



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 coastal observations to a wide audience. Sessions will include a review of the basic principles of Ocean Observations (e.g., fundamentals of oceanography, introduction to satellite and 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 are 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



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conferences and meetings (e.g., the African Union Blue Economy Strategy, the African Union Commission Agenda 2063, and the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap).

### Session 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.



### Plenary 1: Fisheries

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.

The Fisheries Plenary Session will be geared towards first understanding the needs of stakeholders who are involved in small scale fisheries, commercial fisheries and fisheries management in the region. This will be followed by a demonstration of the tools and opportunities which have been developed using Ocean and Coastal Observations for fisheries-related applications. Finally, the session will be closed by a presentation on inspiring examples of cases wherein Ocean and Coastal Observation tools have been successfully employed meet a fishery related need.



## Plenary 2: Ecosystem Conservation

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.



## Plenary 3: Coastal Hazards

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 been 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.

The Coastal Hazards Plenary Session will be geared towards initiating and stimulating dialogue about coastal related issues globally and in Africa, providing insight into the needs of local and regional stakeholders, exploring the Earth Observation tools and opportunities which can be used in addressing these issues, and presenting inspiring examples of the successful application of Earth Observations in supporting decision making frameworks.

## Interactive Poster Forum | 24 & 25 Oct

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.

## Copernicus Private Sector Opportunities | 26 Oct

This session will highlight private sector opportunities using Copernicus-based products in support of a sustainable blue economy. About 20 Ghanaian and European Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) will have a 5-minute pitch to present their





companies/services/products relevant for the African context, as well as needs and ideas for collaboration.

This session is hosted by the Atlantic International Research Centre (AIR Centre), together with the Portuguese Space Agency as part of the activity “Copernicus SMEs – Atlantic Ocean Interactions” funded by the European Union through the Framework Partnership Agreement on Copernicus User Uptake.

## Thematic Workshops | 27 & 28 Oct

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

The five workshops will focus on the following topics:

- **Earth Observations for Fisheries and Aquaculture Site Selection**
- **Ocean and Coastal Observations for National Adaptation Plans (NAPS)**
- **Earth Observations for Coastline changes**
- **Earth Observations for Sargassum Monitoring**
- **Earth Observations for Marine Litter Monitoring**

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 Earth Observation tools available to address region specific issues while providing feedback on the interoperability and feasibility of making Earth Observation 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 Earth Observation 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 Earth Observation experts, local sectoral stakeholders (e.g., representatives from regional fisheries associations), leaders/ chiefs of local coastal communities, representatives from research institutions and students.





## Agenda

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### DAY 1 : MONDAY, 24 OCT

09h00-15h30	<b>Training sessions</b>
15h00-16h00	<b>On site registration &amp; refreshments</b>
16h00-18h00	<b>Symposium Opening Ceremony: Welcome remarks &amp; keynote presentations</b>
18h00-20h00	<b>Welcome cocktail reception &amp; Interactive Poster Forum opening</b>

### DAY 2 : TUESDAY, 25 OCT

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

Venue: **Alisa Hotel North Ridge**, 21 Dr. Issert Road – North Ridge, Accra, Ghana, in the following halls:

- Training sessions (Ridge Arena & Prins hall)
- Plenary sessions & Forum (Ridge Arena)
- Thematic Workshops (Opera 1 & 2 halls)

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

Daily tea breaks mid-morning & mid-afternoon and lunches will be provided for all session 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: Earth  
Observations for  
Fisheries & Aquaculture  
Site Selection**

12h00-14h00

**Lunch**

14h00-17h00

**Workshop 2: Ocean  
and Coastal  
Observations for  
National Adaptation  
Plans**

### DAY 5 : FRIDAY, 28 OCT

09h00-12h15

**Workshops: Earth Observations  
for monitoring  
3- Coastline Changes  
4- Sargassum  
5- Marine Litter**

12h15-12h45

**Concluding notes to workshops**

12h45-14h00

**Lunch**