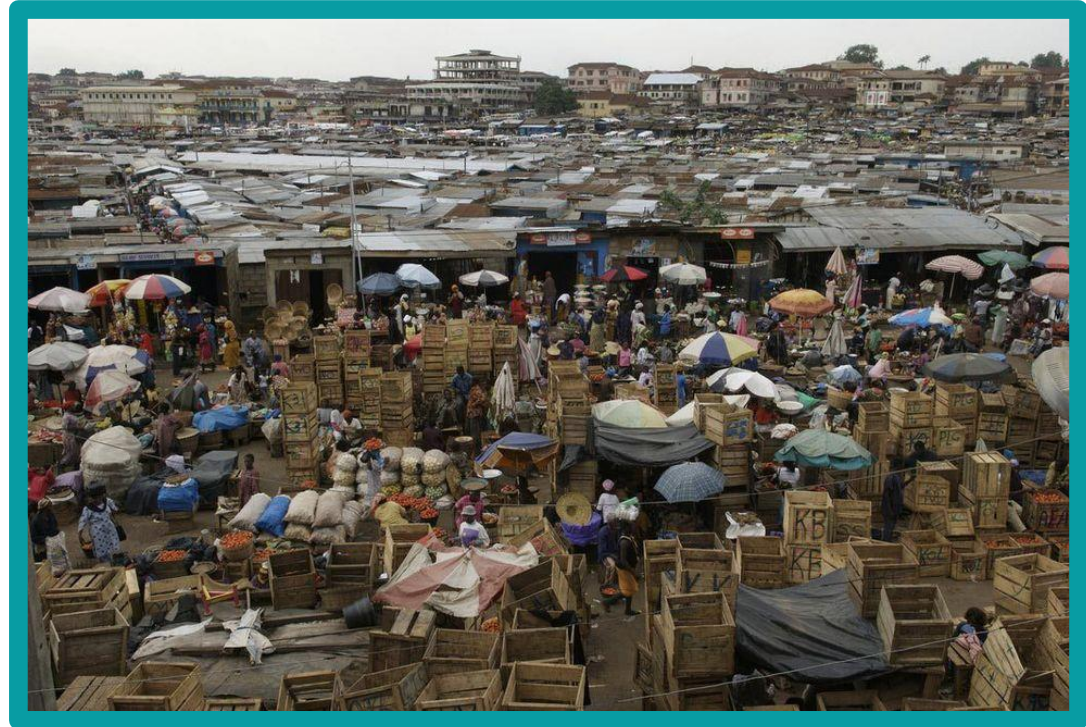
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Credit: BBC Africa, Fuveme

Pressures on Ghana's Marine Environment

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Credit: The World Bank

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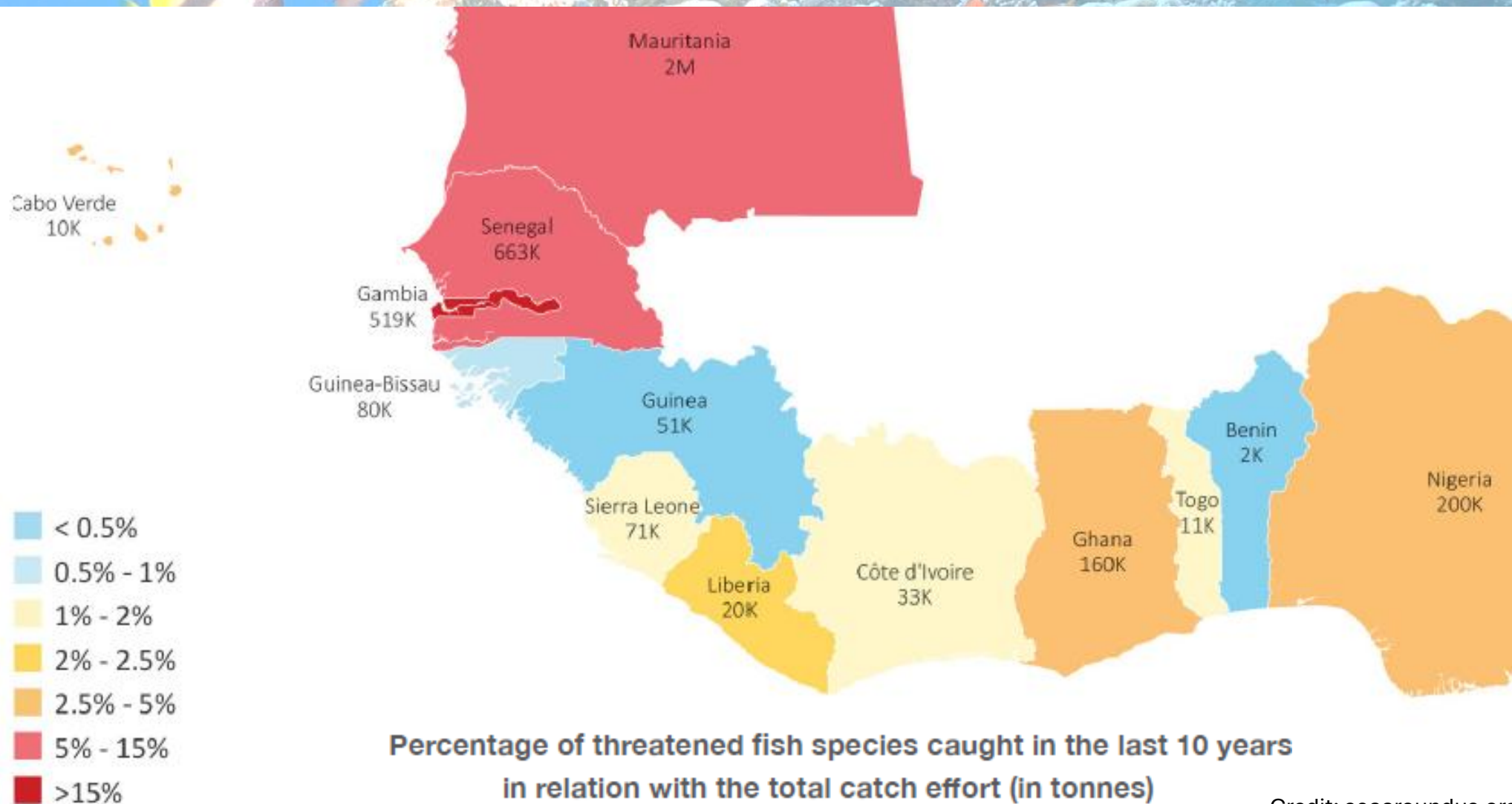
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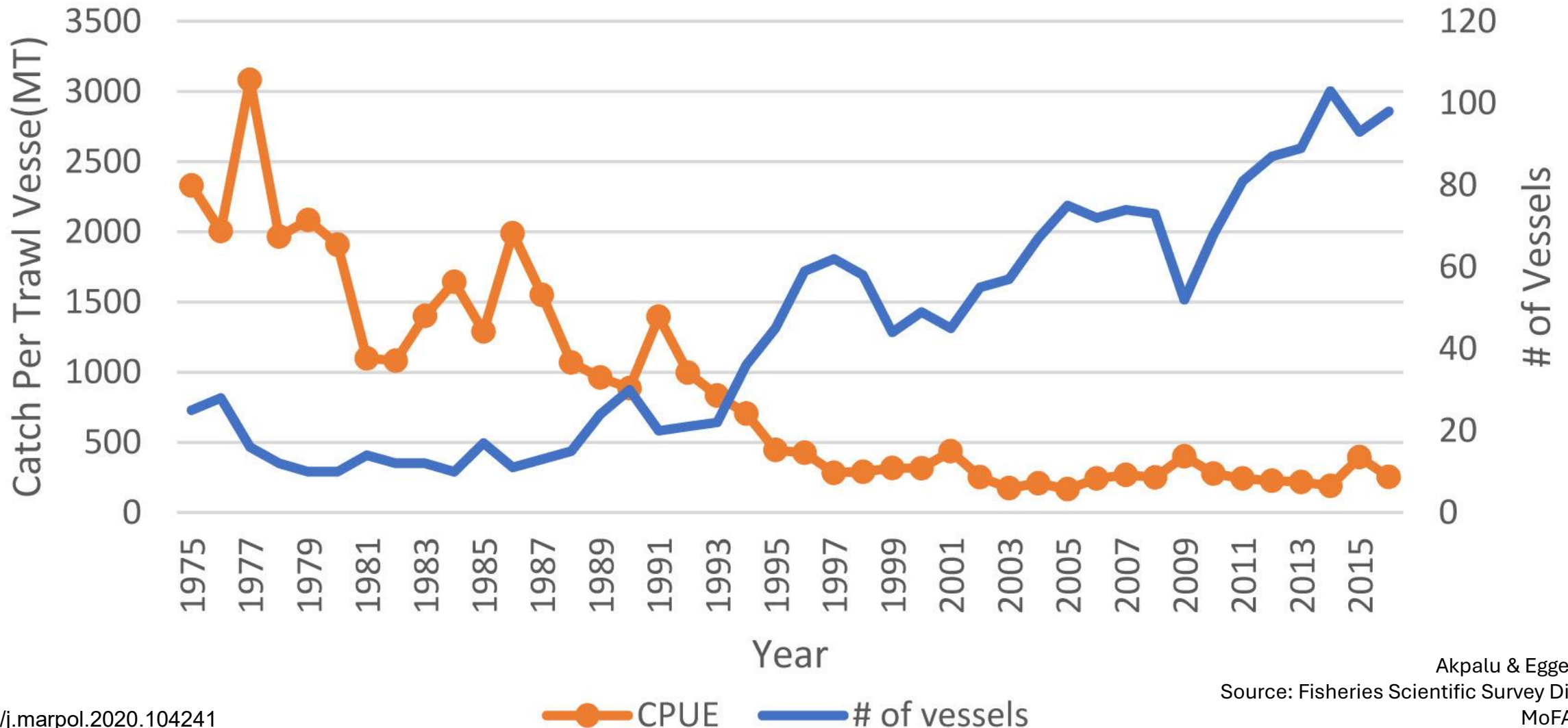


