

**Concept Note for Swedish support  
to the Nairobi Convention and the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries  
Commission (SWIOFC)**

Requesting Agency:	UNFAO/UN Environment - Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention and South Western Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC)
Priority Issue Addressed:	Strengthening cooperation and collaboration between the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC in ocean governance in the Western Indian Ocean Region in support of SDG 14 and SDGs 1 and 5
Regional Scope:	Western Indian Ocean – Countries that are signatories to the Nairobi Convention and members of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission
Participating Countries	Regional component: All members of SWIOFC that are also parties to the Nairobi Convention
Implementation Period:	2018-2021

---

## **1. BACKGROUND**

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) constitutes one of the most biologically diverse and productive systems in both species and ecosystems, and ranks as one of the world's richest ocean areas encompassing the world's second richest marine biodiversity hotspot.

Some 65 million people live within 100km of the coast across the entire WIO, with cultures based mostly on fishing, maritime trade and the use of marine resources. Today, healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems underpin the economies of the region, and if properly managed may offer huge potential for sustainable development. The economic value of the ocean assets of the Western Indian Ocean region – expressed in annual gross domestic product (GDP) – is at least US\$20.8 billion.

Numerous studies have identified the WIO Small Island Developing States, amongst the most vulnerable to climate change impacts at the same time most of the WIO countries are expected to face severe environmental, ecological and socio-economic disruptions owing to impacts of climate variability and change. Climate change is severely impacting the coral reefs and mangroves, as well as other ecosystems occasioning regime shifts, a phenomenon that is poorly understood in the WIO region. For example, four significant coral bleaching events have been recorded in the region from 1983 to 2016, impoverishing the diversity of reefs and reducing their ability to sustain fisheries and provide coastal protection for low lying towns and villages.

In the WIO, small-scale fisheries contribute only 13 per cent of the total fisheries value in formal statistics, but this probably more reflects a lack of knowledge about these fisheries than anything else, as most of it is informal and unreported, and, therefore, its real importance is likely to be much higher than what is shown in official statistics. Fisheries provide a major source of protein and essential nutrition, and contribute significantly to food security and employment, particularly to the poorer segments of the coastal population. Processing and trading of products from small-scale fisheries is also a major source of income for many millions of women and youth in poor coastal communities. Nevertheless, the situation of most small-scale fishing communities is still characterized by extreme poverty, unsustainable fishing and a host of environmental problems. Moreover, their sustainability is currently threatened by a mix of factors, including population growth, environmental degradation, and climate variability and change, and the poverty of these communities greatly increases the impact of the human population on the natural assets, as desperately poor people have difficulty limiting their current-day use of the natural resources in favour of their long-term sustainability. Poor coastal communities, in particular youth and women, also have difficulty being heard in decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods, and thus tend to be disproportionately affected by most management measures.

Improving fisheries management, including for small-scale artisanal fisheries, is a major focus at national and regional levels in the WIO region. National fisheries policies are increasingly being aligned with FAO standards for the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), and there is increasing cooperation among countries and management agencies. SWIOFC plays a key role in facilitating this dialogue.

As multiple demands on the marine and coastal systems increase, contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention are committed to, and are putting in place processes for, managing and protecting the coastal and marine environment from pollution, through integrated coastal zone management and ecosystem-based management approaches to manage the complex interactions among different users and stakeholders, and the natural assets

that support them. There is increasing emphasis on the sustainable use of ocean and coastal resources through the “blue” or sustainable ocean economy paradigm. The Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention, notably Seychelles, Mauritius, and the Republic South Africa, are championing the implementation of the Blue Economy. The Nairobi Convention in partnership with SWIOFC will support all contracting parties to advance the blue economy objectives within the national commitments under the Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals, with special emphasis on the linkages between SDG14 to all other 16 SDGs in attempt to unlock the economic potential of the ocean in a sustainable manner.

The partnership between the Nairobi Convention and the SWIOFC will support programs that advance better sectoral management and improved inter-sectoral coordination that should lead to improved uptake of management tools such as marine spatial planning, ecosystem based approaches, to mitigate the adverse impacts of human activities on the marine and coastal environment in the WIO region. These programs will also encourage the use of local knowledge and local communities to address the high risk of programs failures associated with the lack of participation of coastal communities, and particularly artisanal fishing communities, in the management and decisions making processes, especially in the management of the resources that they depend on. This risk is particularly acute for the inter-sectoral processes, but it is also present for the sectoral EAF-based processes. Failing to take due consideration of the needs and interests of these communities, accounting for the roles and needs of men, women and youth alike, leads to increased poverty, and also lead to very limited success of the foreseen interventions, as coastal communities can have a significant impact on the environment around them. Proper inclusion of these communities in the different management processes may protect their livelihoods while ensuring the success of the overall management measures, since coastal communities worldwide are largely dependent on the health of the marine and coastal environment and resources. It has been shown in different occasions that these communities can function as effective stewards of these very same resources, in community-based management or in a co-management framework.

