

The Development of the Western Indian Ocean Regional Ocean Governance Strategy

RATIONALE AND PROCESS

THE MANDATE

In response to decisions of the African Environment Ministers (AMCEN) and the Nairobi Convention Conference of the Parties, the Nairobi Convention is preparing a Western Indian Ocean Regional Governance Strategy (ROGS) through a participatory process. The overall goal of the ROGs is to enhance regional cooperation on all ocean activities.

A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

Representatives of the Parties to the Nairobi Convention (NC), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the Indian Ocean Commission, private sector and civil society actors working together as a regional Task Force (TF) have established a broad consensus on the priority actions and key institutional arrangements to ensure that the regional environmental, social and economic targets are addressed by the ROGS.

ROADMAP

The draft ROGS, due in the third quarter of 2023, will be reviewed by the parties to the NC, the Regional Economic Commissions and other key stakeholders who will provide inputs directly or through an online portal and at events such as the Marine Regions Forum (Tanzania, November, 2023).

THE 11TH COP

The ROGS TF expects the focal points of the NC to work towards a decision on the ROGS at the next COP to be held in the first Quarter of 1 2024 to: (i) take note of the ROGS and its recommendations; and (ii) decide on a follow up mechanism for the institutional arrangements as recommended in the ROGS, and prioritise the required activities accordingly.

KEY LINKAGES

The ROGS is an instrument of the AMCEN which is managed by the NC. It is expected to inform the development of an ocean governance strategy in other African marine areas, such as in the area of the Abidjan Convention (eastern Atlantic from Morocco to South Africa).

The ROGS 'reporting' and review channels will be: (i) directly to the NC COP; (ii) to the AMCEN via the NC; and (iii) to the AMCEN via the RECs and the countries.

OBJECTIVE OF THE ROGS

"To develop a regional mechanism through which the key regional stakeholders can cooperate in a coherent and structured manner to achieve the vision of a peaceful stable Western Indian Ocean region with an environmentally healthy ocean and a blue economy based on the protection and conservation of natural resources that delivers sustainable benefits with due regard to equity and wellbeing."

(Source: Task Force)

PRINCIPLES

The ROGS is founded on the principles of the African Union and the UN Charter. It is grounded in the Law of the Sea Convention and the commitments of countries under various international conventions. It is focused on the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular on SDG 14, Life below Water. The ROGS draws on global principles (such as the precautionary principle and polluter pays) and best practices applied through the lens of key African and regional policies, such as Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy and those on the blue economy.

WHAT IS IN THE ROGS?

- Mandate, principles, and objective
- The state of the WIO environment and blue economy
- The regional priority activities – what, how, who?
- Building enhanced regional cooperation arrangements
- Structuring a regional blue finance architecture
- Monitoring and future adjustment of the ROGS

STATUS AND TRENDS OF THE WIO

The ROGS provides a consensus overview of the state of the WIO – the ocean environment, the blue economy, including the social and economic trends, and the existing regional ocean governance arrangements.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The ROGS groups the regional priorities in four ‘clusters’ to facilitate synergies between sectors and regional institutions that have a narrow mandate.

The **CLUSTERS** are:

Maritime Security CLUSTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Maritime security and enforcement (including port state measures) • Alignment of institutions on a 'regional' ABNJ/ BBNJ
Blue Economy CLUSTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Sustainable Tourism • Building Sustainable fisheries • Managing offshore energy (extractive/ renewable) • Managing deep sea resources • Ports, trade and maritime connectivity • Development of a circular blue economy • Other emerging areas (IT, marine biotech, telecommunications)
Environment and Natural Resources CLUSTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation to and Mitigation of Climate Change • Prevention, reduction, and control of marine plastic pollution • Prevention, reduction, and control of nutrient and chemical pollution (including oil spills) • Conservation and rehabilitation of coral reef ecosystems • Conservation of biodiversity • Regional marine spatial planning and marine protected areas networks
Knowledge Management and Science CLUSTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific advice in support the above clusters (including on ecosystem-based approaches, on fisheries and on monitoring of climate change) • Human capacity development • Transfer of technology • Regional scientific cooperation • Consensus scientific advice on international oceans affairs • Science to governance (institutional arrangements) • Public awareness and access to science (including for private sector applications)

CONSENSUS, LEADERSHIP, RESOURCING

For each of the priorities identified in the clusters, the ROGS presents a consensus description of the priority and provides a consensus on the actions required to move towards regional and global targets, such as those set out in SDG14. The ROGS considers the regional institutional leadership arrangements for the different priorities and identifies the potential sources of financing for each set of activities. Given the scale and diversity of the challenges, the actions required for some priorities are less well-defined. The ROGS establishes a framework for detailed regional stakeholder dialogues on these more complex priorities.

These dialogues would take place during the implementation phase of the ROGS, as directed by the Contracting Parties. Numerous cross-cutting linkages among the priorities are embedded in the ROGS. These include finance, technology transfer, climate change, disadvantaged communities, gender issues and human capacity development.