Credit: Christian Thompson/EPA

Overexploitation: Fisheries



Overexploitation: Fisheries



Akpalu & Eggert (2021)

Source: Fisheries Scientific Survey Division of MoFA, Ghana

Exploitation: Oil & Gas

Environmental impacts associated with oil and gas production in Ghana. Table adapted from Arthur & Amo-Fosu (2020)

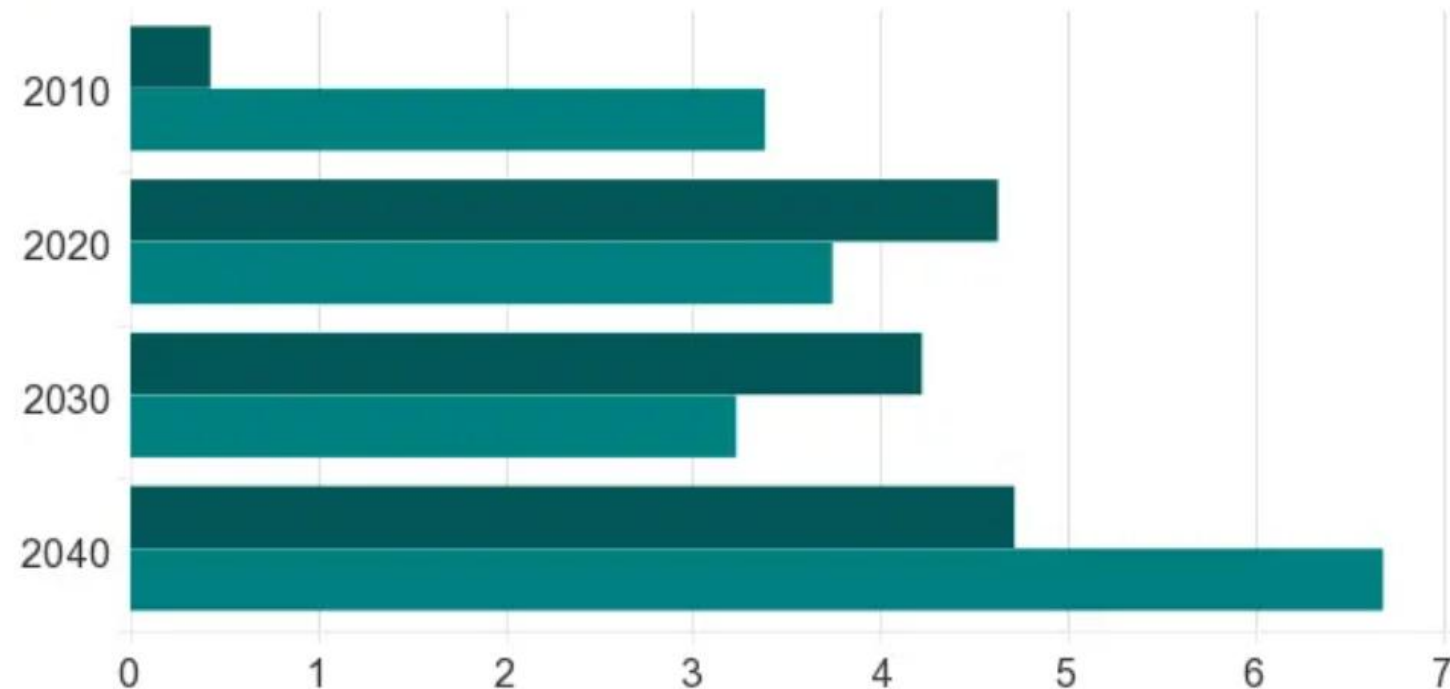
Variable	N	Mean	Index Ranking
Low fish catch	150	4.69	1
Loss of job	150	4.49	2
Increase in accommodation cost	150	4.25	3
Environmental degradation /pollution	150	4.19	4
Cultural change	150	4.06	5
Bad state of the road and the movement of heavy vehicles	150	3.95	6
Low level of income	150	3.67	7
Harassment by naval officials	150	3.55	8
Unable to fish at all	150	3.28	9
Legal issues against offenders	150	2.9	10

