



*Enhance sustainable inland and marine fisheries resources to contribute to the Blue Economy of Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) region*

## BACKGROUND PAPER

### Promoting a Sub-regional Coordination Platform for the coastal marine fisheries sector in the SWIO region

#### Introduction

The Strategic Action 1.1 of the Ecofish Marine Fisheries Programme aims *to strengthen intra-and interagency collaboration at multiple administrative and geographic levels toward sustainable and integrated management of shared and national priority fisheries resources* in Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) region. The vast constituency is promoted as a single block for regional collaboration and cooperation in managing the underlying fisheries resources. However, it is differentiated into two interconnected groups, the SWIO and HOA, led by IOC and IGAD Secretariats, respectively and supported by the partner countries and regional organisations to implement the programme's activities. Anticipating the overlapping mandates and memberships of the Mandated Regional Organisations in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa, particularly in the EA-SA-IO region, *the ECOFISH programme levers communication and coordination processes to promote policy coherence and synergies*. Regional organisations can perform as much as the member states permit. It can not be perceived as a one-size-fits-all, everything or nothing or *beggar thy neighbour* approach. Instead, it must be rooted in the principles of complementary or comparative advantage, subsidiarity coveted by mutual trust and solidarity - *A win-win and not win-lose situation*. So, regional cooperation can be restricted to a Top-Down without adequate dialogue and consultation with stakeholders at the national levels. It is, therefore, vital to establish a Bottom-Up process as a feedback loop for an effective cause-effect relationship. The concept of National Focal Point has evolved under the ECOFISH programme. It constitutes a panel of interdisciplinary, multidimensional and multisectoral stakeholders led by a high official of the national fisheries Ministry or Agency. It is imperative to break the existing silo approach in the public institutions to engage meaningfully in sustainable development and management of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the emerging Blue Economy paradigm.

The fisheries and aquaculture sector is the pinnacle of developing economies, particularly the fragile and vulnerable states of Sub-Saharan Africa, as it contributes significantly to livelihoods, food security and cultural diversity. However, these natural aquatic resources and ecosystems are dwindling because of overfishing and unsustainable fishing practices, land-based and maritime pollution exacerbated by the demographic explosion, climate change and inequalities. Over 90% of the coastal marine and the totality of the inland fisheries resources are harvested by subsistence and traditional fishing in the meagrely regulated common property and informal situations. The per capita fish consumption in Africa is approximately 10 kgs, which is half the global average and will likely decrease to 7 kgs if appropriate measures are not taken to improve the sector's productivity. The coastal marine fisheries of the SWIO region hold a contrasting landscape, with localised overfishing and unsustainable fishing practices in nearshore waters near large population agglomerations and underfished areas in deeper waters owing to inadequate fishing assets and technologies.

Moreover, due to a lack of essential fisheries infrastructures, socio-economic services and market logistics, the physical and economic losses in the sub-sector are relatively high, in the range of 40% and 70% of the total annual production. Allegedly, the island and coastal countries are also victims of illegal fishing and fisheries-related crimes by foreign vessels in the absence of fisheries management and maritime surveillance capabilities. In a nutshell, the regional fisheries resources are considered an underperforming asset. *However, sustainably managed, the sector can emerge as a growth engine for shared prosperity.*

Based on the positive results/feedback for the *Regional Fisheries Coordination Platform* in the Horn of Africa under the leadership of the IGAD Secretariat, the concept is replicated in the SWIO region. In brief, it is conceived as an autonomous regional platform or network consisting of the National Fisheries Directors /National Focal Point to collaborate with their peers on burning topics in the sector. After the gestation period, the platform will accommodate sub-region on specific thematic areas, policy coordination and coherence, transboundary collaboration, sharing knowledge, information and strategic intelligence, joint project formulation and resource mobilisation, etc. *The background paper describes the concept and functionality of the proposed platform to facilitate the discussion and deliberation thereon at the regional workshop organised by ECOFISH in Nairobi on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 2022.*

