

Preliminary Information
Indicative of the outer limits of the continental shelf
And
Description of the status of preparation of making a submission
To the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
For
the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe



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1. Introduction

São Tomé and Príncipe ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, hereinafter referred to as "the Convention", on 3 November 1987. The Convention entered into force for São Tomé and Príncipe on 16 November 1994.

Article 4 of Annex II to the Convention stipulates that where a coastal State intends to establish, in accordance with article 76, the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured, it should submit particulars of such limits to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, hereinafter referred to as "the Commission", along with supporting scientific and technical data as soon as possible, but in any case within ten years from the entry into force of the Convention for that State.

In 2001 the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention decided that in the case of a State Party for which the Convention entered into force before 13 May 1999, it is understood that the ten-year time period referred to in article 4 of Annex II to the Convention shall be taken to have commenced on 13 May 1999 (document SPLOS/72, paragraph (a)). This decision applies to São Tomé and Príncipe. Consequently in the case of São Tomé and Príncipe the ten-year time period referred to in article 4 of Annex II to the Convention expires on 13 May 2009.

The Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention also decided that the general issue of the ability of States, particularly developing States, to fulfil the requirements of article 4 of Annex II to the Convention be kept under review (document SPLOS/72, paragraph (b)). Due to lack of financial and technical resources and relevant capacity and expertise, or other similar constraints, many developing countries, including the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, are in fact facing particular challenges to fulfil these requirements.

In June 2008 the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention therefore

information to be submitted to the Secretary-General in accordance with the decision contained in SPLOS/183”.

2. Assistance and advice received during the preparation of this communication

In accordance with paragraph 19 of resolution A/RES/63/111 of the United Nations General Assembly, the Government of Norway has provided assistance and advice in the preparation of the present submission. Both the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate have been involved in the preparation.

Based on open and accessible sources and modern Geographical Information System technology (GIS), the UNEP Shelf Progr

4. Provisions of article 76 invoked in support of this communication

The provisions of paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of article 76 of the Convention are referred to in support of preliminary information indicative of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

5. General description of the continental margin in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

The Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe is located in the Gulf of Guinea about 250 km west of northern Gabon. They are 140 km apart and form the southwestern end of a chain of

The details of the shearing process of Africa and America to which the formation of the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe is linked to are still a matter of discussion and research. But it is clear that the continental margin of the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, through this link, are part of a transform continental margin that was formed by the continental break-up between the African Continent and the American Continent during the Cretaceous.

6. Maritime delimitations and other issues

All information and maps contained in this submission are without prejudice to issues of maritime delimitation. Nor do they constitute any expression of views by Norway or UNEP Shelf Programme/GRID-Arendal.

The Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe has entered into bilateral treaties on maritime delimitation with the Republic of Equatorial Guinea (Treaty regarding the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, 26 June 1999) and with the Gabonese Republic (Agreement on the Delimitation of the Maritime Border between the Gabonese Republic and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, 26 April 2001). With the Federal Republic of Nigeria the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe has entered into a treaty on the joint development of petroleum and other resources (Treaty between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe on the Joint Development of Petroleum and other Resources, in respect of Areas of the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Two States, 21 February 2001).

Article 4.1 of this latter treaty stipulates that: “Nothing contained in this treaty shall be interpreted as a renunciation of any right or claim relating to the whole or any part of the Zone by either State Party or as recognition of the other State Party’s position with regard to any right or claim to the Zone or any part thereof”.

There may be a potential overlap between areas beyond 200 nautical miles claimed by the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and some of its neighbouring States. Possible unresolved issues of delimitation of the continental shelf in these areas should be considered by reference to rule 46 and Annex I of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission. Such unresolved delimitation issues should be considered as a “maritime dispute” for the purpose of rule 5 (a) of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure of

7. Preliminary information indicative of outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 M

In accordance with SPLOS/183 op.p. 1 (a), this communication seeks to document that at least a single Foot of the Slope Point (FOS point) has a location that indicates that the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe's continental shelf extends beyond 200 M from the normal baseline.

