WACA
West Africa Coastal Areas Management Program



WACA 2025:

Concrete results for a more resilient West African coastline

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01
Introduction

In West Africa, the coastline is far more than a boundary between land and sea. It is a place of life, jobs and trade, where the major cities, the ports, fishing activity, seaside tourism and a large part of the regional economy are concentrated. Millions of women and men live and work there and depend on it every day for their food security, their income and their future.

But this coastline now faces unprecedented pressures: coastal erosion, flooding, sea level rise, ecosystem degradation and the effects of climate change, which weaken communities, threaten infrastructure and endanger a natural and cultural heritage of inestimable value.

These challenges cross national borders. Coastal dynamics are shared; the solutions they call for must also be co-designed and transboundary.

It is from this conviction that the West Africa Coastal Areas Management Program (WACA) was born. By bringing together eight West African countries and one Central African country around a single ambition, it offers a collective response to a shared challenge. Driven by the States, the WAEMU Commission, the World Bank and a broad network of technical and financial partners, the program supports countries in taking concrete action: protecting coasts, restoring ecosystems, strengthening community livelihoods, improving coastal management and building lasting regional cooperation.

The year 2025 marks an important stage in this collective ambition. In the field, major structures that had been awaited for several years were completed or made significant progress in their implementation. Tens of thousands of households are now better protected against erosion and flooding. Thousands of hectares of ecosystems have been restored or preserved. Sustainable economic activities have been developed for the benefit of coastal communities, while laws, coastal observatories, early warning systems and spaces for dialogue with local populations are gradually being strengthened across the different countries.

Beyond the figures, these results reflect a deeper shift: a new way of thinking about and managing the coastline is gradually taking hold at the regional level. Countries share their experience, coordinate their actions, pool their knowledge and build together responses suited to challenges that know no borders.

This document is a summary of the main results achieved during 2025. It highlights the achievements, but also the women and men who make them possible: coastal communities, national institutions, technical teams, regional and international partners, and all the stakeholders mobilized around this shared ambition.

The progress made shows that investing in coastal resilience means protecting lives, preserving essential ecosystems, supporting economic development and preparing for the future. It also reminds us that many challenges remain and that collective mobilization must continue in order to consolidate gains and support the next generation of actions for the coastlines of West Africa.

It is to this collective momentum, built on cooperation, innovation and regional solidarity, that this document is dedicated.

02
WACA at a glance

Understanding the program in a few seconds

01 A vital coastline, a threatened coastline

The West African coastline concentrates most of the region's economic life: a third of the population, most of the major cities, the ports, fishing and tourism. Yet it recedes every year under the effect of erosion, flooding, pollution and the gradual disappearance of the mangroves and dunes that once protected it naturally. These threats ignore borders. The sand missing from one beach has often been trapped upstream, sometimes in another country. No State can protect its coast alone in the long term.

02 The response: acting together

The WACA program rests on a strong conviction: coastal resilience must be approached and addressed as a regional challenge. This ambition takes shape through two projects. Launched in 2018, WACA ResIP 1 operates in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal and Togo. Effective since 2023, WACA ResIP 2 extends this momentum to The Gambia, Ghana and Guinea- Bissau. Nine countries are thus engaged around a common objective: strengthening the resilience of communities and coastal areas. The program works through four complementary levers: regional cooperation, strengthening of national policies, field investments — protection structures, green investments and livelihoods — and overall coordination.

03 A solid partnership

The WAEMU Commission, as project owner, leads the regional dimension. The World Bank finances most of the program, alongside the Global Environment Facility, the Nordic Development Fund, PROBLUE and the States. IUCN, through its Regional Support Office, provides technical support to the nine countries, together with the Ecological Monitoring Centre (CSE) in Dakar, the Abidjan Convention, RAMPAO and PRCM. Bilateral partners have joined the effort, notably AFD and Invest International in Togo, as well as Spanish Cooperation in Côte d'Ivoire. Their involvement reflects the confidence the program inspires and the growing interest in regional solutions to coastal risks.

NINE COUNTRIES, ONE SHARED COASTLINE



6
ResIP 1
COUNTRIES

3
ResIP 2
COUNTRIES

The scale of a collective commitment

9
COUNTRIES ENGAGED
around a shared regional ambition

479
USD MILLION MOBILIZED
World Bank, GEF, Nordic Fund, PROBLUE, States

43
KM OF COAST PROTECTED
against erosion

25,930 households less exposed to erosion

52,339 households less exposed to flooding

31,426 ha + 111,000 ha of ecosystems restored, conserved or protected

14,418 jobs created or supported

16,500+ people trained in coastal management

79 local coastal resilience management committees

04

2025 at a glance

The year's highlights

2025 marks a decisive stage for the WACA program. Investments made over several years are now producing visible results in the field, while regional cooperation reaches a new milestone. This timeline traces the main highlights of a year defined by action, results and cooperation.

February

Political advocacy gains strength

The Senegalese Parliamentary Network for the Environment (REPES) puts coastal resilience at the heart of its work, illustrating the growing mobilization of decision-makers in favor of coastline protection.

April – May

Stronger regional cooperation

Mauritania ratifies the four additional protocols of the Abidjan Convention, while States continue preparatory work on a future protocol on marine protected areas.