Climate change: Sea Level Rise

How much land might be lost through rising sea levels

Submerged area in square km

■ Low sea level rise ■ High sea level rise



Source: World Bank, 2010 study

BBC

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-36257360>

Climate Change: Coastal Erosion

Play video
https://youtu.be/w7Y_-DUGful

TRT WORLD

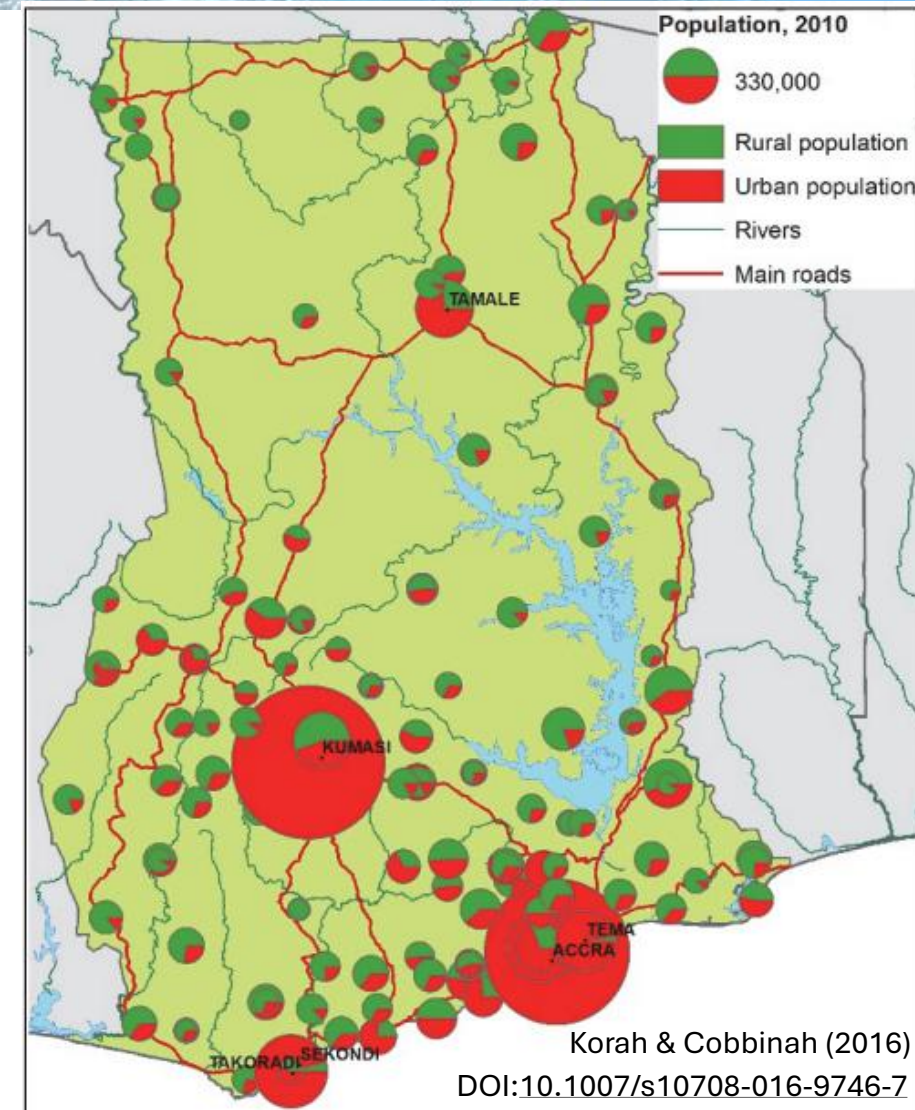


Africa Matters

GHANA'S SLOW DESTRUCTION

Urbanisation

- 60% of all industry located in coastal regions
- Rapid increase in population density
- Increased demand for food, timber, building materials
- Increased exploitation of wetlands, arable land and fuel wood
- Urban planning lacking resulting in unregulated development
 - Poor sanitation
 - Pollution
 - Ecosystem exploitation
 - Coastal erosion



Pollution

Play video-
<https://youtu.be/PBx7KFKws>
mw



Habitat Destruction: Mangroves

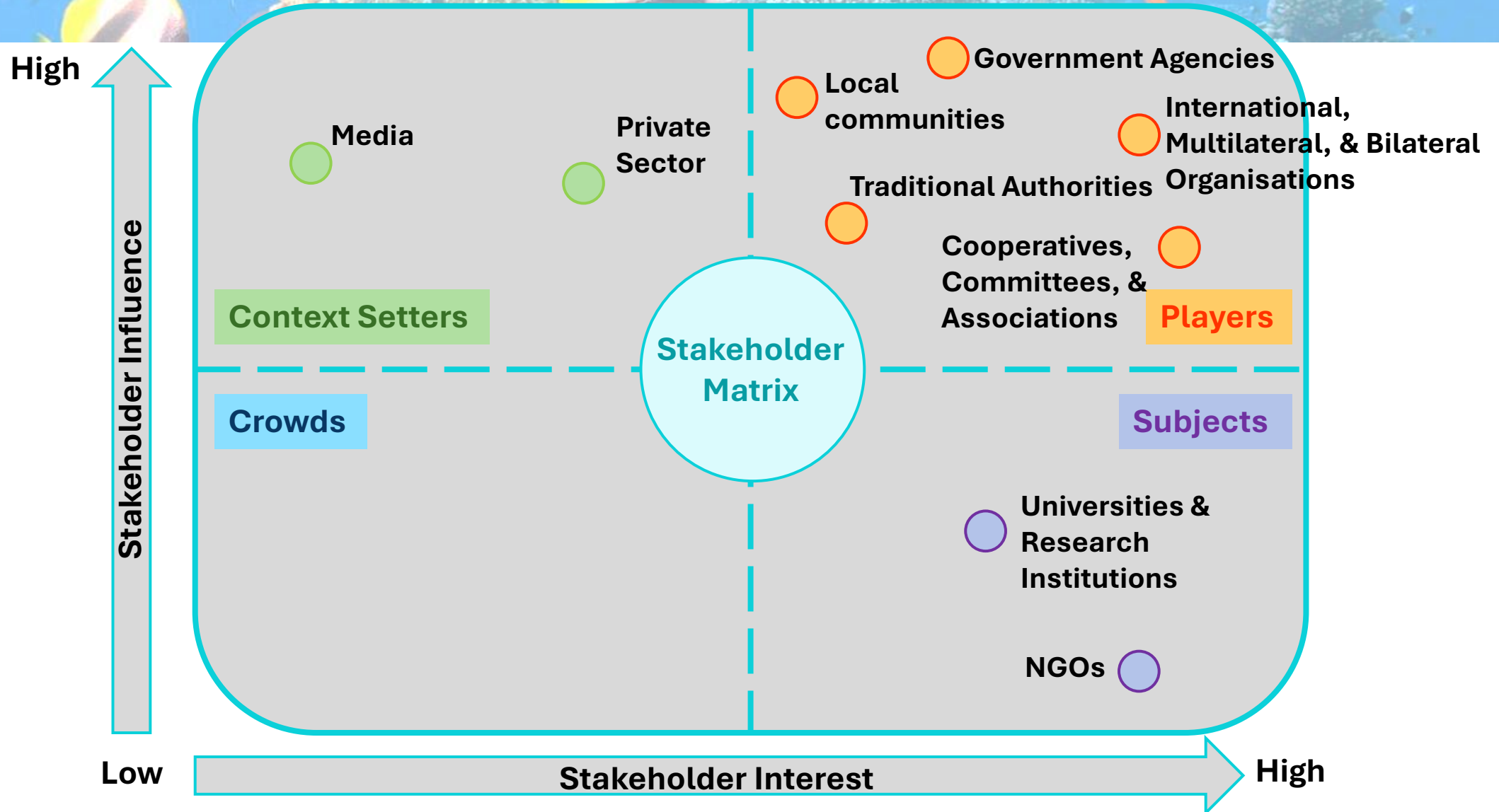
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<https://youtu.be/kikuzOoN0n8>



