



PRESIDENTIAL PARLEY
REPORT

PRESENTATION SCRIPT

Theme:

**BLUE ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES**

By

SENIOR EXECUTIVE COURSE 47, 2025
National Institute, Kuru

December 2025



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NOVEMBER 2025

The President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, *Bola Ahmed Tinubu*, Grand Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic,

- **The Vice President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Your Excellency, Senator *Kashim Shettima*, Grand Commander of Order of the Niger,**
- **The Senate President, Most Distinguished *Senator Godswill Akpabio*,**
- **Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt Hon. Tajudeen Abbas,**
- **Secretary to the Government of the Federation,**
- **Chief of Staff to the President**
- **Members of the Federal Executive Council here present,**
- **Chief of Defence Staff, Service Chiefs, and the Inspector General of Police,**
- **Heads of Extra Ministerial Departments and Agencies,**
- **Director General, members of Management, Directing Staff, and Participants of the National Institute,**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning**

I am _____, a Participant of the Senior Executive Course 47, 2025 of the National Institute, Kuru and the Lead Presenter of our Course Report. Presenting with me are: _____, _____ and _____

Mr President, Sir, on behalf of the Participants of Senior Executive Course 47, 2025 of the National Institute, may I humbly express our sincere appreciation for the opportunity to present an abridged version of the report of our 10-month study on the theme “*Blue Economy and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities.*” The selection of this theme is indeed a clear indication that Mr President appreciates the huge prospects of the blue economy for economic diversification, social inclusion, environmental

stewardship, and national resilience as core drivers of your administration's Renewed Hope Agenda.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, the outline of our presentation is as shown on the screen, *I shall begin with the Background to the Study*: Nigeria loses about **₦33.3 trillion** annually to untapped blue economy potential due to the underutilisation of its extensive coastal and inland waters, which function as disparate systems rather than a unified economic engine. Oceans, seas, and inland waters, form the backbone of a marine and blue economy that generates about 2.5 trillion dollars annually, constituting 6.5% of global Gross Domestic Product. It is also projected that by 2030, socio-economic activities facilitated by the maritime environment would be worth over 34.2 trillion dollars yearly, with the potential to generate about 300 million jobs worldwide. These economic activities in the maritime domain make it the seventh-largest economy in the world, supporting the livelihoods of over 3 billion people. Harnessing the vast potential of the maritime environment, constitutes a unique economic ecosystem commonly known as the **blue economy**.

The '**blue economy**' encompasses a wide range of activities that are dependent on aquatic ecosystems, including fisheries, blue tourism, and renewable energy. Thus, the blue economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean, coastal, and inland water resources for economic growth and improved livelihoods while preserving the health of the ecosystems. On the other hand, sustainable development is conceived as advancing economic growth, protecting

the environment, and promoting social inclusion that meets today's needs without harming the wellbeing of future generations. For the Senior Executive Course 47, the nexus between the blue economy and sustainable development lies in the capacity of ocean and water-based sectors to create jobs, promote equitable growth, and enhance climate resilience, for the well-being of Nigeria's over 200 million citizens. Despite its potential, the blue economy is under severe threats, including overfishing, with nearly 35% of global fish stock fully exploited or overexploited. It also faces growing challenges from pollution, including about 19-23 million tonnes of plastic entering the oceans annually, as well as unsustainable coastal practices. Therefore, several countries are now adopting strategies to enhance their blue economies for sustainable development.

Portugal strategies on the blue economy generates about 7.8 billion Euros and 295,000 jobs, roughly 6% of national employment. South Africa Operation Phakisa launched in 2014 attracted over 3.6 billion dollars and generated over 8,000 jobs by 2023.

Nigeria's 853 km coastline, over 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone, and more than 10,000 km of inland waterways with about 3,000 km navigable all year-round, form an extensive aquatic network supporting agriculture, fisheries, maritime transport, energy, and local livelihoods across major river basins and the Niger Delta. This integrated inland-coastal system underpins a diversified blue economy spanning oil and gas, fisheries and aquaculture, maritime transport, tourism, and emerging renewables. If fully

developed, the sector could generate an estimated ₦427 trillion annually for the national economy.

