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#### LOT No. 1 SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND RESILIENCE

## Contribution of Sustainable Fisheries to the Blue Economy of the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region (E€OFISH programme) – Mid-Term Evaluation



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**Contribution of Sustainable Fisheries to the Blue Economy of the  
Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region (E€OFISH  
Programme) – Mid-Term Evaluation**

Request for Specific Contract No. SIEA-2018-9521

Final Report

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**DISCLAIMER**

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List of abbreviations

ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFRM	African Fisheries Reform Mechanism
AU-IBAR	Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources of the African Union
BE	Blue Economy
CA	Competent Authority
C&V	Communication and Visibility
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBFM	Community-Based Fisheries Management
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CPUE	Catch Per Unit of Effort
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
DMRO	Duly Mandated Regional Organizations
EA-SA-IO	Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (region)
EAC	Eastern Africa Community
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
EDF	European Development Fund
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
DWF	Distant Water Fishing
FAO CCRF	FAO Code of conduct for responsible fisheries
FAO IPOA- IUU	FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
FPAOI	Federation of Artisanal Fishermen of the Indian Ocean
FAO UN	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HOA	Horn of Africa
HR	Human Resources
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IO	Indian Ocean
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
IUU fishing	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
IPMU	Integrated Programme Management Unit
KAZA	Kavango and Zambezi
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LSF	Large Scale Fisheries
LTE	Long Term Expert
LT	Lake Tanganyika
LTA	Lake Tanganyika Association
LVFO	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization
LV	Lake Victoria
MCS	Monitoring Control and Surveillance
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
NFP	National Focal Point
NKE	Non Key Expert
NNF	Namibia Nature Foundation
OECD/DAC	Organization for the Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PE	Programme Estimate
PSMA	Port States Measures Agreement
PRSP	Projet Régional de Surveillance de Pêche
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
REC	Regional Economic Community
RFBs	Regional Fishery Bodies
RFMOs	Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
SADC	Southern African Development Bank
SEY	Seychelles

SDIS	Small Developing Island States
SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
SSF	Small Scale Fisheries
STE	Short Term Expert
SWIOC	South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission
TAT	Technical Assistance Team
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNECA	United Nation Economic Commission for Africa
VMS	Vessels Monitoring System
VG-SSF	FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication

## Executive Summary

The ECOFISH Programme addresses issues and challenges of both marine and inland fisheries in the Eastern Africa-Southern Africa and African Indian Ocean Countries (EA-SA-IO) region. Its total costs were estimated EUR 29, 4 million, and include funding, under the 11th EDF Regional Indicative Programme for the EA-SA-IO Region, to the amount of EUR 28 million over five years. The Programme builds on the results, lessons learned and best practices of the SmartFish Programme, funded under the 10th European Development Fund, and previous EU funded interventions targeting fisheries.

The Programme is structured in three results i.e.,

1. Regional policies and institutional frameworks are enhanced to secure more sustainable fisheries management and contribute to marine biodiversity and climate resilience.
2. Strengthened capacity to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the EA-SA-IO region.
3. Concrete fisheries management and governance initiatives in small-scale inland and marine fisheries are supported with the possibilities of replication at the regional level.

Implementation encompasses five Work Plans, 1: LVFO, 2: LTA, 3: Marine fisheries, 4: Call for proposals (for grant to support inland and marine SSF projects), and 5: cross-cutting contracts/ technical assistance/grants to member states competent authorities (CAs).

Following EU procedures and priorities, a mid-term evaluation was carried out over the second semester of 2022 by a team of two senior fisheries experts.

The MTE followed evaluation questions (EQs) provided in its ToR (to which the MTE team added a further two) for its findings, and, for its conclusions, the six standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, complemented by the EU criterion value added. Findings and conclusions were the basis of key lessons learned, and of recommendations, overall and operational. The MTE travelled to the Region from 28th September to 27th October visiting Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania, Mozambique and Namibia .

Findings, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations are based, above all, on using a toolbox for participatory appraisals, in particular Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII). Consultations were held with regional institutional stakeholders, national CAs, grass root level private sector operators and socio-professional organizations and NGO/CSO non-state actors, face to face or virtually. The MTE team developed a structured interview format which was distributed, together with the Inception and Desk Report, to stakeholders at the beginning of the mission.

As the EQs were not formulated following the logic and structure of the OECD/DAC criteria, MTE responses to them are considered, selectively, in the elaborations of the criteria presented below.

### Relevance

The MTE team concludes that the Programme, its objectives, results, and work plans were and are relevant for the issues and challenges of fisheries in the participating countries and in the region, reflecting the present situation and trends of fisheries globally. This finding is relativized by the potential incompatibility of growth orientation, implying increased effort and fishing pressure included in the overall objective, and the need for responsible and sustainable fishing in consideration of depleted, overfished stocks which were attested for practically all coastal and inland water resources and for many of the straddling stocks of tuna and tuna like species (see EQ 1).

The contribution to the work plans 1, 2 and 3 under Result 1, and achievements under Result 2 are relevant for the Programmes goals but can only mitigate problems by improving frame conditions for sustainable resource management, supporting training, capacity building, and facilitating conducive institutional and normative frameworks, with the perspective of enforcing the latter. Support to inland fisheries resource management efforts of the two inland RFMOs, LVFO and LTA was and is relevant and appropriate, despite and, maybe, because of the constraints encountered (see EQ 3).

Regarding achievement attained to date and planned under Result 2, the MTE team considers it relevant, as it deems them contributing to conducive conditions for management (see EQs 3, 7 and 14). The relevance of the joint patrols carried out to date was increased significantly via the C&V effort of the Programme. Relevance of the Programme is attested, by the MTE team, for the SSF projects supported by grants under result 3. Here, relevance is significant because the Programme supports sustainable

fisheries at grass root level, i.e., the only level where policies and strategies become tangible, visible and yield results (see EQ 8).

### Coherence

Programme goals are coherent, and in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere in the world, 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, and, most relevant for the MTE, SDG 14: *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*<sup>1</sup>. Regarding the latter, goals are also coherent with other international postulates e.g., the Aichi targets *inter alia* 5, 6, 11 and 15<sup>2</sup> of the CBD. At regional level, Programme goals are in coherence with the African BE discussed in several of the EQs above.

### Effectiveness

The Programme's objectives and results provided have been attained to varying degrees of effectiveness. With regards to the postulated enhancement of regional policies and institutional frameworks, and of leveraging regional economic collaboration and cooperation with DMROs and RFBs under result 1 of the Programme, the MTE team has not been provided evidence for effectiveness of respective Programme efforts to date (see EQ 5). Regarding Programme governance and management, the complex and complicated multi-layered design of the Programme also see the risk that the implied efforts sap the limited HR and logistic capacities the TAT, IOC and implementing partners alike (see EQ 2).

The MTE team commends the efforts of the Programme to contribute, as a Cross-Regional Initiative towards sustainable fisheries of the region, but still retains doubts as to whether ECOFISH has the calibre of leveraging, not to talk of exerting effective collaboration and cooperation with and among political/economic entities as the DMROs, RFMOs, RFBs and national CAs (see EQ 5).

Contributions to the work plans 1 and 2 under result 1 (see EQ 3) have been effective but can only mitigate problems, within the limits of HR, duration and logistic and financial means of the Programme. For MCS capacities supported by the Programme to yield effective results, however, they need to be applied and further developed, learning by doing, during frequent regional patrols. The MTE team could not evidence ability of the Programme to effectively influence political will and ensure continuing joint patrols without external funding (see EQ 7, 14). The implementation of result 2, strengthening capacity to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, has been effective with respect to contributing to conditions conducive to enforcement of compliance by developing respective regional protocols, standards, and procedures. Efforts to facilitate much needed and sufficiently deterrent national prosecution and sanctioning of infringements as part of revamped fisheries governance frameworks of fisheries crimes and fraudulent catch reporting in areas under national jurisdiction are in the pipeline.

Concerning the Marine Fisheries work plan under result 1, no effective and tangible support to legal and regulatory frameworks of SS and artisanal coastal fisheries attributable to direct Programme intervention beyond the SSF grant projects under result 3/work plan 4 was recorded. Regarding the latter, the MTE team concludes that, overall, effectiveness can be attested, with the potentials of spill overs, multiplication, impact, and sustainability.

### Efficiency

Virtually all Work Plans are in some stage of delay. Regarding Work Plan 1, the LVFO project managed to achieve the planned outputs at least partially through a combination of virtual and in-person interventions (EQ 3) even though the level of fund utilisation is lower than foreseen (just over 20% against 40% to be committed for the Actions planned by 2021). Regarding Work Plan 2, the LATAFIMA Project suffered major delays, mainly due to the inability of FAO and its team to provide the necessary resources (both human and financial) in due time. The level of expenditure is at a low level in line with the low level of implementation, with approximately 28% of the budget disbursed, with a significant imbalance in favour of expenditure for Human Resources and travel.

Regarding the IOC Marine Fisheries Work Plans under results 1 and 2, the MTE team noted that during the early years of the Programme, the implementing agency, IOC, had difficulty in getting the programme

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/14-life-below-water/>

<sup>2</sup> Aichi Target 5: Habitat loss halved or reduced; Aichi Target 6: Sustainable management of marine living resources, Aichi Target 11: Protected areas increased and improved, Aichi Target 15: Ecosystems restored and resilience enhanced

started. In the 2018 report is stated that the IOC has faced deficiencies in its efforts towards marine coastal fisheries management in the Eastern African-Southern African-Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) region. The 2018 report highlights weak engagement and support from the MCS expert, leading to a delay in the full reactivation of the MCS. The IOC Secretariat tends to overburden the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) and the IPMU with administrative and technical responsibilities, which may compromise the performance of ECOFISH.

The 2019 report indicates a lack of understanding of the scope of ECOFISH as a cross-regional initiative, challenging for TAT and IPMU.

In 2020 reports is stated that the IOC has faced some shortcomings in its efforts towards the Marine Coastal Fisheries Management in the EA-SA-IO region. The IOC Secretariat's weak engagement and support from the MCS expert have led to a delay in the full reactivation of the MCS, mainly PRSP. There is a tendency for the IOC Secretariat to overburden the TAT and the IPMU with administrative and technical responsibilities, which may compromise the performance of ECOFISH. Also, there is a lack of understanding of the scope of ECOFISH as a cross-regional initiative, challenging for TAT and IPMU.

In 2022 report is stated that IOC has faced several shortcomings and incompetencies as described in the text.

Overall, while the TAT has performed well, the IOC Secretariat's underperformance and other structural shortcomings have hindered the implementation of various projects and initiatives.

The MTE also noted a certain grade of disagreement among the TAT, the EUD and the IOC. According to TAT reporting, the IOC Secretariat does not acknowledge the extra efforts, but claim them as a right and became more demanding. As a result, there was a discussion between the latter (IOC Secretariat) and the EUD Mauritius regarding the TAT work scope. This applies also to strategic tools advocated in the context of the Marine Fisheries Work Plans, such as the Blue Economy Fisheries Satellite Account, or the Regional Fisheries Climate Observatory. The former lacks its *conditio sine qua non*, comprehensive and reliable data, and the latter would duplicate a plethora of existing perennial CC mechanisms, with both unlikely to justify implied anticipated efficiency.

Regarding Work Plan 4 under Result 3 (SSF pilot/lab projects), all projects visited by the MTE team demonstrated evidence of efficiency in their implementation, as well as of funds commitment and expenditure, particularly those projects that apply a participatory local development strategy (see EQ 8).

### **Impact**

Given that the evaluated Programme has incurred considerable delays during the early stages of implementation, its impact, in the sense of the OECD/DAC criterion, can be assessed tentatively at the very best, and with regards to longer term higher-level effects e.g., multiplication of positive achievements and larger scale application of lessons learned only.

Intended or unintended, higher-level effects were not recorded, possibly because Programme interventions did not include subsidies or other perverse incentives.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability of time bound, externally financed development assistance interventions is notoriously difficult to assess, especially at mid-term. Uncertainty of sustainability leads many donors to obligatory request an exit strategy in programme/project design. For the Programme, the assessment of sustainability by the MTE team allows a variety of conclusions. Regarding enhanced regional policies and institutional frameworks and leveraging of effective collaboration and cooperation with DMROs and RFBs postulated under result 1. Outcomes will most probably not be sustainable beyond the Programmes completion, for reasons discussed in the respective EQs in the report. Similarly, impact of training and capacity building, and facilitating conducive conditions for sustainable sector management and MCS will dissipate if acquired skills and strengthened capacities are not applied and conducive conditions are not used for the benefits of sustainable resource management.