The program will address the resilience of the marine and coastal environment on one hand and of the sustainability of small-scale fishing communities on the other, as one inextricably linked socio-ecological system. Essentially environmental and fisheries management initiative will take due account of the needs and potential of the local coastal communities and the ability of the ecosystem to service these socio-economic needs. This, in turn, implies a dedicated cooperation and coordination amongst the regional and national institutions dedicated to fisheries management, on the one hand, and those primarily concerned with environmental protection and conservation, on the other.

### Building on Progress

Following the formal creation of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) at the 127<sup>th</sup> meeting of the FAO Council, from 2004 to 2008 SIDA partnered with the FAO office for Southern Africa to support SWIOFC in the development of a regional mechanism to assist countries manage and develop fisheries under their jurisdiction, which led to an appreciable development of the work of the SWIOFC in the region. With this support, SWIOFC managed to reinforce not only its own capacity but also its linkages and cooperation with other organizations, like the World Bank, the Nairobi Convention and WWF, among others.

In the period between 2010 and 2015, the Government of Sweden through SIDA provided crucial support to the Secretariat of Nairobi Convention and Abidjan Convention to build capacity within the Secretariats and within National Focal Institutions and focal points. The Swedish support also allowed the establishment of partnerships with other Inter-governmental organizations e.g, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and with Non-Governmental organizations, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), Birdlife International and WWF etc.. Within this framework, the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC initiated dialogue on the development of a cooperative agreement, to enable the two institutions to support ecosystem based management approaches that address the full range of issues on an ecosystem scale in the WIO region.

As a consequence of the support provided by SIDA, the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC have acquired essential expertise and relations, at national, regional and global levels, each organization having clear comparative advantages in the field of interventions, namely environmental protection and management, and fisheries and aquaculture development, planning and management respectively.

The two organizations aim at reinforcing their partnership to allow more integrated support to the countries in the region for improving the sustainability of their coastal fisheries, including the necessary protection of the ecosystems. Through the interventions by the Nairobi convention and SWIOFC, capacities at the national and regional level will be enhanced where it exists. The program will intervene and build capacity towards sustainable small-scale fisheries and use of common ecosystem services and natural resources, including

resilience to climate variability and change, to improve food and nutrition security, especially for the local small-scale fishing communities.

## **2. PROGRAM AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2018-2021**

The high-level objective for the partnership between the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC is to promote responsible ocean governance and fisheries management for Sustainable Blue Growth in the Western Indian Ocean region.

Within this high-level goal, the project would focus on the following main areas of intervention:

- 1) Promote a consistent high-level policy dialogue and coordination between the environmental and fisheries management institutions, with a particular focus on the SWIOFC and the NC, and their stakeholders at the national level, in support of sustainable management of linked uses of the coastal and marine environment to achieve sustainable livelihoods of coastal communities
- 2) Support development of a multi-stakeholder process for marine spatial planning for policy-making and integrated management and upscale successful models for community-based resource management in the WIO region
- 3) Promote the inclusion of poor coastal communities, and particularly of small-scale fishing communities, in the sectoral and inter-sectoral management processes dealing with the coastal and marine regions
- 4) Enhance regional capacity on adaptation to environmental variability including climate change, targeting especially poor coastal communities

### **Project components**

The project will have two complementary components, a regional component, and a national component.

The regional component will focus on addressing issues directly related to regional-level mechanisms, coordination and cooperation, that need to be developed at a regional level, requiring agreements and coordination among the countries. These may include the development of regional approaches to fisheries management and coastal and marine environment conservation, trans-national agreements on the management of fisheries and other uses of the coastal and marine environment, or similar elements. The goal will be to include mechanisms for mutual support between fisheries and environmental conservation initiatives, that take into account, whenever relevant, the effective inclusion of small-scale fishing communities.

