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ANNUAL REPORT

2020



INDIAN OCEAN
COMMISSION

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Editorial Team: Pascaline Alexandre;
Samira Ahmed Mohamed Djalim; Catherine
Mermera; Andry Rasoanindrainy;
Gilles Ribouet

Graphic design: Laurie Castel

Iconography: IOC photo library; Pascaline Alexandre; Laurie
Castel; Samira Ahmed Mohamed Djalim; Catherine Mermera; Andry
Rasoanindrainy; Toliniaina Manantsoa Razafiarivony; Gilles Ribouet;
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INDIAN OCEAN
COMMISSION

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**Indian Ocean Commission
General Secretariat**

3rd floor - Blue Tower
Rue de l'Institut - Ebene, Mauritius
T.: (+230) 402 61 00
communication@coi-ioc.org
www.commissionoceanindien.org



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FOREWORD

BY H.E.M. DHOHIR DHOULKAMAL

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION, IN CHARGE OF THE DIASPORA
OF THE UNION OF THE COMOROS, PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS OF THE IOC

“ I am honoured, in my capacity as current President of the IOC Council of Ministers, to introduce our organisation’s 2020 annual report, which will allow readers from our countries and the community of technical and financial partners to grasp the diversity of an active regional cooperation in line with the challenges of sustainable development.

2020 has been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a profound impact on programmes, projections and, in a word, the international diplomatic agenda.

Confronted to this unprecedented international situation, our Indianoceanic organisation has spared no effort to adapt to this new deal which, inevitably, has had repercussions on the regular functioning of all our activities.

Out of necessity and also out of solidarity, the Comorian presidency of the IOC Council of Ministers quickly mobilised our organisation for a concerted, rapid action, adapted to the needs of Member States. As a result, the IOC developed a response plan after a first emergency plan developed by the experts of the IOC Health Watch Unit and the members of the SEGA - One Health network.

This response plan has made it possible to strengthen the capacities of our Member States’ health services in terms of surveillance, care, testing and protection equipment. I commend the quality of our partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), which released substantial

resources for this regional health action.

This health sector partnership has been strengthened, in its initial thrust, by the significant support of the European Union which is funding a new project, likely to benefit, among others, our Member States’ laboratories

In addition to the health emergency, it is also essential to mobilise forces towards economic recovery. The IOC Ministers Extraordinary Council of 5 June 2020 provided a political impetus to this recovery which the IOC can usefully contribute to.

Despite the turmoil of Covid-19, the IOC has carried on its mission, bringing about the necessary adjustments. The key word has been adaptability. The institutional evolution and modernisation of the IOC General Secretariat, inspired by the Moroni Declaration on the Future of the IOC, has continued under the new Secretary-General and the whole IOC staff, as well as the members of the Permanent Liaison Officers Committee (PLO), under the active and committed chairmanship of the PLO of the Union of the Comoros. I thank them for their dedication and perseverance.

Adaptability, for us all, has been another word for going digital. Videoconferencing has become a useful new standard that will undoubtedly become part of our work habits. But this new communication standard will never replace human contact through which we all hope to reconnect.

It is therefore with a strong sense of adaptability that, for the first time in the history of our organisation, we have conducted the handover at the head of the IOC General Secretariat by videoconference with a live presidency from Moroni, an outgoing Secretary-General in Mauritius and an incoming Secretary-General in La Réunion.

The handover ceremony was a success thanks to the participation of all our Member States, from all sides of the Indian Ocean. It is my privilege to salute the work of our former Secretary-General, Mr Hamada Madi, and to reiterate to Mr Vêlayoudomariamoutou our full support in the execution of the regional duty that is now his.

Our combined commitment and efforts allow us, despite the global health situation, to develop a roadmap with realism and also, because it is always necessary, optimism.

The painful experience of the year 2020 will have demonstrated that multilateralism and solidarity remain more than ever the cardinal values of international action. It is up to us to enhance and strengthen our Indianoceanic principle, namely our shared destiny. The solidarity shown forth between our countries throughout the year has given relevance to this humanist principle. It is in

this spirit that the Comorian presidency of the IOC will have acted for a whole year, for the common good.

2021 must be the consolidation year for our achievements and the year of opening up to the world, at its best. It should be the year of economic recovery in our countries and that of a new chapter in the regional history with a strengthened and modernised IOC.

”



INTERVIEW

PROF. VÊLAYOUDOM MARIMOUTOU
IOC SECRETARY-GENERAL

"Our natural capital is an economic and social capital; it is a vital one"

You inaugurated your mandate on 1st July 2020. What was your perception of the IOC at the time?

I discovered a regional organisation that is indeed small in dimensions but large in content, through the ambitions of its Member States, its scope of intervention and its outreach. In addition, I started my mandate in a period of disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which delayed my arrival at the headquarters in Ebene. I was immediately thrust in the thick of cooperation since the IOC and the AFD were implementing at that time the Covid-19 response plan. I was able to witness the concrete usefulness of regional cooperation.

In your inauguration speech, you outlined the priorities of your mandate, namely maritime governance, connectivity, climate and biodiversity, education and mobility...

These priorities cover areas where there exists a consensus on the added value of collective action, thus of the IOC. If you closely look at it, everything is important. But a special attention is required when the importance of the topic is doubled by an urgency. This is true for health, of course, but also for climate and biodiversity. That said, the General Secretariat's action remains driven by the decisions of the Member States.

Does the IOC carry enough leverage to weigh in across a field as vast as ocean governance?

Facts speak for that! And it is also an imperative since our islands are, in essence, "Ocean States". The IOC has been involved in fisheries for three decades with the support of our partners, including the EU and the World Bank. The data from the tuna tagging project is used to manage tuna fisheries and monitor fish stocks. We have strengthened the fight against illegal fishing with the Regional Fisheries Monitoring Plan. We have supported and improved fishing sectors that are closer to the communities. We are also working with the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission and the Small-scale fishers Federation of the Indian Ocean.

What about maritime security?

It is a prerequisite. With the EU-supported MASE programme, we are setting up a collective surveillance, monitoring and response architecture for the Western Indian Ocean. The sinking of the Wakashio demonstrated how essential it is to strengthen this mechanism, to further engage national authorities in information exchange, risk prevention and joint interventions. A MARPOL work plan was formulated and approved in December 2020 with three key elements, namely national contingency plans, a regional contingency plan and a regional coordination mechanism for marine pollution risks.

On the digital front, the IOC is achieving tangible results...

Tangible and significant! Barely had I arrived in Mauritius that I was the lucky witness of the landing of the METISS cable. This is the most powerful digital infrastructure in the region, supported by a €40 million investment by six private telecommunication operators. The involvement of the IOC and its support have been decisive for this project. A large scope of opportunities is opening up to the services, health, education, culture sectors as well as to the democratisation of Internet. Nevertheless, we must sharpen our focus on digital governance: it is a whole new way of organising society, public services, to produce, consume and learn. It is along this line that the IOC developed a cooperation with the Estonian e-Governance Academy. We should build on these first steps.

Is it more challenging for marine and air connectivity projects?

The issues here impact upon the competitiveness of our economies in a rapidly evolving global market. And our islands, as we all know, risk being marginalised. On the maritime front, the idea of a regional maritime cabotage system has not gained ground for financial reasons. That said, the pandemic has clearly underlined how much regional circuits need to be promoted. We need to go beyond the Indian Ocean region and set our advocacy to the scale of our larger Eastern and Southern African region. We have thus obtained a grant from Japan to launch a regional consultation on improving maritime connectivity: responses must come from port and maritime operators, public and private actors to agree on ways to strengthen regional trade.

As for connectivity, is the objective still triple: digital, maritime and aerial?

It is a fundamental requirement for our island economies. We do not need roads and bridges so much as ports, air and sea lines, and broadband; this is what makes us part of the global market.



What about air transport?

This is crucial as it pertains to tourism and mobility. All over the world, the sector is in great difficulty. The IOC has demonstrated, in its advocacy "Wings of Indianoceanica", the added value of a concerted, collaborative action, and even the need to monitor the evolution of the sector internationally. We will have to come back to this and dare to use big words like "strategic partner", "merger" or "regional company" ... This is one of the conditions for economic recovery.

Second priority: climate and biodiversity. At the beginning of 2021, the One Planet Summit organised by France, the United Nations and the World Bank confirms the relevance of this priority...

This event was the opportunity for an essential and large-scale mobilisation ahead of the World Summit on Biodiversity this fall in China and the COP26 on climate change in Glasgow. Our natural capital is an economic and social capital, it is a vital one. The environment has always been central to the IOC's work. We have developed recognized experience and undeniable expertise in these areas in collaboration with the EU, the AFD, the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) and the World Bank. We have worked together, on the ground, with NGOs, we have created networks for reefs, marine protected areas, seagrass beds or even meteorology. All this is important and urgent. Our islands are among the first victims of climate change and biodiversity's erosion.

And what is the IOC working upon?

In 2020, we committed ourselves to a new project with AFD and FFEM towards the resilience of coastal ecosystems through the promotion of nature-based solutions. A whole new generation of projects is also in the pipeline: ExPLOI, with AFD and the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM), to combat marine plastic pollution, the disaster risk

reduction project with the EU, Hydromet to strengthen meteorological capacities and climate services with AFD, the EU and the Green Climate Fund. These projects will be consistent with our actions for the sustainable management of fisheries (SWIOFish 1 and 2, ECOFISH), the promotion of circular economy in the islands (AIODIS) or the monitoring of marine and coastal environment with Earth observation technologies (GMES&Africa) and island climate diplomacy (GCCA+).

In addition to these major priorities: education and mobility...

Education, it's my DNA. We must educate at all levels, provide the means for academic and technical learning, and promote vocational training because learning never stops. We can build common curricula, adapted to the needs of the region, encourage scientific research, knock down the barriers between the world of learning and the corporate world. Mobility is linked: education opens up opportunities that should be supported by a regional mobility policy accepted by all. Regional integration also requires education, the intellectual and personal development of our children, the acquisition of know-how and an openness to the region and the world. Concretely, I hope that we can build with our partners a regional programme on education and training, a mobility programme that will create a regional pool of expertise, innovation, entrepreneurship and circulation of skills and ideas.

2020 was unquestionably the year of Covid-19. How has the IOC helped to battle this pandemic?

As from February 2020, the IOC has implemented an emergency plan followed by a response plan as from April supported by the French Development Agency (AFD). Our SEGA - One Health network has demonstrated its usefulness and responsiveness. The AFD's ability to listen and be available has been exemplary, mobilising a total of €4.5 million to provide our Member States with protective equipment, surveillance and

medical supplies. At the same time, the EU has decided to strengthen our SEGA - One Health network with a new dedicated project to complement the actions undertaken with the AFD. Unfortunately, there has been a worrying resurgence in the region with unexpected variants. We must remain vigilant and be prepared to respond. The IOC is considering a new response plan that will also take into account the availability of vaccines and the protocols that will be adopted in each of our countries. In addition to Covid-19, we must remain active on other fronts of emerging diseases, epidemic and zoonotic risks.

Since the Moroni Declaration of August 2019, the IOC has been undergoing a vast modernisation process. What is the current situation?

The IOC's 40th anniversary - in 2019 - also goes along a transformational milestone. The IOC of 2020 is distinctly different from the IOC of 1989, when the General Secretariat was created. The IOC has implemented over 50 cooperation projects, some of which covered over 20 Eastern and Southern African countries. But should we keep on promoting cooperation as before? Are yesterday's ways still relevant? The short answer is no; firstly because the world has changed and the end of the Cotonou Agreement which governs EU-ACP relations is an example of this; secondly because the ambitions and needs of our Member States have evolved, because our region must face up the globalisation of climatic, ecological, economic and health risks and fit into a wider space, that of Africa and also that of a vast Indo-Pacific continuum.

Concretely, how does this translate into texts and procedures?

More than texts and procedures, what imports the most is to have a clear political and strategic vision of Indianoceanica. It is a matter of thinking about the region in the long term, of drawing the outlines of tomorrow's Indianoceanica and defining the role of the IOC in the implementation of this shared ambition. It would probably be up to the Heads of State and Government of the IOC to carry this vision. In the short term, we will have to establish a new strategic development plan that takes into account the geopolitical evolution of our great space, the growing attractiveness of our organisation, the priorities of the Member States in the more or less short term. We must "do well" and not necessarily seek to "do more".



You mentioned the attractiveness of the IOC. Japan, India and the United Nations have recently joined the family of "observer members of the IOC" which until now has included China, the European Union, the International Organisation of the Francophonie and the Order of Malta.

Why is that, and more importantly, what's in it for the IOC?


This is a clear signal of the IOC's influence on the diplomatic scene! But we can only be proud of this growth if we maintain a confident and amplified dialogue on subjects of common interest with our observer members and our partners, including the AFD and the World Bank. We will therefore have to hold regular consultations in order to agree, ultimately, on joint actions. It is also along these lines that we have strengthened our dialogue with the IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) which, with the accession of France in December 2020, brings together all our Member States. The IOC has expertise to offer in the development and implementation of cooperation projects, experience to share in areas such as sustainable management of ecosystems and a voice to promote the recognition of island specificities.

Looking ahead to 2021, what are the perspectives for the IOC?