Considering the limited scientific data available, no final conclusion is made regarding the most appropriate location of the base of the continental slope of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe at this stage. Rather it is found incumbent, based on available data, to document at least the minimum extent of the legal continental shelf – by providing *prima facie* evidence that an FOS point may at least be located in a certain area, if not further offshore.

While there may be grounds for carrying out additional surveys for the precise identification of FOS points (for which there is the possibility of significant variations), the following FOS point and the associated preliminary outer limit points are submitted as part of the preliminary information. These may be subject to later revision.

7.1 Existing database

Figures 3 and 4 show track lines for bathymetric and analog seismic data that has been available

7.2 Foot of the continental slope points

Several FOS points have been identified both on single-beam bathymetric profiles from the GEODAS and IFREMER databases and on bathymetric profiles extracted from the SRTM30plus_V4 grid. These FOS points are shown to generate continental shelf area beyond 200 M. One FOS point extracted from the SRTM30plus_V4 grid is plotted on figures 1 and 5 and is described in more detail in the following for documentation purposes and to demonstrate the variable nature of the continental margin off the coast of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe. This FOS point is indicative only and does not in any way represent the final representation of the foot of the continental slope in the vicinity of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe.

The possibility of identifying FOS points located further seaward than the one documented here cannot be excluded, should more data be discovered or acquired and made available at a later stage.

7.2.1 FOS-1

Basic Data

Data type	Data source
Synthetic bathymetric profile extracted from bathymetric grid	SRTM30plus_V4

Point FOS-1 is located on the south-western flank of the Niger Fan west of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome & Principe at the base of the continental slope. (Figures 1 and 2). The area of the base of the slope is identified on the basis of the morphology of the continental slope in the area as depicted by a synthetic bathymetric profile extracted from the satellite derived bathymetric grid SRTM30plus_V4 (Figure 6). Point FOS-1 was determined as the point of maximum change in gradient within the base of the slope area (Figure 6).

7.3 Indicative extent of continental shelf based on selected FOS points

The FOS point generates continental shelf area beyond 200 M based on the sediment thickness criterion of article 76 paragraph 4(a)(i) and the 60 M distance criterion of article 76 paragraph 4(a)(ii). The exact location of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 M awaits the final analysis which will be submitted to the Commission (see section 8). However, the extent of the continental shelf beyond 200 M adjacent to the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe is indicated in a general way in figure 5.

Further studies and data are needed to clarify the final extend of the continental shelf beyond 200 M of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe.

8. Description of status of preparation and intended date of making a submission

This communication takes advantage of available data from relevant intergovernmental bodies and organizations.