June

Gradual completion of the WACA ResIP project

After São Tomé, Benin becomes the 2nd country to complete its WACA ResIP project, followed by Mauritania as the 3rd, with the main objectives met. The program also carries the voice of the West African coastline to UNOC3 and to the COP14 of the Abidjan Convention.

June – July

The nine countries prepare for the final stretch of ResIP 1

Meeting in Bissau, representatives of the countries and of the implementing partner organizations take stock of progress and jointly define priorities for completing ResIP 1.

September

Kotu withstands exceptional rainfall

Despite above-average rainfall, no flooding is recorded along the Kotu stream in The Gambia. More than 2,600 households are protected.

October

A first marine protected area for Togo

One of Togo's major priorities: to establish a marine protected area to strengthen the conservation of marine and coastal resources. Coastal communities, reassured, have committed to working with the national authorities.

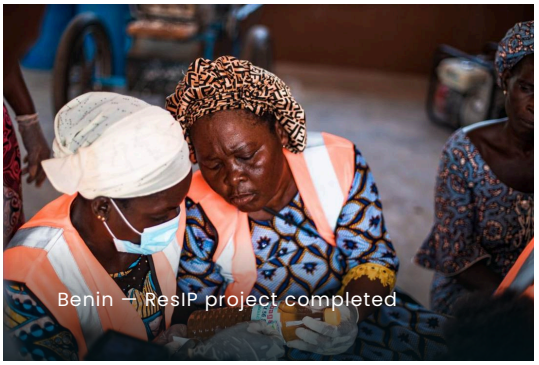
December

ResIP 2 moves into action

The Gambia officially launches its livelihoods support program, while the Regional Steering Committee closes the year in Cotonou.