I am delighted to see the launch of projects in sectors that have been poorly supported until now. I am referring to the "peace, stability and governance" and "cultural and creative industries" projects, both funded by AFD. This will obviously be a year marked by consolidated action in favour of public health. At the same time, we will have to present our Member States with a comprehensive road-map for economic recovery in the region, identifying key sectors such as the blue economy, connectivity and circular economy, for example. We will also have to build the new strategic development plan. In this regard, if the General Secretariat has an executive function towards implementing projects, I believe it should also have an analytical and reflective function, it should also be a think tank at the service of Member States.

And as every year, the IOC will have a new presidency...

The acting Comorian Presidency of the Council has played a leading role in the IOC's response to Covid-19. It will also be able to end its term with the development of new texts in line with the practice of diversified and expanded cooperation. This is a fine achievement in phase with the Moroni Declaration on the future of the IOC. France will then take over the presidency of a transforming organisation. In this year of major global meetings on climate and biodiversity, the IOC will certainly be able to rely on its new presidency to carry the voice of our Member States higher and stronger.



**INSTITUTIONAL
FRAMEWORK**

THE INDIAN OCEAN COMMISSION

THE ONLY REGIONAL ISLAND ORGANISATION IN AFRICA

Created in 1982 and institutionalised in 1984, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) is an intergovernmental organisation that brings together five Member States: the Union of the Comoros, France in the name of La Réunion Island, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. As the sole regional organisation in Africa composed exclusively of islands, it stands for the specificities of its Member States on the continental and international scenes. Indeed, island states are particularly vulnerable to external shocks, whether economic and financial, climatic and ecological, or in terms of food and energy.

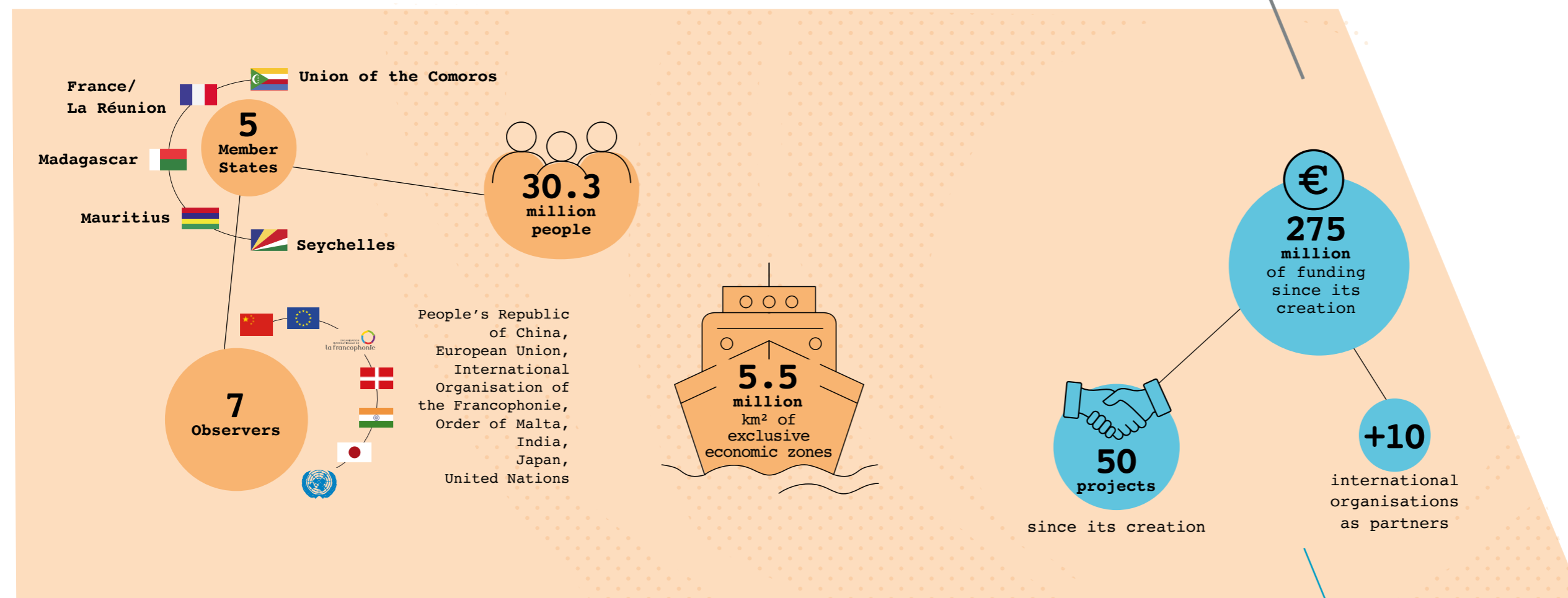
The IOC's mission is to unite forces, mutualise resources, raise awareness about the specific challenges developing islands face. It also entails promoting Indianoceanica, a region with a unique human, cultural and natural diversity.

The IOC embodies regional solidarity thanks to the active support of a dozen international partners financing and supporting its cooperation projects. The latter cover a wide range of sectors: climate change, fisheries, maritime security, connectivity, food security, education, culture, public health... The experience accumulated over more than three decades posits the IOC as a key player in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the region. Gaining in attractiveness and diplomatic clout, the IOC welcomes since 2016 observer members: China, Japan, India, the United Nations, the European Union, the International Organisation of the Francophonie, the Sovereign Order of Malta.

34TH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS: TOWARDS A NEW IOC

The 34th Council of Ministers of the IOC was held on 6 March 2020, in Seychelles. Why is this an important milestone?

- **A new Secretary-General** has been appointed: Vêlayoudom Marimoutou (France/La Réunion), succeeding Hamada Madi (Comoros).
- **The Victoria Agreement**, the founding text of the IOC, has been revised 36 years after its signature.
- **3 new observer members have joined the IOC:** India, Japan and the United Nations. They stand alongside the People's Republic of China, the European Union, the Sovereign Order of Malta and the International Organisation of the Francophonie.



16 JULY 2020: AT A DISTANCE HANDING OVER

A premiere at the IOC! The Covid-19 pandemic has coerced the organisation into adapting this event. This resulted into a 100% digital handover ceremony.

About 100 people followed the event from eight territories and locations, including Ebene and Port Louis in Mauritius, Moroni in the Comoros, Antananarivo in Madagascar, Victoria in Seychelles, Saint-Denis in La Réunion, Paris in France, Pretoria in South Africa and Geneva in Switzerland.

Hamada Madi's mandate has been particularly focused on the front of institutional reform. The Moroni Declaration on the Future of the IOC (2019) and the revised Victoria Agreement (2020) set out Member States' ambitions and delineate the IOC's institutional and functional evolution.



Vêlayoudom Marimoutou, new Secretary-General of the IOC.

Former Rector of La Réunion's Academy, Vêlayoudom Marimoutou outlined his priorities: security, climate and biodiversity, as well as the economy. The objective is to reconcile the economic and environmental agendas with sustainable development's.

IOC MODERNISATION UNDERWAY

The revision of the Victoria Agreement has initiated the IOC's modernisation. With the support of the INCA project funded by the European Union, a process of functional and institutional improvement and adaptation has been incepted. This includes revisiting the texts, updating procedures and framework documents, developing new protocols and new tools, revising the decision-making and monitoring mechanisms, etc. The objective is also to gain accreditation under the EU's nine pillars, empowering the IOC to manage European funding according to its own procedures.



DID YOU KNOW?

On 28 July 2020, the IOC welcomed a new Director to the General Secretariat. He arrived at the Ebene headquarters three weeks before the new Secretary-General. The new Director is none other than Mr Dev Phokeer, former Director of Regional Integration at the Mauritian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and... former PLO! He has known the IOC since its early years and his is a household name in the regional cooperation landscape in Africa and the Indian Ocean.



INCA?

INCA (Institutional Capacity Building) is a technical assistance to help the IOC reform its structure, specifically in view of the IOC's accreditation to the EU's nine Pillars contribution agreement. This will give the IOC the ability to manage European funding according to its own procedures.



NEW VICTORIA COOPERATION AGREEMENT

It is a loop in history. In 1984, the IOC was institutionalised in Seychelles through the General Agreement on Cooperation between IOC Member States, also known as the "Victoria Agreement". Over the last 35 years, the IOC has grown into a regional community-based organisation that has implemented around 50 projects for a total amount of more than €230 million. These actions have focused on environment and climate, fisheries, governance, renewable energy, agriculture, education and public health. More than 10 partners and observers now support the IOC and its Member States. In view of this functional evolution and the political and diplomatic influence of the organisation, it became necessary to modernise the 1984 founding agreement. With INCA Project's support, representatives of IOC Member States and the General Secretariat revised the 1984 Agreement. The new text -updated and in line with States' ambitions as well as with the practice of concrete and result-oriented cooperation - was adopted by the 34th IOC Council of Ministers on March 6, 2020 in Seychelles. This revised agreement will enter into force after its ratification by the Member States. The Union of the Comoros is the first Member State having ratified it.

REVISED VICTORIA AGREEMENT: WHAT'S NEW ABOUT IT?

● The Heads of State and Government

it becomes a statutory decision-making body of the organisation. The Heads of State and Government of the Member States will meet every five years to adopt the organisation's political and strategic agenda. Regional policy will thus be addressed at the highest political level.

● IOC Missions

the IOC's missions have widened over time to meet the needs of Member States. The new text confirms the importance of regional action in the fields of intervention identified in 1984 (environment, fisheries, justice, culture) while mentioning new sectors such as public health, maritime safety and connectivity.

● Functioning

the position of Deputy Secretary-General is created to consolidate the administration. The term of office of the Secretary-General is extended from four years to five years non-renewable.

● Ministerial Conferences (thematic / sectorial)

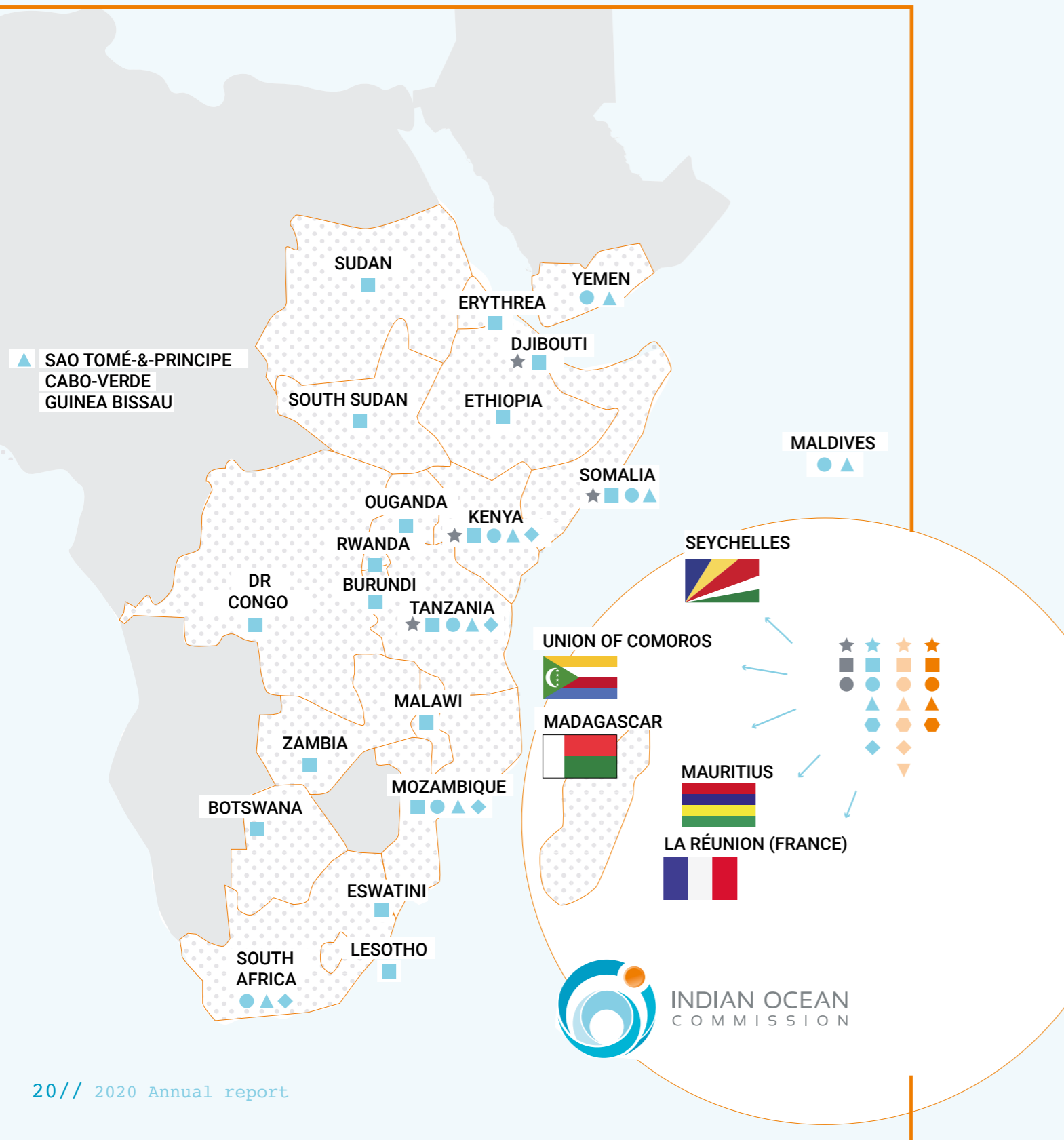
inclusion of thematic ministerial meetings in the IOC structure, thus allowing to better mobilise national sectoral authorities to address common challenges (health, agriculture, etc.).

