TRAFFIC

March 2023

ADDRESSING THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN THE

SOUTHWEST INDIAN OCEAN

SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CITES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS
Voilà Hotel, Bagatelle,
Mauritius
16-20 January 2023

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Delegates at the Sub-regional Workshop on Addressing the Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Southwest Indian Ocean at Voilà Hotel Bagatelle, Mauritius on the 16th of January 2023. © IOC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Workshop background

The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) is an intergovernmental organisation promoting regional cooperation amongst islands of the Western Indian Ocean. Its Member States are comprised of the Union of Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and France for the Reunion Island. The 1984 Victoria Agreement sets out the general mission of the IOC in four areas of cooperation: (i) diplomacy; (ii) economy and trade; (iii) agriculture, marine fisheries, and conservation of resources and ecosystems; and (iv) culture, science, and education.

In each of these areas, as well as on emerging issues such as maritime security, health, and climate change, the IOC has carried out activities within the framework of projects financed by the donor community. In particular, the IOC has built up the capacity of its Member States to improve governance and expertise in the fields of fisheries, conservation of natural resources and maritime security.

TRAFFIC is a leading non-governmental organisation working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. TRAFFIC works in strategic partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at global level and operates in Southern Africa and the Southwest Indian Ocean region under the umbrella of a hosting agreement with the IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office.

SADC-TWIX (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange) is an online tool, managed by TRAFFIC on behalf of SADC Member States, to enhance co-ordination among law enforcement institutions that play a role in addressing the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT), with particular reference to the enforcement of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Building on previous SADC-TWIX initiatives, the IOC Secretariat in partnership with TRAFFIC organised a transnational multi-agency training, information exchange and consultation workshop between investigators and enforcement agency counterparts from the Indian Ocean Commission Member States. The Semi-Autonomous Region of Zanzibar was also an invited party due to its geographical relevance. Kenya and Djibouti were also invited as beneficiaries of the IOC-led Maritime Security Program (MASE) together with IOC Member States, all of which are signatories to the two Regional Agreements for the establishment of an Architecture for Maritime Security based on two pillars: (i) a regional mechanism for exchange and sharing of maritime information, and (ii) a regional mechanism for the coordination of operations at sea in the Western Indian Ocean. The aforementioned agreements aim to strengthen and develop national and regional capacities for the prevention of maritime crimes, smuggling, and contraband at sea. The two executive arms of the MASE Architecture established under these agreements are: the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center (RMIFC) headquartered in Madagascar, set up to help collect, fuse and analyze maritime crime information from the region and enable the identification of vessels of interest; and a Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC), headquartered in Seychelles.

The aim of the meeting organised jointly by the IOC Secretariat and TRAFFIC was to build sustainable collaborative networks among law enforcement institutions in the Southwest Indian Ocean and facilitate regular exchange of IWT information via the TWIX platforms and through the RMIFC and if need be, through the RCOC for inspection of suspected vessels involved. The meeting also allowed participating countries to discuss other pertinent law enforcement matters as they relate to IWT in the region.

More specifically, the objectives of the meeting were:

1. To provide an opportunity for enforcement agencies to meet their counterparts from the region and foster networking and collaboration as it relates to combating IWT.
2. To sensitise participants on IWT issues and the importance of information and data sharing.
3. To identify common challenges, knowledge gaps, and capacity building needs.
4. To build capacity on using TWIX resources and applications, in order to increase the volume of communications involving IOC Member States and other countries of the sub-region via the relevant TWIX networks.
5. To sensitise participants on the linkages between IWT and maritime crime and build knowledge around the Regional Architecture for Maritime Security in order to increase the volume of communications involving IOC Member States and other countries of the sub-region via the RMIFC and the RCOC.
6. To share insights, best practices, and lessons learnt regarding border controls, exchange of information and intelligence, cross-border law enforcement cooperation, joint operations, mutual legal assistance, *etc*.
7. To outline the main characteristics of a tentative subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap towards addressing IWT in the Southwest Indian Ocean.

The meeting was held in English and French, with live interpretation for both languages provided throughout.

1. Opening

Speakers. From left to right: Mr Adam Pires (TRAFFIC), Pr. Vêlayoudom Marimoutou (IOC), Mr Kevin Ruhomaun (Mauritius NPCS). © IOC

1.1. Remarks by the IOC Secretary General

The IOC Secretary General, Pr. Vêlayoudom Marimoutou, recalled in introduction that the Indian Ocean is one of 34 biodiversity hotspots in the world. The region's exceptional natural wealth attracts the transnational criminal networks that are behind wildlife trafficking. This very

lucrative criminal business poses a serious threat to biological diversity and undermines the livelihoods of local communities who depend on it. Countries of the sub-region need to act together on several fronts.

Pr. Vêlayoudom Marimoutou briefly mentioned the IOC's multi-faceted action for the preservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems, in particular through the promotion of the participation of local communities, the training of eco-guards, and the support to the scientific activities of national flora research entities. These efforts must be complemented in the future to demonstrate the tangible contribution of wild species to ecosystem health, economic development, and climate change mitigation.

The IOC also deploys many efforts on the security front, and it is largely on this ground that IWT must be combated. The IOC Secretary General called on States to strengthen legislative arsenals, repressive measures, and border surveillance efforts, with a view to dismantling the criminal networks. The regional maritime security architecture set up by the IOC may contribute in very concrete ways to advancing the fight against environmental crime, in close collaboration with national law enforcement agencies.

Pr. Vêlayoudom Marimoutou invited the participants to build on the IOC's experience and achievements, including those of ongoing projects, to enhance the fight against environmental crime. The IOC hopes to stimulate exchanges and drive collective action on these subjects as part of its new strategic development plan, in particular by strengthening programmatic linkages in the areas of biodiversity and maritime security.

1.2.   Remarks by the TRAFFIC Project Coordinator

Mr Adam Pires, Project Coordinator at TRAFFIC Southern Africa, started by recalling that TRAFFIC operates in Southern Africa and the Southwest Indian Ocean on the back of a hosting agreement with IUCN. Back in 2018, IUCN and the IOC Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which both organisations agreed to work together on wildlife trade in its legal and illegal dimensions.

Trade in wild species of fauna and flora is one of the world's most pressing conservation challenges, affecting hundreds of millions of people and thousands of wild species. The trafficking and unsustainable trade in wildlife commodities are causing unprecedented declines in some of the world's most charismatic, as well as some lesser-known, wildlife species. Against this backdrop, TRAFFIC works with enforcement agencies along supply chains to ensure that illegal wildlife trade is detected, identified, prevented, and prosecuted at every opportunity.

The Southwest Indian Ocean is no exception to these global trends. On the one hand, the sub-region is home to exceptional biodiversity of marine and terrestrial species, characterised by high rates of endemism. On the other hand, it is a key link in the wildlife trade route between Africa and Asia.

The criminal networks behind the illegal trade in wild species share an ability to circumvent law enforcement and override international borders. Experience shows that it takes a network to fight a network. This is why TRAFFIC is actively supporting the establishment of information exchange networks (called TWIXes) throughout the world – including SADC-TWIX, a network established in 2019 for SADC Member States. Mr Adam Pires encouraged participants to take the opportunity of this meeting to learn about and engage with the platform, among other

existing frameworks that may be leveraged to strengthen coordinated efforts against the illegal wildlife trade in the sub-region.

1.3. Remarks by the Director of Mauritius National Parks and Conservation Service

Mr Kevin Ruhomaun, Director of the Mauritius National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS), stressed that illegal wildlife trade is a serious and complex issue affecting the Southwest Indian Ocean in multiple ways, from the standpoint of biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, human health and security. Over the last few years, Mauritius authorities have identified a number of trends in illegal wildlife trade between the sub-region and Asian markets. Efforts to combat this phenomenon through capacity-building and sensitisation of law enforcement personnel were strengthened, which have seemingly been instrumental in bringing down trafficking rates for some species. However, new trends are constantly emerging, with regard to targeted species and concealment methods, and authorities find it difficult to keep up with them.

Mr Kevin Ruhomaun stressed that information needs to travel quickly so that law enforcement interventions can succeed and have an impact. Southwest Indian Ocean Island States are important maritime trade and transit hubs for commodities of all types. The illegal trade in wild species is 'big business', which not only threatens the health of ecosystems but undermines the reliability of legal supply chains and the ability of the region's ports to move commodities swiftly and securely. This is why countries of the region need to address these challenges jointly and find ways to detect and address wildlife trafficking much more efficiently.

2. Workshop objectives

Mr Damien Wolff, LEMUR CWC Project Manager at TRAFFIC Madagascar, presented on the workshop's objectives, grouped into three main areas:

Objective 1: Get to know each other and the issues we face
1. Foster networking and collaboration between enforcement agencies as it relates to combating IWT.
2. Reach a common understanding on IWT issues in the sub-region.
3. Identify common challenges, knowledge gaps, and capacity building needs.

Objective 2: Learn about ways in which we can collaborate further
1. Promote the exchange of information and data across the sub-region.
2. Build capacity on using TWIX resources and applications.
3. Share insights, best practices, and lessons learnt on detection techniques, border controls, cross-border law enforcement cooperation, exchange of information and intelligence, etc.

Objective 3: Imagine collective solutions
1. Outline the main characteristics of a tentative subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap towards addressing IWT in the Southwest Indian Ocean.
2. Increase the volume of communications via the RMIFC, the RCOC, and the relevant TWIX networks with a view to better addressing IWT.
3. Suggest new mechanisms, if relevant.

A minimum of four days – together with the participation of different audiences – was deemed necessary to achieve these ambitious objectives. Authorities from invited countries were therefore asked to designate participants along the following lines:

- Senior officials with a knowledge of their country's law enforcement policies and strategic orientations in the field of wildlife trade governance; and
- Key operational staff involved in enforcing the law, delivering permits, performing controls, monitoring the trade in wild species, and carrying out criminal investigations, among other responsibilities.

Objectives 1 and 3 were mainly addressed as part of Segment 1 of the meeting, held during Day 1 and Day 2. During this segment, the organisers and participants collaborated in setting the scene, better understanding the context, identifying the main gaps and challenges, and coming up with proposals for corrective actions and common strategies.