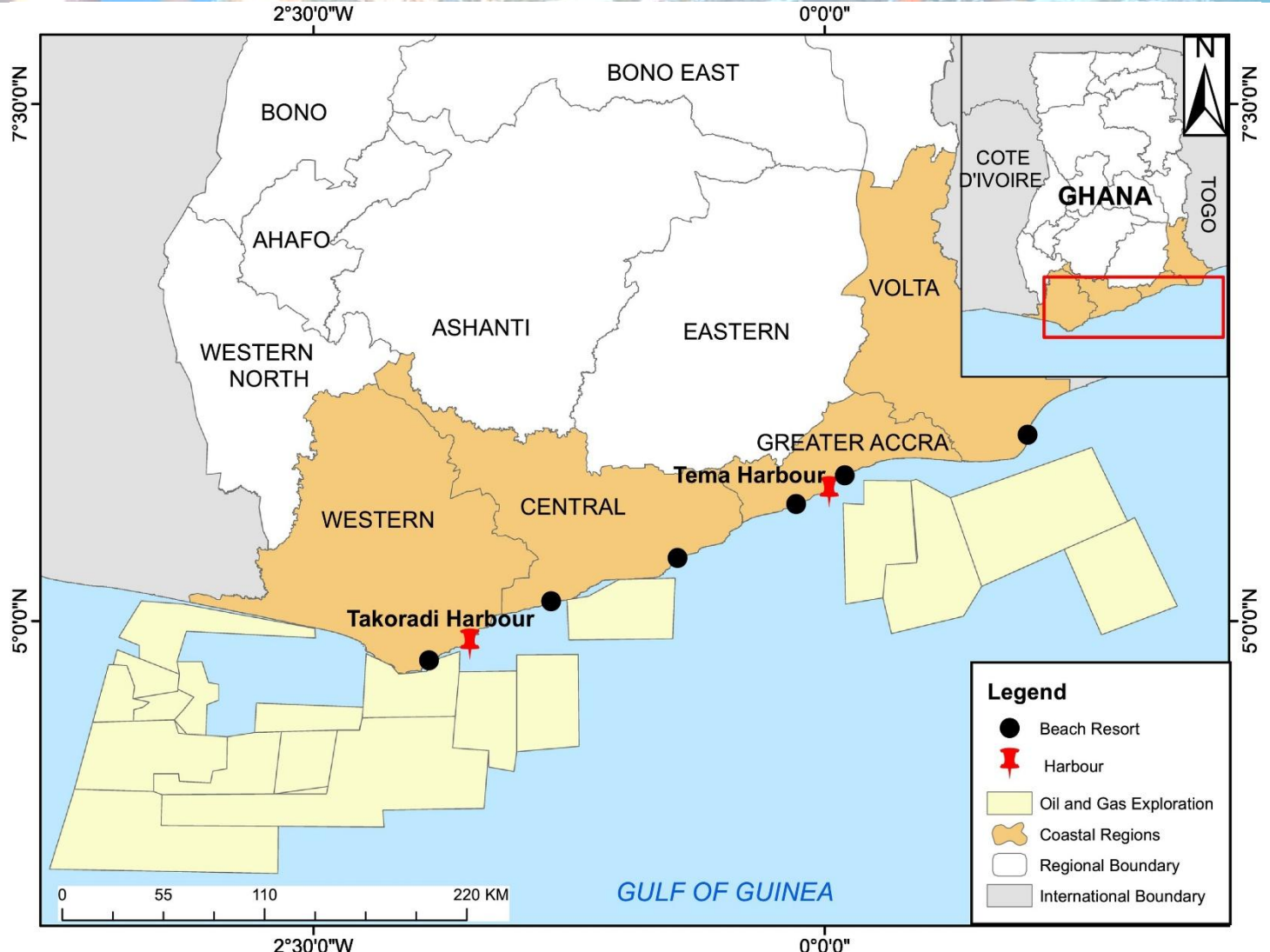
**Revitalizing Ghana's Mangroves
and Coastal Livelihoods**



The people dimension of Ghana's marine environment



The people dimension of Ghana's marine environment



Takvi *et al.*, 2023.
DOI:
[10.1016/j.marpolbul.2023.115735](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2023.115735)

MPA Drivers in Ghana

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

Global Ocean Alliance (30x30)

UN Sustainable Development Goals

AIMS 2050

Convention d'Abidjan

RAMPAO

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

ABES

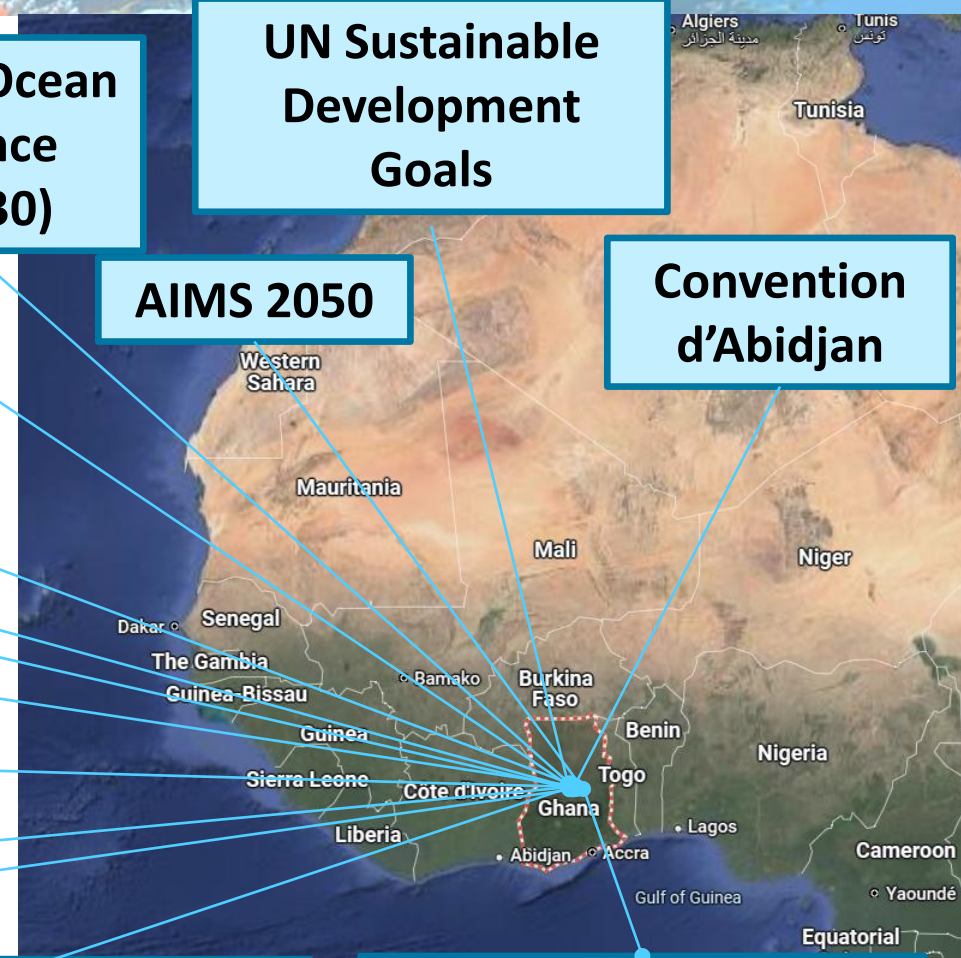
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