### **ECOFISH Synopsis**

The Ecofish Programme is a Cross-Regional Initiative funded by the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF to leverage regional cooperation to enhance sustainable inland and marine fisheries in Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) region. The programme is promoted and managed by EUD Mauritius and the IOC Secretariat in collaboration with the duly mandated regional economic and fisheries organisations (DMROs) to benefit the ACP partner countries in the region. It has a total budget of 28 million euros over 62 months starting in July 2019. However, the implementation is slightly behind schedule mainly because of the sanitary restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

Said differently, the programme aims to unleash the development potentials of wild fisheries resources in the EA-SA-IO region as a sustainable growth engine to contribute to the socio-economic and environmental goals of the UN Global Agenda 2030, which are reflected in Transforming Africa 2063, No Poverty, No Hunger and Nobody is left behind. The emphasis is mainly on SDG 14 – Life Below Water, the Blue economy's pinnacle. The programme consists of 3 synergistic results:

- Result 1**      Enhanced fisheries policies and governance frameworks;*
- Result 2**      Strengthened Fisheries Monitoring, Control and surveillance Capacities;*
- Result 3**      Call for proposals - Demonstration projects to promote integrated, sustainable and inclusive small-scale fisheries.*

The Ecofish programme consists of 5 Work Plans:

- Work Plan 1**    Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation Ecofish Project (Semi-indirectly managed by EUD-Mauritius and a Power of Attorney of the IOC Secretariat);*
- Work Plan 2**    Lake Tanganyika Fisheries Ecofish Project (Through a Contribution Agreement between EUD-Burundi and FAO-Burundi);*

- Work Plan 3** *Marine fisheries Project for the EA-SA-IO region, implemented by the IOC Secretariat in partnership with the Duly Mandated Regional Organisations – (Indirectly managed by EUD-Mauritius);*
- Work Plan 4** *Call for Proposals – Demonstration Projects for showcasing Small-Scale Sustainable Fisheries in the EA-SA-IO region (Managed directly by EUD Mauritius). There are 3 marine projects in the SWIO region, Kenya, Tanzania and Mauritius.*
- Work Plan 5** *Cross-cutting components that include a Service Contract of Technical Assistance, Direct Grants, Communication and Visibility, Independent Financial Audit and Evaluation missions administered by EUD Mauritius*

The programme supports a decentralised management and governance approach regarding Work Plans 1, 2 and 3. It places the implementing partners and stakeholders in the driving seat to ensure ownership and leadership of their priority interventions. In addition, the Programme Management Unit at the IOC Secretariat provides effective collaboration and integration management across the work plan and other external initiatives.

#### **Scope of the Ecofish Marine Fisheries Work Plan**

Following the objectives of the Ecofish programme, the Marine Fisheries Work Plan aims to enhance the sustainable and integrated management of the marine fisheries resources to contribute to the socio-economic and ecological goals of the UN SDG 2030 and Transforming Africa 2063 in the partner coastal and island countries of the EA-SA-IO region. It leverages the value-added of regional collaboration and cooperation to empower the institutional stakeholders to unleash the development potential of sustainable fisheries as a growth sector for shared prosperity, peace and security following the Blue Economy paradigm. The conventional approach to regional collaboration and cooperation, limited to shared and transboundary fisheries resources, is now extended to national fisheries to embrace sharing of fisheries knowledge, information and strategic intelligence, lessons learned, best practices and capacity building. Furthermore, the programme promotes interdisciplinary and multidimensional thinking to encourage intra-and inter-agency collaboration and a cross-sector approach as a requisite for advancing sustainable fish value chains in local communities.

So far, the Regional Fisheries Bodies and national fisheries agencies have emphasised conservation and management of fisheries resources, i.e., the bio-ecological aspects, while underestimating the significance of the socio-economic dimensions of fisheries policies and management decisions. Therefore, the Marine Fisheries Work Plan Result 1 - Enhanced Policies and Governance aims to develop several strategic tools to uplift the coastal marine fisheries in the national and regional political economies. Result 2 - Strengthened Monitoring, Control and Surveillance - Compliance and Enforcement – capacities in the marine fisheries industries constitute an integral part of fisheries management. It also supports the

It supports the IOC Regional Fisheries Surveillance Plan (PRSP) to emerge as a regional Centre of Excellence in the South-West Indian Ocean basin. This regional MCS Coordination Centre is determined to collaborate with other regional and national mechanisms to promote concerted and cost-effective MCS services across the EA-SA-IO region. The Ecofish Marine Fisheries Work Plan is ready to facilitate implementing partners equal to their absorption capacity within its statutory objectives and guidelines.