Despite vast aquatic endowments, the contribution of the marine and blue economy to national Gross Domestic Product remains below 2% as against its 20% potential. Nigeria also loses about ₦103 Billion annually to Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing. Mangrove forests disappear at between 2 to 3% annually, while pollution and sedimentation affect more than 7,000 km of waterways, particularly in coastal areas. Some states, such as Bayelsa and Lagos, produce more than 44% of national aquaculture output. However, these states continue to face cold-chain gaps, coastal erosion, and poor coordination. Inland freight by water remains below 5% despite its cost advantage, leaving logistics costs almost 20% above regional averages. Other factors, such as port inefficiencies and regulatory bottlenecks, have diminished its competitiveness in the Gulf of Guinea. The blue tourism sector remains poorly regulated and underexplored.

The Federal Government has begun addressing these weaknesses through various initiatives. The National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (2020), the Deep Blue Project (2021), and the National Maritime Transport Policy (2022) signal important shifts. Also, the establishment of a new Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy in 2023 by Your Excellency, the President and the adoption of the National Policy on Marine and Blue Economy in 2025 by your administration, all represent monumental institutional and policy milestone by

Mr President. With these steps so far taken, Mr President is indeed to be commended for his visionary leadership. These efforts were geared toward promoting maritime security and safety, port modernisation, and trade, amongst others, in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda to enhance Nigeria's economic diversification. (*Pls continue with the presentation*).

*Mr President, Sir, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen...*this brings me to the Aim and Objectives of this study, beginning with the aim, which is to evaluate “*Blue Economy and Sustainable Development in Nigeria with a view to optimising its potential and making actionable recommendations*”

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the strategic environment, historical evolution, and current trends of the Blue Economy and sustainable development in Nigeria.
2. Assess the policy, legal, and institutional frameworks guiding the Blue Economy, with a focus on the roles of key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. Other *Objectives of the study are as shown on the Screen (Pause)*

To achieve the presidential mandate through these objectives, SEC 47 conducted Study Tours to **13** strategic institutions, namely; the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), as well as Naval Headquarters. Other institutions visited are as shown on the screen **Pause**. Also, the Course visited **seven** Nigerian States, **six** African countries, and seven other countries outside Africa, **as shown on the screen**.

Now to ISSUES AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH BLUE ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Starting with Weak Governance, Weak Institutional Coordination, and Policy Incoherence: Nigeria's blue-economy governance remains incoherent, slowing decisions and deterring investment. Overlapping mandates among NIMASA, NIWA and NPA blur accountability and prolong approval timelines, while NIWA–state disputes persist despite the 2024 Supreme Court decision affirming federal control of major waterways but leaving smaller creeks undefined. Misaligned NIMASA–Navy Deep Blue roles, split pollution enforcement, and centralised River Basin Development Authorities weaken adaptive management. Outdated and conflicting NIWA, NPA, Fisheries, Merchant Shipping and EIA Acts stall port expansion and impede Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050 progress.

Inadequate Financing and Investment Coordination: Nigeria's blue economy faces a structured financing deficit driven by weak coordination, piecemeal investment, and the absence of a unified finance framework. The 2025 FMMBE budget is ₦38.3 billion versus the about ₦72 trillion total annual expenditure needed for ports, waterways, renewables and others leading to irregular dredging and underutilised terminals. Lacking a National Blue Finance Strategy, Nigeria misses out on a \$4.5 trillion market, while ecosystem funding (about ₦20 billion annually) and 5000 MW of offshore renewable potential remain largely untapped.

Absence of Integrated Spatial Planning and Inadequate Infrastructure is another concern: Nigeria's port and inland water infrastructure remains sub-

optimal due to the absence of a coherent national Marine Spatial Plan for dredging, zoning, and industrial allocation. Lagos ports face congestion, while Port Harcourt, Warri, and Calabar ports struggle with shallow draughts and weak intermodal links. Inland ports at Lokoja, Baro and Onitsha are underperforming amid siltation and power shortages. Poor spatial planning has led to overlapping activities and an inefficient allocation of navigation, fisheries and conservation zones. Available infrastructure falls below global standards, inland waterways move less than 5% of freight, compared with 20% in Egypt and Bangladesh; inadequate cold-chain causes post-harvest losses ranging from 25–30%. Digitalisation is below 30% while weak coordination among NPA, NIWA, and NIMASA further slows investment and modernisation drive.

Inadequate Inland Waterways Development and Navigation: Nigeria's **10,000 km** waterways remain underutilised due to siltation, limited dredging, poor maintenance, weak safety enforcement and high navigation costs. Inland ports at Lokoja, Onitsha and Baro lack road–rail links. With approvals delayed and mandates disputed, private investment is low. Waterways move under **5%** of freight, raising transport costs and poverty. Models from Egypt's Nile and Kenya's Lake Victoria show the benefits of unified, multimodal governance.

Other issues and challenges are as shown on the screen.

Mr President Sir, after an extensive analysis of our study variables, the following are some of our key findings, beginning with:

Fisheries and Aquaculture

1. Environmental degradation and insecurity in littorals states and other inland basins have reduced fish output by more than **60%**.
2. National fish output of **1.2 million** Metric tonnes meets only one-third of demand, creating a **2.4 million** Metric -tonne deficit with an annual import bill of over one billion dollars.
3. 30% post-harvest loss persists due to inadequate cold-chain, low electricity access, poor handling, and outdated storage infrastructure. This affects local enterprises, especially those owned by **women and youths**.
4. Hatchery certification is inconsistent; fewer than **50%** meet national quality standards.
5. Deliberate investment in fisheries and aquaculture could accelerate fish production, increase revenue and create about **10 million** new jobs by 2030.

Next is Roles and Interactions of Government, Private Sector, Civil Society, and Local Communities

1. Governance in Nigeria's blue economy is splintered across River Basin Development Authorities, NIWA, NIOMR, and state ministries, causing duplication, unclear licensing, and weak coordination.
2. Weak alignment of mandate among federal agencies hampers collaboration resulting in inconsistent hatchery standards, poor disease surveillance and underutilised reservoirs.
3. **Limited cooperation** among NIMASA, NIWA, Marine Police, transport operators, and communities undermines inland-waterways safety.

4. **Social inclusion** remains vital as Tanzania, Kenya and Morocco show that investments targeted at **women and youth** expand productivity and market access.

5. **Insecurity** on rivers and creeks stems from coordination gaps among security agencies, community groups, and operators, enabling sea robbery, cargo theft and illegal sand mining. (*.....Pls continue with the presentation*)

Now to findings related to Revenue Generation and Blue Financing Strategy

1. The current revenue base from the marine and blue economy sectors remains narrow, informal and segmented with significant leakages.

2. A major revenue potential exists in concessioning and commercialising underutilised Federal and State assets along coastal and inland water bodies.

3. Countries that maximised marine revenues adopted integrated Blue Corridor models such as Egypt's Nile–Suez and Greece's Aegean–Ionian corridors.

4. The low 5% water-cargo share stems from weak infrastructure, silted channels, poor multimodal planning and insecurity.

5. Lack of a structured financing limits private-sector participation and hinders impactful blue-economy projects.

6. Countries like Morocco, Kenya, and Tanzania utilised structured Infrastructure Investment Funds to improve bankability and attract blended finance.

7. Nigeria's capital market offers untapped potential to access blue bonds, blue sukuk and structured funds.

Next is findings related to Governance, Institutions, and Policy Coherence

1. Mandates across FMMBE, Ministries of Environment, Power, Water Resources and Sanitation, Agriculture and NHA under MOD create duplications.
2. Vertical coordination between Federal and State Governments is weak; conflicts over licensing and dredging are common.
3. Replicated budgeting across agencies leads to abandoned projects and inconsistent technical standards.
4. Some laws are outdated and did not provide for Marine Spatial Plan, digital regulation, and climate-resilience needs.
5. Institutional learning is weak, successes such as Deep Blue Project have not been replicated inland.

Mr President Sir, ladies and gentlemen, despite these challenges there are OPPORTUNITIES FOR NIGERIA

From field studies by SEC 47, tangible opportunities exist for Nigeria to build an adaptive, coordinated, and knowledge-driven blue economy. The recent re-election of Nigeria into IMO Council presents opportunity to reposition its blue economy and deepen its influence in global maritime governance. Fisheries and aquaculture remain strong entry points for Nigeria, improving basin-level management and raising hatchery certification above the current level of below 50 percent would expand domestic production and cut post-harvest losses, which

currently exceed 30 percent. This would improve coastal and inland livelihoods, reduce the over \$1.7 billion fish-import bill, and support about **10 million jobs**.

Scientific data collection through a National Integrated Spatial Plan would enhance bathymetry, fisheries, vessel movement, and resource-mapping data for transparent forecasting and stronger investor confidence. Diversifying revenues across fisheries, maritime logistics, blue tourism, marine biotechnology, offshore renewables, and conservation, alongside concessioning underutilised assets, would unlock new earnings. The 700 km Lagos-Calabar coastal highway offers a unique opportunity to significantly open Nigeria's maritime corridor, increase cargo movement, facilitate trade, promote blue tourism, and advance economic development.

A National Blue Finance Strategy with standardised eligibility criteria would mobilise capital, reduce logistics costs, expand aquaculture clusters, and support a commercially vibrant and a resilient blue economy.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies & Gentlemen, in Conclusion, the establishment of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy in the very first year in office and approval of the National Policy 2025 by Mr President marks a visionary shift towards economic diversification and sustainable development. Senior Executive Course 47 observed that Nigeria's marine and inland water assets such as oceans, mangroves, rivers, lakes, and wetlands are vast but currently underutilised due to uncoordinated governance. This leads to duplication of efforts, poor accountability, higher costs, and missed opportunities

in ports, fisheries, tourism, logistics and renewable energy. The structural challenge is that institutions have overlapping roles without shared planning, data, or performance systems thereby discouraging investment.

Lessons from Egypt, Greece, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, the Philippines, Algeria and the United Kingdom show that aligning governance, Science, Technology & Innovation, as well as finance under a coherent system accelerates progress in the marine and blue economy. A legally anchored coordination council could promote marine and blue economy governance. The absence of a synergised financing arrangement necessitates a structured financing approach for the sector. (..... ***Pls conclude the rest of the presentation***)

Now to our Recommendations and Implementation Strategies

Recommendation One

FGN should facilitate the investment of about **₦12 trillion** over the next two years for the production of 10 million MT of fisheries from the current **1.2 million MT**.

Implementation Strategies:

- i. FMMBE to expedite the review and adoption of the Draft National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2024–2028) by First Quarter 2026.
- ii. FMMBE in collaboration with MOFI to establish Comprehensive Fisheries and Aquaculture Value Chain Framework with an initial capital to mobilise private investment and coordinated financing to boost fish production from Second Quarter 2026.

- iii. FMMBE to scale up water- and land-based aquaculture as well as marine, inland and industrial fisheries to create over **7.5 million** jobs and generate about **₦25 trillion** from Third Quarter 2026.
- iv. FMMBE to facilitate establishment of hybrid plants and insect-protein production hubs and hatchery infrastructure through public-private partnerships from Third Quarter 2026.
- v. FMMBE in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation, other stakeholders to facilitate the development of aquaculture clusters around existing River Basin Development Areas from Second Quarter 2026.
- vi. FMMBE in collaboration with the Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute, Banks of Industry and Agriculture to facilitate the provision and upscaling of cold chain facilities, climate-smart ovens and sun-dryers for inland fisheries clusters by Fourth Quarter 2026.

Recommendation Two

The FGN should develop a coastal and inland water bodies national Marine and Aquatic Spatial Planning Framework.

Implementation Strategies

- i. SGF to set up a committee of relevant stakeholders to conduct a national baseline survey of marine resources and hydrological-ecosystems First Quarter 2026

- ii. The committee to draft a Marine and Aquatic Spatial Planning Policy and develop a national coastal and inland waterways spatial management plan beginning from Second Quarter 2026.

Recommendation Three

FGN should expand the revenue base of the Marine and Blue Economy Sector.

Implementation Strategies

- i. FMMBE in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to design an expanded revenue generation strategic plan in all Blue Economy revenue subsectors not later than Second Quarter 2026.
- ii. FMMBE and Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission to embark on the concessioning of underutilised assets along the coastal and inland waterways from Third Quarter 2026.
- iii. FMMBE in collaboration with sub-national governments to designate Marine and Blue Corridors across inland and coastal waterways for fisheries, maritime logistics, trade and revenue generation not later than Fourth Quarter 2026.
- iv. FMMBE in collaboration with MOD to commence the commercial export of hydrographic services to Gulf of Guinea States not later than Fourth Quarter 2026.

Recommendation Four

FGN should develop a comprehensive marine and blue economy financing strategy.

Implementation Strategies

- i. FMMBE in collaboration with FMF to create a financing window for Blue Marine and Economy sectors by Second Quarter 2026.
- ii. CBN to coordinate with Development Finance Institutions to expand their financing windows to the wider Marine and Blue Economy sector projects by Third Quarter 2026.
- iii. The FMMBE in collaboration with the Securities and Exchange Commission to regularly sensitise private sector actors in the blue economy on available capital market funding windows and listing opportunities from Fourth Quarter 2026.
- iv. FMMBE to collaborate with FMF and Debt Management Office for the issuance of Sovereign Guarantees, Blue Bonds, Blue Sukuk, and Risk Mitigation mechanisms to de-risk the mobilisation of local and international private equity funds and investments, by Fourth Quarter 2026.

Recommendation Five

FGN should review and harmonise all legal, policy and institutional frameworks on Marine and Blue Economy.

Implementation Strategies

- i. SGF to constitute a National Technical Working Group comprising relevant stakeholders to review and harmonise all existing legislations on Marine and Blue Economy, not later than First Quarter 2026.
- ii. FMOJ to submit the reviewed bills to the National Assembly for passage into law by Fourth Quarter 2026.

iii. SGF to seek presidential approval to transform the current Marine and Blue Economy Policy Advisory Council provided in the NPMBE into a National Blue Economy Coordination Council to be chaired by the President not later than Fourth Quarter 2026.

Recommendation Six

FGN should establish an Innovative Marine and Blue Skills, Job Creation and Social Inclusion Framework.

Implementation Strategies

i. FMMBE in collaboration with relevant MDAs to co-design and deliver short-cycle, job-ready marine and blue skills programmes for priority groups including women and youths by Second Quarter 2026.

ii. FMMBE in collaboration with stakeholders to develop marine and blue skills vocational pathways through technical colleges, community hubs and certified private providers. by Second Quarter 2026.

iii. FMMBE to set up a committee to carry out needs' assessment for upgrade and expansion of training facilities and the financial implications at Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron, and submit their report for approval not later Second Quarter 2026.

iv. FMMBE to begin the upgrade and expansion of the Academy not later than Third Quarter, 2026.

v. FMMBE in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment and private partners to link graduates' apprenticeship to job-placement schemes in Marine and Blue Economy sectors from Third Quarter 2026.

Recommendation Seven

FGN should enhance safety and security of inland waterbodies.

Implementation Strategies

- i. FMMBE to collaborate with MOD, MOI and Police Affairs to strengthen security, safety, surveillance and vessel monitoring standards across inland waterways beginning First Quarter 2026.
- ii. FMMBE to enhance surveillance and inspections at ports, jetties and shipping routes using Automated Identification System, drones, and satellite monitoring by Second Quarter 2026.
- iii. FMMBE to develop an Inclusive Coastal Security Network to integrate youth, women, and local communities into maritime security and surveillance framework by Fourth Quarter 2026.

Recommendation Eight

FGN should develop coordinated corridors for blue tourism and ecological conservation.

Implementation Strategies

- i. FMMBE working with States Ministries of Tourism, Arts and Culture to develop a Blue Tourism Masterplan, focusing on eco-resorts in coastal and inland water areas by First Quarter 2026.
- ii. FMACCE in collaboration with subnational governments to develop and enforce a hospitality service national standard benchmark by Second Quarter, 2026.

- iii. FMMBE to collaborate with relevant MDAs to develop eco-tourism integrated marketing and promotion programmes, to attract tourists by Third Quarter 2026.
- iv. FMMBE in collaboration with subnational governments and private sector to develop a national offshore and aquatic sports framework for Nigeria not later than Fourth Quarter 2026..
- v. FMMBE in collaboration with subnational governments, National Directorate of Employment, SMEDAN and relevant stakeholders to conduct training and capacity enhancement, including Education-to-Employment in Community-Based Eco-Tourism by Second Quarter 2027.

Mr President, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies & Gentlemen, this bring me to the end of our presentation. May I add that this study has 12 other actionable recommendations as contained in the report for your consideration. Your Excellency, once again we thank you most sincerely for this opportunity and we look forward to your comments and further guidance.



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