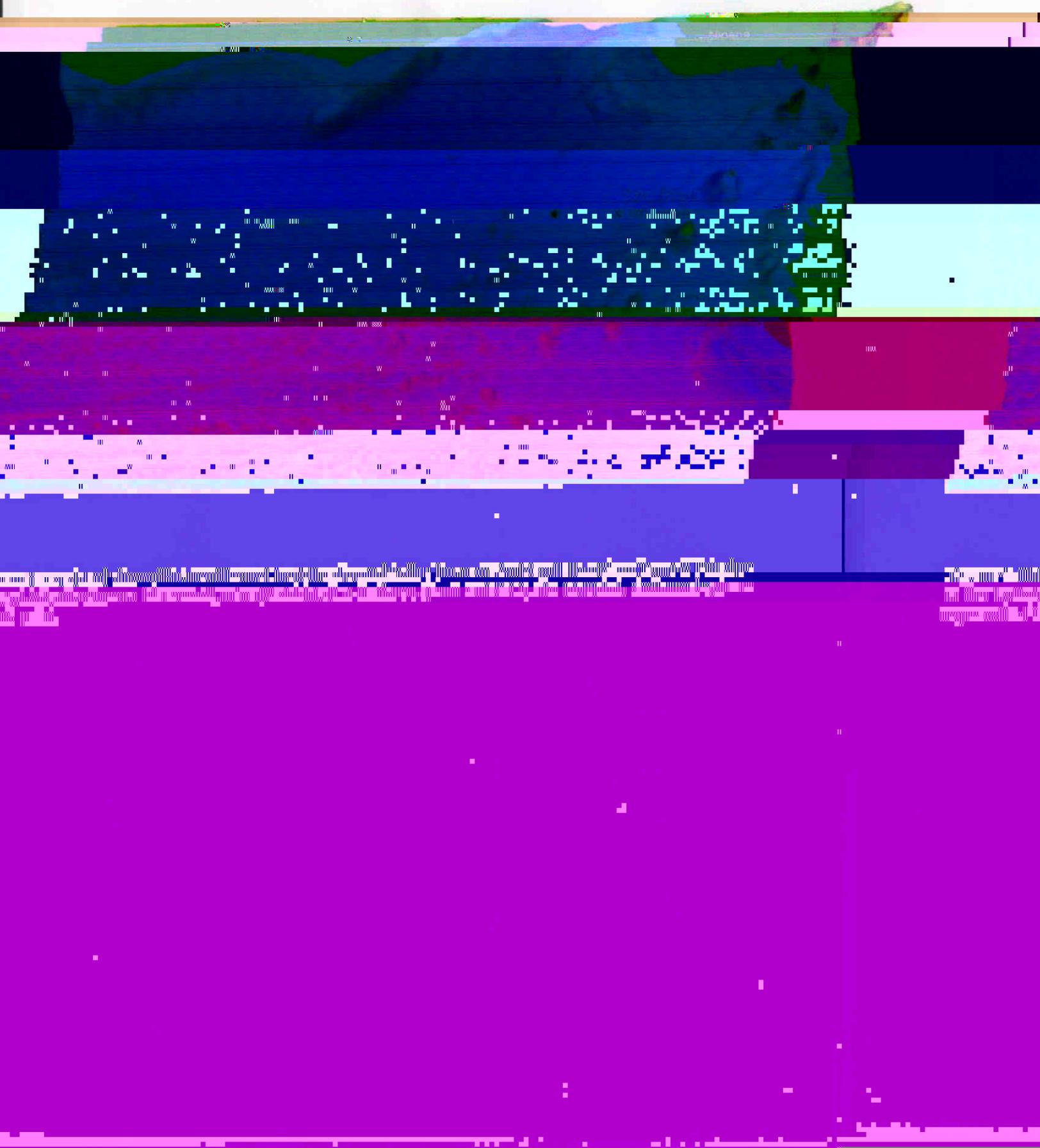
The utilization of GRID-Arendal's global public marine geoscientific database, provides a careful documentation of the aforementioned FOS point thus providing *prima facie* evidence that the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe's continental shelf

