Throughout 2019, the PRCM has been active in strengthening the capacities of stakeholders working on the coast and on building new partnerships.
Introduction

"Work towards creating a healthy and productive marine and coastal environment for peoples’ wellbeing"

Our vision
More than ever, the management of the West Africa coastline and its resources has become an issue of concern in the face of the urbanisation of major coastal cities and the development of economic activities, including port handling, agribusiness, fishing and off-shore oil extraction and production. Unless specific regulations are put in place, these activities are likely to jeopardise the productivity of coastal ecosystems.

Such is the context from which emerges the commitment of the PRCM whose vision is to “work towards creating a healthy and productive marine and coastal environment for peoples’ wellbeing”. This commitment is manifested through the actions of PRCM members on the ground but also through projects implemented by the PRCM in seven countries in West Africa.

Through a partnership-based approach, the PRCM engages with both state and non-state actors at the national and sub-regional level in order to pool strengths and resources with a view to reaching a common objective.

With the support of its financial partners and in collaboration with its members and other regional and international stakeholders, the PRCM implements several projects on the ground. Central to its mission are advocacy, communication, fundraising and training.

Since 2018, the PRCM has embarked upon a new path to ensure its sustainability. Now is therefore the opportunity to stop and look back on 2019 in order to assess and appreciate the progress made so far.

Throughout 2019, the PRCM worked actively to strengthen the capacities of those stakeholders involved in the conservation of the coastline and in fundraising.
Evolution
Life of the PRCM Association

Since the beginning of the institutional reshuffle of the PRCM in February 2018, significant reforms have been undertaken to help strengthen the new PRCM Association. Henceforth, the Association will focus its efforts on ensuring that it keeps growing.

This is how a General Assembly meeting was held in December 2019 in Dakar, Senegal during which four items dealing with the status of the PRCM, the review and approval of the Rules of Procedure as well as the review of applications for membership were discussed.

Following the General Assembly meeting, former members of the PRCM were able to join the Association after a resolution was voted on the issue. Similarly, three membership applications by new members were discussed and approved.

The newly adopted Rules of Procedure supplement and specify the Association’s operating and management rules. They provide generic information on the Association, and outline its strategy of action as well as the membership categories and accession method, and the various bodies and their methods of operating.
Collaboration
Partnership and collaboration

The PRCM has entered into a new contract with RAMPAO in the amount of one hundred and seventy thousand (170,000) euros, as part of the PIMFAO project funded by the French Fund for Global Environment (FFEM).

With regard to fundraising, the PRCM developed and implemented a strategy for mobilising the resources required to finance the conservation of coastal wetlands in West Africa. To that end, the Executive Director undertook missions to the Netherlands, Germany, France and Belgium, with the support of an international woman expert to meet public donors (KFW/BMZ, etc.), private foundations (DOB Foundation, Total Foundation, G9Ark, etc.), international NGOs (WWF Netherlands, IUCN Netherlands, etc.) and many more (Wadden Sea, etc.).

New projects are in the pipeline, such as the regional mangrove conservation and rehabilitation project which was the subject of a development workshop attended by stakeholders from 12 countries in West Africa, and submitted to the G9Ark Foundation. Other initiatives with a smaller geographic coverage and involving several members of the PRCM were tabled to the Total Foundation and KFW in 2019.
Overview of our projects’ flagship activities

PAHZOC¹: Investing more in West Africa’s coastal areas

As part of the Plan of action for coastal wetlands and waterbirds in West Africa (PAZHOC), the PRCM has been conducting lobbying, advocacy, communication and awareness-raising activities on the conservation of coastal wetlands across West Africa. In this context, the PRCM encourages players whose actions fall in the same area of work to engage in a collective dynamic of networks centred on the exchange of findings, partnership and common actions.

2019 was the year in which several strategies and activities were put in place with a view to preserving biodiversity in coastal wetlands.

Flagship activities included producing a regional summary document on the status and trends of both birds and biodiversity in coastal wetlands, strengthening the capacities of civil society partners in advocacy techniques, and stimulating the WACOWET Network whose geographical coverage extends to 13 countries and 74 RAMSAR sites and whose carriage was entrusted with the PRCM.