● Observers






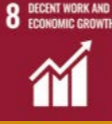













creation of an observer status with the IOC along specified criteria and modalities.








































PROJECTS
AND PARTNERS

Our projects 2020-2021



ONGOING AND UNDER DESIGN PROJECTS IN 2020

Project	Area	Partners	SDG*
BRIO Building Resilience in Indian Ocean	Meteorology: training, improvement of national/regional climate simulation capacities, climate services	  	 
EcoFish	Sustainable fisheries, fisheries monitoring and control		     
Entrepreneurship and business cooperation	Entrepreneurship, trade, SMEs run by women and young people/ with green solutions		     
ExPLOI Indian Ocean Plastic Expedition	Fight against marine and coastal pollution. Circular economy, environmental education	 	     
GMES&Africa	Monitoring the marine and coastal environment through Earth observation services and technologies		  
Hydromet	Meteorology and climate modelling, strengthening of climate, weather and water forecasting networks/services	  	 
INCA	IOC Institutional capacity building		
PRESAN	Food security and nutrition	  Investing in rural people	    
Intra-ACP AMCC+	Capacity building for climate negotiations and implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement commitments		 

RECOS Coastal resilience	Resilience of coastal populations and ecosystems to the effects of climate change, coastal development (nature-based solutions), scientific cooperation	 	     
SEGA-One Health network RSIE 3	Public health, health watch, alert management, response		
MASE Maritime security	Strengthening regional capacities for maritime information exchange and intervention at sea (operational coordination)		
Food security	Agricultural development, agroecology, call for proposals		  
Port security and safety at sea	Monitoring and surveillance of maritime trade, strengthening control and enforcement systems, information sharing		
SWIOFISH 1	Regional fisheries governance, implementation of regional and international guidelines/regulations, fisheries monitoring		  
SWIOFISH 2	Professionalisation of artisanal fisheries, improved management of tuna fisheries in support of the IOTC, blue and circular economy in the islands of Africa and the Indian Ocean		     
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION	Risk preparedness, disaster response management		  
RSIE 4	Public health, health watch, alert management, response	 	
EMCP	Strengthening regional maritime connectivity		 

And also...

The IOC also implements activities outside the project cycles. This is the case in the field of culture with the Prix Indianocéanie supported by International Organisation of the Franco-phonie and the Department of Reunion Island, as well as activities with the Historical Image Library of the Indian Ocean. In addition, the IOC has set up a regional mechanism for dialogue on migration with the International Organisation for Migration.

**All projects have SDG 17 in common, Partnerships for the Goals.*

14-15 January

IOC modernisation workshop, with the IOC Steering Committee and Permanent Liaison Officers, the EU and INCA's technical assistance



20 February

Signature of the IOC-AFD-FFEM convention for the RECOS (coastal resilience) project, with Jean-Yves Le Drian, French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs



21-25 February

Mission to support Covid-19 control in Madagascar and the Comoros - Adoption of the first emergency plan



27 February

Kenya takes over from Mauritius as chair of the CGPCS (Contact group on piracy off the coast of Somalia)



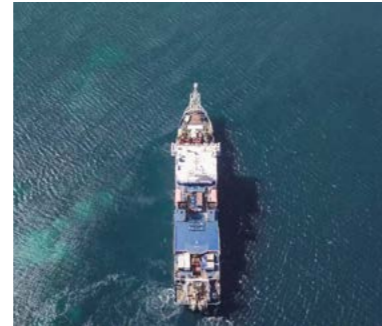
06 March

34th Council of Ministers in Seychelles - Group photograph with representatives of Member States and observer members



15 March

The cable ship Teliri unwinds the METISS cable, a very high speed submarine cable (24,000 Giga-bits/s)



27 April

As the IOC adopts its contingency plan, the General Secretariat is adopting a protocol for Covid-19 at the IOC Headquarters



24 June

Covid-19 response plan: installation of a thermic camera at Moroni international airport (Comoros)



15 July

Departure of Hamada Madi after a 4-year mandate as IOC Secretary-General



16 July

Handover ceremony by videoconference between Hamada Madi and Vêlayoudom Marimoutou, new IOC Secretary-General



16 August

Covid-19 response plan: delivery of materials and equipment to Seychelles



17 August

Covid-19 response plan: delivery of equipment to Madagascar



23 August

Covid-19 response plan: delivery of equipment to Comoros



07 September

Vélayoudom Marimoutou, Secretary-General, and Dev Phokeer, Director, hold their first meeting with the whole General Secretariat team



07 October

Connection of the METISS digital cable in Mauritius with representatives of Emtel and CEB FiberNet, Mauritian members of the METISS consortium



09 October

Inauguration of the joint exhibition "IOC-EU: A Shared Commitment for a Sustainable Indianoceanian"



14 October

Series of conferences as part of the joint IOC-EU event: climate, cooperation, maritime security, ...



20 November

World Day of Artisanal Fishermen and Sea Workers in Moheli (Comoros) celebrated by FPAOI with IOC



01 December

Visit of the President of Seychelles, Wavel Ramkalawan



09 December

Launch of the ECOFISH project



15 December

Launch of the 3rd edition of the Prix Indianocéanie



HEALTH
A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIONS
WITH COVID-19
AS THE MAIN FOCUS



Undoubtedly, if there were one word that left its imprint upon 2020, it would be "pandemic". Covid-19 has shaken the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Covid-19 epidemic a "public health emergency of international concern" and it evolved into a "pandemic", announced on 11 March 2020. Early anticipation was required: following the evolution of the epidemic outbreak in Wuhan in December 2019, the IOC Health Watch Unit (IOC-HWU) and the SEGA - One Health network exchanged information and organised a Regional Technical Committee of the network in February 2020, focusing on preparedness.

With the pandemic declared on 11 March, people are finding out the necessity of individual protection and protective measures.

ANTICIPATION

Anticipation enabled the development of a first emergency plan as early as February 2020. The IOC mobilised €500,000 from the RSIE3 project funded by the French Development Agency (AFD). This initial response addressed the immediate prevention needs in the face of virus introduction risks. The emergency plan supported by AFD enabled, among other things, the strengthening of national health surveillance systems at the borders. Meanwhile, the first cases of Covid-19 appeared in the region. Under the impetus of the Comorian presidency of the IOC Council of Ministers, a contingency plan was developed in April 2020 to provide increased support to national response efforts. This contingency plan is in line with the needs expressed by the beneficiary Member States. It required the mobilisation of an additional €4 million from AFD, almost all of which was allocated to the purchase of medical and laboratory equipment, protective materials and medicines for the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles (see infographic on page 32-33).



On 23 July, material and equipment for the fight against Covid-19 were delivered to Mauritius.

DELIVERY OF MATERIALS TO MEMBER STATES

After a material handover in Mauritius on 10 August 2020, the IOC organised the delivery of the first batch of equipment by special flights to Seychelles on 16 August 2020 and to the Comoros and Madagascar on 17 August.

The material and equipment provided have strengthened the monitoring, diagnosis and management capacities. Other batches of equipment complement the IOC donations mobilised alongside the rapid support of AFD through its "Covid-19 - Health In Common" initiative.

Covid-19 response plan - equipment handover ceremony in Mauritius, 10 August 2020.

Covid-19 response plan - delivery of material and equipment to Seychelles, Comoros and Madagascar (16-17 August).



IN ADDITION TO COVID-19

Alongside the Covid-19 response plan, the IOC-HWU and the SEGA - One Health network have continued their health monitoring activities and, when needed, interventions targeting other epidemic risks. Support was provided following an animal health alert in Mauritius, rabies in Madagascar, dengue fever in the Comoros and for the strengthening of surveillance and response systems, in particular with surveillance reinforced by NICTs.

In addition, the IOC continues consolidating national health surveillance structures through a field epidemiology training programme (FETP). These three-month training courses aim at training a total of 105 professionals in grassroot epidemiology techniques,

an essential activity for monitoring, investigating and ensuring the prevention of diseases according to the One Health approach that links human, animal and environmental health. An initial partnership agreement was signed at the end of 2020 with the national human and animal health administrations of Mauritius for the deployment of this training to the benefit of some thirty professionals. The extension of this activity in other IOC Member States is underway. These trainings also contribute to strengthening surveillance and response capacities in the prevailing pandemic situation.

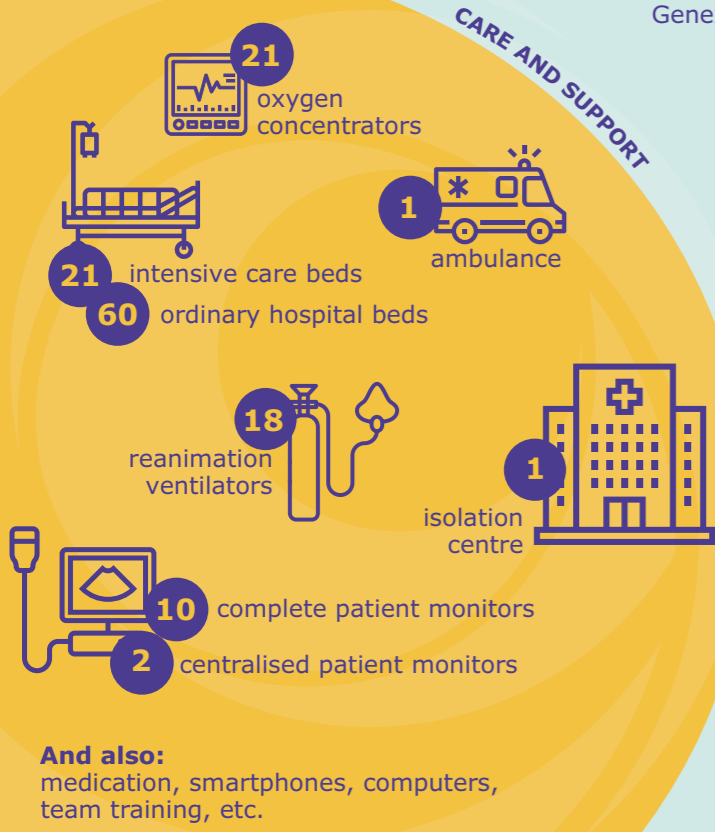


Dr. Harimahefa Razafimandimby, a trained FETP epidemiologist, in action in Madagascar.

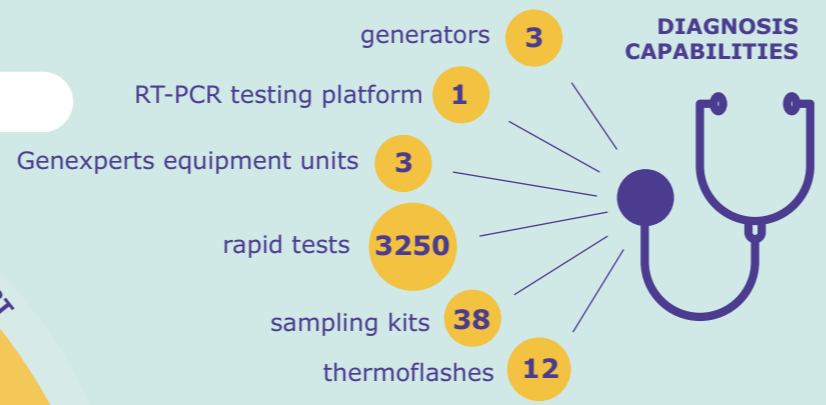
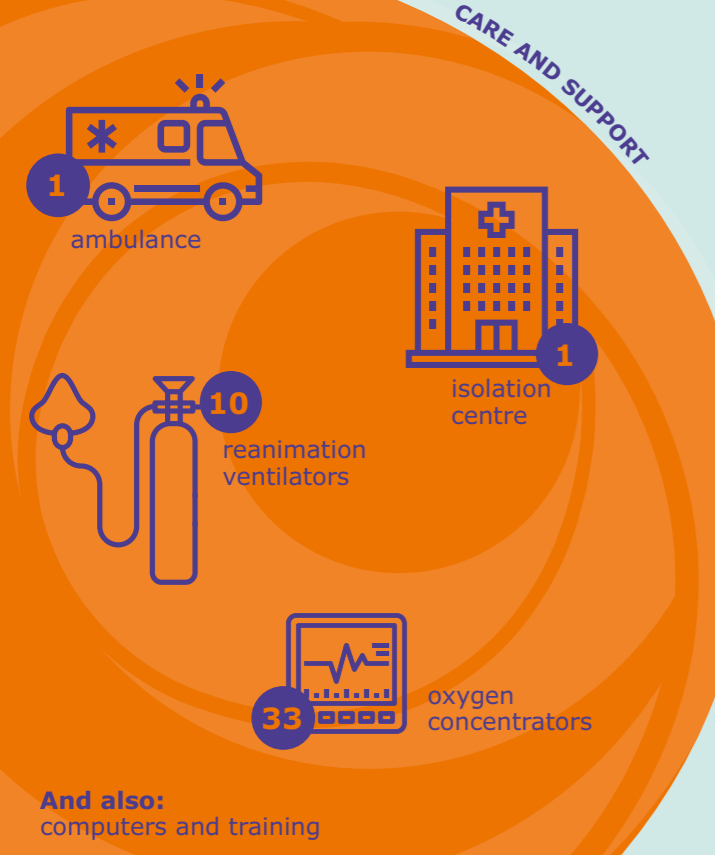
WHAT'S NEXT?