The national component will be a pilot project mainly focusing on establishing processes and mechanisms for the cooperation and coordination between the institutions responsible for fisheries management, on the one hand, and those responsible for environmental conservation, on the other. It will concentrate on a small number of countries that already have mechanisms for participatory management of small-scale fisheries in place, and will target one or two main fisheries or areas that simultaneously are of importance to the small-scale fishing communities and affected by important environmental issues.

Activities to be carried out may include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- i. Development of a multi-stakeholder process for marine spatial planning for policy-making and integrated management towards the deployment of a Blue Economy Development Approach that explicitly benefits coastal communities, and particularly women and youth, including through the creation of alternative livelihoods;
- ii. Undertake strategic environmental and social assessment to identify at least 5 priority sites to support in decision-making in relation to the integration of spatial planning and the EAF at national and regional level, based on upscaling existing experiences of community-supported natural resource management;
- iii. Review the status of selected critical habitats (e.g. coral reefs, mangroves, sea grasses, estuaries) in the Western Indian Ocean, and their contribution to the dynamics of fishery resources and to the livelihoods of poor local communities;

- iv. Review the current status of selected marine protected areas, their effectiveness, connectivity, and impacts on the local resources and on the local small-scale fishing communities;
- v. Support the collection, management and analysis of information for participatory and evidence-based spatial management of the ocean, including artisanal fisheries and other uses of the coastal and marine ecosystems;
- vi. Restore and/or rehabilitate already damaged ecosystems and protected areas and sustainably manage critical habitats for increased resilience to the spectrum of anticipated climate change impacts;
- vii. Support the establishment or reinforcement of community-based fisheries and natural-resource management systems, based on the multiple experiences already gained in the region;
- viii. Conduct targeted capacity development actions on approaches and tools for the sustainable management and development of artisanal fisheries and other uses of the coastal and marine environment that address the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainability;
- ix. Document existing tools and approaches for sustainable small-scale fisheries and use of ecosystem services and evaluate their applicability to the countries and fisheries in the region;
- x. Support the establishment of a network of fisheries extension services targeting the poor small-scale fishing communities, and in particular women and youth;
- xi. Assist development of improved handling, processing/ value-addition and marketing of fishery products, and support alternative livelihoods and income generation to the fisheries value-chain in a value-chain approach;
- xii. Raise awareness on the importance of small-scale fisheries in the WIO region, in particular on social and economic aspects;
- xiii. Support the development of coastal and marine areas climate-change adaptation policies at regional and national level, including mapping of risks to extreme events.

For the pilot component, the work will focus on selected fisheries and coastal and marine ecosystems that will function as case studies with a high probability of success. A first group of candidates are the shallow-water shrimp fisheries of Mozambique, Madagascar and Tanzania. These fisheries have either collapsed or are in a severely distressed state. The most likely cause has been a combination of negative environmental effects on recruitment, combined with continuing high levels of industrial and artisanal fishing effort. If more strict management measures are not implemented in the short-term, it is thus likely that the current situation will cause severe long-term socio-economic impacts. Understanding the main elements affecting these fisheries and the associated ecosystems, as well as the small-scale fishing communities that traditionally exploit them, and possible interventions to improve the situation, will be essential to reverse the negative trends observed. These interventions may include the transfer of experience achieved from activities such as: (1) community-based octopus management experiments in different countries in the region, to the shallow-water shrimp fishery which has a significant economic and social importance in many SWIO countries, and (2) implementation of marine spatial planning in countries such as Seychelles and South Africa, ensuring the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including poor coastal (fishing) communities.

The project will contribute to Africa's Blue Growth Initiative, the main goal of which is to improve fish supply for food and nutrition.

### **Mechanism for Implementation**

The proposed project components will be coordinated by UNEP and the UNFAO Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa with some components implemented by Nairobi Convention and others by the UNFAO working in partnership with regional NGOs and various organizations mandated in fisheries management and working with fishing communities on the ground.

This project will complement regional support provided by other development partners in fisheries, such as the WWF, the EU, GEF and the World Bank, and will be closely coordinated with these and other initiatives,

including those within the framework of the IOC, SADC, the African Union or other regional organizations, to ensure avoiding overlap and to maximise synergies between them.

The proposal will be part of the work programmes of the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC for 2018 - 2021 that will be submitted for endorsement of the Members at the Ninth Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention (COP 9) and at the Ninth Session of SWIOFC to be held in March 2018.

**Approximate budget**

The total approximate cost for the proposed components during these four years is currently estimated to be US\$ 10 million.