A training workshop was also organised for journalists and Members of Parliament to discuss issues confronting the coastal and marine area. The purpose was to enlist their collaboration in designing advocacy strategies. Furthermore, on the occasion of the World Day of Migratory Birds, a number of civil society organisations received support to organise celebrations at the country level. These celebrations provided an opportunity to gather dozens of school pupils for site visits.

It should be noted that a documentary film on the importance of protecting the network of flyway critical sites is being produced.
Oil and gas: Raising awareness and educating about environmental issues and impact

It is in this context that the PRCM has initiated awareness-raising, training and capacity building sessions for its stakeholders in order to help them enhance their knowledge on the environmental issues and impact inherent to offshore oil and gas operations. Throughout the year, activities with a national and regional focus were undertaken in the four countries of intervention, being Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau.

To start with, a mapping was produced of those stakeholders involved in offshore extractive activities across the PRCM member countries. This enabled to identify 90 players, including 46 national entities (i.e. 15 in Mauritania, 13 in Senegal, 10 in Guinea-Bissau and 8 in Sierra Leone) and 44 international entities.

Moreover, continuous training was provided in Mauritania and Senegal on the environmental management of oil and gas operations. Over a hundred actors benefitted from the two sessions organised in this regard and that targeted government officials, specialists and civil society actors involved in the environmental management of oil and gas operations. More training sessions are planned to be delivered in Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone.

Under the same project, the PRCM is also endeavouring to disseminate information by equipping journalists with the required knowledge, sensitise the public, and strengthen existing training programmes. With regard to information dissemination, journalists received training and were subsequently able to produce 33 articles and news stories in the four target countries.

In partnership with the GAED² (University of Nouakchott Al Aasriya and the Gaston Berger University of Saint-Louis) and GIDEL³ (Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar) Master programmes, the PRCM has been supporting academic training across the sub-region in fields dealing with extractive industries and reflecting the needs and challenges of marine and coastal conservation. In this regard, the sixth year group of the GAED Master programme
Engagement

consisted of 13 scholarship students and 30 students in the first and second years of the Master’s degree, including 9 from Mauritania, 9 from Senegal, 5 from Guinea and 7 from other African countries. In the case of the GIDEL Master programme, the 2019-year group comprised 17 students in the first and second years of the Master’s degree.

In respect of awareness-raising, partnership have been established and maintained with several NGOs, namely BiodiversCités in Mauritania, Green Senegal, CSSL in Sierra Leone and Tiniguéna in Guinea-Bissau. This made possible, on the one hand, to conduct awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns on the actions required for reducing the impact of oil development and, on the other, to set up consultative frameworks and relevant coalitions with other organisations working in the same area.

Small pelagic species: Promoting the sustainable management of fishery resources

At the centre of the small pelagics project are awareness-raising, extension services and the strengthening of the capacities and skills of fishery professionals and civil society players. These activities come within the framework of the “Advocacy, support to transparency in fishery agreements, and enforcement of regulations on small pelagic fisheries” strategy, which aims to ensure the sustainability of small pelagic species faced with overexploitation and the deterioration of their habitats.
The objective of the PRCM, under this project, is to mobilise stakeholders with a view to the accession of countries to the Fishery Transparency Initiative (FiTI), the conclusion of transparent and equitable fishery agreements, and the sustainable management of small pelagic species and of their critical habitats.

It should be noted that remarkable progress has been achieved so far with respect to accessing to the Initiative. For instance, in Senegal, a roadmap for accession to the FiTI was developed for the Directorate of Marine Fishing following several meetings and workshops on the FiTI standards, while in Guinea Bissau, policy makers were invited, during an outreach workshop and a press conference, to adhere to the FiTI standards. As for Mauritania, whose application for accession was tabled to the FiTI organs, a report would be published in 2020 by the National Multistakeholder Group (GMN), which has been assigned a new office.

The PRCM also undertook to put at the service of the Sub-Regional Fishery Commission (SRFC) a sub-regional and specialised independent Task Force on the monitoring and evaluation of fishery agreements in its intervention area. At the same time, civil society organisations received support to implement initiatives for improved governance and transparency in small pelagic fisheries.

