

Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme (SWIOP)

Proposed EU support to IOTC (draft)

The objective of this note is to present a proposal for EU support to IOTC under the new SWIOP programme, and to obtain IOTC's feedback, before embarking in its in-depth formulation in collaboration with IOTC.

The EU has been **supporting since 2007 ocean governance** and fisheries management in the Southwestern Indian Ocean, through Sectorial Supports of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements with Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros (via European Commission Directorate General MARE), but also through international cooperation programmes such as successive SMARTFISH and ECOFISH programmes, signed with the Indian Ocean Commission (via European Commission Directorate General INTPA). The current ECOFISH programme (2018-24) also includes specific support to IOTC (9 actions in the fields of implementation of IOTC Resolutions – management of the tuna fishery; implementation of port state measures to fight against IUU fishing; strengthening of MCS capacity), managed by the IOC.

The EU is now preparing a new programme of support “Sustainable Western Indian Ocean” (SWIOP), with a broad thematic scope, including fisheries management and the fight against IUU fishing. The RFMOs, and notably IOTC, have an important role to play for that objective. **SWIOP therefore proposes a specific component to strengthen IOTC**, along the lines indicated in the section “Output 1.2” of the annex hereunder. The programme would last **3 to 4 years** (starting in the first semester of 2025), with a budget of **up to € 3 million**. After discussion with IOTC secretariat, the implementation modality tentatively envisaged is a **technical assistance contract**, tendered and managed by the EU delegation in Mauritius, but under the active guidance of IOTC. The ToR of its assistance will include inputs from the IOTC Secretariat to ensure that this programme is in line with the objectives and priorities of the organisation.

The project would include activities contributing to the general strengthening of IOTC, such as supporting stock assessments for IOTC species and designing capacity-building activities that would benefit the entire membership of the IOTC. In addition, nationally focussed activities covering eight members of IOTC in East Africa (nine countries in total) mentioned hereunder (**geographical scope** of SWIOP) will be funded by this programme, alleviating the IOTC budget to cover the rest of the IOTC members.

Under the fisheries management dimension of SWIOP, the IOC and the European Fisheries Control Agency will also have an important role to play. Coordination modalities will be established with these institutions, as well as more broadly with the other partners of SWIOP.

ANNEX**Extracts of the SWIOP project document most relevant for the proposed IOTC component of the project.**

“The action will be carried out in nine countries in the Western Indian Ocean (Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania).

The Overall Objective is to contribute to the sustainable, productive, climate-resilient governance and use of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO).

The Specific Objectives of this Action are:

- ✓ *SO1. Strengthen regional and national capacities to coordinate and collaborate on shared ocean governance;*
- ✓ *SO2. Facilitate investment in the sustainable blue economy; and*
- ✓ *SO3. Support regional initiatives to improve ocean and coastal ecosystem resilience and blue carbon capture*

Under SO1, the Action aims to support the development, implementation and enforcement of international and regional agreements and mechanisms, including on policy approaches in the WIO blue economy as well as regional fisheries management (e.g. RFMOs) and the fight against IUU fishing. This will be achieved notably through institutional and human capacity-building, improved regional coordination in shared resource management, and better compliance with international and RFMO agreements. [...]

Activities related to Output 1.2: Implementation of conservation and management measures for shared fisheries resources through RFMOs is improved:

- ***Support RFMO and coastal states for the stock assessment of shared species;***
- ***Provide technical assistance to RFMOs to design capacity building activities and training with the aim to improve beneficiaries’ capacity to comply with conservation and management measures adopted;***
- ***Provide technical assistance to beneficiaries on data collection, analysis and reporting to improve their capacities to comply with obligations stemming from RFMO membership;***
- ***Support beneficiaries for the organisation of meetings and other activities within the framework of RFMOs, notably the areas related to the conservation and management of shared resources.”***