Objective 2 was addressed as part of Segment 2 of the meeting, held during Day 3 and Day 4. During this segment, technical focal points from TWIX participating countries were trained on how to use TWIX resources and tools, with a view to exchanging relevant information with their counterparts from other countries of the SADC region and beyond.

3. Attendance

© IOC

The workshop brought together more than 50 participants including law enforcement officials from all IOC Member States (Comoros, France (Réunion), Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles) and 5 out of 16 SADC Member States (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Tanzania – represented by the Semi-Autonomous Province of Zanzibar). Also attending were participants from Kenya and Djibouti. Participants included representatives from Wildlife and Forest authorities, Fisheries authorities, Police and Gendarmerie authorities, Customs authorities, Port authorities, and in some cases Military authorities (navy).

There were also representatives from the IOC Secretariat, regional maritime security centres, TRAFFIC Southern Africa, and TRAFFIC Europe. The full list of participants can be found in Annex III.

All participants were given an opportunity to introduce themselves prior to the commencement of the meeting.

4. Pre-workshop survey

A pre-workshop survey was circulated to all workshop participants in the weeks leading up to this event, via the [SurveyMonkey](#) platform. This survey was made available in English and French and consisted of 41 questions relating to the awareness around issues of illegal wildlife trade in the Southwest Indian Ocean sub-region, the regional co-ordination mechanisms (TWIX, RMIFC, RCOC) and the current needs around inter-agency communication about wildlife crimes. Participants were made aware that individual responses would be kept confidential and that the results of this survey would be shared during the live event. Responses in English and French were combined to analyse the results in a single dataset (i.e. responses were not disaggregated by language preference).

Ms Storme Viljoen, SADC-TWIX Project Manager at TRAFFIC Southern Africa, presented the results of the survey in two parts – one part during Segment 1: general questions, understanding of IWT and awareness of regional co-ordination mechanisms; and the other part during Segment 2: recap of general questions for new participants, and TWIX-specific questions.

A total of 33 responses were collected, with every invited country having submitted at least one response. It is important to note that not all questions were mandatory as they may not apply to all participants, thus responses for individual questions may be fewer than 33 responses. Responses represented workshop attendees from environmental ministries (including forestry and fisheries), customs, police and 'other', which included port authorities, defence forces and ministries of Foreign Affairs. Respondents highlighted that they were most looking forward to 1. learning about IWT, 2. sharing knowledge and best practices with law enforcement colleagues, 3. making new professional connections, 4. learning about challenges in other countries and 5. learning more about TWIX.

> **"I hope that at the end, I could build sustainable collaborative networks among law enforcement institutions in the SWIO region and facilitate regular exchange of IWT information via the TWIX platforms."**

When asked about whether respondents felt that they had adequate networks of colleagues within their country to do their job in combatting IWT, most answered "sometimes", but that these networks were not always effective (52%). However, 18% noted that these networks were not yet established, but are considered a priority effort. It is promising that no responses were received which indicated that establishing collaborative networks was not a priority. In terms of awareness of IWT issues in the SWIO region, most respondents said that they were "somewhat aware" (53%) or "not so aware" (24%). "Very aware" was the response for 12%, while "extremely aware" was the answer for 3%, and "not at all aware' was true for 6% of respondents (Table 1).

Table 1: How would you rate your knowledge of IWT in the Southwest Indian Ocean?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all aware	6.06%	2
Not so aware	24.24%	8
Somewhat aware	54.55%	18
Very aware	12.12%	4
Extremely aware	3.03%	1
TOTAL		33

When asked about the seriousness of IWT in their own countries, most respondents perceived this issue as either "somewhat serious" (36%) or "very serious" (33%) (Table 2). Interestingly, 18% were of the opinion that IWT was an "extremely serious" issue at the country level. When expanded to the regional scale, a similar pattern is seen, but more responses of "very serious" (47%) and "extremely serious" (25%) were observed (Table 3). The most commonly traded species included: corals, sea cucumbers, tortoises, turtles, timber and marine fisheries (multiple responses for each). In addition, the following taxa were highlighted: primates (monkeys, lemurs, galagos), elephant ivory, rhino horn, birds (parrots and yellow canaries), bird eggs, sharks and shark fins, orchids, geckos and lizards, giant clams, and coco de mer.

Table 2: Do you think that wildlife crimes are a serious issue in your country?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all serious	0.00%	0
Not so serious	12.12%	4
Somewhat serious	36.36%	12
Very serious	33.33%	11
Extremely serious	18.18%	6
TOTAL		33

Table 3: Do you think that IWT is a serious issue for the region?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all serious	3.13%	1
Not so serious	0.00%	0
Somewhat serious	25.00%	8
Very serious	46.88%	15
Extremely serious	25.00%	8
TOTAL		32

The integration of SWIO countries into wildlife strategies in the African continent was seen as "moderate" (50%), with "a little" being the next most common response (22%) (Table 4). In relation to national legislation relating to CITES and IWT, most respondents said that they were "somewhat aware" (42%) or "very aware" (33%). When asked about access to adequate resources (e.g. capacity building tools) to combat IWT, only 3% responded "yes" (Table 5). Ninety seven percent of respondents (all but one) stated that they would like to know about IWT and that it was important for their work. The remaining 3 percent agreed that they would like to know more, but with the caveat that they were more interested in IWT as it relates to their country rather than the region. Topics of interest most commonly cited (top 5) are as follows: smuggling methods, CITES obligations, approaches to IWT by other countries, information-sharing, and species identification (Table 6).

"The cooperation between countries of the Southwest Indian Ocean is still not sufficient in terms of combatting IWT"

Table 4: Do you think that the SWIO countries are well-integrated into wildlife strategies in the African continent?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None at all	3.13%	1
A little	21.88%	7
A moderate amount	50.00%	16
A lot	12.50%	4
A great deal	6.25%	2
Not sure	6.25%	2
TOTAL		32

Table 5: Do you feel that you have adequate resources (training guides, identification materials, capacity building events) to be able to carry out your duties relating to IWT?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I have access to all the resources I need	3.03%	1
No, but I feel confident that I can find these when I need them	33.33%	11
No, I can only sometimes find what I need	30.30%	10
No, the resources are inadequate	33.33%	11
TOTAL		33

Table 6: Which topics relating to IWT would you like to know more about?

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Species identification		63.64%	21
CITES obligations		72.73%	24
Animal welfare		33.33%	11
Prices and market dynamics		36.36%	12
Smuggling methods		84.85%	28
Rescue centres		33.33%	11
Crime scene forensics		45.45%	15
Financial crimes		39.39%	13
Other countries approaches to IWT		72.73%	24
Information-sharing		69.70%	23
Seizures data management		54.55%	18
Other	Responses	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 33			

Awareness of the regional bodies is shown in Figures 1-3. Key insights include that awareness of TWIX was at 45% prior to this workshop, with an additional 42% becoming aware after being invited to this event. For the RMIFC, approximately 42% of participants were aware prior to this workshop, with 9% becoming aware as a result of the workshop invitation. Forty eight percent were not aware of the RMIFC. A similar pattern is seen for awareness of the RCOC. In terms of how comfortable participants felt about finding their counterparts in all the represented countries, Seychelles, Comoros, and Mauritius were highlighted as countries that most participants feel comfortable contacting. Comments on this question suggest that participants did indeed feel comfortable interacting with colleagues from across the region, but that they

may not already have these contacts. What is also promising is that 94% of participants indicated that they believe their country could contribute more knowledge to the region (Table 7, "strongly agree" and "agree"). The remaining 6% indicated that they neither agreed not disagreed.

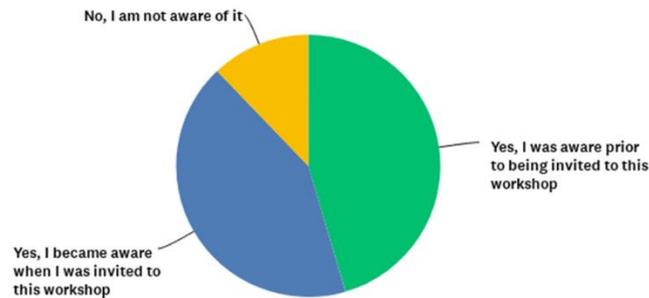*Figure 1: Are you aware of TWIX (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange), including SADC-TWIX, Eastern Africa-TWIX, or EU-TWIX?*
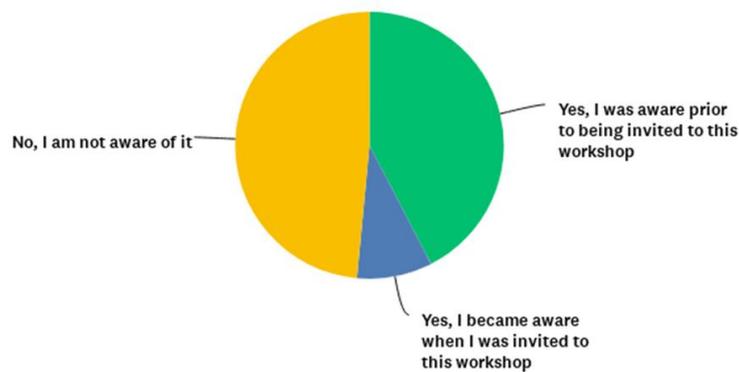

Figure 2: Are you aware of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC)?
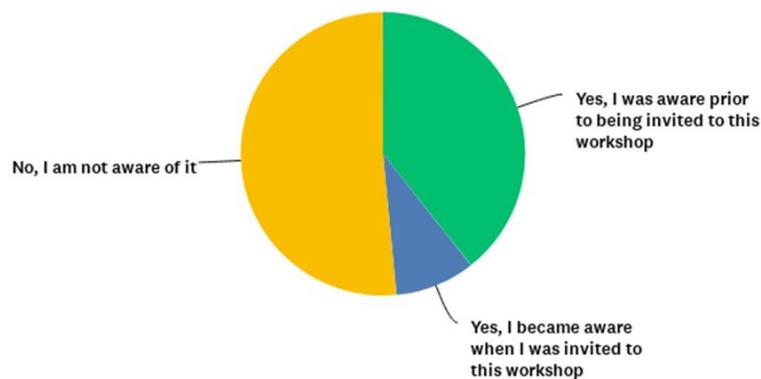
Figure 3: Are you aware of the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC)?