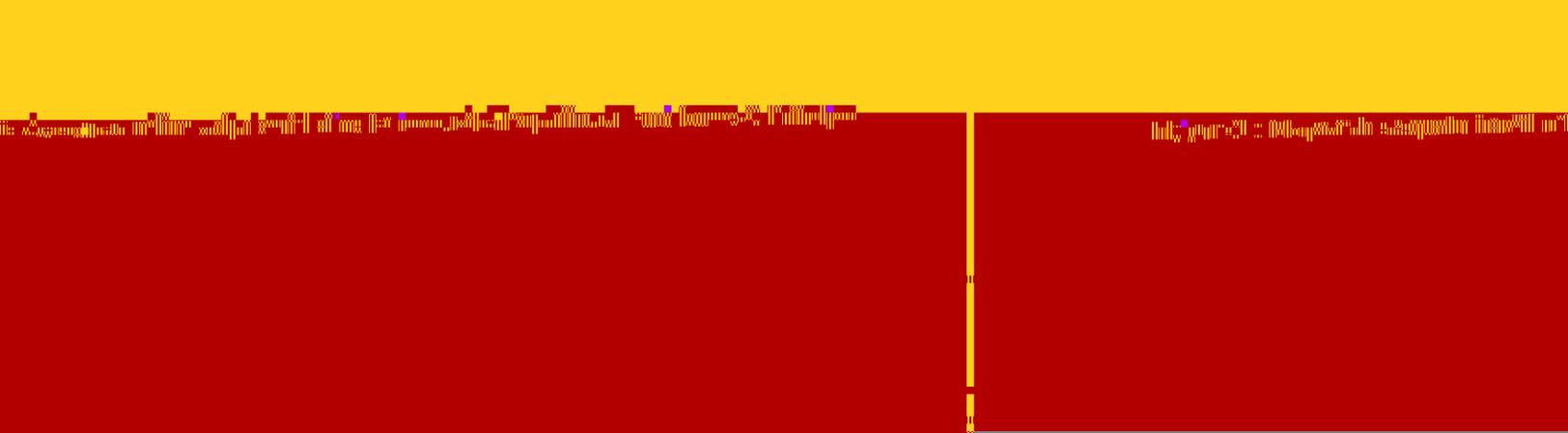
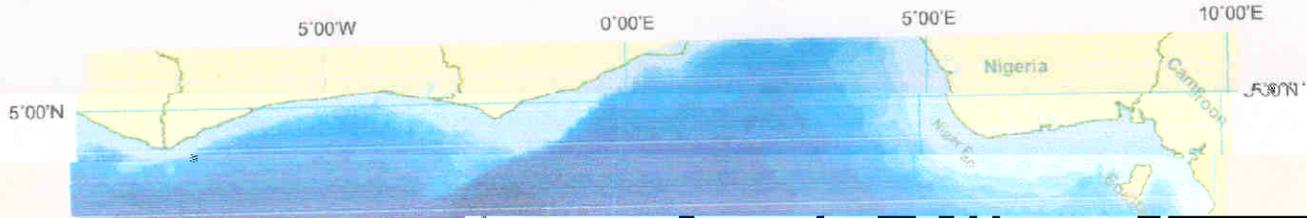
According to the Training Manual a desktop study shall cover the following items:

- Assemble and organize all pre-existing data;
- Analyse the data according to article 76;
- Identify areas of critical value for further studies;
- Subdivide the geographical area being considered into 2212 T46h-nu