REPES meeting, Dakar


Benin — ResIP project completed


Regional Steering Committee, Cotonou, December 2025

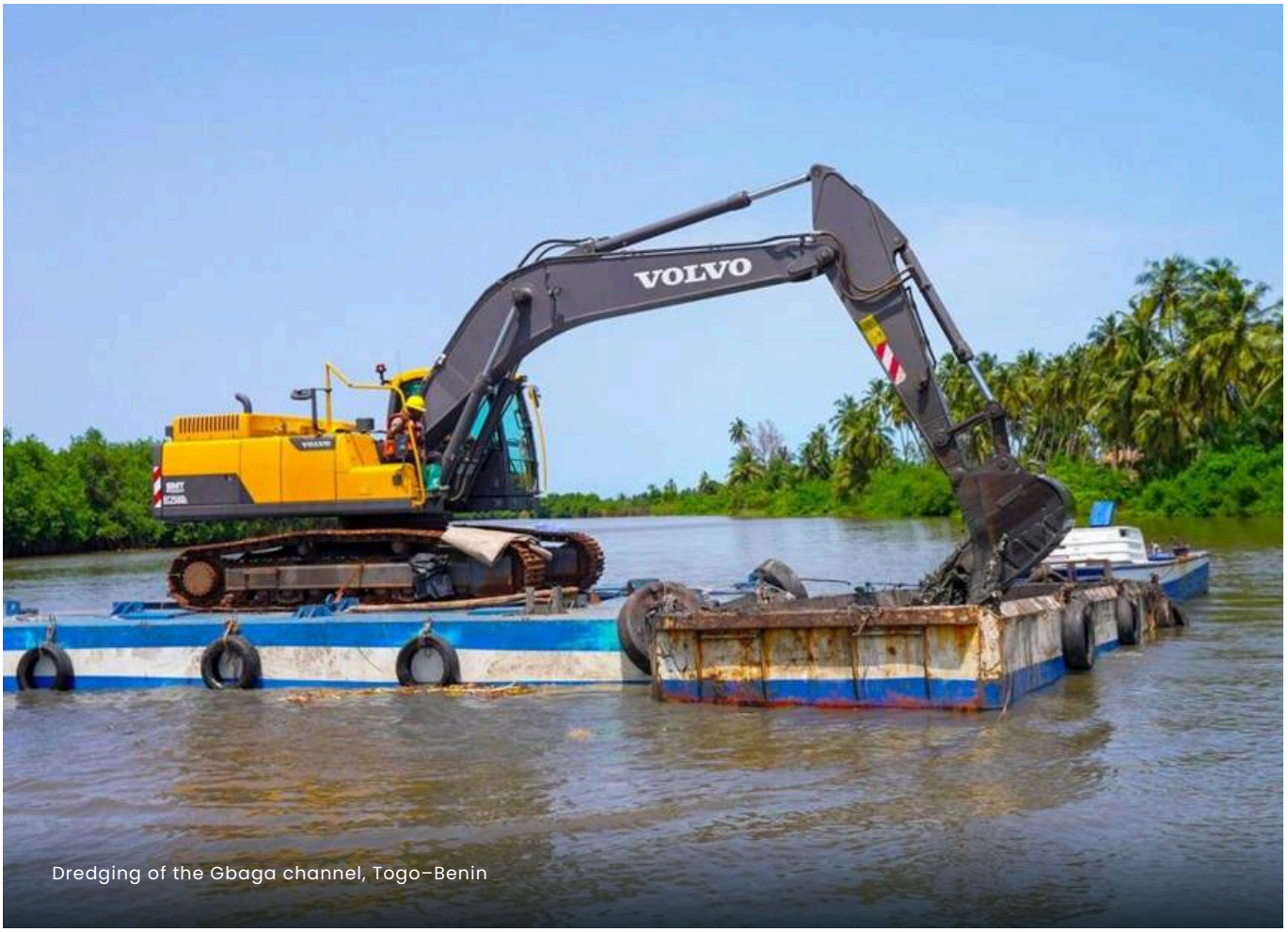

Works along the Kotu stream, The Gambia

The advances that define 2025

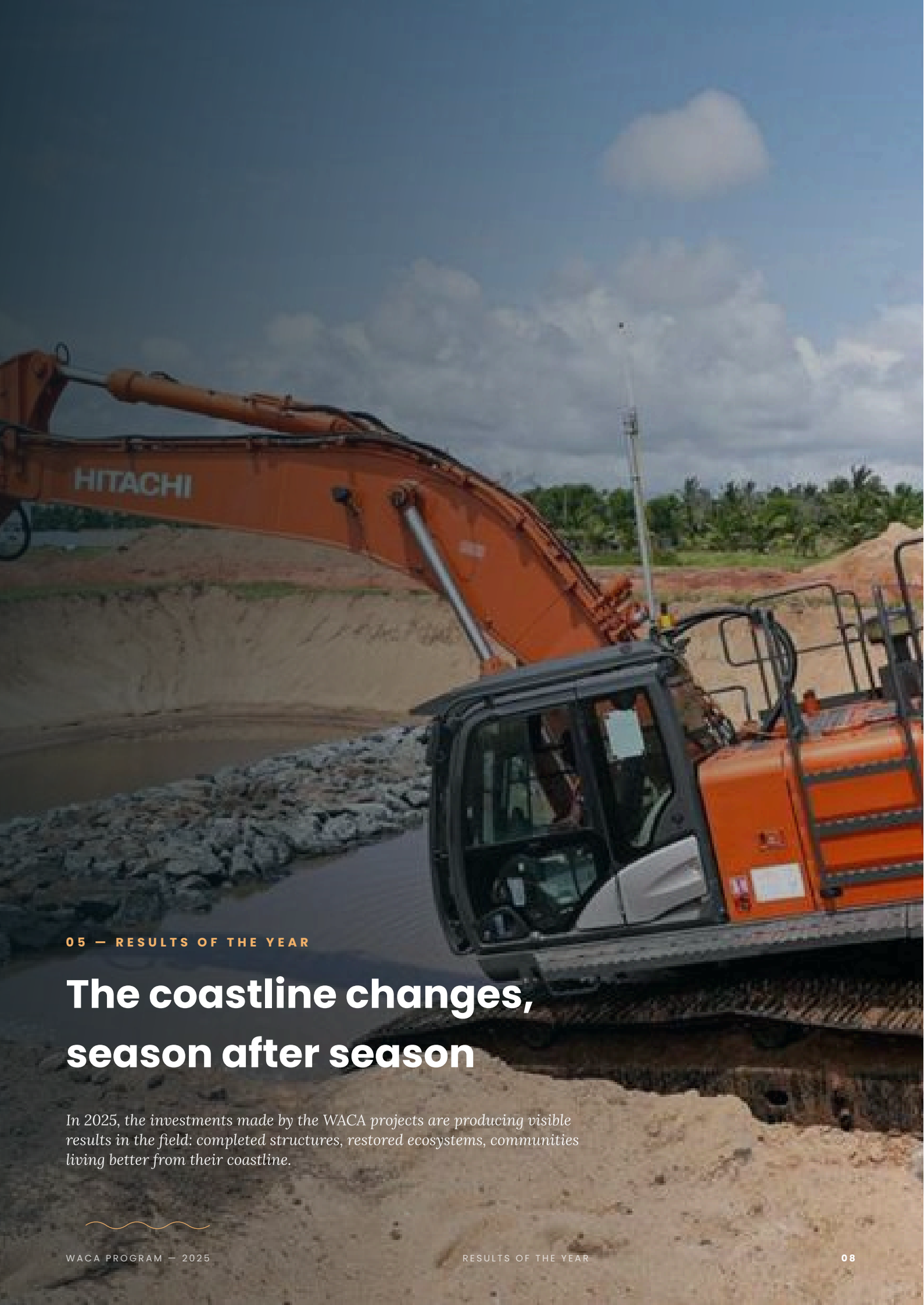
Beyond the events that punctuated the year, 2025 is above all the year in which results become visible.

The major coastal protection structures under way for several years reach decisive milestones. The Gbaga channel recovers its natural functioning after being dredged jointly by Togo and Benin. At Gorée (Senegal), 1.54 km of coastline are now protected against erosion. At Grand-Lahou (Côte d'Ivoire), the structure stabilizing the sand spit reaches 73% completion, while in Mauritania the main protection works in Nouakchott are completed, with the breaches in the coastal dune closed.