Table 7: Do you feel that your country could contribute more in terms of knowledge to the region?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
▼ Disagree	0.00%	0
▼ Neither agree nor disagree	6.06%	2
▼ Agree	63.64%	21
▼ Strongly agree	30.30%	10
TOTAL		33

The remaining questions dealt with TWIX-related matters and can be summarized with the following key insights:

- Most workshop attendees were not yet connected to a TWIX platform, with three participants indicating that they were not sure (it is important to note here that not all workshop participants are eligible to join a TWIX as these platforms are restricted to wildlife law enforcement and wildlife management authorities).
- There were no participants who indicated that they were not interested in joining a TWIX platform. The vast majority said that they would like to join, or that they had already joined. The remaining response (1 participant) selected "not sure".
- For the participants already connected to a platform, many indicated that they do not make use of it often (62%). While some participants make use of both the mailing list and website, there were also responses suggesting that only one part of the platform is regularly used (either the mailing list OR the website).
- Despite the high rate of non-usage of TWIX by officials who are connected (see above), 79% of respondents feel that being connected to a TWIX has many benefits, while an additional 7% note that while there are only a few benefits, these are important.
- Most users feel comfortable using TWIX, but some noted that they experience reservations about using TWIX because they do not understand how the mailing list works (6%), that they do not feel comfortable speaking in English (3%), or that they require approval from their hierarchy before sharing on TWIX (provided as a comment).
- Most users feel confident in using the TWIX systems (Table 8 and 9).

Table 8: How confident would you feel about using the TWIX mailing list?
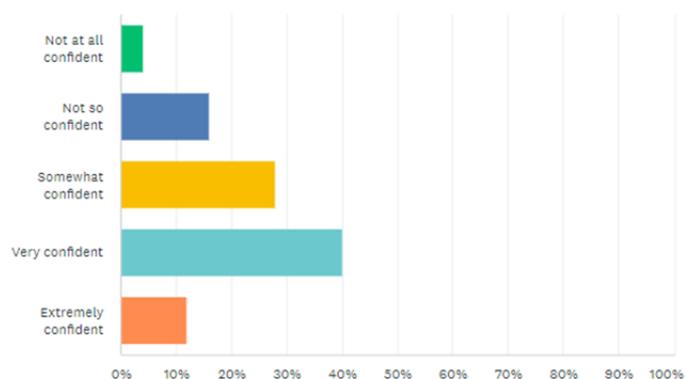
Table 9: Do you feel confident that you are able to use the TWIX website?
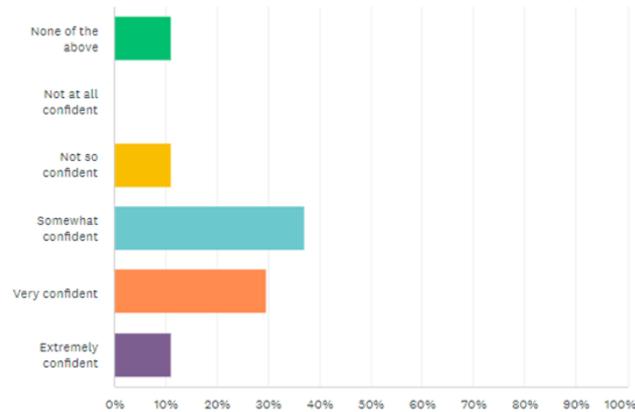
- Most respondents feel that being able to access seizures data from their own country (90%) and other countries (97%) would be useful. Other responses were "a little bit useful", and one dividual who indicated "not at all".
- Knowledge of wildlife legislation from neighbouring countries is not something that respondents felt they had good knowledge of, or that neighbours had good knowledge of legislation in other countries.
- The need for more communication in the TWIXes was agreed upon by 94% of respondents. Other responses were "not sure".
- Frequently cited types of information that would be useful for respondents were seizure alerts, alerts of new species/products in trade, alerts of new trade routes and concealment methods, and notification of new identification guides and training materials.
- When asked which of these types of information respondents would be willing to provide, common answers included seizure alerts, updates on ongoing cases and alerts of new species/products in trade.

In conclusion, 82% agreed that developing a regional framework for co-operation would be useful for supporting the existing regional agreements on maritime security in SWIO. Priority areas identified for inclusion in the prospective framework included: co-ordination of efforts, transnational and inter-agency communication, creation of standard operating procedures, access to IWT information and a framework for monitoring and evaluation of objectives. When asked what respondents were hoping to achieve from attending this workshop, the following points were highlighted:

1. Learning - from other countries, but also from technical experts
2. Free exchange of information and best practices
3. Building of "sustainable collaborative networks"
4. Adoption of a common strategy for SWIO
5. Identification of regional correspondents
6. Awareness of legal tools and understanding of legislation
7. Creation of effective resolutions
8. To give their experiences, and to bring lessons back home (rather than just receiving)

5. Presentation on wildlife trade trends and dynamics in the Southwest Indian Ocean

Ms Simone Louw, Project Support Officer at TRAFFIC Southern Africa, presented an overview of trade in CITES-listed marine and terrestrial species from the Southwest Indian Ocean between 2011 and 2021. The presentation included data on legal trade (based on annual CITES trade reports) as well as on illegal trade (based on seizure data[1] and trade discrepancy analyses[2] conducted by TRAFFIC).

LEGAL TRADE

As far as the legal trade is concerned, the data show that most direct exports of CITES-listed terrestrial taxa for the period 2011-2020 are from Madagascar. The next top exporter is Seychelles, followed by Mauritius and Comoros, each of whom is reported to export much smaller quantities. No direct exports of wild-sourced terrestrial taxa for commercial purposes are reported from Réunion.

Madagascar exports large quantities of CITES-listed species of geckos, chameleons, mantella frogs, palm trees, and aloes. All specimens belonging to the gecko, chameleon and mantella frog families are reported to be live individuals traded for the pet trade. For all three families, the USA is the top importer reported by Madagascar, followed by Japan, Hong Kong, and European countries.

Seychelles reports exporting specimens from the family of palms, and all of these specimens belong to the species *Lodoicea maldivica*, commonly known as coco de mer, sea coconut or double coconut palm. Hong Kong is the top importer of *Lodoicea maldivica*, receiving 97% of specimens in direct exports as reported by Seychelles between 2011-2020.

Mauritius reports exporting only taxa from the family of old-world monkeys, with all of these from the species *Macaca fascicularis* commonly known as long tailed macaque. The only importer for this species is the USA. There are discrepancies between importer and exporter-reported data, with the USA reporting imports of 2,800 individuals and Mauritius reporting exports of 700 individuals between 2011-2020. In addition, Mauritius representatives during the meeting mentioned the existence of a legal CITES trade in Aldabra giant tortoises (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*) through registered captive-breeding facilities, although this is not reflected in the country's latest reports to the CITES Secretariat.

Overall, countries of the sub-region are reporting very low levels of legal CITES trade in high value marine species such as sharks, sea cucumbers, shells, corals, and aquarium fish.

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[1] As reflected on the Wildlife Trade Information System (WiTIS), the global database created and administered by TRAFFIC to track illegal wildlife trade incidents.
[2] Trade Discrepancy Analysis is a tool to compare the export value reported by country A to country B with the import value reported by country B from country A for any given commodity. This method is used to calculate gaps between reported exports and imports, and relies on mirror statistics, based on the principle of double accounting in international trade statistics. Ideally, the value of the two trade statistics should only differ by the costs that occur when transporting goods from one country to another, referred to as CIF (cost, insurance, freight). The standard in international trade statistics is to report the export value exclusive of these costs and the import value inclusive of CIF. Standard practice is to add 10 per cent to the export value of all countries in a sample to account for differences in valuation. To perform the analyses whose findings were reported on during the meeting, TRAFFIC used trade data from the United Nations International Trade Statistics Database (UN Comtrade).

ILLEGAL TRADE

TRAFFIC presented data on seizures made in the sub-region between 2005 and 2020. These data were collected by TRAFFIC based on media reports and on information shared by law enforcement, but they may reflect a mere sample of all the seizures made by IOC countries during the reference period. Seizure numbers for each country include seizures made in that specific country as well as seizures made elsewhere but linked to that country (e.g. live tortoises originating from Madagascar but seized by law enforcement in another country).

TRAFFIC's dataset for the period shows 2 seizures for Comoros, 178 seizures for Madagascar, 24 seizures for Mauritius, 5 seizures for Réunion, 26 seizures for Seychelles, and 11 seizures for Zanzibar. The vast majority of seizures registered across all 6 jurisdictions are related to species of terrestrial wildlife:

- All seizures linked to **Comoros** in the TRAFFIC database were related to live tortoises originating from Madagascar. During the meeting, the representatives from Comoros mentioned additional seizures made by Comoros authorities in recent years linked to Malagasy rosewood, sea cucumbers, sea turtles, shells, and shark products (these incidents do not reflect in TRAFFIC's database but may be incorporated depending on the availability of seizure data).
- Most seizures linked to **Madagascar** were related to precious timber (mainly rosewood), live tortoises, live chameleons, live geckos, and live snakes. Significant seizures were also related to dead seahorses, dead sea cucumbers, and corals.
- Seizures linked to **Mauritius** were mainly related to precious timber (rosewood and sandalwood), live tortoises, live geckos, and live chameleons originating from Madagascar. A few incidents related to coral and giant clam shells were reported as well.
- Seizures linked to **Réunion** were mainly related to live tortoises and rosewood originating from Madagascar, as well as elephant ivory.
- Seizures linked to **Seychelles** were mainly related to marine species such as coral, giant clam shells, and shark fins. During the meeting, the representatives from Seychelles mentioned an additional incident linked to aquarium fish (this incident does not reflect in TRAFFIC's database but may be incorporated depending on the availability of seizure data). Seychelles representatives further informed that IWT instance have not led to court cases yet. The country has recently adopted an action plan for the conservation of sharks.
- Seizures linked to **Zanzibar** were mainly related to elephant ivory, Malagasy rosewood, and sea turtle products.