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted, if need be, the importance of having a regional public health watchdog. The SEGA - One Health network is a concrete tool for cooperation, a network for exchange and mobilisation for field actions. Given its relevance and its contribution to the prevention and management of health risks, the Member States committed in 2017 to making this network permanent. The SEGA - One Health network, through the IOC-HWU, is expected to expand partnerships in order to amplify regional action in public health and to respond to important needs. In addition to the integration of actions in human and animal health, the times increasingly invite to factor in the impact of climate change on health.

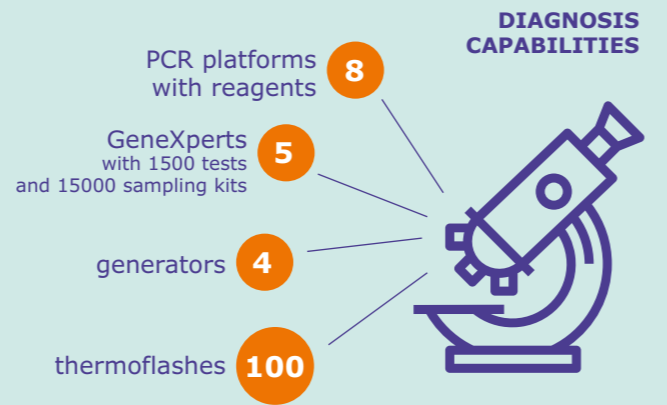
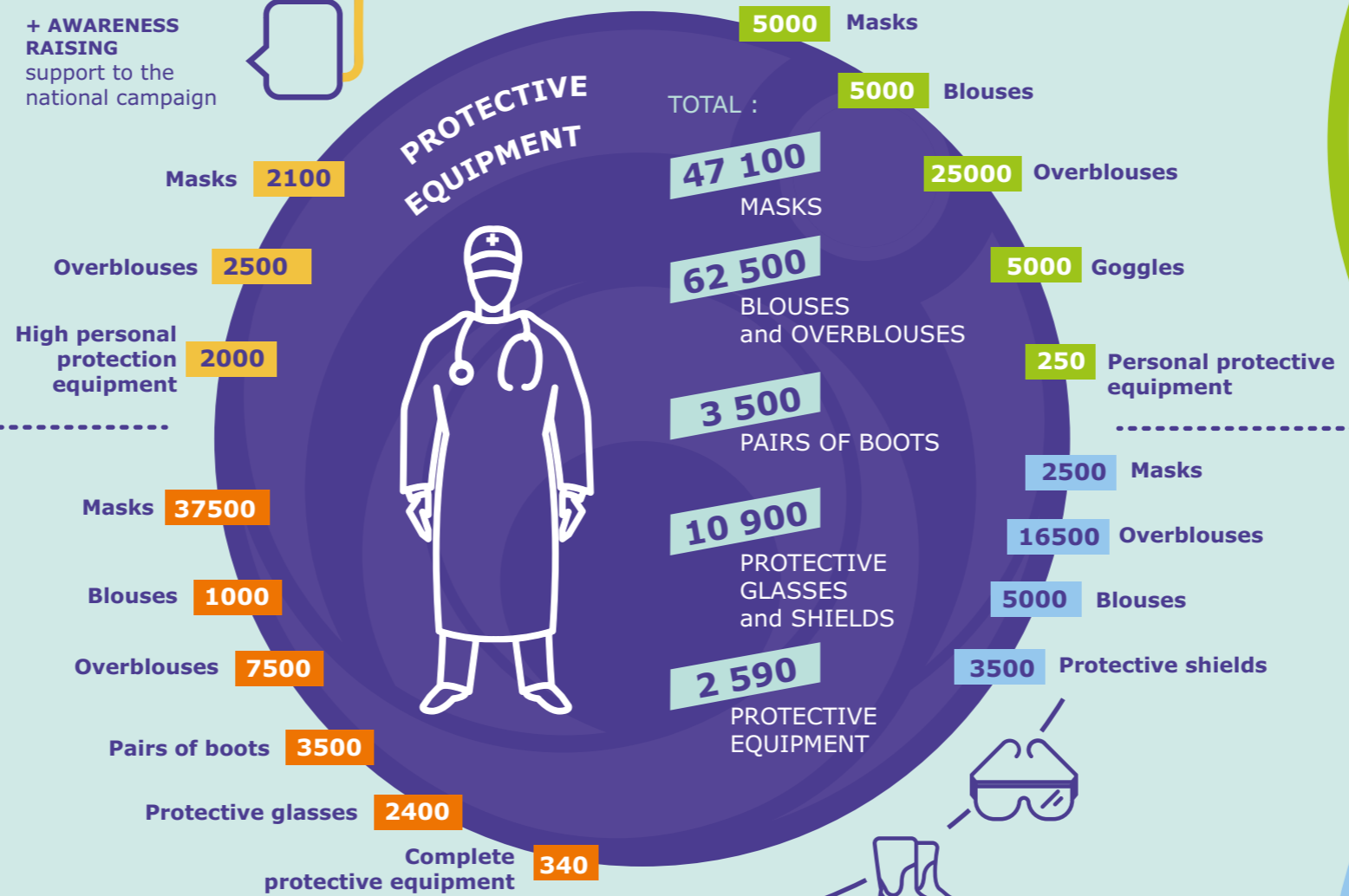
 **COMOROS**



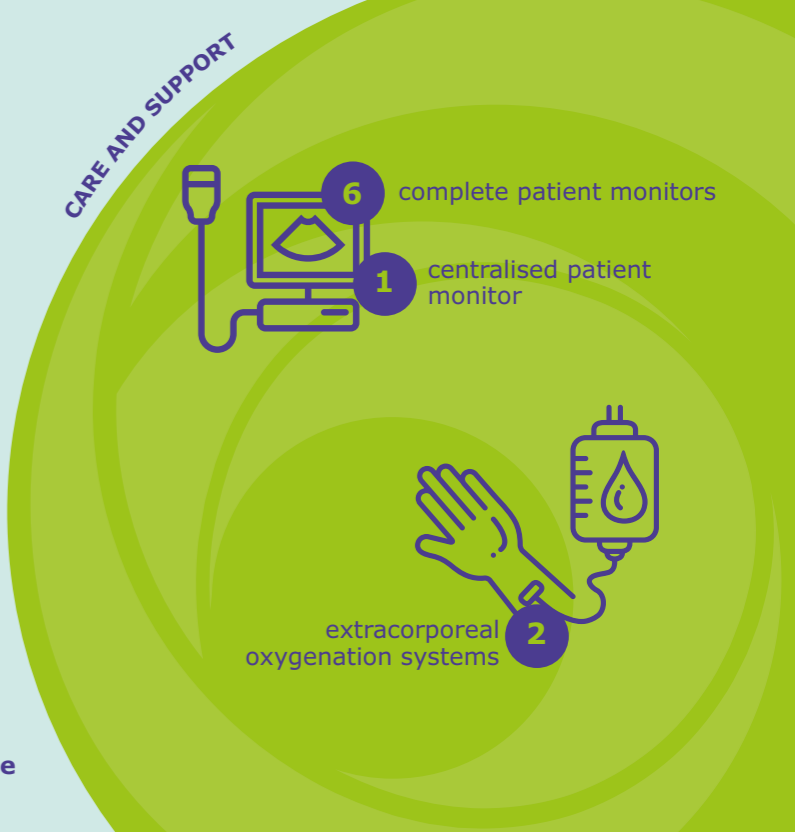
 **MADAGASCAR**



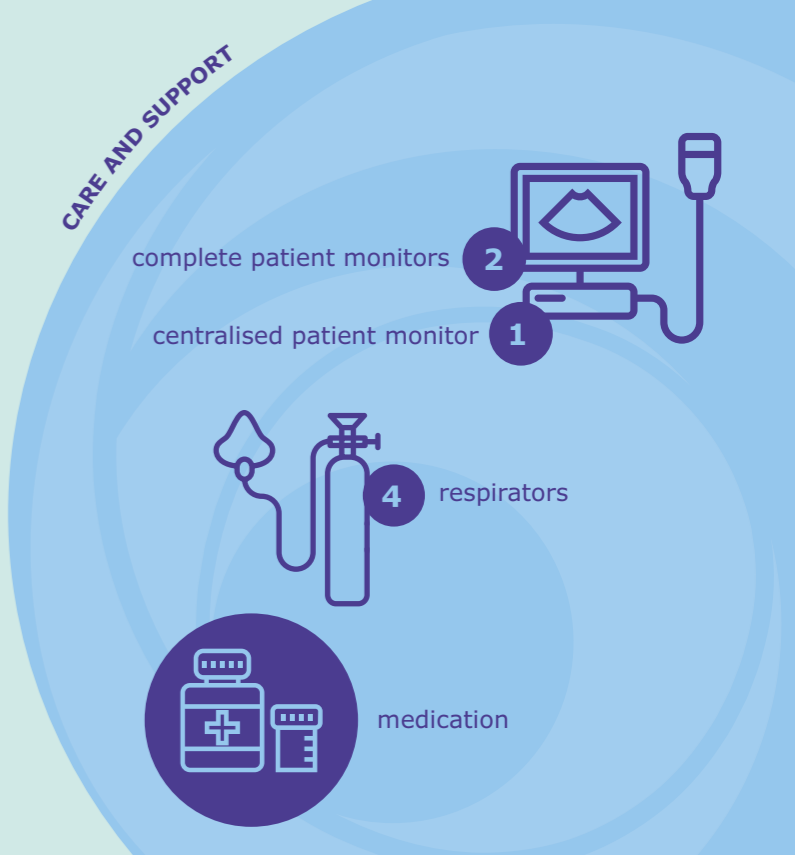
+ AWARENESS RAISING support to the national campaign



MAURITIUS 



SEYCHELLES 



THE EU STRENGTHENS REGIONAL HEALTH ACTION

In addition to AFD's, the European Union (EU) has also decided to provide support to the SEGA - One Health network. The financing agreement for this new RSIE4 project, entitled "Strengthening regional health security and mitigating the effects of epidemics and pandemics" was signed between the IOC and AFD on 16 December 2020.

" The European Union has decided to strengthen the network by providing 9.35 million euros in funding through an agreement with the AFD, in order to support this regional cooperation and to increase the response capacity of IOC Member States to epidemics and pandemics and thus improve health security in the region."

H.E.M. Vincent Degert,
EU Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius
and the Republic of Seychelles

This project aims at building capacity within IOC Member States and at the regional level to improve surveillance, alert and response to epidemics and pandemics. It also aims at strengthening strategic preparedness and response mechanisms. The project will, among other things, reinforce the laboratory network with the improvement of technical platforms (equipment, skills).



The RSIE4 project will, notably, strengthen the network of laboratories with the improvement of technical platforms.

Q&A WITH...

DR HARENA RASAMOELINA, IOC-HWU COORDINATOR

With Covid-19, we've been hearing a lot about epidemiology. What is it about?

It is a scientific discipline that studies health problems in human, animal and even plant populations. Epidemiology is particularly focused on frequencies, distributions in time and space and the factors that influence them. Without being exhaustive, these factors can be the characteristics of individuals (sex, age, immune status ...), environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, air quality ...), or pathogens (resistance, strains ...).

As the one who monitors the evolution of diseases by taking into account all these factors, the epidemiologist has an essential role in disease control. He provides the necessary guidelines for prevention and response and also implements these guidelines.

What is the added value of the SEGA - One Health network?

The SEGA - One Health network is a feat, a world class example of a structured and functional regional network. It ensures the sharing of health information between Member States, decompartmentalises disciplines and facilitates interdisciplinary work at both national and regional levels. It is also a concrete example of solidarity through prevention and response to epidemic risks. It contributes as well to strengthening skills through training. It finally opens up numerous opportunities through partnerships with international players such as the WHO and the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) and regional institutions of excellence such as the Institut Pasteur and CIRAD. All this confers to the SEGA - One Health network the traits of a unique, supportive and effective cooperation instrument.

How will IOC's health action evolve in the future?

The first thing is to ensure the permanence of the SEGA - One Health network and to consolidate the achievements in terms of surveillance and response.

Then, one of the major perspectives is to broaden the areas of action such as environmental health or non-communicable diseases, starting with diabetes.

Although we are not abandoning surveillance and response, we are beginning to consider much more systemic actions to achieve this objective of securing the health of the population of Indianoceanians. In fact, we will shift from a project approach to a programme approach through thematic poles of excellence. This will enable the IOC to seek support from partners to implement, not projects, but a major public health programme that addresses all health issues.



FEEDING
30 MILLION
INDIANOCEANIANS

"Our food systems are failing, and the Covid-19 pandemic is making things worse. [...] We [nevertheless] have the opportunity to build [...] systems that better meet the needs of food producers and workers [that ensure] that more people have access to safe and nutritious food to eradicate hunger, [that rebalance] the relationship [with] the natural environment. If we do all this and more, [...] we can avoid some of the worst consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition"

This call for collective action is from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. This was on 9 June 2020, at the launch of the United Nations' policy brief on the pandemic's impact on food security and nutrition. The observation that food systems are failing and that the pandemic is exacerbating this situation also applies to Indianoceanians.



