



5<sup>th</sup> Symposium | 24 – 28 Oct 2022 | Accra, Ghana

## PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

### Training Sessions | 24 October

The Training Sessions will be geared towards introducing ocean and coasts observations to a wide audience. These may feature a review of the basic principles of Ocean Observations (e.g., fundamentals of oceanography, introduction to satellite & in-situ observations, modelling), common tools and strategies for analyzing observations, and exploring the availability and capacity of data products for information-based decision making.

#### Objectives

- Introduce satellite and in-situ observing and modelling of the ocean and coasts
- Provide a high-level overview of the processes involved in analysing ocean data
- Inform attendees of the availability and capacity of ocean and coastal data products for information-based decision making

#### Target audience

These sessions are open to a maximum of 40 attendees from diverse career backgrounds including academics (research scientists, students), end users (sectoral stakeholders) and local/regional decision and policy makers.

### Plenary Sessions | 25 & 26 October

The Plenary Sessions will be geared towards exploring the role of ocean and coastal observations in addressing **fisheries, ecosystem conservation and coastal hazards** through region-specific **user needs assessment, tools & opportunities, and inspiring examples** of successful applications supporting decision making.

The Plenary Sessions will reflect the context of GEO Blue Planet's Core Action Areas of **Stakeholder Engagement, Cooperation and Co-design and Capacity Development**.

The selection of this year's plenary topics was based on a review of the ocean and coastal related engagement priorities set forth by the relevant regional governing bodies in recent conferences and meetings (e.g. the African Union blue economy strategy, the African Union Commission Agenda 2063, and the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap).



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## Fisheries Session

Fisheries has been identified as an engagement priority given the importance of the fisheries sector to many countries in Africa. It plays a significant role in supporting food and nutritional security and supports the livelihoods of people in many coastal communities across the world. There are however many issues affecting the growth and success of the fisheries sector. The African Union and other governing bodies in the region have identified challenges related to data, assessments, ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management, regulation, enforcement and governance as being of prime importance.

Ocean and coastal observations can provide information about conditions (e.g., harmful algal blooms) that might impact fisheries and aquaculture sites, identify and track illegal fishing activity and monitor environments that support fisheries stock species.



## Ecosystem Conservation Session

Properly conserved ecosystems and well managed coastal and ocean activities are the basis for sustainable Blue Economies that lift regional communities. Healthy and diverse coastal and marine ecosystems provide significant economic, cultural, and social contributions to many countries in Africa, contributing up to 35% of the GDP in some regions primarily through fisheries and tourism. The African continent has over 35,000 kilometers of diverse and unique habitats and ecosystems, inextricably linked with diverse cultures and communities, each with their own aspirations and socio-economic potential.

However, different ocean and coastal regions across Africa are experiencing similar pressures on their diverse and valuable ecosystems. These pressures include Climate Change, pollution, over-exploitation, and increasingly the growing influence of marine litter. These pressures threaten coastal community's potential to benefit sustainably from their unique marine environments, putting long term income stability at risk.

This session will explore how data from satellites may help communities and regions secure the ecosystem foundations of their Blue Growth potential. It recognizes the critical role played by local and regional stakeholders, and stakeholder networks, in all aspects of managing and harnessing an ecosystem, and the information needs of these diverse stakeholder communities.

The session focuses on the use of participatory approaches and using example ecosystems such as Mangroves and Sargassum - key ecosystems that can support or even hinder both tourism and fisheries. These ecosystems are used to provide examples and inform discussions





on how data from satellites and other sources, and stakeholder-led development, can be used by local and regional stakeholders to identify issues, provide management guidance, and ultimately restore and conserve the balance within these habitats which support their local communities and economic activity.



## Coastal Hazards Session

Coastal areas consist of 20% of the Earth's surface yet containing over 50% of the human population and 75% by 2025. A hub of biodiversity and production, coastal areas are home to valuable wetlands, coral reefs, fisheries, oil, and gas reserves. As sea level rises and the frequency of natural disasters grows, coastal areas under human development are likely to experience increased hazards including erosion, inundation, and pollution, posing a threat to coastal communities, infrastructures, and coastal ecosystems. With over 35,000 kilometers of coastline, Africa is highly vulnerable to coastal hazards. In recognition of those growing risks, enhancing coastal resilience has a priority for local governments, industries, and environmental advocates.

Recent advances in observing techniques offers unprecedented coastal data sets that provide solid foundations for adaptation strategies. The access and use of these data sets are still limited and understanding stakeholders' needs is key to deliver relevant actionable information to decision makers and coastal communities.

### Objectives

- Initiate and stimulate dialogue about ocean and coastal related issues globally and in Africa.
- Provide insight into the needs of local/regional stakeholders which are essential to address marine and coastal issues.
- Explore the available tools and opportunities brought by Earth Observations in addressing these issues.
- Present inspiring examples of successful application based on Earth Observation supporting decision making.