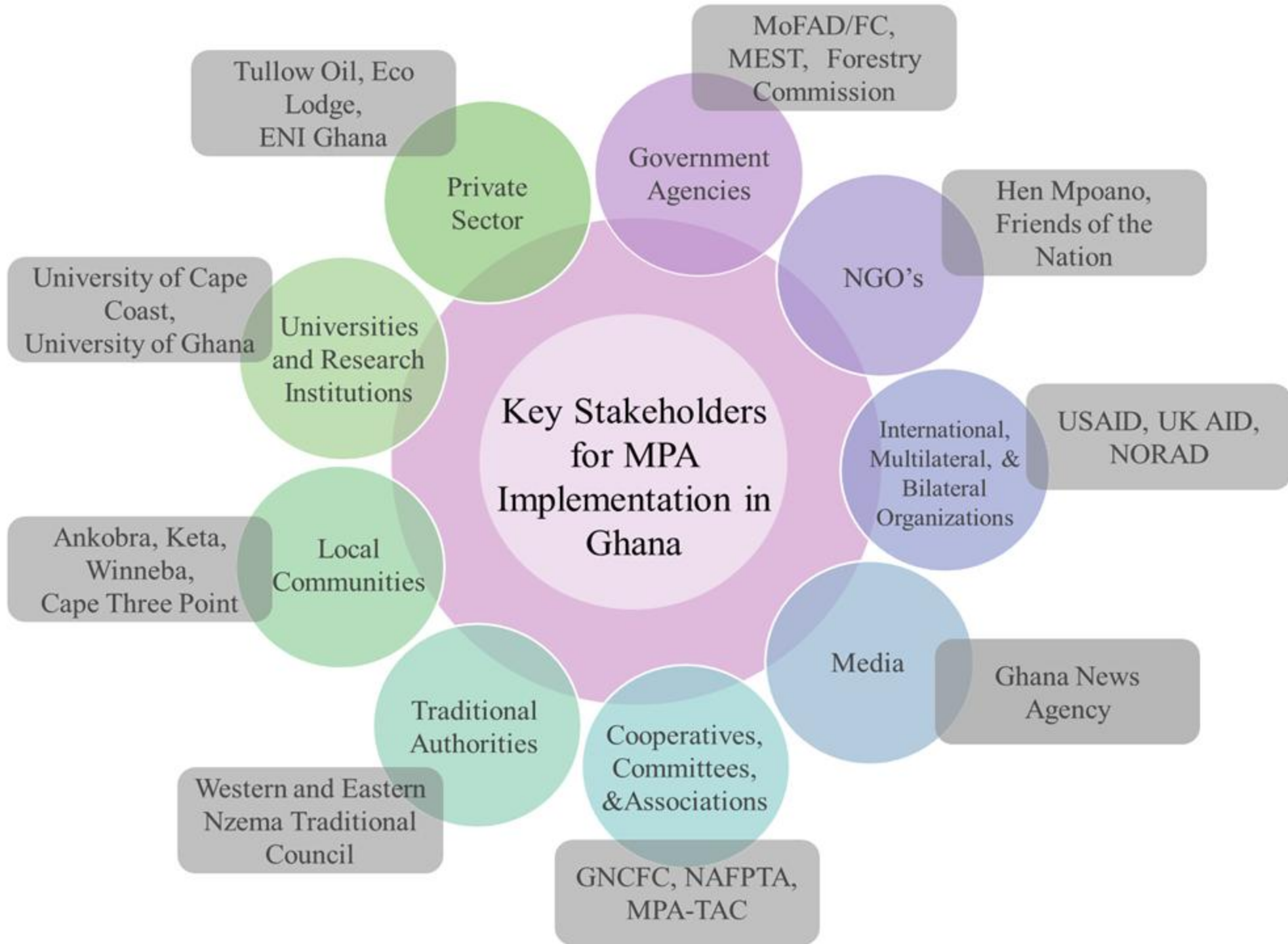
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