Similarly, it is planned to develop a transparency index for fishery management, which would provide an additional means of advocacy and citizen engagement for better transparency.
The idea is also to produce an analysis of the implementation, by SRFC Member states, of the advisory opinion delivered by the International Tribunal on the Law of Sea.

**TRISTAO: Fostering the natural regeneration of the mangrove forest in a marine protected area in Guinea**

Through the financial resources provided by the DOB Ecology Foundation, the PRCM, in close collaboration with its partners, is running the conservation project for mangroves on the Tristao Island in Guinea Conakry, with the purpose of extending the surface area of the mangrove forest by 1,400 hectares and implementing concrete measures for the sustainable management of mangroves on the Island.

Two studies were conducted prior to launching the project. These addressed, on the one hand, mangrove ecosystems on the Tristao Island and, on the other, the identification of the social and economic factors driving the demand for mangrove wood.

In the course of the first year of implementation, the project’s activities were targeted on four districts, namely Kaffoura, Kadignet, Kaplin and Kasmack. In this regard, some communication and awareness-raising work was conducted to foster community engagement. Moreover, the mangrove was the subject of a restructuring and tree plantation on the selected sites.

On a different note, communities were mobilised and trained on how to recuperate abandoned rice fields in mangrove areas, following which the demolition of dikes took place in the abandoned rice fields, which helped to flatten the dykes that stood as an obstacle to the natural movement of the tides and to improve the hydrology of its plains. This is how 2,000 linear metres of dykes were destroyed in the abandoned rice fields, thereby contributing to the gradual restoration of the water cycle in the rice fields, which was critical for the assisted regeneration of the mangrove forest.
PRISE*: Reducing the impact of coastal infrastructures by means of environmental assessment tools and effective regulatory mechanisms

The West Africa coastline is witnessing an unprecedented development of infrastructures, with major implications for the marine ecosystem.

The PRCM’s approach under this Project is, on the one hand, to strengthen and effectively implement relevant legal and regulatory frameworks and, on the other, to advocate for a reduced impact of infrastructures on the Project's targets. This required implementing diagnostic reviews of legal frameworks, environmental assessments, efficient regional cooperation, awareness-raising work, workshops and consultation with relevant stakeholders (civil society organisations, government institutions and international organisations) in five countries, i.e. Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal.

The Project showed a strong momentum in 2019 when several activities were put in place. In the countries of intervention, studies were carried out on the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the procedures, protocols and other national and international legal texts governing the construction of coastal infrastructures and the management of their impact. The final reports of these studies are now available. Where gaps have been identified, procedures, protocols and/or legal texts are being developed or revised to close them.

In Mauritania and in Guinea, strategic and social environmental impact assessments are being finalized for the Banc d'Arguin National Park and the delta of the Rio Kaptachez.

In the context of the regional dimension of this project, changes were made to the text of the Abidjan Convention in order to address the issue of the construction and management of coastal infrastructures. In this regard, several meetings took place at the level of experts of focal points. Advocacy work is also done with focal points and Members of Parliament in the countries parties to the Abidjan Convention to underpin this process.

Moreover, national awareness-raising and outreach workshops were organised in the five countries for the leaders of civil society organisations on the impact of infrastructural development...
and environmental management tools, with the support of national partners of the PRCM, including NGOs such as Tininguema, BiodiverCité, ADAD, GAIA and Guinée Ecologie.

In terms of visibility, the Project’s activities are regularly reported via our communication channels. A number of vehicles have been developed to that end, including posters, thematic sheets and photographs. Moreover, a documentary film on the issue of coastal infrastructures in Guinea is under preparation.

**ByCatch : Reducing the impact of fishing activities on seabirds and sea turtles in West Africa**

Of the threats arising from the sea, the bycatch of seabirds and sea turtles in the context of commercial fishing is probably the most important threat facing marine wildlife. The PRCM and its partners, including BirdLife International, IDDRI, UNEP/CMS and national fishery and research institutions, have launched an initiative aimed at reducing the impact of fishing on seabirds and sea turtles.