As is evident from the above, there is little seizure data and almost no legal CITES trade data regarding the trade in marine protected species from the region. Other methods may be used to assess the extent of this trade, including trade discrepancy analyses (TDA). Using the Comtrade database, TRAFFIC compared exports in selected marine protected species as reported by Customs authorities from IOC countries to the imports reported by Customs authorities of importing countries (mainly Hong Kong) for the same species. The findings seem to indicate that the sub-region is a major exporter of high value marine species while failing to report this trade adequately.

Ms Simone Louw presented an overview of trade in CITES-listed marine and terrestrial species from the Southwest Indian Ocean. © TRAFFIC

These commodities include shark fins, sea cucumbers, fish maws, and seahorses, among others. They are mostly traded in dry form to supply the upscale seafood market and the demand for traditional medicine products in Asia. Processing and drying facilities for these commodities are most often situated in source countries i.e. within the Southwest Indian Ocean – only rarely are they traded in frozen or fresh form. As a result, data shows that the most common way to trade the commodities is through containerized sea cargo.

Seventy species of sea cucumbers are believed to be currently found in trade, out of 1,250 species occurring worldwide. Out of these 70 species, only six have been afforded protection under the CITES Convention: three species belonging to the genus Holothuria were listed in CITES Appendix II in August 2019 (with a 12-month delay in implementation) while three additional species belonging to the genus Thelenota were listed in November 2022 (with a 18-month delayed implementation). This is to say that the trade in sea cucumbers is only partly regulated at the international level, and since very recently. Therefore, illegal trade in sea cucumbers is but a recent phenomenon dating back from August 2020, and so far restricted to two species occurring in the Southwest Indian Ocean (this figure will increase to four species once the 2022 CITES listing is enforced). Pre-2020 seizures of sea cucumbers would likely be linked to the use of unauthorised fishing equipment or to harvesting in marine protected areas.

Madagascar and Seychelles together account for almost 75% of all sea cucumbers harvested in Africa for the period 2012-2021.

- There are no records of legal CITES exports of sea cucumbers from **Madagascar** for the period between 2012 and 2021. Madagascar Customs have reported exports for a total of 350 tonnes over the same period.
- **Seychelles** only started reporting from 2018 onwards. Seychelles reported exports for 237 tonnes over the period 2018-2021, which is higher than the imports reported by Hong Kong for these years.
- There are no records of legal CITES exports of sea cucumbers from **Mauritius** for the period between 2012 and 2021. Mauritius Customs did not report sea cucumber exports over this

period either. However, Hong Kong reported sea cucumber imports from Mauritius for 53 tonnes between 2012 and 2021, valued at around USD2 million.

The situation with sharks has some similarity to that of sea cucumbers. Indeed, the most commonly traded shark species were only afforded international protection recently. Shark species were first listed on CITES in 2003 when the basking shark and whale shark were added to Appendix II. More species have been included over the years, mainly in 2013 and 2017. Despite these significant developments, almost 80% of all species of sharks and rays known to be caught in international trade had remained unaffected by CITES regulations. This changed in November 2022 when CITES State Parties voted to include 54 species of requiem sharks, six species of hammerhead sharks and 37 species of guitarfish on Appendix II (with a 12-month delay in implementation). In the future (as of November 2023), CITES export permits will be required for around 90 percent of all internationally traded species of sharks and rays.

Sharks are caught for a number of products – including their skin and liver oil. But the two main products that are driving the international shark trade are shark fins and shark meat. The value of shark fin trade is much higher than the value of shark meat trade. Shark fin can sometimes fetch up to USD400 per kg depending on the species. The shark trade is believed to be worth between 0.5 and 1 billion USD per year.

Madagascar and Kenya each account for 36% of shark fin exports from SWIO countries, while Mauritius and Seychelles respectively account for 13% and 12%. Hong Kong and Singapore are the top two importers of shark fins from the region. Shark fins are most commonly found in freight and containerized cargo (and less frequently in personal luggage and postal parcel) alongside other illegal products such as sea cucumbers, seahorses and fish maws. Additionally, shark fins are predominantly exported in the dried processed form (80% of total exports) as opposed to frozen (6%) or fresh fins (14%), which indicates the fins are undergoing processing within SWIO countries before export to Asia. There are high levels of under-reporting shark fin consignments from exporting countries where they may simply not be reported or the consignments are mis-declared as other commodities (e.g. dried fish). Export data for shark fins are typically very low, while destination countries report significant imports. This has been found to be linked to an incorrect use of HS codes and to a lack of capacity for the identification of CITES-listed shark products by law enforcement.

The demand in Asia for high value marine species is unabated and unlikely to diminish in the next few years. On the contrary, it is likely to keep expanding as the middle class in China and Southeast Asian nations continues to grow.

6. Presentation of the IOC's activities in the area of environmental governance, sustainable fisheries, law enforcement, and fight against transnational organised crime

Ms Gina Bonne, Head of Environment and Climate Change at the IOC Secretariat, reminded participants about the IOC's mission which is to support sustainable development for Southwest Indian Ocean nations, improve living conditions for populations, and preserve natural resources. The IOC promotes regional cooperation between Indian Ocean countries to address cross-border issues and achieve positive development outcomes.

At the same time, the IOC cooperates with countries of the wider SADC region and with a host of partner organisations (international and regional, both inter-governmental and private) in the

fields of environmental governance, sustainable fisheries, maritime security, and law enforcement. Ms. Gina Bonne briefly presented on four ongoing IOC programmes and projects in these areas:
- MASE programme: Maritime Security in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean
- ECOFISH programme
- PRSP: Regional Fisheries Surveillance Plan
- RECOS project: Building resilience through coastal ecosystems in the Indian Ocean

A lot can be drawn from these different programmes and projects to strengthen the fight against IWT in the sub-region, particularly when it comes to addressing the linkages between IUU fishing and the illegal harvest of nationally protected or CITES-listed marine species (e.g. sharks, sea cucumbers, seahorses) or the trade in related products (e.g. fish maws).

The main objective of the ECOFISH programme is to consolidate sustainable fishing practices while generating growth and livelihoods for the region. It includes three sub-objectives:
1. Improve regional policies and institutional frameworks to ensure more sustainable fisheries management while contributing to marine biodiversity and climate resilience.
2. Strengthen the region's capacity to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
3. Support concrete initiatives for the management and governance of inland and marine fisheries.

The Regional Fisheries Surveillance Plan (PRSP) pools resources from nine countries of the wider Indian Ocean region in order to share information and support national efforts in the fight against IUU fishing. Where the MASE programme encourages countries to share information and coordinate actions towards addressing a broad range of maritime crime including piracy, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, the PRSP looks specifically at IUU fishing. It connects national fisheries surveillance centres and enables the integration of data on vessels, fishing licences, catch reports, inspection reports, fishing offences, etc. Over the period 2014-2021, 864 fishing vessels were registered onto the regional VMS and 120 serious offences were prosecuted as part of the PRSP project. In future, the countries of the Southwest Indian Ocean may leverage the capacity acquired under the PRSP to better prevent, detect, and investigate the illegal trade in marine protected species.

Through the RECOS project, which seeks to improve the management of coastal ecosystems and implement pilot projects for their restoration, the IOC may provide further guidance on how to mainstream IWT prevention into coastal management and local livelihoods initiatives. This may be of particular interest to key coastal fisheries which depend on the health of reef ecosystems.

7. Presentation of the work of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center (RMIFC)

Captain RALAIARIVONY Harifidy Andrianjaka Alex, Director of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center (RMIFC), presented on the Center's activities. The RMIFC's mission is:
- To collect, fuse, and analyze maritime information;
- To establish regional Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA);
- To maintain a recognized maritime picture (RMP);

- To provide operationally significant maritime information to National Maritime Information Fusion Center (NMIFCs) and the Regional Coordination Operations Center (RCOC); and
- To produce reports and studies related to maritime safety and security as well as the maritime field in general.

The RMIFC works with 12 categories of events, of which a few may be used to designate IWT incidents depending on circumstances: IUU fishing (category #2), smuggling and contraband at sea (category #3), marine environment (category #12), or others (category #9). Data sources include open media sources; national maritime information networks; reports from participating countries via the International Liaison Officers; Automatic Identification System (AIS) satellite monitoring systems; international databases; voluntary community reports; reports by foreign armed forces and multilateral naval operations. The RMIFC also compiles data from NGO's including the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Blue Ventures, and Sea Shepherd, among others. Once collected, the data proceeding from all these sources are selected, collated, reconciled, and ultimately fused.

The aim of this work is to obtain actionable information. Weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly reports provide analyses based on the data, which seek to define trends, such as new hot spots, new routes, and new *modus operandi*. The RMIFC feeds this information back to National Maritime Information Fusion Centres for countries to execute maritime operations in their territorial waters or EEZ. The RMIFC may also share the information with the RCOC whenever these is a need to coordinate operations across countries.

Research and analyses are carried out by two operational cells within the RMIFC: one focusing on research and study; the other focusing on regional analysis. The RMIFC comprises three other operational cells, tasked with (i) Daily monitoring, exercises and training; (ii) Shipping engagement; and (iii) an *ad hoc* working group. The RMIFC produces for instance a list of Vessels of Interest (VOIs).

The RMIFC defines poaching as any activity which contravenes industry regulations outlined in marine living resources regulations of many states. The various infringements range from diving in restricted areas to exceeding the daily catch limit. The latter violation can refer to a minor offence that involves an excess of one or two animals by recreational divers or to a more serious offence that involves more than several hundred kilograms by highly organised poaching syndicates.

25 instances of poaching were recorded by the RMIFC in 2021 (compared to 15 in 2020 and 22 in 2019).

LOCATION	TYPE	CASES
India	Sea cucumber	01
Madagascar	Sea turtles and sea cucumber	06
South Africa	Abalone, crayfish and lobster	08
Oman	Shrimps and lobster	09
Mayotte	Turtle	01

In addition, the data collected and fused by the RMIFC reflects several recent incidents linked to IWT, including:
- Seizure of a shipment of ivory, rhino horn, pangolin scales and other animal parts worth an estimated USD18 million, made on 10 July 2022 by Malaysian authorities
- Seizure of 63 containers of ebony timber (Diospyros spp.) in Pemba Port, Mozambique on 27 July 2022, before export to China
- Consignments of black coral (volumes and dates to be defined)

8. Presentation of the work of the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC)

Captain Sam Gontier, Director of the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC), presented on the mission and activities of the RCOC. The RCOC is one of two regional centres along with the RMIFC established under the Maritime Security (MASE) programme. The RCOC oversees an exceptionally busy maritime space covering 28 million square kilometres for information sharing purposes and 14 million square kilometres for operations, including maritime routes of strategic importance linking Europe and Africa to the Middle East and Asia. Approximately 5,000 ships are thought to transit through this zone at any given point in time. It is estimated that 80% of the global maritime trade in oil uses these routes.