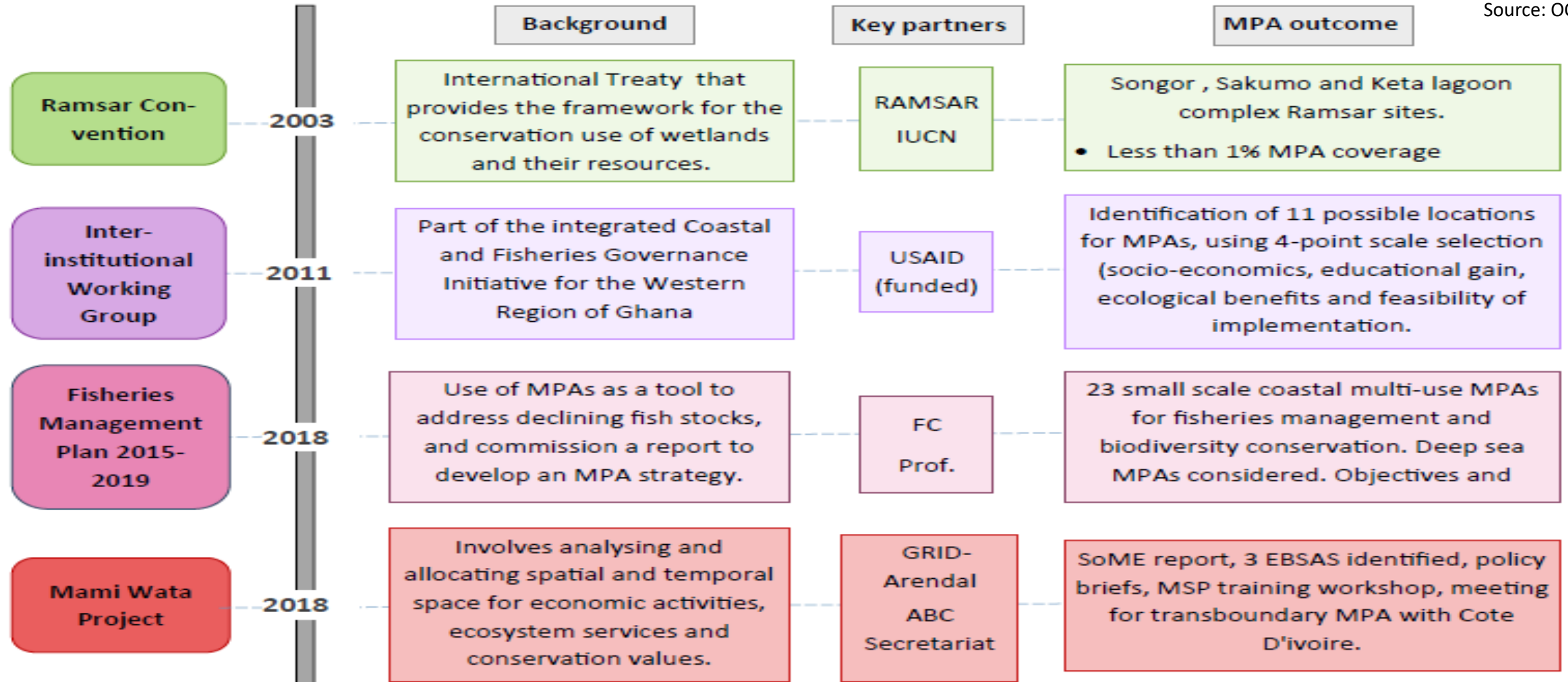
Africa Union Agenda 2063



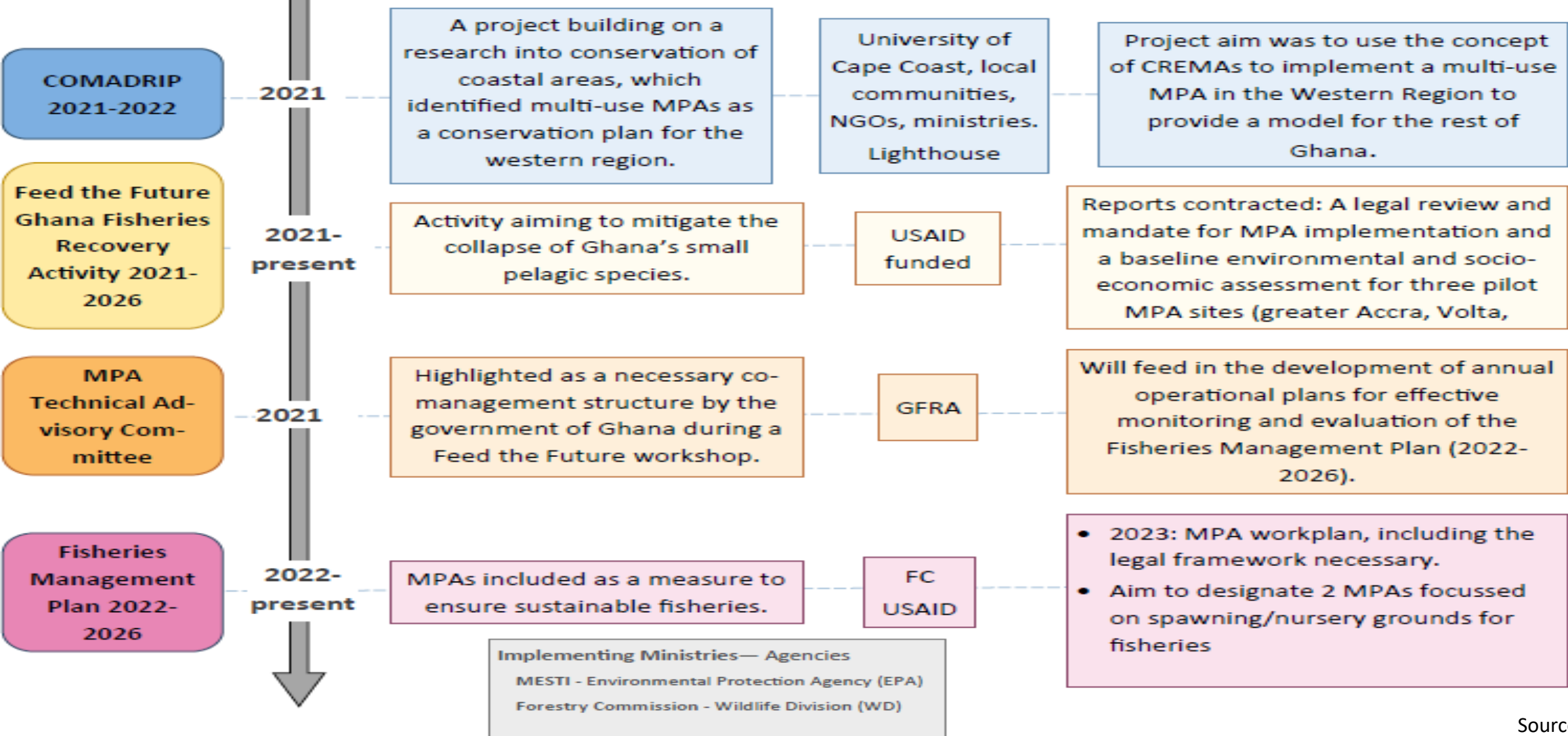


Timeline of MPAs & other designations in Ghana 2003 - 2018

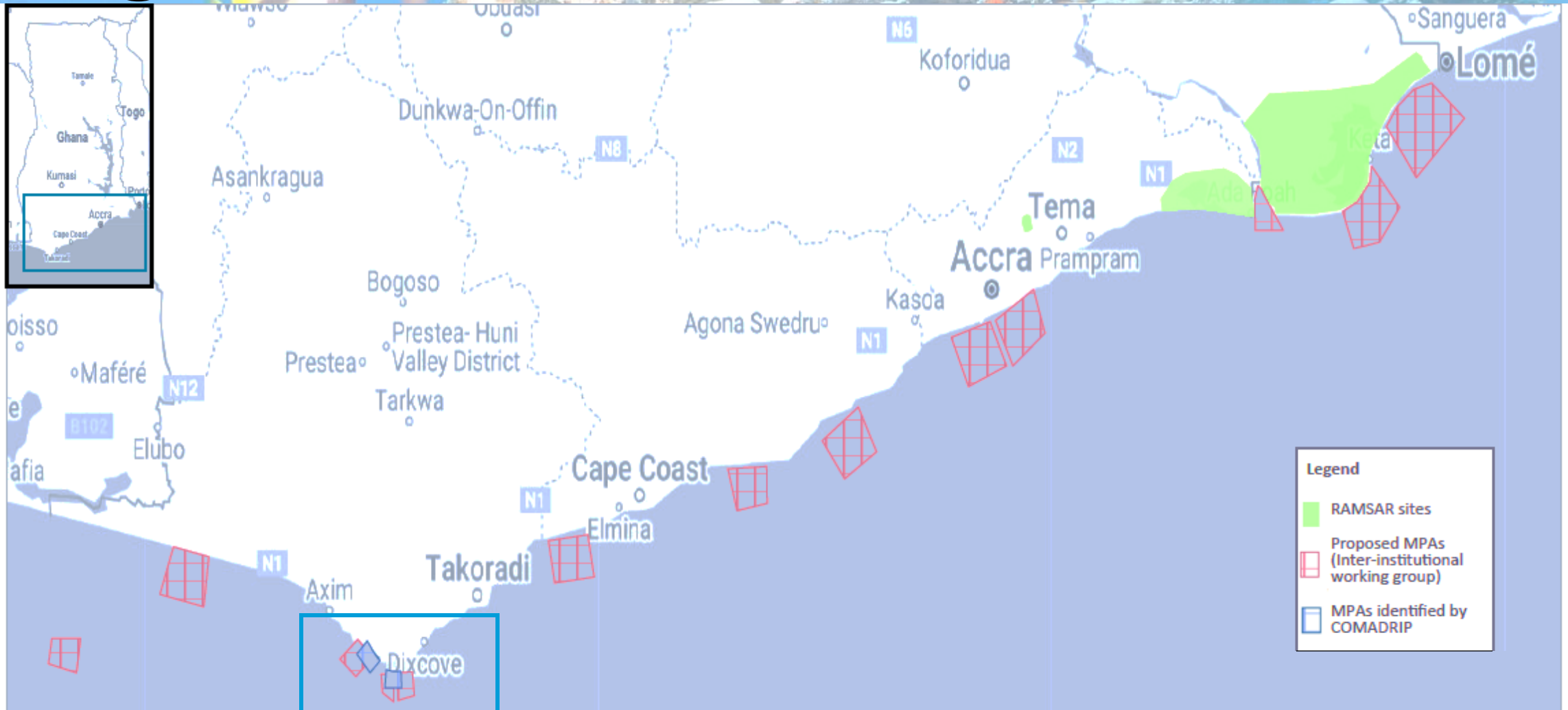
Source: OCPP



Timeline of MPAs & other designations in Ghana 2018 - Present

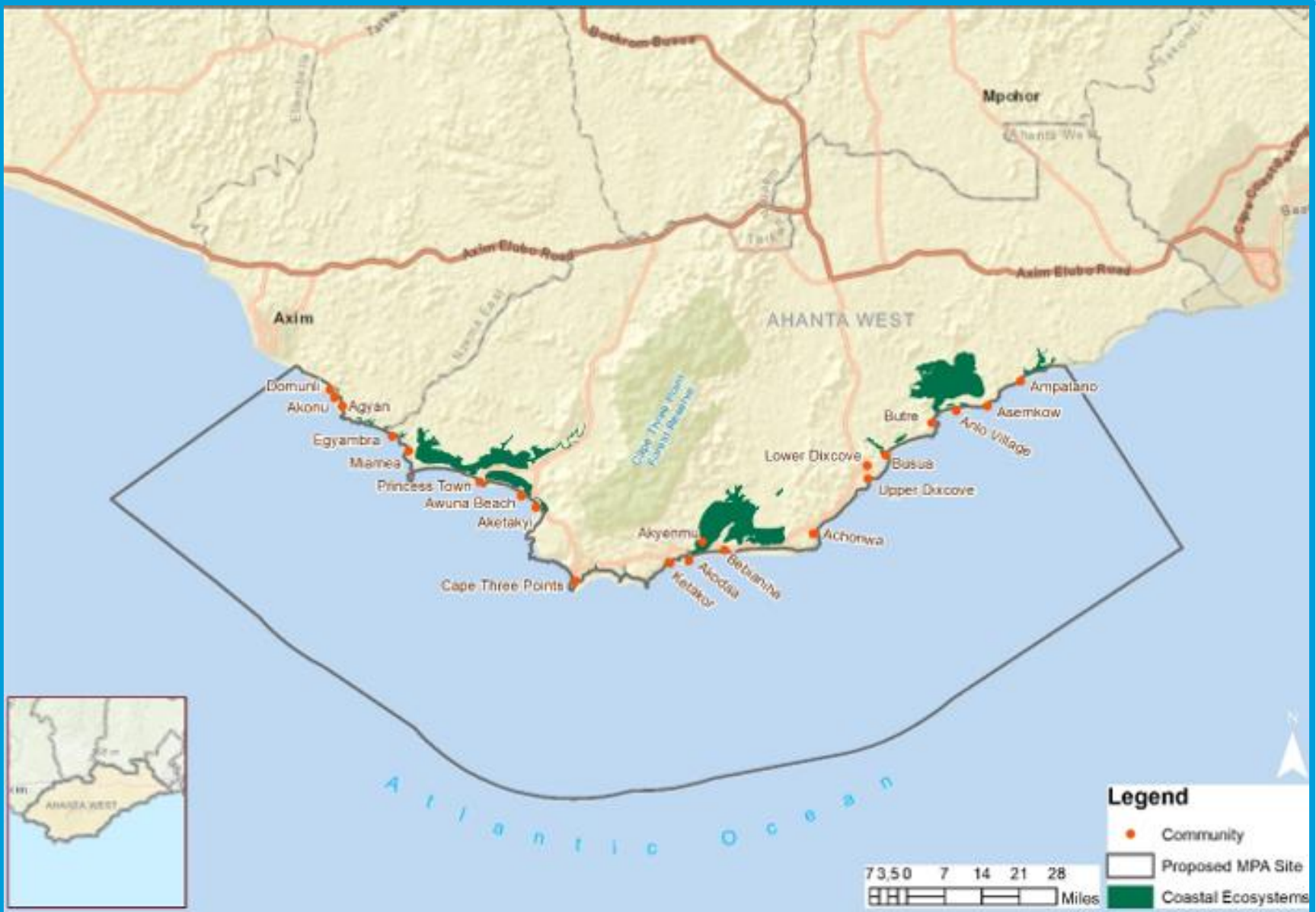


Map of potential MPAs & other designations in Ghana