In this regard, a diagnostic study was made of national laws pertaining to the protection of seabirds and sea turtles, on-board data collection, fishing activities and fishing practices in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of the countries members of the Sub-Regional Fishery Commission. Also reviewed were the difficulties encountered in the framework of the observer programme.

The meeting of experts held in June 2019 at the sub-regional level resulted in the adoption of a number of recommendations to update national legislations and better operationalise the surveillance and control of activities at sea. A roadmap was put together for the implementation of relevant actions at the national, regional and international level, such as for instance the discussions dedicated to the issue of bycatch at the General Assembly meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) as well as awareness-raising and political advocacy actions with Brussels-based European institutions in charge of fishing, in collaboration with CAPE, WWF, BirdLife.
Dissemination
Overview of our communication actions

Communication takes centre stage in the PRCM’s activities. All the projects that are implemented are adequately showcased through dedicated communication tools and channels. These are, inter alia:

- Website
- Facebook: facebook.com/prcmarine (98,289 followers)
- Instagram: instagram.com/prcmarine (3,328 followers)
- Twitter: twitter.com/prcmarine (1,874 followers)
- YouTube: youtube.com/user/Prcmarine (29,920 views)
So far, a community of 103,491 followers have registered to our social medias, including 98,289 on Facebook, 1,874 on Twitter, 3,328 on Instagram and 29,920 views on our Youtube channel.

By means of such platforms, the PRCM is able to better share information with the various categories of stakeholders (partners, stakeholders, communities, medias, etc.) and advance knowledge and good practices related to conservation.

Two newsletters of the PAZHOC Project, kakemonos on small pelagic species, two television programmes on issues such as the management of coastal infrastructures and the impact of offshore oil and gas operations were among the means of communication developed in 2019 to accompany our activities.

Campaigns have also been staged on social medias. For instance, the campaign on small pelagic species was conducted over a two-month period disseminating strong messages. Infographics were produced in two languages for each country (Senegal, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau) and shared through social medias. The publication of the study report on the economic, social and ecological value of small pelagic species, which provided a basis for the campaign, generated a very significant media interest.

Committed to a constant search for efficiency, the PRCM has undertaken to develop an editorial strategy in order to offer a content more suitable for its audiences and engage them around its vision. To this end, new concepts were developed with a focus on education about coastal and marine environments in general. These concepts will soon be the subject of facilitation meetings.
The Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation (PRCM) is a coalition of actors working on the problems of the West African coastline and covering seven countries: Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

The strength of the Partnership is its diversity. Its spirit and strength lie in its network of 78 members ranging from small associations active at the local level to very large international organizations. It is conceived as a grouping of forces and diversified initiatives in support of a common goal of coastal and marine conservation.

The Partnership is governed by a Charter that commits its members to the principles and values underpinning it.
Event on the horizon

Healthy oceans: an issue of sustainable development for West Africa coastal countries

2020 Bissau Forum Theme
The Coastal and Marine Forum: the meeting place for conservation stakeholders

Every other year, the PRCM organises the coastal and marine Forum in a Capital city of one its member countries.

The Forum has become today an event that sparks a keen interest and the place to be for conservation stakeholders, as this is where current issues confronting the West Africa coastline are discussed and where forward-looking solutions are contemplated.

At each edition, the Forum gathers about 200 high level participants representing governments in the sub-region, regional and international intergovernmental bodies, networks of parliamentarians, civil society organisations involved in the environmental protection, technical and financial partners and other categories of stakeholders.

The next edition is scheduled to take place by mid-2020 around the theme “Healthy oceans: an issue of sustainable development for West Africa coastal countries”.

A website was specifically designed to promote this event. A registration procedure and a call for papers were also launched online.
End notes

1 Plan of action for coastal wetlands and waterbirds in West Africa
2 International Master in Management the impacts of Extractive Activities
3 Master in Integrated management and sustainable development of the West African Coast
4 Regional project to reduce the impact of coastal infrastructure on ecosystems in West Africa
The implementation of the projects received financial support from the partners below: