

THE REGIONAL AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH NETWORKS FOR AFRICA: NORTH AFRICA AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

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AU-IBAR in collaboration with WOAH supported the launch of the Regional Aquatic Animal Health Network's (RAAHN) for Southern and North Africa in 2023. The establishment of RAAHN's is among the key outputs of the EU supported second Fisheries Governance Project on improving regional capacities for aquatic disease outbreak detection, notification and coordinated response with a view to enhancing safe intra and inter-regional fish trade in line with the regional integration trade agenda and the Protocol on Trade in Goods of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area. Additionally, the action is also in concurrence with the WOAH's Aquatic Animal Health Strategy (2021 -2025). The RAAHN's offer an opportunity for establishing an all-inclusive multi-stakeholder participatory mechanism through which the sectors' stakeholders collaborate equitably, to share sanitary information. This is a proven global and continental best practice that has been shown to promote coherence and cost-effectiveness in the development and implementation of animal SPS standards and measures, and thus promoting the sustainable development of animal (aquatic animals notwithstanding) value-chains. The approach further aligns with the *Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa* (PFRS) and the *Africa Fisheries Reform Mechanism* (AFRM). The action will ultimately promote aquatic animal health governance to safeguard Africa's aquatic animal resources against biological threats, enhance the productivity and resilience of its fishery and aquaculture production systems, foster aquatic biodiversity conservation, and enhance the competitive access to markets for Africa's aquatic animal resource goods and services. This is paramount for the development of sustainable food systems. The occasion to conduct the first steering committee meetings for RAAHN North Africa and SADC as a side-event at World Aquaculture 2025 offers committee members an opportunity to draw and share lessons from global and regional experiences.