Greater Cape Three Points Area (GCTPA)

Greater Cape Three Points Area (GCTPA)



Source: OCPP and Hen Mpoano

Ghana's Institutional Framework

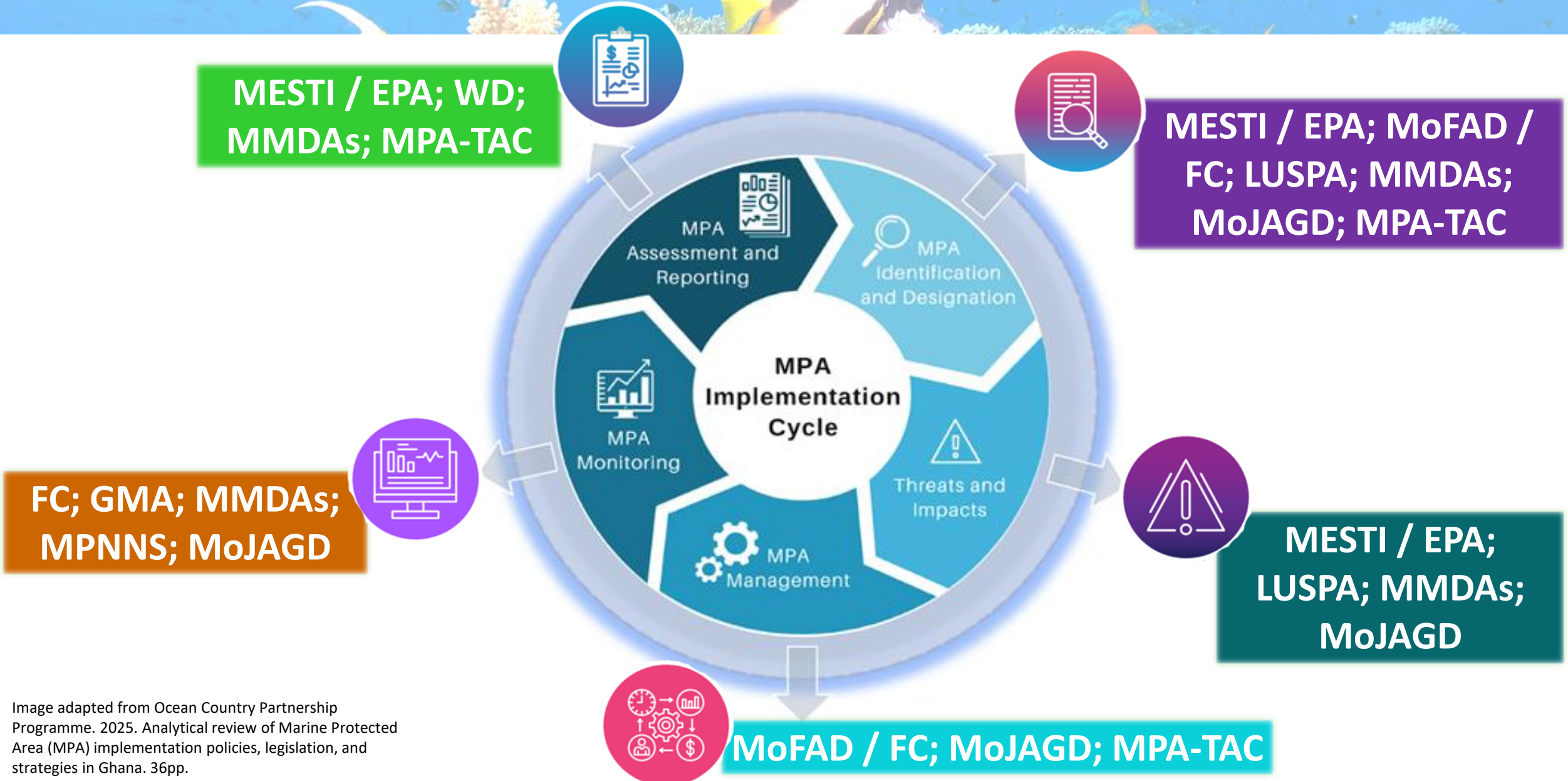


Image adapted from Ocean Country Partnership Programme. 2025. Analytical review of Marine Protected Area (MPA) implementation policies, legislation, and strategies in Ghana. 36pp.