The year also marks a turning point for regional cooperation with the signing of the protocol establishing the West African Regional Coastal Observatory (ORLOA), set to become a permanent tool for coastline monitoring and decision support. At the same time, the WACA experience is beginning to inspire other regions of the continent, with the opening of a dialogue with the coastal countries of Central Africa, held in São Tomé and Príncipe from 20 to 22 August 2025.



Dredging of the Gbaga channel, Togo–Benin



05 — RESULTS OF THE YEAR

The coastline changes, season after season

In 2025, the investments made by the WACA projects are producing visible results in the field: completed structures, restored ecosystems, communities living better from their coastline.

Protecting coasts and the people who live along them



Groynes under construction, Togo

In 2025, the investments made by the WACA projects produced visible results in the field. Several major structures reach decisive milestones, durably strengthening the protection of populations, infrastructure and economic activities against erosion and flooding.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the structure stabilizing the Grand-Lahou sand spit reaches 73% completion. Once completed, it will durably protect the populations, infrastructure and economic activities of this particularly vulnerable area.

Progress also continues in the program's other countries. In Togo, five new groynes strengthen protection along the Gbodjomé–Agbodrafo segment. In Mauritania, the consolidation works on the Nouakchott dune ridge are completed, with 5.9 km of coastline protected, nine breaches closed and 50 ha of dunes stabilized. Between Togo and Benin, the dredging of the Gbaga channel restores the natural circulation of water and reduces flood risks in the neighboring localities.

KEY FIGURES

43 km of coast protected · 25,930 households less exposed to erosion · 52,339 households better protected against flooding.

Restoring nature to protect ourselves

31,426

HECTARES RESTORED OR CONSERVED
IN THE ResIP 1 COUNTRIES — 99% OF TARGET

+111,000

HECTARES UNDER CONSERVATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU
UNDER ResIP 2

In 2025, the WACA program confirms that nature-based solutions are an essential pillar of coastal resilience. Mangroves, dunes and revegetated riverbanks complement protection structures while strengthening biodiversity, fisheries resources and adaptation to climate change.

In Senegal, the Langue de Barbarie National Park continues the replanting of its mangroves, supported by technical guides designed to disseminate good practices.

In Guinea-Bissau, more than 111,000 hectares are now under conservation in the Cantanhez, Cufada and Cacheu parks, with the active participation of local communities.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Grand-Lahou stabilization works are complemented by mangrove restoration. In Benin, the bank of the Mono River at Gbèkon has been stabilized and then revegetated.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mangroves are among the best natural barriers against erosion: they dampen the effect of waves, serve as nurseries for fish and store up to five times more carbon than a terrestrial tropical forest.



Mangrove replanting, Côte d'Ivoire

Improved livelihoods for communities

The resilience of coastal areas does not depend on infrastructure alone. It also rests on communities able to develop sustainable economic activities and make better use of the resources of their territory.

19,538

HOUSEHOLDS BENEFITING FROM INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES IN 2025 — 131% OF THE ResIP TARGET

316

income-generating activities set up around Grand-Lahou, Côte d'Ivoire, benefiting more than a thousand people, 56% of them women.

Mboumbaye, Senegal

The shellfish processing unit has been handed over; the women of Gandiole have been trained in its management.

Benin · Togo · Mauritania · The Gambia

Improved fish-smoking stoves in Benin, solar multifunctional platforms in Togo (processing of agricultural products, household electricity, public lighting, phone charging), support to communities in Mauritania and the launch of the national livelihoods program in The Gambia.

RESULT — 14,418 jobs created or supported · more than 16,500 people trained in coastal management.



Fish farming, Benin

Governing the coastline together

Structures protect for twenty or even thirty years. The laws, institutions and working habits established in 2025 protect for even longer.

6	5	79	28/36
COUNTRIES WITH A FUNCTIONAL NATIONAL OBSERVATORY	COMPLETE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS	LOCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES	COMPLAINTS ALREADY HANDLED

Senegal has validated its national coastal management strategy, while Côte d'Ivoire has adopted all of its regulatory texts.

The ResIP 2 countries are moving forward just as well: a first-ever National Land Policy (2026–2035) in The Gambia, a sustainable ocean plan in Ghana and an updated coastal master plan in Guinea-Bissau.

IN BRIEF

Institutions, observatories, early warning systems and local committees form a lasting legacy that will continue to produce effects well beyond the life of the program.



ORLOA regional workshop on monitoring coastal risk indicators, Saly

A regional force

Regional cooperation remains the main added value of the WACA program. In 2025, it reaches a new stage thanks to stronger common tools, knowledge sharing and closer coordination among countries.

The signing of the protocol establishing the West African Regional Coastal Observatory (ORLOA) is a major step forward for coastline monitoring at the regional scale. The cross-border Gbaga channel project illustrates this cooperation between Togo and Benin in concrete terms.

Parliamentary networks, civil society organizations and technical exchange frameworks continue to grow stronger. At the same time, the WACA experience is beginning to feed the dialogue with Central African countries, opening the way to wider sharing of the program's lessons.