The goal is to achieve an equitable and inclusive regional food production and trading system.

CONNECTIVITY AND REGIONAL AGRI-FOOD TRADE

COVID-19 AND REGIONAL ROUTES

The discussions related to Covid-19 clearly show that new food distribution systems are necessary. The health crisis has confirmed the interest and relevance of a regional approach to food production and consumption.

The objective is to create a fair and inclusive regional food production and trading system. Such a regional market "enhances the livelihood opportunities of local food producers, processors and sellers [and] also provides an opportunity to reduce dependence on remote and dominant transnational corporations", observes The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (FAO, 2020).

The Regional Programme for Food Security and Nutrition (PRESAN) and the food security project with the EU are ways of addressing the challenges exacerbated by Covid-19.

In the meantime, the IOC is launching a new project to improve regional maritime connectivity with the support of Japan. This is essential for food trade.

Effective maritime connectivity is essential for the implementation of a regional food chain.



Improved maritime connectivity is essential for the creation of a dynamic trade area, especially for agri-food products. IOC studies have provided guidance for reducing maritime transport costs to, within and from Indianoceanians. To implement the guidelines of these studies, the IOC has launched, with the financial support of Japan, a medium-term Enhanced Maritime Connectivity Programme (EMCP). This action also involves the coastal states of East Africa.

The EMCP aims to achieve the following:

- **rationalise** port management structures and simplify the decision-making process;
- **establish a regular monitoring system** for IOC trade, including the quantification of the region's shipping needs based on current and projected trade volumes;
- **establish a single maritime office** as regional trade facilitation tool.

NET IMPORTERS

IOC Member States are largely net importers of food. In addition to the financial cost of these imports, the environmental cost of transport also needs to be considered. This has led IOC Member States to consider food security and nutrition as a primary focus of regional development. Access to sufficient quantity and quality of food is a fundamental right. PRESAN, supported by FAO and IFAD, provides a framework for concerted and supportive actions. The approach is global: it covers production chains with regional added value, production methods, the investment climate, phytosanitary standards, storage, distribution capacities, etc.

The aim is therefore to produce more and better, particularly by taking into account the effects of climate change but also opportunities to boost regional circuits. In short, to produce in the region, for the region.

Several players from the regional private sector have expressed an interest in PRESAN. Investments are essential to make up for the weakening of efforts, to transform the trial and considerably reduce food insecurity and nutritional challenges. It is about economic opportunities, production and trade as much as it is about the right to food, social equality, jobs, biodiversity and adaptation to climate change.



Maize, along with rice, onions, soya, poultry and zebu meat, is one of the key value chains identified.



DID YOU KNOW?

The FAO estimates that if women were guaranteed the same access as men to agricultural resources, credit and innovations, the productivity of their farms would increase by 20% to 30%. There is therefore great potential for Indianoceanania, particularly in Madagascar where 46% of small farms are run by women.



MAIN SECTORS

Through PRESAN, the Antananarivo-based coordination unit has initiated studies to better define comparative advantages and identify obstacles to regional agri-food trade. The studies, conducted with FAO's and IFAD's support, identified priority value chains, namely rice, onions, maize, soybeans, poultry and zebu meat.

While Madagascar's potential is at the heart of PRESAN, it is also a question of developing production capacities in the other islands. Even more so, to facilitate the exchange of products at the regional level.

To this end, the IOC, together with the FAO, has also set up an information platform on intra-regional business opportunities. This platform, which will be launched in 2021, aims to provide players in the region with a reference tool providing information on prices, production, as well as import and export opportunities for priority agricultural and food products.

At the same time, studies on sanitary and phytosanitary standards are being conducted. A scientific committee and a group of experts specialised in maize and poultry have been set up to provide scientific advice on standards, quality and certification of foodstuffs. An action plan will then be developed to address the identified constraints.

DIVERSIFICATION AND NUTRITION

The EU has also committed €16 million from the 11th EDF to a food and nutrition security program. Signed in February 2020, it includes a call for proposals for the subsidy of projects aiming to (i) increase and diversify agricultural production in a sustainable and inclusive way in order to improve the food security of vulnerable populations and (ii) enhance the nutritional situation of children aged 0 to 5 years, adolescents and women, particularly pregnant and lactating women.

The IOC is also collaborating with the Regional Platform on Agricultural Research for Development (PRÉRAD) within this food security initiative. This network is coordinated by CIRAD and mobilises research for sustainable agriculture, adapted to island territories. It aims to improve yields, adapt to the effects of climate change, preserve biodiversity and fertilize soils. This platform, which involves scientific research, will also be engaged in the implementation of the program with the EU.

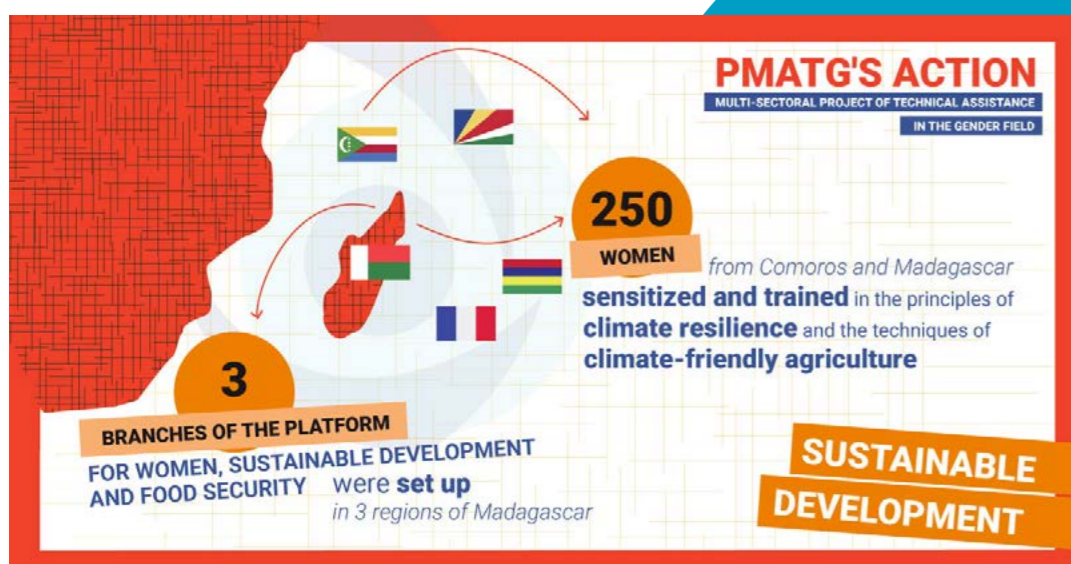
The IOC's action in favour of sustainable fisheries is also part of this broad dynamic of food and nutritional security. The projects, implemented with funding from the World Bank and the EU, contribute to the improvement of fisheries governance, to the strengthening of sectors such as *ourite* (octopus) in Mauritius and Rodrigues, and of small-scale fishermen.



With the introduction of closed fishing seasons for octopus in Rodrigues and Mauritius, catches up to 5 times higher have been observed, thus increasing the income of fishermen.



WOMEN AND FOOD SECURITY
The regional gender strategy of the IOC promotes the role of women for sustainable development and food security. Thus, the multi-sectoral technical assistance project funded by the African Development Bank has supported training for Malagasy and Comorian women until 2020.



BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE
strongly linked

BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE STRONGLY LINKED

Climate has an impact on biodiversity: global warming contributes to the higher temperatures and acidification of the oceans and, consequently, to the bleaching and weakening of corals, etc...

Biodiversity also has an impact on the climate: as it gets warmer, the ocean loses its capacity to absorb CO₂ and therefore contributes to global warming, the intensification of weather phenomena, etc...

" The climate agenda is absolutely decisive for the future of our islands. It is about resilience, about resistance. It is simply about life. There is a framework for international cooperation, we need to mobilise funding and build common strategies with all IOC partners. The biodiversity agenda is a strategic agenda for the whole region. One of the region's assets is its biodiversity capital. It is not an artificial capital, it is a natural capital. We must be able to fully promote it so that it benefits the territories and the populations."

Vêlayoudom Marimoutou,
Secretary-General of the IOC, at his
induction on 16 July.

INDIANOCEANIA, VICTIM OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Indianoceaania is a highly vulnerable region to the effects of climate change and therefore to natural disasters. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the World Bank assess that they have caused more than \$17.2 billion in agricultural and economic damage to the island states of the Western Indian Ocean since 1980.

PAVING THE WAY: 2020, A DECISIVE YEAR

2020, heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, was nevertheless a year of many decisions. Even if activities, workshops and conferences inevitably had to be put on hold, this year has provided the opportunity to lay the foundations for important actions:

• **RECOS**

signing of the Coastal Zone Resilience Project Agreement (AFD-FFEM) in February 2020.

• **HYDROMET**

Continuation of the validation process of the project focused on hydrometeorology (AFD-EU-Green Climate Fund). The agreement should be signed in the first quarter of 2021.

• **Green Climate Funds**

Continuation of the accreditation process in order to mobilise climate financing for Member States. The application has been finalised and submitted.

• **GCCA+**

In the first quarter, implementation of the Organisation of ACP States' project to prepare the region's islands for the climate negotiations and to support them in the implementation of the Paris Agreement (EU) will start.

• **GMES & Africa**

Implementation and communication support of the sub-regional component for monitoring the marine and coastal environment with Earth observation technologies.

ECOLOGY AND ECONOMY

Degrading our environment means damaging our economies. Intensive agriculture, urbanisation, deforestation, degradation of coral reefs during fishing, removal of mangroves... these actions, which are basically designed for development, end up harming development.

According to IPBES (Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), current negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems are expected to jeopardise the achievement of 80% of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The IOC places the protection and better management of the environment and biodiversity resources at the heart of its action. Indeed, almost all projects have an ecological ambition:

• **SWIOFISH 1 & 2 and ECOFISH**

for better management of fisheries resources in particular;

• **BRIO et HYDROMET**

for meteorological capacity building;

• **RSIE3**

for a global analysis of public health (human, animal and environmental);

• **RECOS, ExPLOI**

for the preservation of ecosystems;

• **Entrepreneurship and business cooperation**

for support to entrepreneurs offering green solutions;

• **MASE**

the maritime safety programme, which has a marine pollution response component.



Achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

This was the theme of the IOC-EU exhibition held in October 2020 in Mauritius. The public was invited to discover, through 17 boards and tablets, how the IOC-EU partnership supports the island populations of the South West Indian Ocean in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



CLIMATE AND HEALTH

The Covid-19 pandemic was the biggest story in 2020. It has even been argued that Covid-19 was "good for the planet". The reason behind this was the slowing down of activities resulting in a decrease in pollution. There was a notion of health-climate causality. However, there is a real climate-health link. In this regard, IOC climate projects, such as BRIO or HYDROMET, are a tangible support to the health security of Member States.

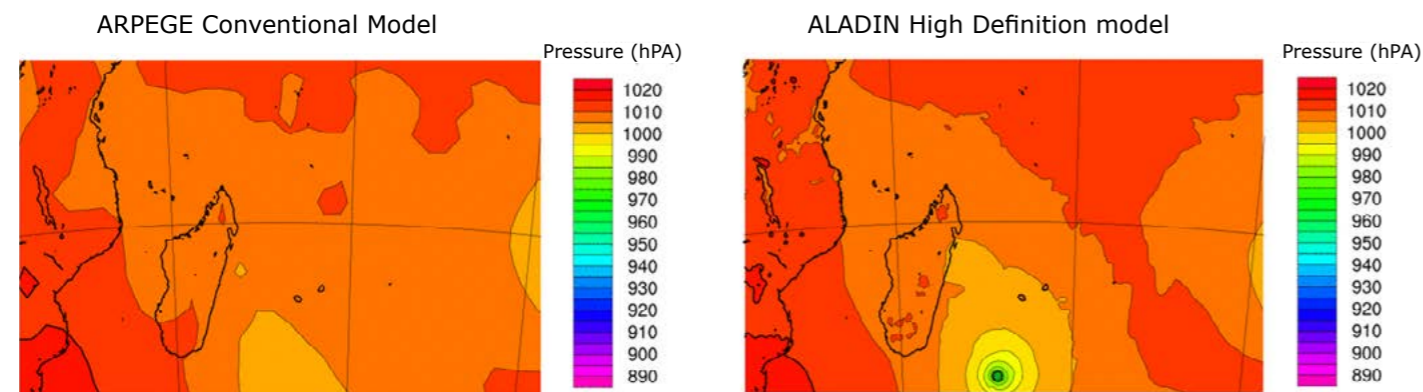
GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND ANTICIPATION

Climate change is a threat to public health. Heat waves, floods, droughts, cyclones, etc... These phenomena are unfortunately contributing to the transmission of diseases such as dengue fever or malaria or to the aggravation of malnutrition. The IOC is therefore committed to strengthening the resilience of populations by working in a cross-cutting way: better understand climate change in order to help Member States address health challenges. The RSIE3 project has integrated the impact of climate change on health into the process of sustaining the SEGA - One Health network.

DO WE NEED IMPROVED CLIMATE SIMULATIONS?