Requirements for MPA implementation in Ghana

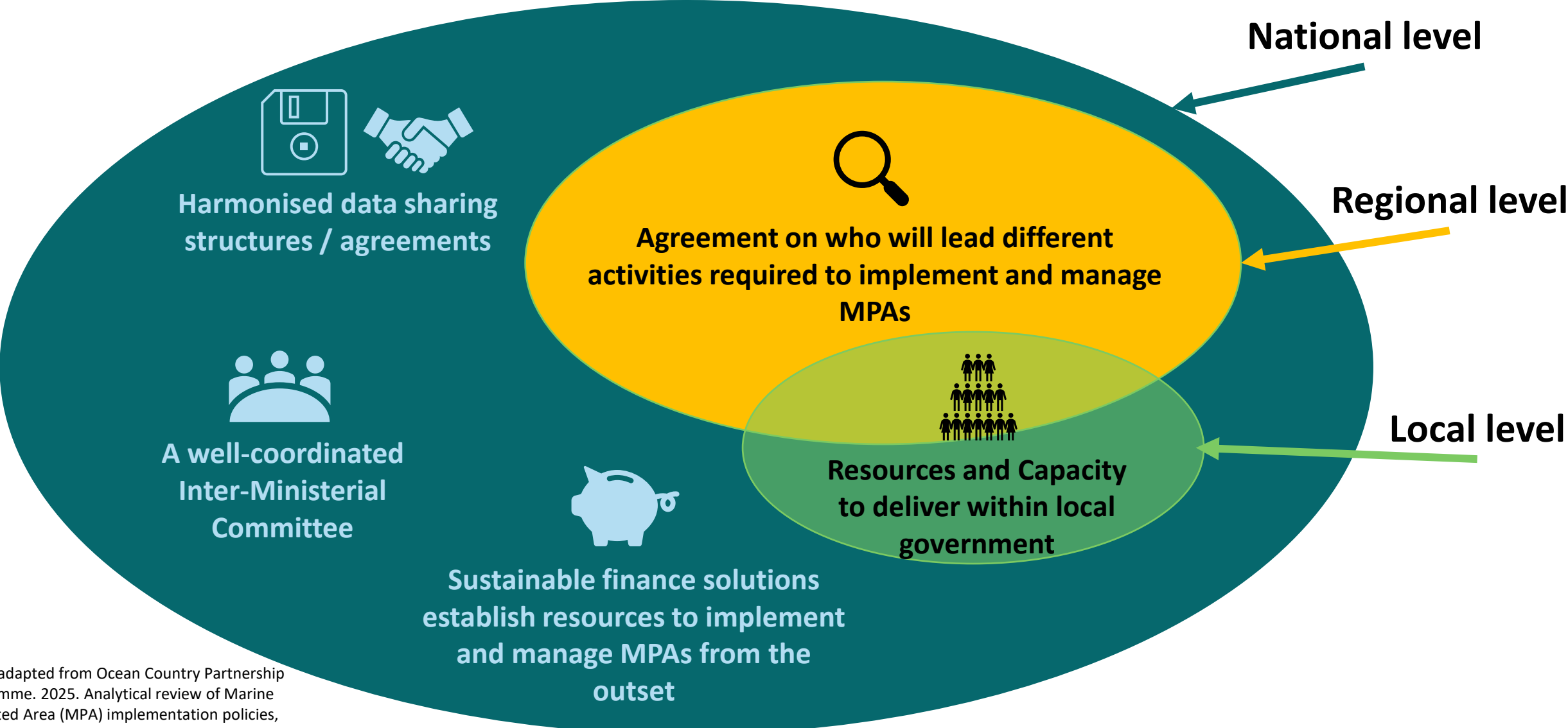
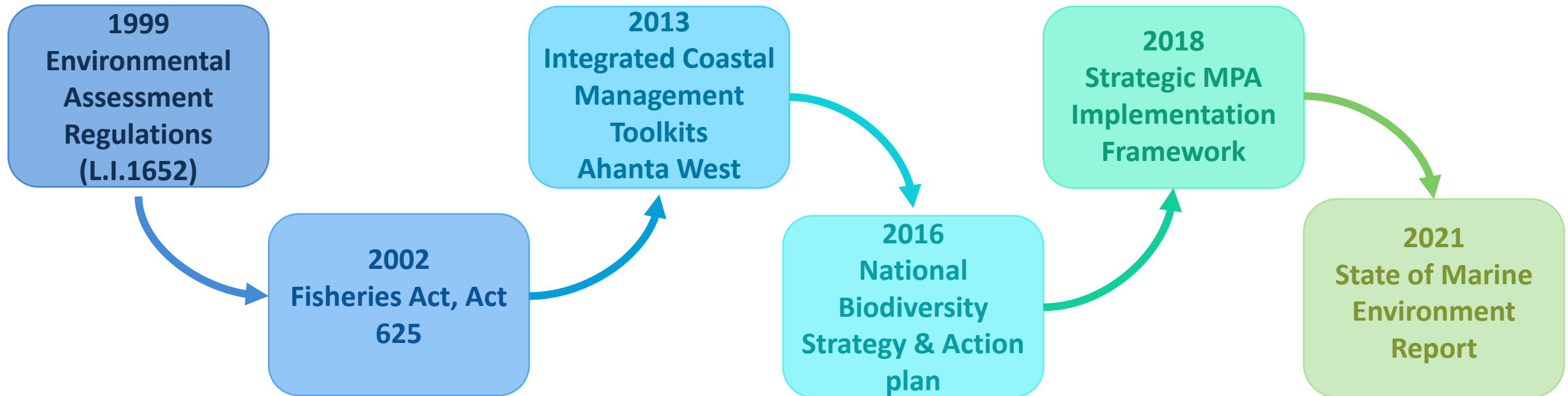


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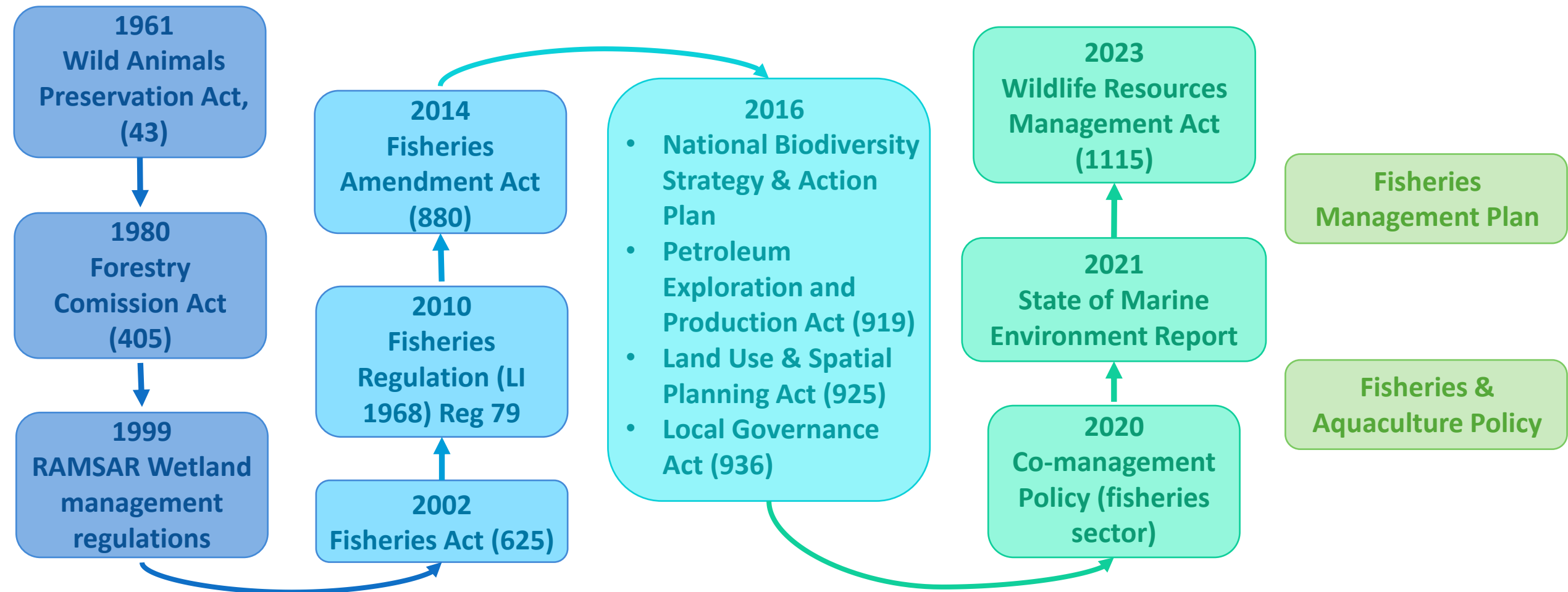
Ghana's Policy Framework For MPA Designation

Timeline of key legislation / policies relating to MPA assessment criteria



Ghana's Policy Framework For MPA Designation

Timeline of key legislation / policies relating to MPA management criteria



Ghana's Policy Framework For MPA Designation

Timeline of key legislation / policies relating to MPA monitoring criteria



Summary

An underwater scene featuring a vibrant coral reef. In the foreground, a large, striped Moorish Idol fish with yellow and white bands is swimming. The background is filled with various smaller fish, including orange ones, and diverse coral structures under clear blue water.

1. Ghana's various marine habitats are a key source of food and livelihoods for coastal communities.
2. Human activities such as resource exploitation and climate change are negatively impacting Ghana's marine ecosystems.
3. While Ghana does not yet have any formally designated MPAs, it does have 5 Ramsar sites and a biosphere reserve.
4. Due to the current threats to Ghana's marine environment, the Government of Ghana has identified the need to create and manage MPAs to protect fish nursery areas and spawning grounds as a strategic measure to sustainably develop Ghana's declining fisheries resources as outlined in the Fisheries Management Plan (2015–2019).
5. In April 2024, it was announced that the Government of Ghana is committed to establishing an MPA in the Greater Cape Three Points Area (GCTPA) by 2026.