39%
2023 SCORE

→

62%
2025 REGIONAL INTEGRATION SCORE



Regional dialogue with Central African countries, São Tomé and Príncipe, August 2025



RESULTS OF THE YEAR — MOBILIZE

Mobilizing stakeholders and showcasing results

In 2025, the WACA projects consolidated a common voice across the nine countries, through harmonized messages, shared tools and a single hashtag, **#WACA_Program**, now used on all platforms.

The regional communication strategy was revised and rolled out around this common identity.

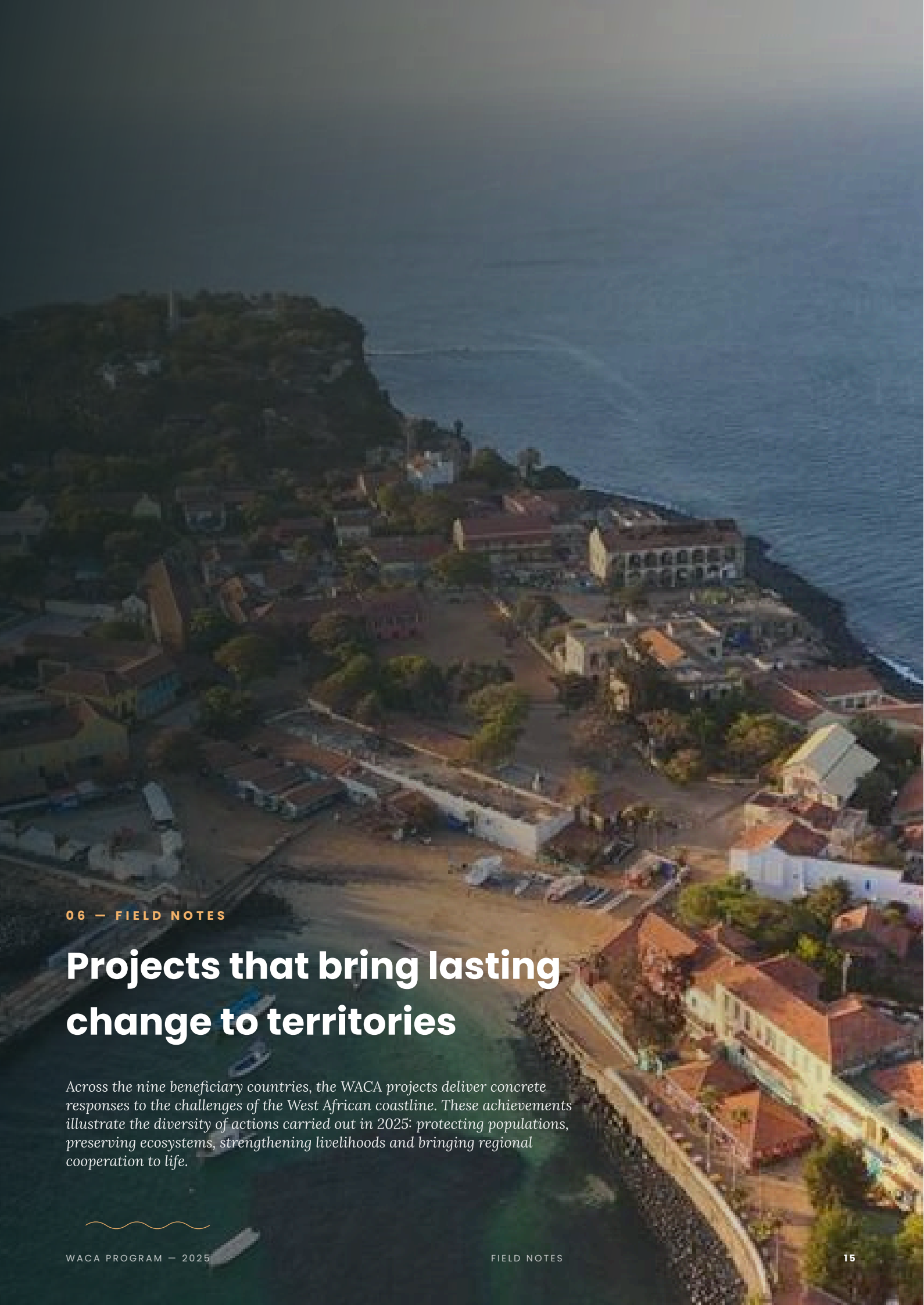
The network of communicators has been consolidated, encouraging the exchange of practices and the production of shared tools.

A regional press tour brought together journalists and content creators from the nine countries in Mauritania to showcase the program's achievements.

Digital communication has intensified, with more than 38 articles published on www.wacaprogram.org and a growing audience on social media — more than 6,100 followers on the WACA Facebook page and more than 1,500 on LinkedIn by the end of the year — complemented by regular radio programs in several countries: 48 episodes of Radio du Littoral in Mauritania, more than 370 broadcasts on community radio stations in Guinea-Bissau and the continuation of La Voix du Littoral in Benin.

The lessons drawn in 2025 will directly feed the preparation of WACA+.

The network of communicators, the harmonized tools and the audience built in 2025 provide a solid foundation to support, from 2026, communication around the launch of WACA+.