The RCOC's mission is to provide assistance and logistical support to regional coordinated operations at sea with a view to addressing any foreseeable threat within the area of interest, including:
1. Maritime piracy
2. Organised crime and illegal acts at sea
3. Search and rescue operations
4. Protection of marine environment
5. Restoring safety and security of navigation
6. Protection of underwater sites of cultural value
7. Cooperation in the event of natural or environmental disasters
8. Assistance in the exercise of State towards vessels flying their flag or flying no flag

The RCOC also aims to strengthen individual and institutional capacities, facilitate cooperation between States, and promote cooperation with maritime agencies. The RCOC comprises four cells: operational; support to operations; capacity-building; and legal & cooperation.

A coordinated operation is triggered either when one State party cannot respond alone to a foreseeable threat, or when a foreseeable threat affects the collective interest of several State parties. A total of 16 surface assets (vessels) and 4 aerial assets (aircrafts) are made available to the RCOC by State parties for the needs of coordinated operations at sea. Since its creation in 2018, the RCOC has monitored a total of 108 vessels of interest, including 78 fishing vessels, 14 cargo ships and 5 tankers.

As a result of the monitoring and coordinated operations, RCOC has been able to confirm the findings of research analyses conducted by the RMIFC on illegal activities and recognise current maritime threats and challenges. The centre's actions have boosted monitoring, control, and surveillance strategies within the region in addition to providing potential deterrent effects on offenders. In addition to its current activities, there are plans to include the coordination of preventive patrolling operations within the RCOC's missions.

9. Presentation on trade in wildlife products between Madagascar and South-East Asia

Ms Cynthia Ratsimbazafy, Voices for Diversity (VfD) Project Manager at TRAFFIC Madagascar, presented on the dynamics of the illegal wildlife trade between Madagascar and Southeast Asia

and the potential role played by the IOC countries in this trade. Under the VfD project, TRAFFIC comprehensively documented the extent and dynamics of the legal and illegal trade in wildlife species between Madagascar (MG) and Southeast Asia (SEA). The study analyses species and commodities traded, trafficking methods, trade routes, seizures, prosecutions, and demand trends in destination countries. From 2000 to 2021, 121 seizures involving Madagascar were reported globally (including one in Réunion); all originated from Madagascar. Of these, 77 (64%) of the seizures took place in Madagascar. Significant seizures also took place in China, France, Mauritius, and Singapore.

Of the 121 seizures recorded by TRAFFIC, 144,478 individual items and an additional 1,218 kg were seized. The major commodities seized were timber (mostly *Dalbergia* species), with a total of 80,112 items of roundwood, sawn wood and wood NES (not elsewhere specified) items. Reptiles and amphibians also featured prominently, with 34,728 individual animals (dead, alive, and unknown) seized; a large proportion of these were endemic Malagasy tortoises, including at least 30,875 radiated tortoises, and smaller quantities of chameleons. A further 23,936 dead seahorses were seized.

Of the 121 seizures recorded globally, at least 36 seizures originating from Madagascar involved SEA countries. Half of these occurred in Madagascar itself, prior to being trafficked to their destinations, while another 12 seizures (33%) occurred in Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. All cases involved whole reptiles and amphibians, except 2 cases of *Dalbergia* roundwood. Radiated tortoises and other species of Malagasy tortoises (all CITES Appendix I and Critically Endangered) featured significantly in the seizure records. Close to 80% of the seized shipments transited through the IOC countries, before reaching the destination countries or the re-exporting countries.

The majority of incidents involved smuggling by air (89%); of these, 75% were found in personal baggage on passenger flights. This highlights how Madagascar's Ivato International Airport is a key location implicated in wildlife smuggling. Intelligence and targeted operations led to half of the total seizures, and routine inspection and X-ray inspections uncovered 25% of cases.

In at least six cases, tortoises were taped up or wrapped in diapers before being hidden in suitcases – a common smuggling method for live tortoises. There was another case where smugglers tried to prevent detection from scanning machines by taping electronic devices to the animals' bodies. In one case, radiated tortoises were hidden in a shipment of sea cucumbers on air freight, and in another case, concealed in a wooden model boat. Apart from two shipments of *Dalbergia* roundwood, all other Southeast Asia-implicated seizures involved whole reptiles and amphibians.

Of the 36 seizures involving Southeast Asia, a total of 35 people were arrested from all the seizures, and 27 were successfully convicted. Madagascar had the greatest number of successful convictions, and most of the suspects apprehended were Malagasy. However, not all suspects were arrested.

Overall, the following conclusions can be drawn from the study:
▪ IOC countries are important transit points for IWT from MG to SEA
▪ Inter-agency cooperation for IWT investigation and prosecution is yet to be strengthened
▪ There are capacity gaps within enforcement agencies responsible for passenger and luggage control at airports, particularly with respect to CITES regulations, species and quotas.
▪ Security checks at ports and airports need to be strengthened

10. Country presentations

Participants were given the opportunity to reflect on the main IWT trends and law enforcement challenges observed and experienced in their respective countries, and to present their findings to the rest of the group. The organisers shared specific guidelines for country presentations with participants ahead of the workshop to allow sufficient time for data collection and inter-agency discussions at national level. Participants were encouraged to work on their presentations as country teams.

In particular, participants were asked to reflect on:
- The main wildlife commodities traded from their country (as country of origin) and through their country (as country of transit) over the last 10 years i.e., from 2012 to 2021;
- The main characteristics of maritime trade-based IWT in their country;
- Their country's priorities when it comes to combating IWT;
- Their country's legislation and regulations relating to IWT;
- The main challenges faced by their country's authorities when it comes to combating IWT;
- Their country's most critical needs in terms of capacity-building;
- Their country's experience and perception around cooperation with other countries from the Southwestern Indian Ocean region when it comes to combating IWT.

A breakout session was organised in the afternoon of Day 1 of the meeting to give participants a chance to further consolidate their presentations and incorporate new elements if needed. Each country was then allocated a 15-minute timeslot to present.

11. Presentation on common challenges, good practices, and opportunities for enhanced cross-border cooperation

Based on country presentations, a number of common challenges (hereunder grouped in four thematic areas) were identified by participants:

Legislation
- Absence of legislation/regulation specifically related to CITES – KM, MU, TZ[3]
- Legal framework poorly understood by practitioners – KM, TZ

Data
- Lack of centralized seizures database and/or maintenance thereof – KM, MG, SC
- Insufficient and scattered data – KM, MG
- Lack of export data on trade in CITES species – concerns all countries

Detection and identification
- Limited capabilities to conduct proactive intelligence-based investigations – MU, MG, SC
- Limited capabilities to detect and inspect private aircraft/vessels – SC, MU
- Limited capacity for the identification of seized specimens – KM, MU, TZ

Management of seized specimens
- Absence of quarantine centres – KM, MU
- Difficulties in repatriating seized specimens – KM, MG

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[3] Country codes in this section are as follows: KM refers to Union of Comoros, MG to Madagascar, MU to Mauritius, FR to France (Réunion), SC to Seychelles, and TZ to Tanzania (Zanzibar).

These and many more common challenges were also identified as part of the pre-workshop survey (see section 4 above).

In addition to the above, many participants believe that countries should aim to strengthen frameworks for inter-agency coordination and information-sharing at national level. In most countries, there are no guidelines on which entity should prosecute which type of offence. Lack of communication and conflicts of competence between entities within countries are also proving challenging under the MASE programme. It appears these aspects need to be clarified across the board when it comes to law enforcement.

12. Presentation of SADC-TWIX and other TWIX networks: resources and functionality

An introduction to TWIX, using SADC-TWIX as the key example, was provided by Ms Storme Viljoen, SADC-TWIX Project Manager at TRAFFIC Southern Africa. Video productions of TWIX can be viewed in English (https://vimeo.com/374892074/777ab1f430) and French (https://vimeo.com/439297068/821ce5bf67).

This introduction included an explanation of the history and creation of the TWIX concept and the subsequent launching of the TWIX platforms in Europe (EU-TWIX, launched in 2005) and the African TWIXes (AFRICA-TWIX, launched in 2016; SADC-TWIX in 2019; and Eastern Africa-TWIX in2020). The two components of the TWIX platforms, mailing list and website, were outlined and an explanation of the TWIX structure was given, such as who is eligible to join a TWIX, the nomination of agency focal points and guidelines for use of the mailing list. A full explanation on the use of the website, including live demonstration was provided in Segment 2 only (see section 19).

13. Discussion on a subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap

During the morning of Day 2, participants reflected on the common challenges previously identified and discussed what should be the key objectives and priorities for joint action at the sub-regional level.

Participants decided to focus on the following four priority areas:
1. Information-sharing
2. Capacity building and awareness raising
3. Co-ordination of efforts and investigations
4. Revamping and harmonization of legislation

The group was then split in multi-country teams to identify key actions and targets for each priority area. The outcome of these discussions is a 3-page document outlining ideas put forward by participants on how to collectively address the gaps and challenges (see Annex IV). The document may later serve as basis for the development of a regional cooperation framework on addressing IWT in the Southwest Indian Ocean.

14.   Field visit to the Mauritius Port

A field visit to the Mauritius Port was organised by the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) in the afternoon of Thursday 19 January as part of Segment 2. The objective of the field visit was to understand how a major commercial port operates and showcase good practices in relation to IWT detection techniques.

The visit started at the Mauritius Container Terminal, at the MRA Customs Examination Bay where containers are physically inspected by different authorities. The facility has a Coordinated Border Management Unit which comprises the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Fisheries, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the National Plant Protection Office (NPPO). Containers which are physically examined there are high risk containers which have either been profiled and targeted by the Compliance Unit after documentary checks or by other enforcement units of MRA Customs. Containers which are allocated red channel by the Risk Management Unit are automatically routed for Physical examination. Containers requiring clearance from other government agencies are also opened and inspected in the presence of MRA Customs. Around 50 containers including those requiring clearance from other agencies are physically examined on a daily basis. It is to be highlighted that all containers are scanned prior to physical inspection.