WHEN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CHIMES WITH HIGH RESOLUTION

BRIO (Building resilience in the Indian Ocean) is a project implemented by the IOC in partnership with Météo-France Réunion. It is funded by AFD's Adapt'Action programme.



Comparison of climate simulations obtained by ARPEGE and ALADIN.

The goal?

To develop high-resolution regional climate simulations (via the ALADIN model).

Why?

To provide the region with climate projections adapted to the particularities of island territories. Indeed, the ARPEGE model offered projections with a resolution of 150km. By reducing to a resolution of 12km, we have a tool that is ten times more accurate than the global models.



Marie-Dominique Leroux (Météo-France Réunion) presents the ALADIN-Climate model.

FIRST RESULTS

The first results of the BRIO project were presented on 18 February at the Météo France - Réunion headquarters. For almost a year, four experts from Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles have been trained to use the ALADIN-Climate model. The infographic below shows some of the advantages of the ALADIN model used within BRIO.

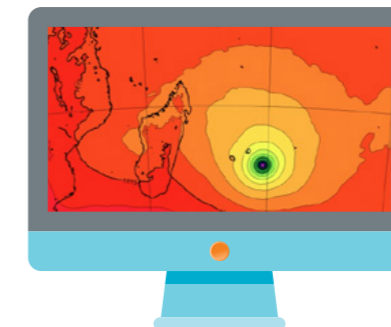
THE GENIUS OF WEATHER

ALADIN-Climate is the new meteorological tool for the Indian Ocean.

TEN TIMES MORE ACCURATE THAN GLOBAL MODELS

10+

ALADIN-Climate is a model capable of offering climate simulations with a resolution of 12 km. It can simulate the intensity of tropical cyclones, obtaining results that are very close to reality.



The capacity to quantify the uncertainties related to climate change is becoming increasingly important against the incumbent climate challenges (sea level rise, droughts, floods, cyclones, food security, etc.). The ALADIN model produces the first and only high-resolution climate simulations for the countries of the region.

THE INDIAN OCEAN A VULNERABLE REGION NATURAL CATASTROPHES FLOODS, TROPICAL CYCLONES

	COMOROS 5.7 M\$
	MADAGASCAR 100 M\$
	MAURITIUS 110 M\$
	SEYCHELLES 2.8 M\$



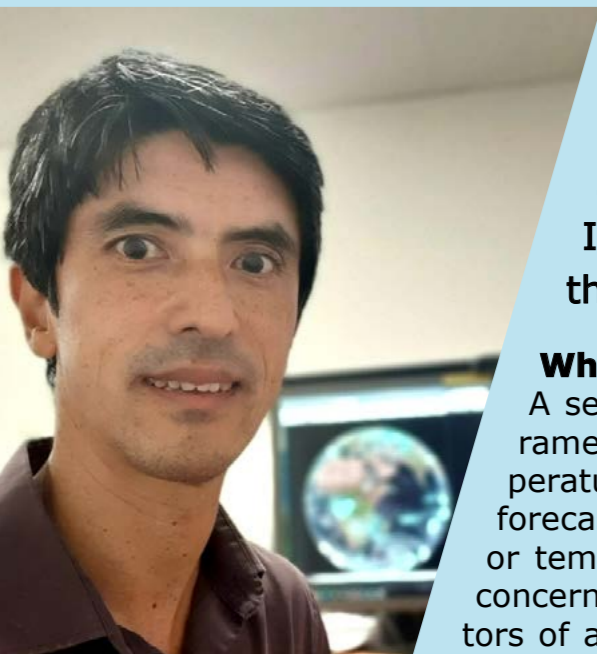
3 3RD MOST AFFECTED REGION IN THE WORLD BY NATURAL CATASTROPHES

17 17 BILLION DOLLARS IN DESTRUCTION LOSSES BECAUSE OF CLIMATE DISASTERS OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS

8 MOST AFFECTED SECTORS

- AGRICULTURE
- PUBLIC HEALTH
- ENERGY
- LAND SECTOR
- WATER
- TOURISM
- FISHING
- COASTAL AREAS

M\$: Annual losses million dollars



Q&A with...

LAURENT LABBÉ,
RESEARCH ENGINEER
Studies & Climatology Division,
Interregional Météo France Direction for
the Indian Ocean

What is the use of a seasonal forecast?

A seasonal forecast is a probability assessment of a parameter's evolution (cumulative rainfall or average temperature) for the coming quarter. The aim therefore is to forecast the occurrence risk of a deficit or excess of rainfall, or temperature, in relation to the normal situation for the concerned quarter. This information can be used by the sectors of activity that are likely to adapt their practices accordingly (water resource management, hydroelectric production, agriculture, health, etc.).

How is it established?

They are produced on a global scale by the main meteorological centres listed by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). They are based on a set of scenarios that allow probabilities to be calculated. For the South West Indian Ocean zone, the forecasts of the European centre (ECMWF), Météo France and the American service (NCEP) are considered. They are subject to additional statistical processing to account for local effects and to correct model biases.

You took part in the ninth session of SWIOCOF in September. What is SWIOCOF?

It is the seasonal forecasting forum dedicated to the South West Indian Ocean region. Experts from IOC countries, Mozambique, Tanzania, Malawi and South Africa gather to review the past year and consider the current situation. The aim is to establish a consensus on the likely evolution of rainfall and temperature over the coming quarters and to share this with potential users. This meeting is also a time for knowledge sharing, training and forward thinking in the light of WMO recommendations. A work plan is established for the coming year, setting out the objectives to be achieved by the next session. 2020 also saw the organisation of a virtual forum specifically dedicated to cyclone activity forecasting in November.



CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

A PRODUCT CAN HAVE MANY LIVES!

In opposition to the linear economy: buy-consume/use-discard, the logic here is 3R:
Reduce - Reuse - Recycle

PLASTIC POLLUTION, A SCOURGE THE IOC IS TACKLING

The IOC is committed to strengthening the capacity of its Member States to tackle plastic pollution.

When we want to illustrate plastic pollution, we often represent a water bottle left in the open. But the problem is gigantic. According to Greenpeace, every minute the equivalent of a bin of plastic is dumped into the ocean. And every year, between 8 and 12 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans. And there are plenty of impacts! Firstly, the environment and ecosystems are affected, but this also has repercussions on our health, our economy, etc.

EXPLOI :

INDIAN OCEAN PLASTIC EXPEDITION

This project is funded by AFD and the FFEM (French Global Environment Facility). In short, it aims to combat marine pollution caused by plastic waste and to develop a regionalised circular economy.

The ExpLOI project agreement will be signed in 2021.

It is estimated that between 8 and 12 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans each year.



OUR ISLANDS COASTLINES ARE ENDANGERED

Our coastal areas are on the forefront of climate change, especially with regard to the ocean: rising sea levels, erosion, warming, acidification, etc.

COASTAL RESILIENCE PROJECT

On 20 February 2020, the IOC signed a partnership agreement with AFD and FFEM for the implementation of the Coastal Resilience Project (RECOS). This project aims at strengthening the resilience of coastal zones and marine ecosystems through nature-based solutions.

WHAT IS A NATURE-BASED SOLUTION?

It is about using the potential of our environment to address societal challenges. The solution is not 'grey': it is not about using infrastructure or technology to solve one problem at the expense of another. The solution is 'green', sustainable, adaptable and cross-cutting. It is called ecological engineering.



For instance, restoring a coastal area by planting trees that stabilise the soil to prevent erosion and thus help protect the coastline and the population from natural risks linked to climate change (intense weather events such as cyclones, rising sea levels, etc). This will also bring economic benefits: tourists' attraction.



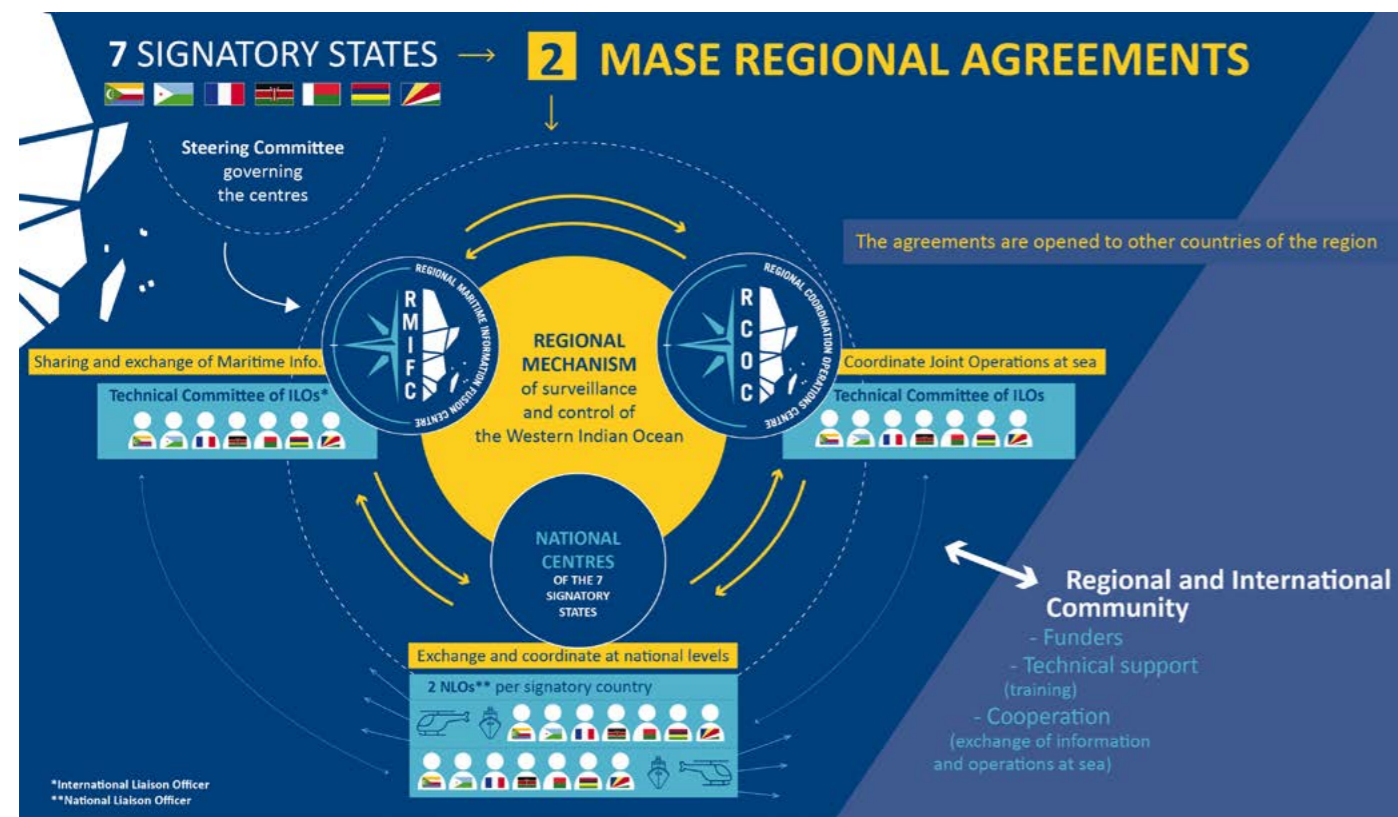
RECOS : WHICH PILOT SITES?

PROJECTS AND LOCATIONS	ECOSYSTEMS AND RELATED THEMES	FINAL BENEFICIARIES
 SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT for the Ankivonjy and Ankarea Marine Protected Areas and support to the integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in Nosy Be	Fisheries resources Sustainable fisheries Reefs ICZM	Fishermen and farmers of Ankarea and Ankivonjy
 SUSTAINABLE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION of Morondava Urban Commune	Dune environment Erosion	Population of Morondava
 MANGROVE RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT in Antongil Bay	Mangroves Sustainable fisheries Agroforestry	Fishermen and farmers of Antongil Bay
 SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND MANGROVE MANAGEMENT in Tsimipaika Bay	Fisheries resources Aquaculture	Fishermen and farmers of Tsimipaika Bay
 AGROFORESTRY AND EROSION CONTROL on the outskirts of Moya forest Anjouan	Coastal forest Soil erosion Agroforestry	Farmers on the outskirts of Moya Forest
 SUSTAINABLE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION Flic en Flac	Lagoon Beach Coastal erosion	Tourist operators, local population and visitors in Flic en Flac
 COASTAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION Mahé and Praslin	Lagoon Beach Coastal erosion	Coastal population

**OCEANIC
GOVERNANCE**
Securing the blue gold

CONSOLIDATING MARITIME SECURITY'S ARCHITECTURE; IMPROVING OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

The maritime security's architecture set up under the MASE programme through European Union funding has reached the initial operational phase, a crucial stage in its development. Indeed, after the deployment of International Liaison Officers (ILOs) and equipment in the regional and national centres, it is now time to operationalise the mechanism. This phase is crucial: it marks the entrenchment of the centres in the regional landscape and tests the vessel monitoring system's capacity to engage concrete action, the identification of vessels of Interest and the coordination of joint actions at sea.



A strong, state-of-the-art and regional maritime security architecture is a prerequisite for the development of a blue economy.