## Regional Collaboration and Cooperation

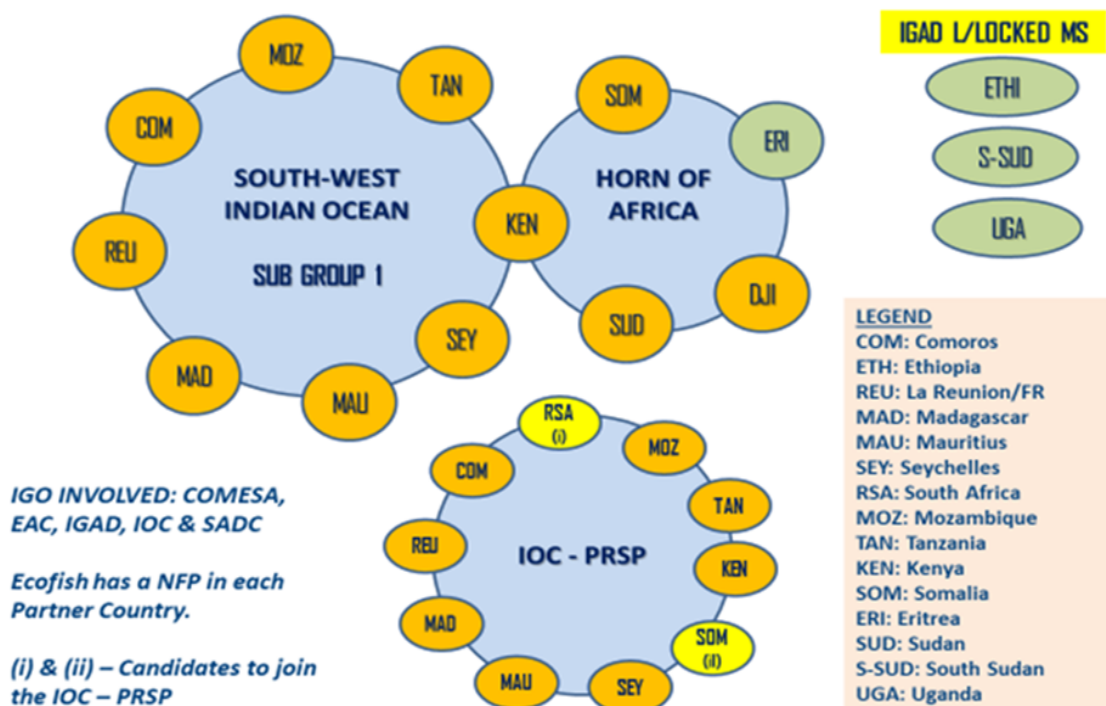
Regional collaboration and cooperation among coastal countries are essential for the sustainable management of fisheries resources and ecosystems. It stretches beyond shared fish stocks to include common nationally prioritised fisheries and shared markets. Thus, the impetus has expanded from Conservation and Management Measures for shared fish stocks to embracing the emerging concept of sustainable fisheries and the Blue Economy in the coastal and island countries. The scope of regional collaboration and cooperation now involves sharing diverse scientific knowledge, information and strategic intelligence, experiential learnings and best practices, capacity building and training at the bilateral and regional levels.

The IOC Secretariat implements the Ecofish Marine Fisheries Work Plan through a Programme Management Unit that also caters to the coordination of the entire programme. In addition, a dedicated Steering Committee provides performance review, policy guidance and strategic orientation to the work plan. The programme promotes the EA-SA-IO region as a regional block for effective collaboration and cooperation for sustainable management of the partner countries' coastal marine fisheries. However, the interventions are coordinated through two (2) interconnected sub-regional groups.