Workshop participants are escorted to the MRA Customs Cargo Scanning Facility which is found at the Mauritius Container Terminal, where containers are scanned. © TRAFFIC

Participants then proceeded to the Cargo Scanning Facility where containers are scanned. The scanning equipment is very useful in the detection of offences related to wrong declaration of goods, attempted revenue evasion, smuggled drugs, firearms, weapons of mass destruction and other offences. In the control room, MRA officers gave an overview of the whole scanning process starting from the profiling and targeting until the release of a container. Participants got the opportunity to witness the live scanning of a container and the techniques used during interpretation of scanned images to detect suspicious consignments. MRA officers also explained the material discrimination technology of the scanners which enables MRA Customs to identify organic, inorganic and metallic substances inside a container. It is to be noted that on average MRA Customs scans 125 containers per day and between 30,000 and 35,000 containers on a yearly basis.

The group was then taken to the Customs House, where a small collection of prohibited goods are displayed.

15.   Training session on shark fin identification

Ms Simone Louw, Project Support Officer at TRAFFIC Southern Africa, hosted a training session on shark fin identification based on the 3D shark fin toolkit developed by TRAFFIC.

The majority of the illegal trade in sharks and their products occurs due to exporting CITES-listed species without the relevant CITES permits. In order to effectively enforce the CITES listings of sharks, customs, and other law enforcement officials across the world need to be able to identify and intercept shark fin consignments that are traded without the relevant CITES permit.

The Shark fin ID Toolkit was developed specifically for frontline law enforcement officials such as Fisheries Control Officers and Customs officials who conduct inspections of shark fin consignments. It includes [pocketbooks](#) for quick and easy identification of shark fins, [comprehensive identification guides](#), and [3D printed and painted replica fins](#) of CITES-listed shark species. The 3D replica fins are a unique tool that can enhance capacity building workshops with frontline officials in major source and trading countries. Additionally, the combination of replica fins and QR codes that can be scanned by law enforcement in the field, and links to dedicated webpages for [further ID material,](#) allows for rapid and confident decision-making during shark fin inspections. The overall purpose of the toolkit is to improve the capacity of frontline officials to detect, deter and intercept illegal shark fin consignments before the point of export.

After a short presentation of the main visual and anatomical characteristics of pectoral, dorsal, and caudal fins from selected shark species, participants were divided into two groups. Each group was handed out a set of 3D printed and painted replica fins and asked to identify them based on the information contained in the pocketbook. Participants were given 30 minutes to identify the species behind each fin. Results were then discussed with the TRAFFIC trainer.

Participants were split into small groups to work on identifying a selection of shark fins using a set of 3D-replica shark fins as reference. © TRAFFIC

16. Fictional cross-border IWT case: how to make best use of the TWIX suite of tools (website and mailing list)

Workshop participants were divided into five groups, including a mix of countries and agencies, and given two fictional case studies to discuss. Groups were asked to answer questions for each case relating to how TWIX could be used to assist the fictional investigations, how sharing information could benefit others and scenarios where information should not be shared outside of the TWIX networks without prior consent of the supplying agency. Each group provided answers, questions and ideas on sticky notes, which were then collated into common themes and discussed in the plenary session, which was facilitated by Ms Magdalena Norwisz, TWIX Programme Officer. Fruitful discourse was maintained throughout the session with participants demonstrating good understanding of TWIX, based on earlier presentations by TWIX staff. Discussions also provided clarification on the unique function of TWIX as a complement to existing communication tools as well as it's associated restrictions (e.g. that no sensitive information is stored on the system).

Multi-country groups working on fictional case studies in order to explore how TWIX can be used to aid investigations and understand perspectives of different agencies. © TRAFFIC

Feedback from groups was collected on sticky notes and collated into key themes for discussion in the plenary session. © TRAFFIC

17. Discussion with TWIX users from Namibia and South Africa

Presentations and discussion on how seizures data are collected, stored and used, were hosted in a virtual session with SADC-TWIX users from South Africa (Data Fusion Centre, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment) and Namibia (Blue Rhino Task Force, Ministry of the Environment, Forestry and Tourism). Presentations by users from these countries highlighted the different mechanisms for managing seizures data as well as the benefits of having a centralized system for hosting and analysing these data to generate insights and highlight trends. Speakers also highlighted the challenges faced in setting up and maintaining such databases and suggested that SADC-TWIX provides a good system of data-sharing among the participating countries, and could serve an important role in regional data analysis if all countries contribute data.

18. SADC-TWIX website demonstration

A detailed, live demonstration of the SADC-TWIX website was provided, which served to give insight into any of the existing TWIX platforms as all are designed using the same architecture and contain many of the same resources, where appropriate. Workshop participants were able to see sections on identification tools, training materials, useful links, national legislation folders, and shared documents. The mailing list archive was only viewed for the last entry (sent by the SADC-TWIX Project Manager), and the seizures database was demonstrated in a slideshow of screenshots using a 'dummy' dataset. This was in accordance with the confidentiality rules set out in the 'Terms and Conditions' of SADC-TWIX membership, whereby information stored and shared via the TWIX platforms should not be made accessible to non-users without the prior consent of the supplying agency.

Other website resources, including where to access the lists of all users, focal points and their contact details, and the excel template for data submission were also demonstrated. Participants were urged to contribute new and updated materials to their respective TWIX websites, with particular reference made to current legislation documents of each country.

19. Q&A on the use of TWIX in the region

The workshop concluded with dedicated time for discussion on questions related to TWIX in the SWIO region. Key questions and associated responses were as follows:

- **How can workshop attendees join a TWIX network?** Where an agency is already connected to a TWIX network, attendees should approach their TWIX Focal Point who will communicate with the respective TWIX Project Manager to have new members added. When an agency is not yet part of a TWIX network, a representative may contact the TWIX Project Manager with a list of officials to be added, along with a nominated Focal Point. Agencies should follow any protocols required by their respective ministries if necessary, keeping in mind that the use of SADC-TWIX is supported by the Ministers for environment of all SADC Member countries (in accordance with the 2016-2021 SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy).
- **Why is TWIX structured at the regional level, rather than at the level of continents or a global TWIX?** Due to the existing regional agreements and co-ordination mechanisms, it was decided that the TWIX platforms would align to the regional economic

communities, and neighbouring states in certain cases. Global communication systems already exist, e.g. ENVIRONET, Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) and I24/7. These tools function differently to the TWIXes, however, as exchanges via ENVIRONET and I24/7 do not happen in real time, and not all agencies have access to CEN (only Customs). Links are made between the TWIXes when necessary (for example, when a given European agency intercepts a shipment which has originated from Africa).

- **Are the TWIXes operational 24/7?** As the TWIX platforms are online platforms, which comprise an email-based mailing list and website, users are able to access all of the TWIX resources and send messages on the mailing list at any time. The TWIX staff are available to support users during normal business hours, but users are able to interact with each other at any stage.

- **Can Réunion be part of EU-TWIX and SADC-TWIX?** Réunion is already connected to EU-TWIX, but may also benefit from, and be able to contribute to other TWIX platforms due to the geographical proximity of Réunion to other SWIO countries. At present, only Member States of SADC are entitled to join SADC-TWIX, but the possibility of an invitation being extended to Réunion may be explored once the SADC-TWIX Advisory Body is established.

The session concluded with a discussion on next steps to achieve the identified objectives of this workshop. Participants already connected to a TWIX platform were encouraged to make use of the TWIX mailing lists and websites, and to request training from TWIX staff if needed. As the last remaining SADC Member State without registered users on a TWIX platform, representatives from Comoros were strongly encouraged to nominate users, and were enthusiastic and positive in response. Agencies that would like to join a TWIX platform (e.g., Mauritius National Parks and Conservation Service), were given direction on how to do so. Once users are added to a TWIX system, this should be followed up with training, either in person or virtually with the relevant TWIX Project Manager or using the TWIX guideline documents made available. Internal discussions should be had among TWIX users and their respective hierarchies within an agency to ensure that users feel confident sharing information as appropriate so that information exchange is prioritised and acknowledged positively. Finally, TWIX users were encouraged to initiate contact with their network by posting on the mailing lists to introduce themselves, to ask questions or to share updates. Only by engaging in communication can the TWIX systems be successful in assisting law enforcement to build sustainable collaborative networks to combat IWT in SWIO and beyond.

20. Closing remarks by the IOC Secretariat

In her closing remarks, Ms Gina Bonne, Head of Environment and Climate Change at the IOC Secretariat, emphasised the importance of looking at these issues collectively and with a coordinated approach. The IOC Secretariat is here to assist and facilitate the dialogue between Member States in that regard.

Discussions during the meeting showed the many linkages between IWT issues and maritime security. Maritime surveillance and law enforcement remain a significant challenge in the Southwest Indian Ocean as a result of the extensive maritime space. Countries should collaborate to find creative solutions across the most relevant sectors, including the aviation sector.

The SADC-TWIX network is a useful resource and an opportunity for IOC countries and their law enforcement agencies to communicate more, and better. The value of this network also lies in

its regional reach. Through SADC-TWIX, law enforcement authorities from IOC Member States will be able to build bridges with their counterparts in SADC countries. This ensures that data can reach a significant number of partners, thereby maximising the potential impact of the information that is exchanged.

The IOC will inform national authorities about the main points that were discussed during this meeting. A meeting report will be shared with the IOC Council of Ministers.

21. Vision going forward

Main take-aways and action points:
1. Support Comoros in joining the SADC-TWIX network.
2. Share the outcome of the meeting with national authorities of IOC Member States.
3. Discuss further to identify possible entry points and opportunities to enhance anti-IWT efforts through existing IOC projects and programmes (MASE, ECOFISH, PRSP, etc).
4. Follow up on the main suggestions made by participants as part of the proposed outline for a regional cooperation framework on addressing IWT in the Southwest Indian Ocean.
5. Identify emerging challenges and new funding opportunities to address them.
6. Develop a proposal for a memorandum of understanding between the IOC Secretariat and TRAFFIC, for approval by each party's governing entities.
7. Integrate IWT detection efforts within other programmes focusing on port security e.g. UNODC Container Control Programme.