06 — FIELD NOTES

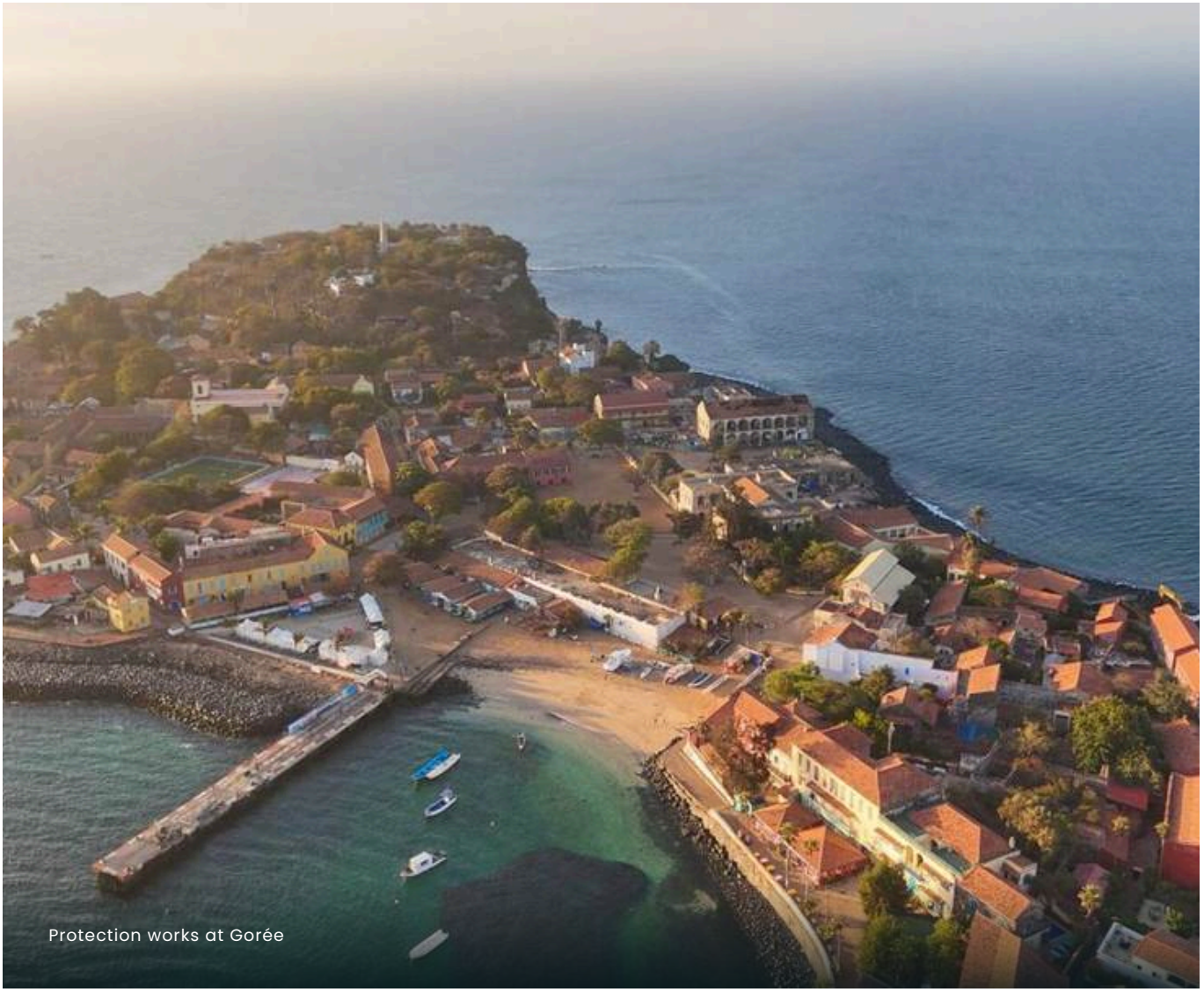
Projects that bring lasting change to territories

Across the nine beneficiary countries, the WACA projects deliver concrete responses to the challenges of the West African coastline. These achievements illustrate the diversity of actions carried out in 2025: protecting populations, preserving ecosystems, strengthening livelihoods and bringing regional cooperation to life.

01 — SENEGAL

Gorée

Preserving a world heritage site from erosion



Protection works at Gorée

Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, Gorée Island has faced coastal erosion for several years, threatening its historic heritage and the people who live there.

In 2025, 1.54 km of coastline were secured with structures specially designed to preserve the integrity of the site while withstanding heavy swells. Carried out under particularly complex logistical conditions, this work shows that it is possible to reconcile heritage protection, coastal resilience and technical requirements.

RESULT — Gorée — a historic heritage better protected and residents now less exposed to the effects of erosion.

02 — CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Grand-Lahou

Stabilizing an estuary mouth to protect communities



Aerial view of Grand-Lahou

At Grand-Lahou, the sand spit separating the lagoon from the ocean is an essential natural protection for the families living on either side of the estuary mouth. Its gradual degradation exposed populations, infrastructure and economic activities to growing risks.