INSTITUTIONS AND FINANCING

Enhanced institutional cooperation. There is an emerging stakeholder consensus that reinforced institutional cooperation arrangements at the regional level are required to implement the ROGS, to inform decisions, to drive consensus on regional policies, and to provide a framework for a WIO blue finance architecture at a regional scale.

There is broad Task Force support for the following arrangements to provide for formal, but flexible relationships on oceans between the Regional Economic Commissions (COMESA, EAC, IGAD, SADC), the Indian Ocean Commission, the Nairobi Convention, and other key regional institutions. The proposed arrangements are designed to reinforce, redeploy or realign existing processes in a more effective manner, rather than creating new institutions, except where critical gaps are apparent. Subject to the COP decision, dialogues on the proposed institutional arrangements, as outlined below, would be initiated by the NC Secretariat in close association with the other regional organizations.

HIGH-LEVEL PLATFORMS

Three 'high-level' platforms are envisaged to provide consensus regional advice: (i) on policy, (ii) on a blue finance pipeline; and (iii) on technical issues in the major ocean sectors and across ocean thematic areas.

I) The OCEAN POLICY PLATFORM (OPP) would comprise of a core group of high-level officials representing the four RECs (COMESA, EAC, IGAD, and SADC), the Indian Ocean Commission, and the Nairobi Convention. The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU) Secretariat are envisaged as assuring a secretariat function on matters in their area of competence (such as maritime security and blue economy) while the NC Secretariat would provide support on matters pertaining to the ocean environment. For Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU) Secretariat are envisaged as assuring a secretariat function on matters in their area of competence (such as maritime security and blue economy) while the NC Secretariat would provide support on matters pertaining to the ocean environment. Reporting would be through the RECs to the countries and through the NC to the parties to the Convention and to the AMCEN.

II) The WIO BLUE FINANCE PLATFORM (BFP) is envisaged as an open-ended forum tasked with bridging the financing gap between the regional demand for blue finance and affordable supply of blue and green funding. The BFP would compile demand for finance into a regional blue portfolio to provide the scale required to access major funding (e.g. climate funds), leverage different sources of finance, create synergies and reduce transaction costs. It would build a blue taxonomy to link the investments to SDGs, to net zero targets and to construct a common set of indicators across investment categories and the systems for tracking and verifying performance.

The role of the Blue Finance Platform would be to facilitate access to blue finance by convening funding agencies, spreading risk, reducing transaction costs, providing common means of assessment across sectors and countries and to provide the scale required to attract major funding sources over the medium term.

TASKS AND ACTORS IN THE BLUE FINANCE PLATFORM

The tasks of the Blue Finance Platform are to:

- Compile the demand for blue investment at regional scale
- Structure the blue investments as a financing portfolio to achieve regional economies of scale
- Align or match the funding sources with investments
- Leverage grant financing to prepare investments or investment portfolios
- Prepare a long term blue financing indicative programme
- Build the blue taxonomy to align investments with the SDGs

The key actors in the BFP include:

- Countries of the region and the RECs
- Major sources of blue (and green) finance, including sources of grant finance, such as the GEF, FFEM, and bilateral partners (e.g., GIZ, Sida, AFD, 'blue' philanthropic foundations)
- Sources of loan finance, notably International Financial Institutions (AfDB, WB, EIB, IFAD, others)
- Potential debt financing managers (e.g., Paris Club/ IMF) global funds (e.g.) climate funds specialised instruments, e.g. blue carbon finance, GFDRR and other major funds
- Institutional investors (private sector) including impact funds, blue bond 'buyers' and others
- Regional commercial (investment) banks (co-finance for private sector)
- National blue funds (e.g. SeyCATT, ProAzul, BIOFUND) and development banks
- WIO private sector investors

III) The TECHNICAL PLATFORM would group four cluster platforms (see above) to provide collective science-based consensus advice to policy makers and to report on the environmental, social and economic status and trends of the WIO, in particular in relation to the investments undertaken in advancing healthy oceans and the wellbeing of the coastal and dependent populations and the ocean economies.

REGIONAL OCEAN ACCOUNTS

The monitoring and evaluation of the ROGS are expected to use the ocean accounting framework. This framework will draw on national ocean accounts and progressively build regional ocean accounts, initially for priority sectors and indicators of ocean health, the blue economy, the wellbeing of coastal peoples and the effectiveness of ocean governance. The ocean accounts framework will also provide common metrics for funding agencies and avoid duplication in project-by-project monitoring requirements.

STAKEHOLDER INPUTS

Prior to the submission of the draft ROGs to the NC parties and the RECs for final inputs, there will be an extended period of stakeholder consultation, including structured Technical Dialogues with key stakeholders and presentation of the draft ROGS at a session of the Marine Region's Forum in Tanzania in November, 2023.