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ANNEX I: Workshop agenda

Segment 1 : Policy-Makers..

Day 1: Monday 16 January

Time		Activity	Speaker	Objective of the session
08h00	**1.**	**Registration of participants**		
08h30	2.	Opening statements • Welcome from the Indian Ocean Commission Secretariat • Welcome from TRAFFIC • Welcome from Mauritius authorities (60 min)	IOC Secretariat TRAFFIC Mauritius authorities	
09h30	3.	Presentation of workshop objectives and agenda (15 min)	TRAFFIC	
09h45	4.	Round of introductions (15 min)	All	
10h00	5.	Introduction to wildlife trade in the Southwest Indian Ocean: overview of wildlife trade trends and dynamics in the region (encompassing both legal and illegal trade) (30-40 min)	TRAFFIC	Foster a common understanding of wildlife trade issues in the region.
10h30	**6.**	**Group picture** Followed by coffee break (15 min)		If the weather allows, we will take the group picture outside the hotel's main entrance.
10h45	7.	Presentation of the IOC's activities in the area of environmental governance, sustainable fisheries, law enforcement, and fight against transnational organised crime. (30 min)	IOC Secretariat	
11h15	1.	Maritime Security in the Southwest Indian Ocean: presentation of the work of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center (RMIFC) and Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) (20 min)	RMIFC and RCOC	
11h35	2.	Plenary discussion on maritime crime and illegalities in the fisheries sector affecting protected species (30 min)	IOC Secretariat	
12h05	3.	Introduction to financial crime as it relates to IWT	TRAFFIC	

Time		Activity	Speaker	Note
		(25 min)		
12h30	11.	**Lunch**		Lunch will be served at the hotel's restaurant
14h00	12.	Presentation of the main findings of the TRAFFIC study on trade in wildlife products between Madagascar and South-East Asia (20 min)	TRAFFIC	Identify key trends relating to the transit of Malagasy wildlife through IOC countries, en route to Asian markets
14h20	13.	*Breakout session*: Participants will be split per country to reflect on the following aspects: - IWT trends - Legal and enforcement challenges - Knowledge and capacity gaps - Experience with cross-border cooperation (40 min)	Each team may appoint a moderator to facilitate the discussion (if needed)	Foster interagency communication and exchange of experiences and insights at country level (*pre-workshop preparation by Customs and CITES MAs required*)
15h00	14.	Country presentations: reports back to the group (15 min per country)	Each country team will need to appoint a speaker for the presentation	Identify the main IWT trends and law enforcement challenges in each country.
15h30	15.	**Coffee break**		
15h45	16.	Reports back (continued)		Same as above.
17h00	17.	Wrap-up / End of Day 1	TRAFFIC	

Day 2: Tuesday 17 January

Time		Activity	Speaker	Objective of the session
08h30	1.	**Recap of the previous day**	TRAFFIC	
08h45	2.	Report back on common challenges, good practices, and opportunities for enhanced cross-border cooperation (20 min)	TRAFFIC	Summarise inputs from Day 1 on similarities across countries and opportunities for enhanced cross-border cooperation.
09h05	3.	Feedback on pre-workshop survey, followed by a plenary discussion. (40 min)	TRAFFIC	Collectively discuss opportunities for enhanced cross-border cooperation.
09h45	4.	Video presentation of **TWIX** (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange) (15 min)	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	
10h00	5.	Introduction to SADC-TWIX and other TWIX networks	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	

Time		Activity	Speaker	Objective of the session
		(30 min)		
10h30	6.	**Coffee break**		
10h45	7.	Introduction to the concept of a subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap, followed by a plenary discussion to identify key objectives and outcomes. (60 min)	IOC Secretariat	Identify the key objectives and outcomes of a tentative subregional framework and/or roadmap.
11h45	8.	*Breakout session*: Participants will be split in multi-country teams to identify key action and priority targets for each objective/outcome of the tentative subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap. (45 min)	Each team may appoint a moderator to facilitate the discussion (if needed)	Identify key action and priority targets for each objective/ outcome of the tentative subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap.
12h30	9.	**Lunch**		
14h00	10.	Reports back to the group (10 min per team) and consolidation of inputs into one joint document. (60 min)	Each multi-country team will need to appoint a speaker for the reports back	
15h00	11.	Circulation of the draft subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap, for discussion. (30 min)	IOC Secretariat TRAFFIC	
15h30	12.	**Coffee break / Group picture**		
15h45	13.	*Breakout session* (same teams as before): Each team will work on identifying milestones and timelines for each priority action. (30 min)	Each team may appoint a moderator to facilitate the discussion (if needed)	Identify milestones and timelines for each priority action.
16h15	14.	Report back to the group (10 min per group) and consolidation of inputs into one joint document. (60 min)	Each multi-country team will need to appoint a speaker for the reports back	
17h15	15.	Closing remarks by the IOC Secretariat (10 min)	IOC Secretariat	
17h25	16.	Wrap-up and closing remarks	TRAFFIC	

Segment 2 : TWIX Focal Points..

Day 1: Thursday 19 January

Time		Activity	Speaker	Objective of the session
08h00	1.	**Registration of participants**		

08h30	2.	Opening statements • Welcome from the Indian Ocean Commission Secretariat • Welcome from TRAFFIC • Welcome from Mauritius authorities	IOC Secretariat TRAFFIC Mauritius Authorities	
09h30	3.	Presentation of workshop objectives and agenda (15 min)	TRAFFIC	
09h45	4.	Round of introductions (15 min)	All	
10h00	5.	Introduction to wildlife trade in the Southwest Indian Ocean: overview of wildlife trade trends and dynamics in the region (encompassing both legal and illegal trade) (30-40 min)	TRAFFIC	Foster a common understanding of IWT issues in the region.
10h30	**6.**	**Coffee break (group photo)**		
10h45	7.	Overview of TWIX: resources and functionality (30 min)	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	
11h15	8.	Report back on the pre-workshop questionnaire regarding perceptions of IWT and use of TWIX in the region (45min)	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	
12h00	9.	Preparation for field trip (30 min)	TRAFFIC	
12h30	**10.**	**Lunch**		
13h45	11.	**PLEASE NOTE: We will be departing from Voila Hotel reception at 13h45** Field visit to the Mauritius free port. This will include 3D shark fin training.	MU authorities, TRAFFIC	Showcase IWT detection techniques and good practices.
17h30	12.	Transport back to the hotel		

Day 4: Friday 20 January

Time		Activity	Speaker	Objective of the session
09h00	**1.**	**Recap of the previous day**	**TRAFFIC**	
09h15	2.	*Breakout session.* Participants will be split in multi-country teams to work on a fictional cross-border IWT case. (45 min)	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	Identify cooperation needs and the required steps to move investigations forward.
10h00	3.	Continuation of fictional exercise: how to make best use of the TWIX suite of tools (website and mailing list). (30 min)	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	Leverage the TWIX networks to address the cooperation needs arising from the IWT case.
10h30	**4.**	**Coffee break**		

10h45	5.	Reports back and discussion on the fictional exercise. (45 min)	All	
11h30	6.	Zoom discussion with TWIX users from other SADC countries, Namibia and South Africa (60 min)	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	Exchange good practices and lessons learnt on wildlife seizures database management.
12h30	**7.**	**Lunch**		
14h00	8.	SADC-TWIX website demonstration (30 min)	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	
14h30	9.	Q&A on the use of TWIX in the region (including needs assessment, app discussion and barrier/benefit analysis) (30 min)	TRAFFIC (TWIX team)	Open discussion
15h00	**10.**	**Coffee break**		
15h15	11.	Introduction to the tentative subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap on addressing IWT in the Southwest Indian Ocean. (30 min)	IOC Secretariat TRAFFIC	Inform TWIX focal points of the outcome of discussions under Segment 1.
15h45	12.	Plenary discussion on the subregional framework for cooperation and/or roadmap. (30 min)	All	Identify entry points for TWIX within the framework and/or roadmap.
16h15	13.	Workshop assessment questionnaire (30 min)		This will be done through SurveyMonkey.
16h45	14.	Closing remarks by the IOC Secretariat (10 min)	IOC Secretariat	
16h55	15.	Wrap-up and closing remarks	TRAFFIC	

Mesdames, Messieurs,

J'ai plaisir à vous accueillir ce matin à l'ouverture d'une semaine d'atelier sur la lutte contre le trafic d'espèces sauvages avec la collaboration de l'ONG TRAFFIC et la Communauté de développement d'Afrique australe (SADC) et le soutien de l'Union européenne à travers notre programme régional de sécurité maritime (MASE) et le Département d'Etat américain.

Cette rencontre régionale se tient au moment opportun, soit quelques semaines après la Convention sur le commerce international des espèces de faune et de flore sauvages menacées d'extinction et la Convention sur la diversité biologique qui ont été l'occasion d'obtenir de nouveaux engagements pour la biodiversité et la lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages.

L'initiative régionale portée par la SADC et l'ONG TRAFFIC est complémentaire des actions de la COI pour la préservation et la gestion durable des écosystèmes marins et côtiers et pour la sécurité. En effet, l'Indianocéanie, qui est l'un des 34 points chauds de la biodiversité mondiale, aiguise les appétits de réseaux transnationaux qui alimentent le trafic d'espèces naturelles. Entre 2018 et 2021, quelques 21 000 tortues endémiques de Madagascar ont été saisies dans la Grande Ile. Ailleurs, c'étaient des cargaisons de bois précieux. Si on élargit à notre grande région de l'Afrique orientale et australe, la liste se rallonge très vite avec les défenses d'éléphants, des animaux sauvages, des espèces florales et marines comme les ailerons de requin.

Disons les choses comme elles sont : ce dont nous parlons, c'est de criminalité transnationale. Et cette filière criminelle qui menace la diversité biologique autant que les communautés locales est lucrative générant des revenus illicites estimés entre 7 et 23 milliards de dollars annuellement, ce qui en fait la quatrième plus importante filière de la criminalité transnationale.