**Group 1 -** *The south-West Indian Ocean region* comprises the five IOC member states (Comoros, France /Reunion, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles) and 3 coastal countries of Eastern Africa (Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya). This group is driven primarily by the IOC Secretariat

**Group 2 -** *The Horn of Africa*, encompassing Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti and Sudan, Kenya is at the edge of the two groups and has the flexibility of participating in both. IGAD Secretariat leads it.

### ECOFISH MARINE WP – OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENT



Furthermore, every coastal country of the EA-SA-IO is a member of 2 to 3 RECs. Each one has a diverse fisheries agenda without a proper coordination mechanism. The Ecofish Programme cannot resolve structural issues related to the overlapping mandates and memberships besides a lack of institutional linkage between the REC and the Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFB). Therefore, it proposed creating the SWIO Regional Fisheries Coordination Mechanism to ensure effective communication and coordination among these institutional stakeholders in a synergistic, i.e., Top-Down and Bottom-Up.

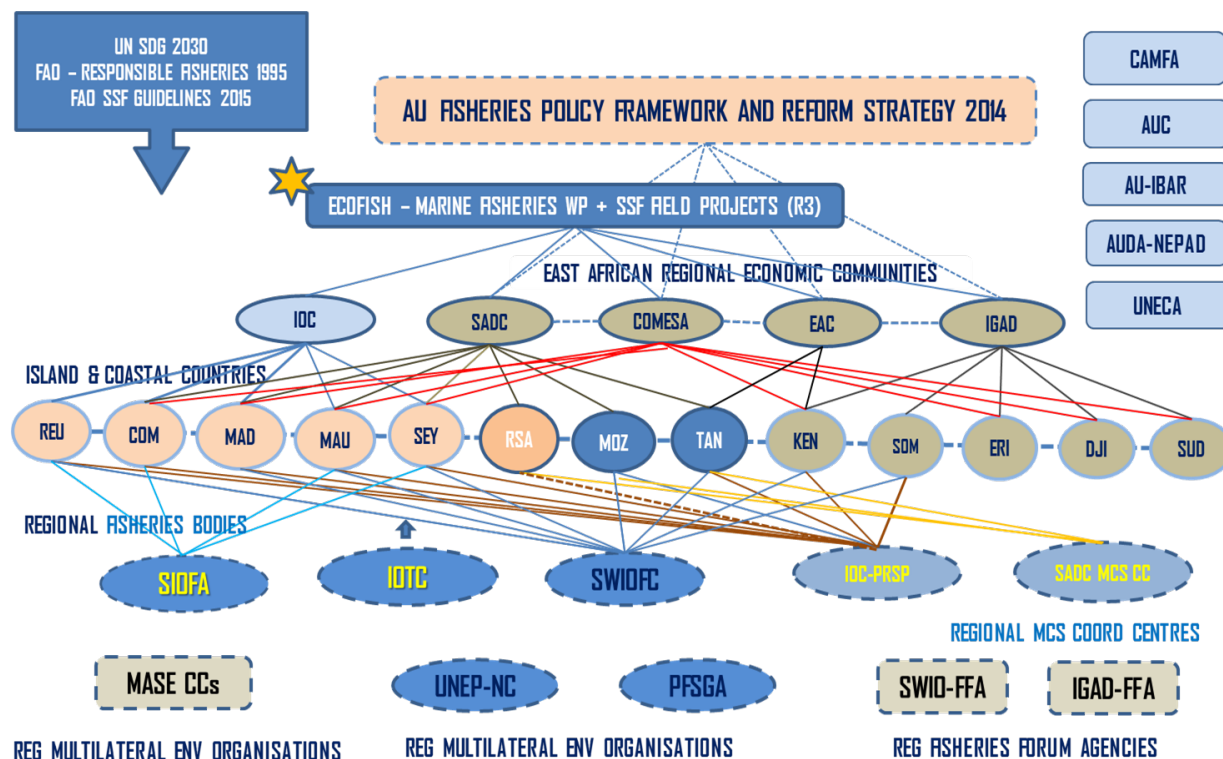


Figure 1 – Ecofish Marine Fisheries Project – Institutional Linkages

## SWIO Priority Interventions

SWIO region has partly benefited from the short-term expertise of 60 working days for conducting a situational analysis of the marine fisheries in its member countries<sup>1</sup>. The preliminary research and consultation have helped identify the prospects and challenges to pave the way for implementing the sub-regional priority interventions<sup>2</sup>, which are as follows:

- i) To provide Technical Assistance to mainstream its Blue Economy Strategy into the national policy frameworks, with emphasis on marine fisheries and environments;
- ii) To create a Sub-Regional Fisheries Stakeholders Platform to coordinate the implementation of the sub-regional and national chapters of the Ecofish programme

<sup>1</sup> Except for IOC.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ecofish Technical Handbook 2020 for more details.