### Target Audience

The plenary sessions are open to an audience of up to 200 attendees from varying levels of government, research institutions, commercial sectors and other local stakeholders. Attendees may include high-level representatives from international agencies, ministers of government, policy makers, representatives from regional and local organizations, earth observations experts, researchers, students and other local stakeholders.





## Interactive Poster Forum

The Forum is designed to be a platform for interactive dialogue among various members of the ocean and coastal observations value chain. Based on a review of the engagement priorities set forth by the relevant regional governing bodies, we have identified and will be organizing our forum around the themes of: **Fisheries, Ecosystem Conservation and Coastal Hazards**, as well as around the cross-cutting areas of: **Stakeholder Engagement, Cooperation and Co-design and Capacity Development**.

We plan to feature six booths which will be populated by data providers, academics (researchers and students), industry representatives, policy makers, and stakeholders from end-user groups. Each booth will act as round tables where presenters will engage in dialogue with each other and with conference attendees. The forum would also be an opportunity for local stakeholders to engage with invited members of the private sector to spark discussion about funding projects/actionable outcomes.

### Objectives

- Provide an interactive platform for engagement among members of the ocean and coastal observations value chain.
- Support engagement between local stakeholders and the private sector to encourage the development of local/regional opportunities.
- Discuss the role of ocean and coastal observations in addressing issues pertinent to the African continent.

### Target Audience

The Forum should appeal to the general audience of the symposium.

## Thematic Workshops

The workshops will aim to strength linkages between local/regional sectoral end-users and EO data providers. Six thematic workshops are planned centred around the ocean and coastal engagement priorities of **Fisheries, Ecosystem Conservation and Coastal Hazards**.

The six workshops will focus on how Earth Observation can support the following topics:

- Fisheries and Aquaculture site selection
- Coastlines changes
- Plastic pollution
- Sargassum inundations
- National Adaptation Plans
- Oil spill warning





Attendees will have the opportunity to openly engage with data providers to provide insight into the data needs and gaps in information among local/regional end-user communities. They will also have an opportunity to improve their understanding of the EO tools available to address region specific issues while providing feedback on the interoperability and feasibility of making EO products/tools operational in their respective communities, countries and regions.

### Objectives

- Discuss and propose actionable deliverables which can contribute to a more resilient and prosperous continent.
- Improve local/regional understanding of the EO tools available and build local/regional capacity in using these tools/ products.
- Seek feedback from local stakeholders in determining the feasibility of making tools/products operational in specific communities, countries etc.

### Target Audience

The workshops should appeal to a diverse audience of stakeholders interested in using Ocean and Coastal Observations to support decision-making on the African continent. These workshops may also include local/regional EO experts, local sectoral stakeholders (e.g. representatives from regional fisheries associations), leaders/ chiefs of local coastal communities, representatives from research institutions and students.





## Agenda

# 5TH SYMPOSIUM

24 – 28 October 2022 | Accra, Ghana

### DAY 1 : MONDAY, 24 OCT

09h00-15h30	Training sessions
15h30-16h00	On site registration & refreshments
16h00-18h00	Symposium Opening Ceremony: Welcome remarks & keynote presentations
18h00-20h00	Welcome cocktail reception & opening of the Interactive Poster Forum

### DAY 2 : TUESDAY, 25 OCT

09h00-12h00	Plenary session 1: Fisheries
12h00-14h00	Lunch townhall
14h00-17h00	Plenary session 2: Ecosystem Conservation
17h00-19h00	Interactive Poster Forum

Venue: Alisa Hotel North Ridge, 21 Dr Isert St, Accra

All times are in Ghanaian local time (UTC +0)

Daily tea/coffee breaks mid-morning & mid-afternoon and lunches will be provided for all participants



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### DAY 3 : WEDNESDAY, 26 OCT

09h00-12h00

**Plenary session 3:  
Coastal Hazards**

12h00-14h00

**Lunch townhall:  
Forum closing notes**

14h00-17h00

**Copernicus private  
sector opportunities**

17h00-18h00

**Symposium closing**

18h00-20h00

**Social event/ dinner**

### DAY 4 : THURSDAY, 27 OCT

09h00-12h00

**Workshop 1: Fisheries &  
Aquaculture site selection**

12h00-14h00

**Lunch**

14h00-17h00

**Parallel Workshops:  
2- Coastline Changes  
3- Sargassum Inundation  
4- Plastic Pollution**

### DAY 5 : FRIDAY, 28 OCT

09h00-11h30

**Parallel Workshops:  
5- Oil Spill Monitoring  
6- EO for National  
Adaptation Plans**

11h30-12h30

**Concluding notes to  
workshops**

12h30-14h00

**Lunch**