Pour éviter que nos écosystèmes, nos communautés et nos économies ne souffrent davantage de ces activités illégales, il est nécessaire d'agir ensemble, sur plusieurs fronts. Cela passe par le renforcement des mécanismes nationaux, régionaux et aussi locaux de gouvernance des milieux naturels. Il faut renforcer les arsenaux législatifs, inscrire clairement des mesures répressives et les appliquer, améliorer la surveillance aux frontières, démanteler les réseaux et aussi démontrer la contribution concrète des espèces animales et végétales sauvages à la diversité biologique, à nos traditions, à nos économies, à l'atténuation des effets du changement climatique ou encore à l'attractivité de nos territoires.

Du côté de la COI, nous avons mis en œuvre plusieurs cycles de projets pour nos îles et les Etats côtiers de l'Afrique orientale en faveur des objectifs de développement durable n°14 et n°15 sur la biodiversité marine et terrestre. Nos actions ont permis, entre autres, de mobiliser les communautés locales dans la préservation, la gestion et la surveillance d'espaces naturels, de soutenir des actions de restauration côtière en adoptant une approche globale des crêtes aux récifs, de documenter la biodiversité de nos pays en appuyant les herbiers nationaux ou encore de former des éco-gardes.

A ces actions, nombreuses et diversifiées pour la biodiversité, s'ajoute la mise en place d'une architecture régionale de sécurité maritime qui mobilise nos Etats membres ainsi que le Kenya

et Djibouti depuis 2018. Ce mécanisme régional de coopération pour la sécurité est unique en Afrique. Il repose sur deux accords régionaux qui identifie la lutte contre le trafic des espèces naturels comme l'une des principaux crimes maritimes car le trafic passe effectivement par la mer, notamment entre notre zone africaine et la péninsule arabique et l'Asie.

Concrètement, la COI, avec le soutien de l'Union européenne, a facilité l'installation et l'opérationnalisation des Centres régionaux de fusion d'information maritime à Madagascar et de coordination opérationnelle aux Seychelles. Ces deux centres régionaux de sécurité maritime travaillent en étroite collaboration avec les centres nationaux, les autres centres d'Afrique orientale et d'Asie, jusqu'au bassin occidental du Pacifique, et avec les missions navals et pourvoyeurs extérieurs de sécurité, notamment la mission EUNAVFOR Atalanta de l'Union européenne.

Ce dispositif régional assure à la fois une surveillance en identifiant les comportements suspects des navires, une intelligence par du partage, de la fusion et de l'analyse d'informations et il assure aussi une présence en mer avec des contrôles, des missions conjointes et coordonnées. L'architecture régionale de sécurité maritime est donc de nature à contribuer très concrètement au combat contre la criminalité environnementale en plus des agences nationales chargées de l'application de la loi. C'est un mécanisme de coopération qui fait ses preuves, qui suscite l'intérêt et se renforce grâce à de nombreux partenariats et qui, vraisemblablement, devrait s'élargir à d'autres pays dans le cadre du programme MASE 2.0. suite à la manifestation d'intérêt du Mozambique et de la Namibie pour notre coopération régionale en sécurité maritime. La prochaine phase du programme MASE, qui est en cours d'instruction auprès de l'Union européenne et pour lequel la COI a un mandat de ses Etats membres, devra notamment nous amener plus loin dans la fluidification de la circulation et le partage des informations, dans la rapidité de mobilisation des moyens matériels, techniques et humains pour intervenir et aussi dans le traitement judiciaire des infractions et crimes en mer.

A cet égard, cet atelier sera aussi l'occasion d'échanger sur les moyens concrets de capitaliser sur les expériences de la COI et des autres partenaires, sur nos acquis et projets en cours pour lutter efficacement contre la criminalité environnementale.

Permettez-moi un dernier mot pour remercier l'ONG TRAFFIC et l'équipe du projet TWIX-SADC pour leur collaboration avec nos services de la COI. Le Secrétariat général de la COI portera une grande attention aux conclusions et recommandations de notre rencontre qui nous permettra aussi d'alimenter nos actions en cours et la programmation des nouvelles actions de la COI en lien avec son nouveau plan de développement stratégique, notamment dans les domaines de la biodiversité et de la sécurité maritime.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

ANNEX III: List of participants

	Country	Title	Surname	First name	Entity	Position	Email address
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ANNEX IV: Proposed outline for a regional cooperation framework on addressing IWT in the Southwest Indian Ocean

Note: The below suggestions were made by participants based on the premise that 'short term' refers to a period of less than 1 year, 'medium term' to a period of time within 3 years, and 'long term' to a period of time exceeding 3 years.

1. Share information

Short term:
- Establish a working group between the IOC Secretariat, the two regional centres (RMIFC and RCOC), and TRAFFIC (incl. TWIX) to specifically look at information sharing possibilities and identify ways in which countries may work together moving forward.
- Participating countries to encourage and ensure good communication between RMIFC liaison officers and each country's CITES Management Authority, in order to facilitate cross-border information-sharing related to wildlife trade through the RMIFC.
- Clarify the RMIFC's role in terms of data collection and data sharing.
- RMIFC to circulate with countries a monthly update on IWT incidents, which should also be shared on the TWIX networks.
- Seek membership to the relevant TWIX network for all countries as well as for the IOC Secretariat, and encourage RMIFC and RCOC liaisons officers to register as TWIX users.
- Encourage countries to submit seizures data to the relevant TWIX network, and to seek assistance with this where needed (training is available from TWIX staff to assist with seizures data management and submission for the CITES Annual Illegal Trade Report).

Medium term:
- Quantitatively assess IWT in the sub-region and clarify IWT dynamics and trends. Develop an action plan based on this research.
- Develop regional guidance on data collection standards & rules to support countries towards establishing better practices in this area. These guidelines would aim to identify the types of data owners and stakeholders, types of data sources, types of information to be collected (e.g. What type of information should be collected for SADC-TWIX and what type of data for the RMIFC? Are these identical?), checks and controls, filters, standards for information-sharing with international organisations and partners, among other aspects.
- Train all TWIX focal points and TWIX users from the region on how to use TWIX resources and tools.

Long term:
- Each participating country to consider establishing a specific national database on IWT, where relevant.
- Involve universities and research outlets in the collection and analysis of data.
- Promote new partnerships with scientific institutions and research outlets.

2. Build capacity and raise awareness

2.1. Build capacity

<u>Short term:</u>
- Develop a list of officials and/or experts who have capacity in specific areas (e.g. species identification, forensics etc.) These lists would be maintained on the TWIX platforms (some already exist but will need to be further developed and kept up to date). Engagement from subject matter experts should be encouraged and facilitated where possible.

<u>Medium term:</u>
- Develop reporting protocols for seizure events to ensure law enforcement do not only report seizures, but also the circumstances surrounding IWT incidents e.g. origin of specimens, modus operandi, sales price, etc.
- Analyse trends, set up risk indicators and red flags, and feedback this information to law enforcement officers to enhance detection efforts. Where relevant, these should be shared timeously through the existing communication mechanisms (e.g. TWIX).
- Develop a specialised regional training module on IWT law enforcement.
- Build capacity of law enforcement for the identification, rescue, and rehabilitation of seized specimens, using workshops, online training and exchange programmes (Note: online trainings are already conducted via the TWIX platforms. Attendance and content creation at the TWIX events should be encouraged).

2.2. Raise awareness

<u>Medium term:</u>
- Develop sensitisation material on protected species aimed at the general public, including information on the offences/penalties associated with IWT.
- Engage airlines and airport stakeholders towards developing targeted advocacy initiatives on IWT for passengers, airline staff, and airport-based law enforcement. The IOC Secretariat suggests leveraging the existing partnership (i.e. working committee) with national flag carriers to explore the possibility of promoting specific airline work on IWT. Support should also be sought from civil aviation authorities to ensure uptake of awareness campaigns by/in airports.
- Build, co-ordinate and reinforce existing networks and work with other private sector associations e.g. regional port association, Cap Business (private sector representative body), among others.

3. Co-ordinate efforts and investigations

3.1. Inter-agency coordination at national level

<u>Medium term:</u>
- Countries to consider setting up coordinated border management units at national level, where such units do not currently exist, to improve processes for the inspection of imports and exports and increase IWT detection rates. These efforts should seek strong linkages the National Maritime Information Sharing Centres, already established or in the process of being established.

- Develop guidance on how to set up such coordinated border management units, based on experience of countries from the region and beyond. Consider developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) based on success stories, good practices, and lessons learnt.

3.2. Cross border coordination

Medium term:
- Consider establishing a permanent unit or platform to provide technical support to countries for investigations and prosecutions i.e. somewhat similar to what is planned for the next phase of the MASE programme.
- Leverage the existing SADC protocol on Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) in criminal matters to enhance cooperation in the field of prosecutions and judicial proceedings.
- Encourage bilateral coordination where relevant to facilitate the repatriation of specimens (no need to adopt a specific protocol). Explore the possibility to dovetail coordinated operations under the MASE programme with repatriation efforts where relevant.

4. Update and harmonise the legislation

Legislative reform is an objective for the medium and long term, although specific work should be undertaken in the short term as well. Participants agreed that harmonising national legislations would be a complex and lengthy endeavour.

Short term:
- Share legal experts within the region. Enable countries to have access to legal experts from each country, with support from the IOC Secretariat and TWIX. RMIFC and RCOC liaison officers may play a role in facilitating discussions between legal experts.
- Encourage countries to contribute to the digital repositories of national legislations on IWT, hosted in the TWIX websites. Countries should work with TWIX staff to ensure that all relevant legislation is available and up to date.

Medium term
- Establish a dedicated regional working group to identify gaps and challenges with the legislation and make suggestions on the way forward. Alternatively, broaden the mandate and composition of the existing regional working group on biodiversity, and consider inviting legal experts to present on gaps and challenges (via ad hoc meetings or a specific subgroup). Based on the recommendations of the regional working group, set up national working groups -where relevant- to identify issues with the legislation and regulation at national level.
- Look at CITES legislation in conjunction with the suite of legislation that addresses transnational organised crime and maritime crime. Produce country-specific legal assessments and gap analyses where necessary and relevant.

WORKING TO ENSURE THAT TRADE
IN WILD SPECIES IS LEGAL AND
SUSTAINABLE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF
THE PLANET AND PEOPLE

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