With support from the MASE programme, the regional and national centres consolidated in 2020 the cooperation structures' and mechanisms' basis. This was achieved through tabletop and field simulation exercises with representatives of the States parties to the 2018 Maritime Security Agreements. These mock drills helped to strengthen the operational procedures put in place and to reinforce the capacities of the parties involved.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Union of the Comoros, Djibouti, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles signed two regional maritime security agreements in 2018. The first addresses maritime information exchange and sharing whereas the second provides for coordination of joint actions at sea. Two Regional Centres - for Maritime Information Fusion in Madagascar (RMIFC) and Operational Coordination in Seychelles (RCOC)- have been established to operationalise these agreements. These two agreements are an important outcome of the MASE programme.

MARITIME HIGHWAYS

Implemented by the IOC in close collaboration with the Nairobi Convention's Secretariat and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), this World Bank-funded project involved Comoros, France (La Réunion), Madagascar, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania.

The main objective was to provide a basis for improved responsiveness to major maritime pollution events affecting or likely to affect the territorial waters, coastline or related interests of any of the nine parties concerned.

OPERATION BULLDOG SHARK: COOPERATION IN ACTION

A launching pad for the organisation of joint operations at sea! The full-scale simulation exercise - MASE MARPOL 2019 - tested the regional maritime safety mechanism based on the 2018 regional agreements. The exercise, based on a accidental marine oil pollution scenario, took place in Madagascar in October 2019 and laid the foundations for a cross-cutting operational cooperation focused on a maritime threat prevailing in the region. This type of simulation makes it possible to identify the obstacles and weaknesses of the mechanisms, to define the strengths and thus to significantly improve the response and intervention capacities.



The goal of the 2019 MARPOL exercise was to test coordination and improve regional cooperation in the event of marine oil pollution.

After a long delay due to restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the first preventive operation at sea took place in November 2020. This preventive anti-narcotics patrol operation called "Bulldog Shark" was initiated by the RCOC in the northern Mozambique Channel. This is the first coordinated operation that has called upon the contractual resources of the countries that are signatories to the regional maritime security agreements. France and the Seychelles deployed their support and assistance vessels, namely the multi-mission patrol ship Le Champlain and a Seychelles Dornier maritime patrol aircraft respectively.

This was an important milestone in the process of operationalisation and coordination between the RMIFC, the RCOC and the national centres. Logistic difficulties remain, however, and the global health crisis is an additional challenge towards the implementation of operations. This highlights the need for stronger support towards national integration and ownership of the MASE Agreements. Targeted awareness-raising campaigns, particularly among the agencies and institutions that are called upon to play a role in the regional maritime safety architecture, should also be held to ensure better understanding and ownership of the issues at stake.

MV WAKASHIO EVENT: UPDATE OF THE REGIONAL 2011 CONTINGENCY PLAN

In August 2020 a marine pollution news story hit headlines around the world. This - the MV Wakashio incident - occurred in the territorial waters of Mauritius. It highlighted how essential it is to have the tools to prevent and respond to maritime risks, especially in a region crossed by busy shipping lanes. This incident, which resulted in an oil spill in the island's south-eastern lagoon, was unprecedented in the region in terms of its scale and highlighted the shortcomings (logistical, technical and from lacking know-how) in the rapid handling of disasters at sea at both national and regional levels.

The MV Wakashio stranded on the reefs of South East Mauritius on 25 July 2020. 12 days later, a state of ecological emergency was declared following the oil spill.

BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Stakeholders in the MASE Agreements were quick to respond. Through the RCOC, they provided the Mauritian authorities with lists of equipment that could be made available. However, restrictive measures in the face of the pandemic and logistical difficulties were obstacles to the deployment of MARPOL resources in a situation of emergency.

At the same time, the IOC has set up a working group composed of experts in projects related to maritime safety, the environment and sustainable ocean management. The goal? To look at the impact of the 2019 MARPOL exercise based on the achievements of the 2011 "Maritime Route" project for the future. The analysis, currently underway, should make it possible to identify ways of collaborating and taking action in order to rally the countries around this topical issue.

To this end, the IOC has asked the Steering Committee (COPIL) for RMIFC and RCOC governance to define an action plan based on the lessons learned from the Wakashio and the MARPOL 19 exercise. In December 2020, the 7 signatory countries agreed to implement the "Maritime Pollution" component as stipulated in the two MASE Agreements. They decided:

- to adapt the "Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Prevention and Response to Marine Pollution" of 2011.
- to operationalise the Marine Pollution Contingency Plan, which now includes the two regional centres.

The regional agreement drawn up within the framework of the "Maritime Route" project adopts, in essence, the operational provisions between the riparian states. In the event of an incident, the mechanism recommends the sharing of resources and expertise for joint assistance, both in the form of a national contingency plan for State party and a regional contingency plan. However, the MV Wakashio incident was a wake-up call to the outdated regional plan. It highlighted the added value of regional cooperation on maritime safety and, therefore, of the maritime safety mechanism set up through the MASE programme.

Consultations and collective work on its implementation between the regional centres, the Nairobi Convention, the IMO and the signatory countries should start by April 2021.

Marine pollution is an issue that lies at the heart of the "Maritime Route" project, which involved the coastal states of East Africa and the Indian Ocean in 2011-2012. The participating countries adopted a regional contingency plan. They had also received training, tools and equipment to build capacity in marine pollution prevention and management. However, these achievements were designed to deal with pollution incidents on a smaller-scale than the one involving the MV Wakashio.



Handover of equipment as part of the Maritime Route project (IOC, 2012).

Furthermore...

The operationalisation of the MARPOL Plan will be further achieved by the development of national and regional capacities of institutions and structures involved in maritime safety and security operations. This through support to the implementation of a regulatory and legal framework at both national and regional levels. Synergy between signatory states' regional and national centres will also be promoted through tabletop and field exercises to improve and strengthen coordination and operational responsiveness. In line with the Oil Spill Agreements, the IOC will work with the Nairobi Convention and the IMO to ensure synergy of coordinated actions and above all to strengthen cooperation with the riparian countries on this critical issue, with heavy environmental and economic consequences.

MULTIFACETED ACTION FOR FISHERIES GOVERNANCE

Fisheries have provided the IOC with a long-standing area of intervention. And for a good reason: IOC Member States control more than 5.5 million km² of exclusive economic zones. The Western Indian Ocean Basin is, moreover, one of the main tuna fishing areas, accounting for almost 20% of the world's commercial tuna catch, i.e. nearly 1 million tonne, and 16% of the global tuna industry's revenue, i.e. approximately USD 6.5 billion (IDDRI, *Indian Ocean tuna fisheries: between development opportunities and sustainability issues*, 2018). Europe, the largest market, has a strong presence in the area through its fleet and its industrial operators, which explains the shared interest of the EU and the regional states in the industry. In fact, the regional tuna industry, providing jobs, is a pillar of the island economies.

Yet fisheries resources are under pressure. Globally, overfishing and illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing result in a considerable loss of income, amounting to more than \$80 billion per year for overfishing (World Bank, 2017) and between \$10 and \$23 billion per year for IUU fishing (FAO, 2014).

As fish know no borders, regional cooperation is an indispensable tool for the sustainable management of these shared resources. Through the World Bank-funded SWIOFISH 1 and 2 programmes and the EU-funded ECOFISH programme, the IOC promotes responsible fisheries governance. Interventions target both industrial and small-scale fishers, fisheries policies and local communities.

The Western Indian Ocean is one of the main tuna fishing areas, accounting for nearly 20% of the world's commercial tuna catch, or nearly one million tonne.

The governance of fisheries in the South West Indian Ocean involves strengthening value chains, surveillance and control actions at sea, support for communities and artisanal fishermen, and support for the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

The Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down the implementation of activity programmes coordinated by the IOC. This slowdown has not prevented the implementation of operations at sea, as shown by the reactivation of the Regional Fisheries Monitoring Plan (RFMP) through the ECOFISH programme.

The RFMP is an emblematic mechanism for regional cooperation under the IOC-EU partnership. It involves IOC five Member States as well as Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania.

Following a two-year standby phase, the representatives of the eight RFMP member countries were officially appointed in June 2020. Following these appointments, the Western Indian Ocean Island and Coastal States met on 4 and 10 September 2020 to approve the RFMP guidelines. Cost-effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the actions to be adopted were at the heart of the debates during this workshop which marked the official re-launch of the RFMP.

A first regional fisheries surveillance mission started on 10 November 2020 aboard OSIRIS II, with fisheries inspectors from France/La Réunion, Madagascar and Mozambique. This 36-day mission enabled 15 vessels to be inspected over a distance of 11,287 kilo-

metres. It also contributed to fisheries inspectors' upskilling.

In addition, the SWIOFISH 1 programme has been able to mobilise expertise to develop a catalogue of fishing methods and gear (in progress) and to draw up a sustainable management plan for sea cucumbers. At the same time, SWIOFISH 1 promotes the good sustainable fishing practices of the SWIOFC member states.

The SWIOFISH 2 programme provides specific support to the Artisanal Fisheries Federation of the Indian Ocean (FPAOI). In particular, the FPAOI was able to organise inter-professional exchange meetings, notably in Mauritius and the Comoros. Expertise was also provided to support the FPAOI towards the revision of its 2020-2025 action plan. This involves, among other things, proposing actions to mitigate the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and reorienting the FPAOI's actions according to the current context and priorities.

As States in the region work towards economic recovery, it is obvious that regional activities in favour of fisheries governance are key drivers for recovery. Actions in this area must necessarily consider the needs of States and communities for a sustainable contribution to a responsible fisheries sector in their economies.



The fisheries inspectors on board the OSIRIS II (from left to right: Randrianjaka Lalaina, Butana Sebastiao L. J., Rousselet Pascal Roger A., Saory Olivier, Penalonga David S., Maillard Bertrand J.P. W.).

TESTIMONY

“ The re-launch of the Regional Fisheries Monitoring Programme takes our efforts against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing to a new level. Of course, each country already has its own structure and approach to this fight but, as the saying goes, ‘alone we go faster, together we go further’.

First of all, regional cooperation increases the deterrent effect of our actions. By acting as a region, the shortcomings of one player are made up for by the strengths of another, whether in terms of resources or expertise. As a result, those who used to exploit these gaps will think twice with the re-launch of the RFMP. Secondly, this collaboration makes it possible to be more effective in the actions carried out. Thanks to the tools put in place and the exchange of information that has now become possible, our actions are better targeted and are more unobtrusive. In addition, the pooling of monitoring resources helps to reduce costs.

Finally, the exchanges within the RFMP provide each country and each of us with new knowledge and offer multiple options for carrying out our mission. Indeed, we come from disparate backgrounds, have different experiences and see things differently. Our interactions make diversity an asset to the region. “



Randrianjaka Lalaina

START : 2007

INVESTMENTS : RFMP - **€12 million** (2007-2014); SmartFish - around **€3 million** (2015-2018); ECOFISH - around **€4.5 million** (2020-2024)

INVOLVED
COUNTRIES:



RFMP
IN A
NUTSHELL...

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE : about **6 million km²** of EEZ

ACHIEVEMENTS (2007–2018) : **49 joint patrols** over 1,228 days at sea, **12 illegal fishing vessels** seized, **120 violations** detected, **670 vessels** monitored, and **410 satellite images** shared

CULTURE
A human and humanistic
cooperation

Culture is the foundation stone of humanity, it binds a community together and sets it apart. Culture has naturally been identified as a core mission of the IOC since its creation in the early 1980s. By promoting active regional solidarity, the IOC contributes to strengthening the bonds of friendship between the South-West Indian Ocean islands' peoples.



DID YOU KNOW?

The IOC's cultural strategy was adopted in 2013. It is based on shared values: interculturality, creativity, a unifying spirit, exchange, transmission, peace and respect.

To this end, the IOC promotes Indianoceanica, the toponym of the South-West Indian Ocean islands region, and, in so doing, its cultural diversity and the common features that bind these territories together. 2020 marks a turning point in the IOC's cultural mission: AFD has agreed to support this mission through an initiative in the field of cultural and creative industries (CCI).

A STUDY TO IDENTIFY THE NEEDS OF CCI STAKEHOLDERS

The IOC and AFD initiated a diagnosis study to identify the needs of CCI stakeholders in the IOC Member States and Mozambique. This study carried out a non-exhaustive analysis of the six sectors that form the CCIs as defined by UNESCO, namely:

- tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- living arts (dance, music, theatre...);
- audiovisual with interactive media and creative services;
- design, architecture, arts and crafts;
- books and publishing;
- and finally the visual arts.

This diagnosis made it possible to identify common points in terms of needs, potential, obstacles and opportunities. Four main areas of intervention emerged from this study, according to the expectations of the players in the sectors. Firstly, it appears necessary to strengthen the conditions favouring the emergence of projects, both at national and regional level. Secondly, stakeholders solicit support to develop their capacities and skills in order to professionalise their sectors and improve their competitiveness. Stakeholders also indicate the need to better support exchanges between CCI professionals within and between countries and to facilitate access to regional and international markets. The last element is to increase the social and environmental impact of projects in the sense that cultural projects have a strong dimension of inclusion and social promotion and must also be in line with the growing

demands of environmental awareness.