Appendix

Figures





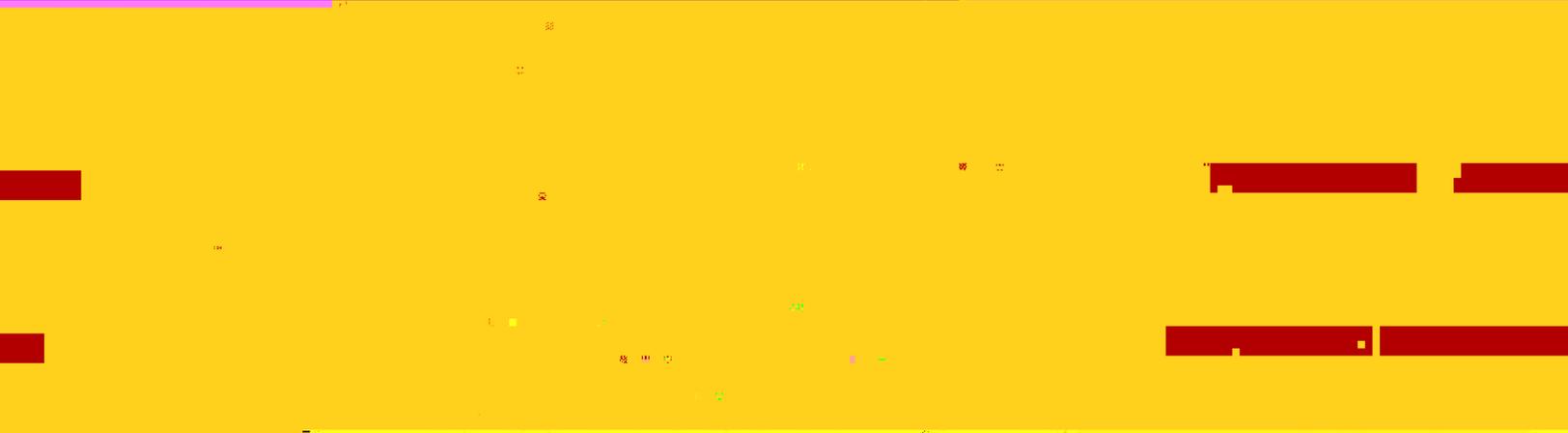
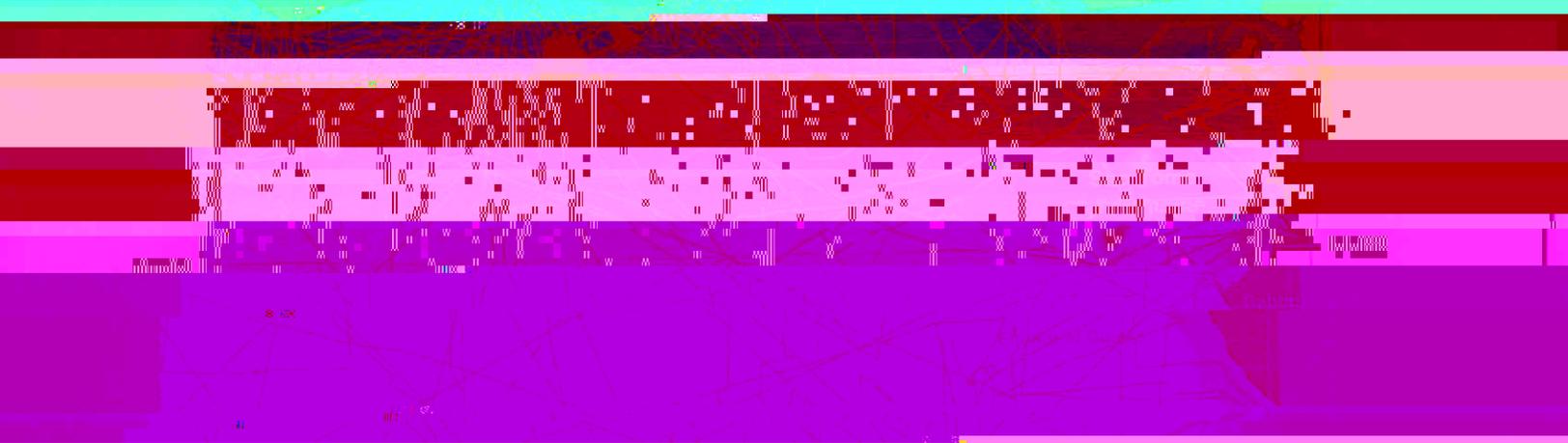


Figure 1. Location of the study area in the Gulf of Guinea, showing the coastline of Nigeria and Cameroon. The map includes latitude and longitude markers (5°00'W and 5°00'E) and a scale bar. A red line indicates the location of the study area.

Figure 2. Satellite image of the study area, showing the coastline and the location of the study area. The image is overlaid with a grid of latitude and longitude coordinates. A red line indicates the location of the study area.

Figure 3. Map of the study area, showing the coastline and the location of the study area. The map includes latitude and longitude markers (5°00'W and 5°00'E) and a scale bar. A red line indicates the location of the study area.

Figure 4. Satellite image of the study area, showing the coastline and the location of the study area. The image is overlaid with a grid of latitude and longitude coordinates. A red line indicates the location of the study area.

Figure 5. Map of the study area, showing the coastline and the location of the study area. The map includes latitude and longitude markers (5°00'W and 5°00'E) and a scale bar. A red line indicates the location of the study area.

