

THE BENGUELA CURRENT COMMISSION FACT SHEET

Three countries sharing a productive ecosystem



The Benguela Current Commission (BCC) is a multi-sectoral inter-governmental, initiative of Angola, Namibia and South Africa. It promotes the vision of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) sustaining human and ecosystem well-being for generation after generation.

The BCLME is richly endowed with both living and non-living resources – from large oil and gas reserves to abundant fisheries and unrivalled natural beauty. The BCC provides a vehicle for the countries of the region to introduce an “ecosystem approach to ocean governance”. This means that the three countries work together to manage the marine environment.

The BCC was established on January 2007 through the signing of an Interim Agreement. Then, on 18 March 2013, the governments of Angola, Namibia and South Africa signed the Benguela Current Convention, a groundbreaking environmental treaty that entrenches the Benguela Current Commission as a permanent inter-governmental organisation.

THE BENGUELA CURRENT LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM

The Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) extends from east of the Cape of Good Hope, northwards to Cabinda Province in Angola and encompasses the full extent of Namibia's marine environment. It is a major coastal upwelling ecosystem and an important centre of marine biodiversity and marine food production.

The Benguela is particularly productive in terms of fisheries resources, but top predators such as seabirds and marine mammals are also abundant. Commercial fisheries and the extraction of non-living natural resources such as oil, gas, diamonds and other minerals, are the focus of industrial activities in the region. **It is estimated that coastal and marine resources contribute approximately US\$269 billion per year to the economies of Angola, Namibia and South Africa.**



THE BENGUELA CURRENT CONVENTION



Once it is ratified,
the Benguela
Current Convention
will commit Angola,
Namibia and South
Africa to:

- Preventing and eliminating pollution and taking steps to protect the marine ecosystem against any adverse impacts;
- undertaking environmental impact assessments for activities that might have negative impacts on the marine and coastal environment;
- collecting, sharing and exchanging data;
- where possible, reversing and preventing habitat alteration and destruction;
- protecting vulnerable species and biological integrity;
- improving human capacity and infrastructure.

The text of the Benguela Current Convention captures the intention of Angola, Namibia and South Africa to conserve and manage the BCLME jointly, for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Benguela Current Commission is supported by the governments of Angola, Namibia and South Africa and involves the following ministries and departments:



Angola

Ministry of Fisheries
Ministry of Petroleum
Ministry of Urbanism
and Environment



Namibia

Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Ministry of Mines and Energy
Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Ministry of Works and Transport



South Africa

Department of Environmental Affairs
Department of Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries
Department of Mineral Resources



PROMOTE, COORDINATE AND IMPLEMENT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BCLME

The Benguela Current Commission is the first commission in the world to be based on the Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) approach to ocean governance. It is focused on five strategic areas, including ocean governance, stakeholder participation, marketing and resource mobilization, capacity building and corporate governance.

Ocean governance

- manage and coordinate projects relating to marine resources
- facilitate an ecosystem approach to marine ecosystem management
- improve understanding of productivity and variability
- facilitate improved governance for the BCLME region

Stakeholder partnering and relationships

- facilitate the establishment of inter-sector stakeholder groups
- facilitate the establishment of mutually beneficial relationships with key stakeholders
- enter into reciprocal beneficial relationships with comparable institutions
- coordinate and host symposia to address priority issues identified by the BCC

Marketing and resource mobilization

- increase brand awareness to actively engage our societies
- mobilize funding to sustain the Commission and Secretariat
- engage stakeholders through information and education

Capacity building

- redesign the structure and optimal functioning of the BCC to enable implementation of the strategy
- conduct a competency needs assessment across participating ministries and facilitate coordinated competency development initiatives
- implement alternative capacity building solutions for the region

Corporate governance

- review and update the BCC strategy and implement
- institute a risk framework covering all resources critical to the operations of the Commission
- develop and implement ICT systems
- liaise with borders of BCLME area, including neighbouring LMEs

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

The activities of the Benguela Current Commission are supported by the governments of Angola, Namibia and South Africa.

Partners of the BCC are:

- **The government of Norway**, which supports a science programme for the integrated and sustainable development of the BCLME region.
- **The government of Iceland**, which supports a training and capacity building programme to strengthen marine research institutions and improve ocean governance.
- **The government of Germany**, which supports a project on the conservation and sustainable use of the BCLME, using marine spatial planning to identify ecologically or biologically sensitive areas. The project is jointly implemented by the BCC and GIZ.
- **The European Union**, which supports the sustainable management of the shared fisheries resources of the BCLME, through a project implemented and executed by the BCC.
- **The Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, which supports projects on:
 - Enhancing climate change in the Benguela Current fisheries system, implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and executed by the BCC; and
 - realising the inclusiveness and sustainable development of the BCLME region through improved ocean governance and the integrated management of ocean use and marine resources (2014–2019) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and executed by the BCC.
- **The EAF-Nansen Project of FAO** provides support for the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

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