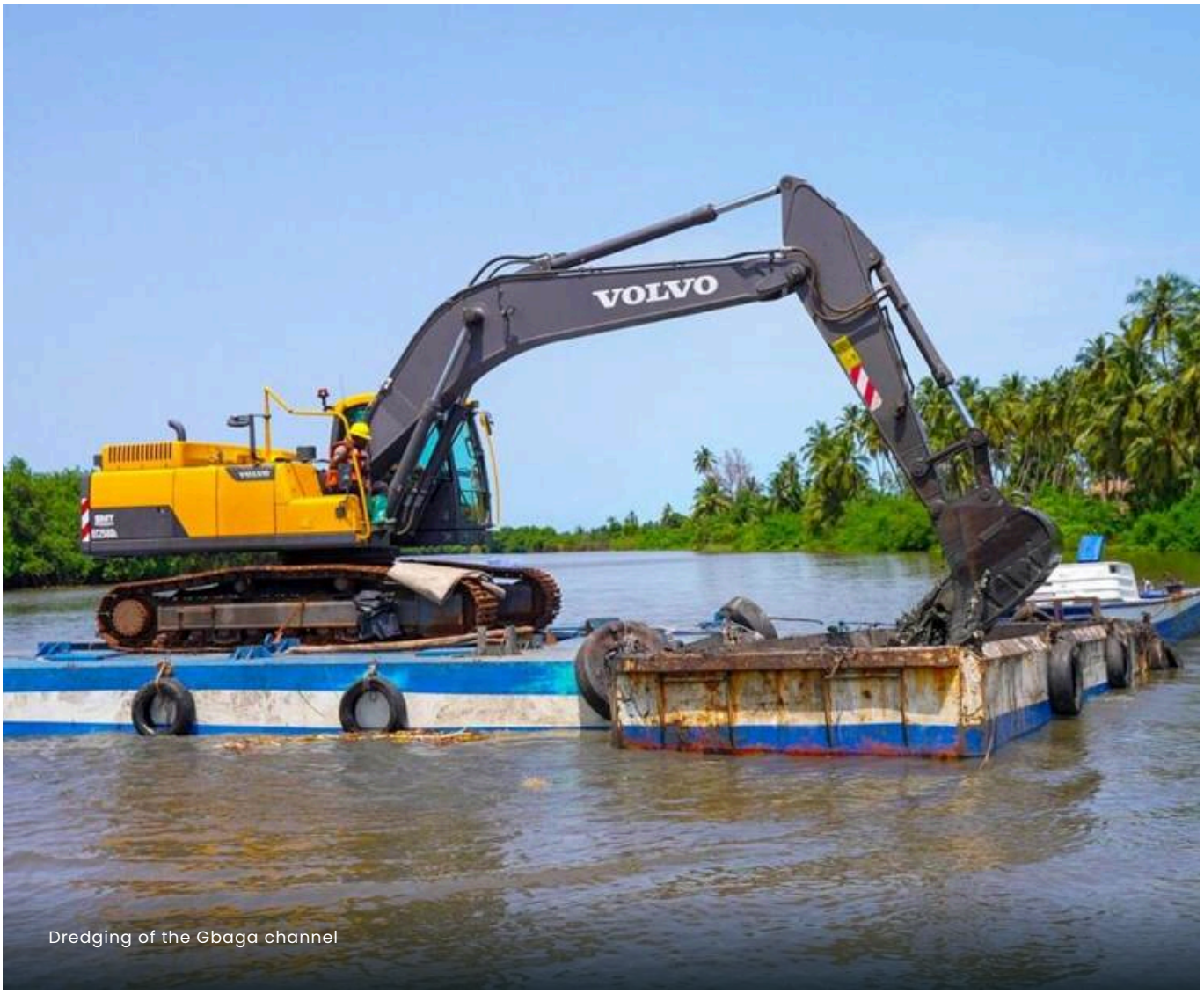
The works are accompanied by mangrove restoration and compensation for affected people, so that the protection of the territory directly benefits those who live there.

RESULT — Grand-Lahou — better protection of the territory and support for communities toward more resilient livelihoods.

03 — TOGO - BENIN

Gbaga channel

Cross-border cooperation serving local territories



Dredging of the Gbaga channel

The Gbaga channel is an ecosystem shared between Togo and Benin. Its silting up regularly caused flooding in the neighboring localities on both sides of the border.

Jointly led by the two States, this project shows very concretely what regional cooperation can bring to communities living on either side of the same ecosystem.

RESULT — Gbaga channel — better water circulation, reduced flood risks and a concrete example of regional cooperation.

04 — MAURITANIA

Nouakchott

Strengthening the protection of the capital



Nouakchott dune ridge

Part of Nouakchott is particularly exposed to the risk of marine flooding. Consolidating the dune ridge is therefore a major issue for protecting the capital and its inhabitants.

Beyond the structures, the works included the development of public spaces and the replanting of tree-lined avenues, so that coastal protection also improves the everyday living environment of residents.

RESULT — Nouakchott — stronger protection of the capital against coastal risks and the completion of the WACA project in Mauritania.

05 — THE GAMBIA

Kotu stream

Visible results from the very first rainy season



Works carried out along the Kotu stream

Even before the permanent structures were built, the project took immediate measures along the Kotu stream to reduce flood risks for families in the Sukuta Nema neighborhood.

Dredging of the watercourse, construction of footbridges and other priority interventions produced results as early as the 2025 rainy season. Despite above-average rainfall, no flooding was recorded in the areas concerned.