- iii) *To promote the Sub-Regional MCS Coordination Platform to share strategic intelligence with other regional and international centres for combating IUU fishing and fisheries-related crimes.*
- iv) *Develop a Blue Economic Statistical Framework, including a Blue Economic Fisheries Satellite Account in collaboration with COMESA.*
- v) *To establish a Fisheries – Climate Outlook Network / Observatory for assessing and predicting the potential impact of climate change and extreme weather events on fisheries ecosystems, fish production and livelihood of the fishing communities.*
- vi) *To set up a Sustainable Development Reference System to track and monitor the performance of coastal marine fisheries against national policy objectives.*
- vii) *To contribute to formulating a comprehensive sustainable rehabilitation and modernisation strategy and business plan for the coastal marine fisheries of the EA-SA-IO region.*

### **Objectives of the SWIO Marine Fisheries Coordination Platform**

It will support the IPMU and Marine Work Plan Steering Committee to ensure effective collaboration between SWIO partner countries and those with the HOA Group. Furthermore, Ecofish has a National Focal point designated by the parent Ministry in each partner country. The platform will be a non-formal and consultative mechanism. The national delegation will comprise three (3) participants/contributors, including the National Focal Point. The other delegates will be from Fisher Associations, Research institutes and/or relevant NGOs. However, only one delegate per partner country will be invited to the inception meeting. The main objectives of the SWIO Fisheries Coordination Platform are as follows

- i) *To contribute to the strategic orientation of sub-regional and national chapters of the Ecofish activities;*
- ii) *To provide inputs for the formulation of Concept Notes and Terms of Reference for Technical studies, background papers and Agendas for the sub-regional meetings and workshops;*
- iii) *To review the performance of the programme activities at the sub-regional and national levels;*
- iv) *To coordinate fisheries and fisheries-related programmes at sub-regional and national levels for reinforcing synergies;*
- v) *To promote multistakeholder dialogue and a participatory approach in policy-making management decisions;*
- vi) *To assess the capacity needs and gaps, constraints and barriers, and to enhance training and capacity building through regional collaboration and cooperation;*
- vii) *To promote an interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach to mainstream the Blue Economy Strategy into the national policy frameworks.*
- viii) *To review the performance of the awarded small-scale fisheries (Result 3) in the IGAD region and to facilitate sharing of lessons learned and best practices across the sub-region;*
- ix) *To facilitate communication and Visibility of the Ecofish Programme*



### **Proposed Agenda of the Inception Meeting**

In keeping with the objectives and functionalities of the platform, the preliminary meeting will define/approve its Terms of Reference, including the operational modalities with the framework of the ECOFISH programme.

The meeting will reflect on the policy guidance and strategic orientation of the Marine Fisheries Component in the context of the upcoming independent Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ecofish programme.

The one-day physical meeting will be organised on the sideline of a major workshop in Nairobi on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2022. Other pertinent details are as follows:

- i) Funding: Ecofish Marine Fisheries Work Plan following EU financial procedures.*
- ii) Number of Participants: 30 (maximum)*
- iii) Venue: Physical and Virtual (TBA)*
- iv) Language: English and French*
- v) Reporting: PMU / TAT staff*
- vi) Date of the first meeting: the 14th of June 2022 in Nairobi on the sideline of the Coastal Marine Fisheries-Climate Change Workshop*
- vii) Repetition: At least once a year (as a standalone or meeting or side-event)*
- viii) Detailed Agenda, List of participants, and Budget Estimates: To be submitted to IPMU by IGAD;*
- ix) Requirement: Approval of IOC Secretariat*

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