The study, for which 180 interviews were conducted, provides, in support of CCI, the basis for a regional action that could start at the end of 2021. The players interviewed share the following convictions:

- **Art and culture are strong levers for cooperation**, hence the need for an ambitious and innovative project for the IOC. There is a sincere desire to get to know each other better and to work together, as well as to reflect on what connects the people of these island areas.
- **French is the unifying language.**
- **Exchanges must necessarily be** in a free and creative way, in order to go beyond the identity dimension and allow people to express themselves.
- **The Indian Ocean space is porous, by nature and by necessity.** The African continent and the islands of the IOC must naturally increase their cooperation. This space of cooperation can constitute a critical size for the development of regional markets.
- **The Indian Ocean space is seen as an opportunity to create and develop**, through cooperation, artistic singularities that contribute to their distinction at the international level.

CCI IN A NUTSHELL...

\$2.25 trillion
global revenue generated by CCIs.
For the Africa and Middle East region,
revenues generated reach \$58 billion, or 1.1% of GDP.

\$200 billion
total digital sales attributable to CCIs.
Cultural and creative works, whether music,
film or literature, drive the digital economy.

\$4.2 billion
revenue generated by the informal CCI sector in Africa.
About 550,000 people work in the informal CCI sector.

29.5 million
number of CCI-related jobs worldwide,
of which 2.4 million are in Africa and the Middle East.

15-29 years old
age group with a relative presence
in the CCI sector, recognised as a young,
open and dynamic sector.
Entrepreneurship therein is also very present.
In addition, young people are important consumers of cultural
and creative products through digital technology.

Source:
Ernst&Young,
A very cultural world, 2015

If it is first and foremost about creation and innovation, production of knowledge or teaching of know-how, it is also about creating jobs, income and new skills both in the creative sectors and in the technical sectors of support, promotion, dissemination or supervision. It is also the touristic attractiveness of our region that is involved. It therefore appears necessary to structure these sectors at regional level. This is the purpose of a regional project, the first one specifically dedicated to culture as a lever for growth.

The IOC plays a fundamental role here in two ways: it further roots Indianoceanica in the mental map of the peoples and it brings real added value by promoting the regional identity, know-how and creativity of cultural actors as a vector for dialogue

and a springboard for growth. This initiative could also be a complementary response to a human-centred - and thus genuinely inclusive - economic recovery.

PRIX INDIANOCÉANIE 2021

The 3rd edition of the Prix Indianocéanie was announced on 15 December 2020 at a regional press conference held by videoconference. The IOC Secretary-General, live from the organisation's headquarters in Ebène, launched this new edition of the prize, in the presence of the Francophonie Ambassador, Léonard Emile Ognimba, in Antananarivo and Béatrice Sigismeau, Vice-President of the Departmental Council of La Réunion, from St-Denis.

As a reminder, the Prix Indianocéanie follows a call to write texts in French, with no imposed genre, on contemporary issues specific to the Indianoceanic region. The call for writing is open until 30 June 2021. This is a 100% digital edition: the submission of texts is made exclusively online on the IOC website.

A jury appointed by the Member States will be responsible for picking the winning entry of the Prix Indianocéanie. The members of the jury are Ms Dominique Dambreville, Director of the culture, reading and environment centre in Le Brûlé, La Réunion Island; Ms Tsiky Rakotomavo, Director of Cultural Identity at the Ministry of Communication and Culture of Madagascar; Ms Kumari Issur, Associate Professor at the French Studies Department of the University of Mauritius; Ms Zitabella Labiche, Head of Assessments and National Coordinator of the Diploma of French Language Studies at the Ministry of Education of Seychelles; and Mr Saïd El-Anis Mohamed Djohar, a Comorian writer. The selected submission will be printed in a 500-copy run and sold in bookshops. The winner will receive a prize of €1,000.

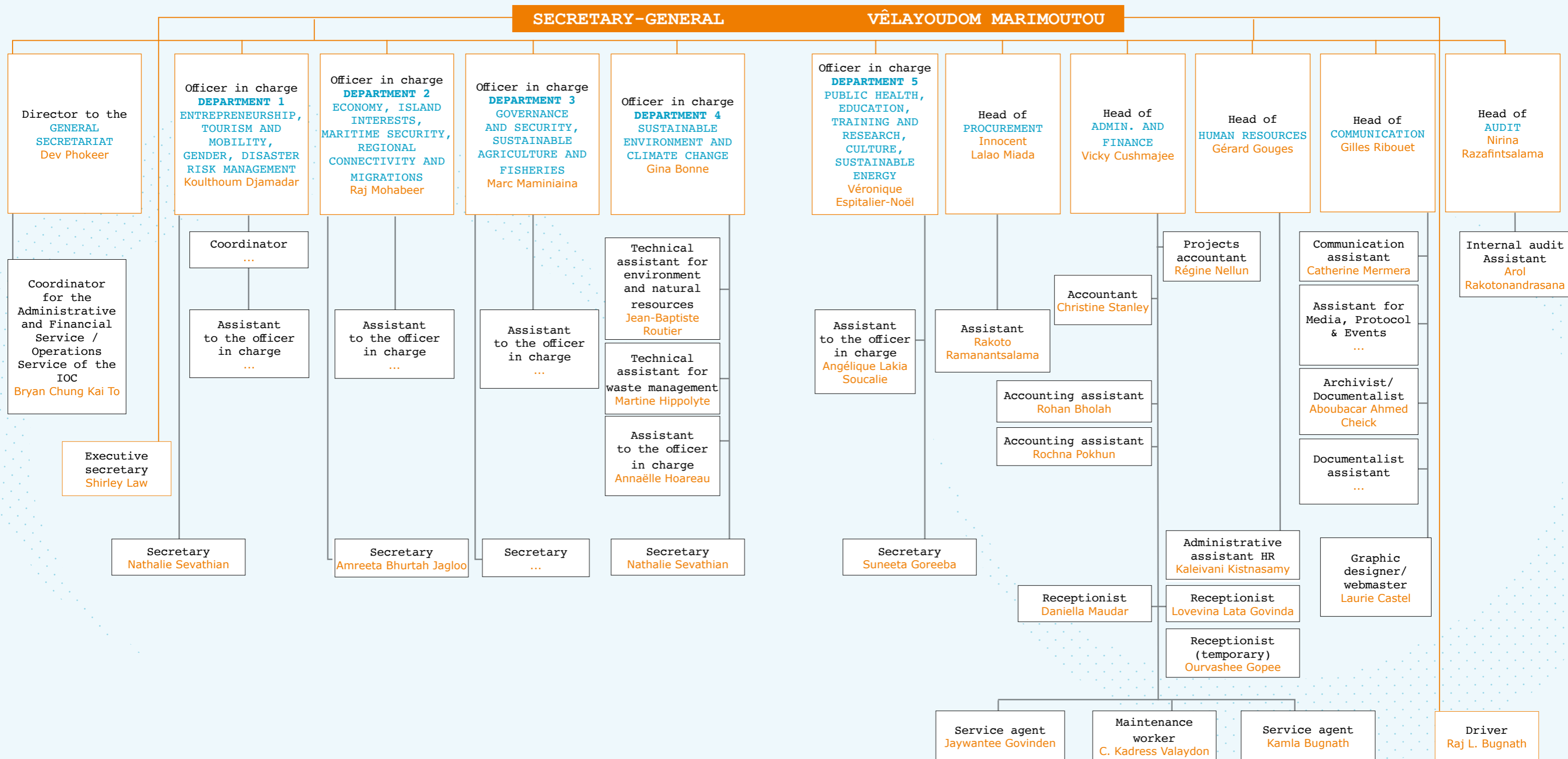


The first two editions of the Prix Indianocéanie rewarded late Jean-Pierre Haga Andriamampandry for his novel *Le jumeau* and Davina Ittoo for *Misère*.

ADMINISTRATION
AND FINANCE

ORGANISATION CHART

December 2020



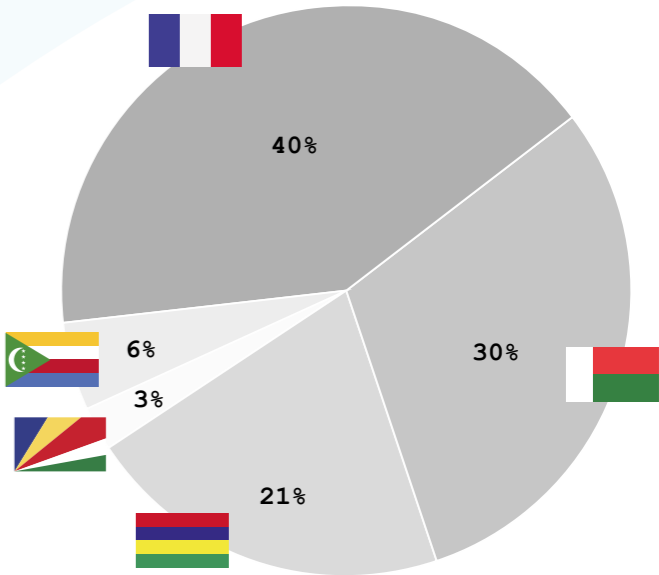
OPERATING ITEMS CASH FLOW IN EUROS

Inflow	Amount	Inflows
Member States' contributions to the IOC budget	1,220,566	57%
China's grants, GCF administrative support, VAT refund, disposal of Fixed Asset	122,179	6%
Exchange rate gains	147,233	7%
Costs incurred by Member States for providing staff	202,400	9%
Contributions for the disposal of the IOC building	335,268	16%
Project contributions for common expenses	127,099	6%
	2,154,744	

Outflows		Outflows
Salaries and related costs	1,034,332	55%
Operating costs	75,472	4%
Travel costs (IOC General Secretariat)	27,064	2%
Audit of accounts	26,075	1%
External communication	13,232	0%
Fixed assets and depreciation	4,346	0%
IOC contribution to projects	6,658	1%
Travel costs (PLOs)	14,797	0%
Exceptional expenditure	597	0%
Ineligible expenditure	-	0%
Rental of building made available for IOC	335,268	18%
Common expenses of projects	127,099	7%
Salaries of staff made available by Member States	202,400	11%
	1,867,340	
Net cash flow from operating items	287,404	

STATUTORY CONTRIBUTION BY COUNTRY

Distribution key	2020 Budget (€)
Comoros	62,059
France/Réunion	507,093
Madagascar	367,643
Mauritius	253,547
Seychelles	30,224
Total	1,220,566








REVENUE CATEGORIES IN EUROS

Activity	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Member States' contributions to the IOC budget	572,023	636,745	752,057	806,800	933,043	967,985	950,970	1,007,458	1,220,566
Costs incurred by Member States for providing staff	175,000	190,000	0	0	0	0	150,000	112,500	202,400
Contributions for the disposal of the IOC headquarters	164,000	290,000	13,637	0	0	0	335,100	251,325	335,268
Projects' contributions to common expenses	64,000	50,800	72,349	77,258	45,934	67,117	95,788	19,110	127,099
Earned interests	850	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others (China grants, EU US -subsidies - INCA)	29,400	0	93,699	157,218	89,075	384,748	1,763,574	838	122,179
Exchange rate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	147,233
TOTAL	1,005,273	1,167,545	931,742	1,041,275	1,068,053	1,419,850	3,295,432	1,391,231	2,154,744

COUNTRY IMPACT 2020

This section indicates the amounts spent for the benefit of each of the IOC member countries on projects that were being implemented in 2020.

The amounts shown here are only a partial reflection of the IOC's actual contribution to its member countries. Indeed, the intrinsic value of the actions implemented and their beneficial effects for the countries, in the medium and long term, cannot be reduced to this expenditure alone. Finally, many actions that cannot be considered from a strictly budgetary point of view are not listed below.

€	Projet	 Comoros	 France/Réunion	 Madagascar	 Mauritius	 Seychelles	Others
	IOC	195,985	115,948	247,257	540,208	87,053	
	INCA SUBSIDY	2,481	0	804	54,243	804	2,557
	EDF - MASE	94,050	957	1,143,833	196,104	485,939	108,798
	EDF - ENERGIES	100,000	0	350,000	450,000	350,000	0
	EDF - ENERGIES (sub)	0	0	0	9,638	0	33,067
	EDF - BIODIVERSITY	0	0	235,661	53,077	0	0
	EDF - TCF	0	20,000	0	83,402	18,000	0
	EDF - ECOFISH	11,743	51,729	0	0	0	11,891
	AFD - RSIE3	981,252	226,671	596,738	539,800	424,920	0
	AFD - BRIO	16,801	1,992	9,692	11,632	2,501	12,375
	Green Climate Funds (GCF)	0	0	0	0	2,047	50,262
	Total in EUR	1,401,526	646,342	2,601,319	2,044,091	1,371,399	295,621

\$	Projet	Comoros	France/Réunion	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles	Others
	WB - SWIOFISH1	0	26,329	31,648	185,816	0	190,878
	WB - SWIOFISH2	80,059	198,023	101,243	281,854	50,156	467,721
	African development bank	3,587	0	0	2,183	0	0
	IFAD/FAO - PRESAN	0	0	174,198	0	0	0
	Total in USD	83,646	224,352	307,088	469,854	50,156	658,600
	GRAND TOTAL IN EUR	1,471,231	833,302	2,857,226	2,435,636	1,413,196	844,454



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**Indian Ocean Commission
General Secretariat**

3rd floor - Blue Tower

Rue de l'Institut - Ebene, Mauritius

T.: (+230) 402 61 00

communication@coi-ioc.org

www.commissionoceanindien.org



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