RESULT — Kotu — more than 2,600 households protected and a demonstration of the effectiveness of early interventions.

06 — GUINEA-BISSAU

Guinea-Bissau

Preserving mangroves, investing in the future



Mangroves of Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau is home to one of the largest mangrove systems in West Africa, essential for coastal protection, biodiversity and community livelihoods.

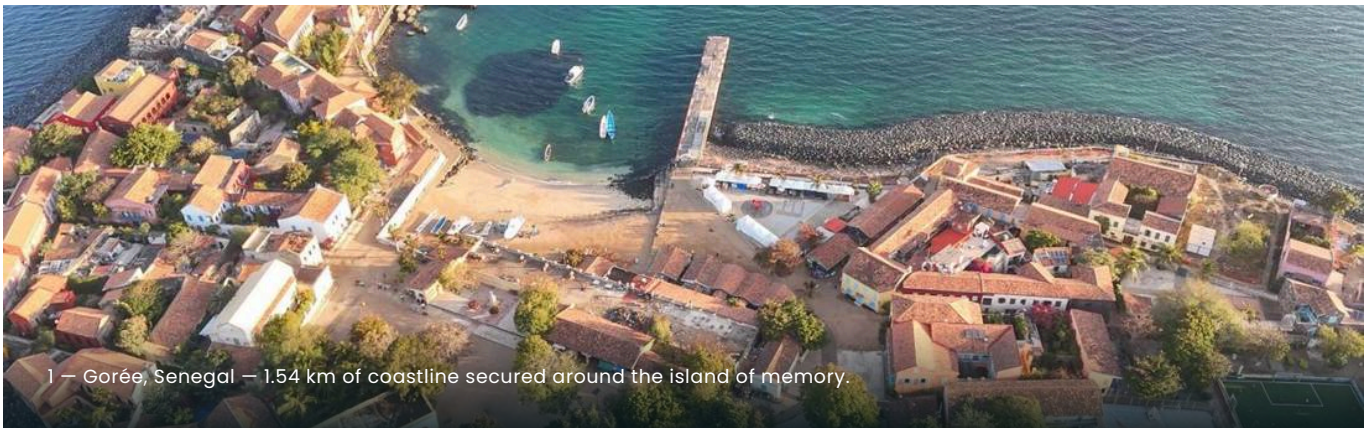
Restoration and participatory management efforts continue with local communities, while work on blue carbon opens new prospects for valuing these ecosystems.

RESULT — Guinea-Bissau — better-protected ecosystems, communities more involved in their management and innovative financing prospects for conservation.

07

2025 in pictures

A year in photographs



1 — Gorée, Senegal — 1.54 km of coastline secured around the island of memory.



2 — Grand-Lahou, Côte d'Ivoire — The stabilization structure reaches 73% completion at the end of 2025.



3 — Gbaga channel, Togo–Benin — Water flows again in the channel dredged by both countries.



4 — Nouakchott, Mauritania — The rebuilt dune protects a capital built below sea level.



5 — Sukuta Nema, The Gambia — Ramps and footbridges on the Kotu stream: zero flooding in 2025.



6 — Gbèkon, Benin — The bank of the Mono River, stabilized then revegetated.



7 — Grand-Lahou, Côte d'Ivoire — Soilless farming and livestock: life after the works takes shape, with strong participation of women.



8 — Regional meeting — Teams from the nine countries gathered to plan 2026.

08
Outlook

Consolidating gains, preparing what comes next

The year 2026 will mark a decisive stage for the WACA program. It will see the completion of ResIP 1, the acceleration of ResIP 2 and the preparation of the next generation of investments in coastal resilience in West Africa.

1

Complete the major works

In Senegal and Togo, the main coastal protection structures will enter their final phase of construction. Their completion will durably strengthen the protection of populations, infrastructure and economic activities against erosion and flooding.

2

Draw the lessons

The final evaluation of ResIP 1 and the mid-term evaluation of ResIP 2 will measure the results achieved and identify the lessons from eight years of fieldwork. This work will allow the lessons learned to be shared with partner countries and future projects.

3

Accelerate ResIP 2

After a phase devoted to studies, investment preparation and capacity building, the projects in The Gambia, Ghana and Guinea-Bissau will gradually move into their field works phase.

4

Strengthen regional cooperation

The West African Regional Coastal Observatory will continue to be set up in order to improve data sharing, shoreline monitoring and decision support at the regional scale. Partners will also continue to strengthen their cooperation and coordination.

5

Prepare for the future

The lessons from ResIP 1 and the first results of ResIP 2 are already feeding the preparation of WACA+, with the ambition of extending the program's achievements and continuing investments in the resilience of coastal areas.

Coastal resilience is not an expense.
It is an investment.

Beyond the kilometers protected and the jobs created and preserved, 2025 will above all have consolidated a way of working together among nine countries and six regional institutions — a gain that will last well beyond the projects. It is this shared momentum that WACA+ will carry forward.

WACA

West Africa Coastal Areas Management Program

WACA 2025

www.wacaprogram.org

THE WORLD BANK

UEMOA

UICN

UN environment

CSE Centre de Suivi Ecologique

PRCM

rampao