The tangible and visible results achieved by the SSF projects allocated grants under result 3 have a good chance of being sustainable, based on the fact that their principal actors are part of the private sector, whether SSF, artisanal fishers or value chain operators and MSMEs/MSEs. Development assistance extended to them, in a participatory way and addressing them individually or via legitimate

and representative community and socio-professional organizations are, in general, more sustainable than institution and capacity building at national and regional levels.

### Value added

The Programme, by achieving its objectives, would add value to:

- EU's engagement to strengthen the process of moving towards enhanced regional cooperation and integration vis-à-vis governing and managing fishery resources regionally and improving and harmonizing regional and national policies.
- EU's efforts to improve transboundary coordination and cooperation mechanisms, MCS and joint patrolling for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, training and capacity building of CAs, and pilot actions promoting co-management and community fisheries management.
- EU support to improve governance and increased private sector and community participation in natural resource ecosystem and biodiversity management at the sub-national and local level, enhancing replicable environmental and socio-economic improvements.

From the findings of the MTE some “**Lessons Learned**” can be proposed. A central lesson is that the root problem of most coastal and inland fisheries in the EA-SA-IO region and beyond is lack of political will and good sector governance. Political will and good sector governance, especially with respect to limiting regulating access to fishery resources, is the *conditio sine qua non* for safeguarding them and the ecosystems they depend on for future generations and for sustainable economic development. Only by safeguarding and restoring abundance and diversity of living aquatic resources and critical habitats can maintain or increase their social, economic, and cultural contributions to local economies, fishers and their communities and the fisheries value chains *eo ipso*. And only good governance will foster willingness of stakeholders to participate in fisheries management processes for the common good. Furthermore, participation in fisheries management and enforcement of compliance will be supported by communities only if stocks have recovered to levels where they are providing better catches and tangible benefits to their members and alleviate poverty.

Last paragraph is complemented by the second learned lesson, that participation in CBFM or co-management are, probably, the only efficient tools for enabling sustainable management of SSF and artisanal fisheries, inland and marine alike. Both CBFM or co-management depend on strong, accepted, legitimate, inclusive (gender, youth and the elderly) and representative institutions. Under open access regimes where the theorem of the “tragedy of the commons” is ever present, building such grass root institutions is a major challenge.

Lessons learned during the MTE do not prove but support the hypothesis extended in the MTE findings i.e., that regional efforts by donor dependent and time bound projects are unlikely to sustainably leverage change with agendas and dynamics of regional organisations with effective positive impacts on SSF. This does however not apply to regional cooperation in conserving and managing tuna and tuna like species, in EEZs and ABNJ, through the enforcement of national legal and regulatory provisions and applicable RFMO's resolutions.

Here, regional solidarity and harmonization of access conditions are the only feasible way out of the present situation where foreign DWF fleet and flag and/or port states continue to apply a “divide and rule” approach to secure access to the high value fisheries resources of the WIO. To have all countries of the EA-SA-IO region sharing the straddling stocks of tuna and tuna like species and agree on mutually agreed and collectively implemented harmonized conditions appear far-fetched at the time of this writing but is, probably, the only option for the long-term conservation and sustainable resource use.

The MTE formulated **Overall and Operational Recommendations**. While the former are focused on the overall program, the latter focus on each specific program. The **first overall recommendation** concerns an extension of the Programme. The rationale for extending the Programme can be outlined as follows:

- The necessity to extend the duration of the programme<sup>3</sup> considers the delays incurred in the early stages of the Programme, regardless of whether caused by COVID 19 and travel restrictions

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Action Document for Contribution of Sustainable Fisheries to the Blue Economy of the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorizing officer responsible by amending this decision

imposed by the pandemic, late recruitment of regional or early replacement of international staff, administrative hurdles, or hick ups caused by some of the implementation arrangements and Programme architecture. They have affected the state of delivery to date, delivery in the “pipeline”, and the need for further delivery towards achieving results.

- Another, at least equally eminent reason for extending the project duration, is the sheer magnitude of the combined tasks of the *multifaceted and cross-regional* Programme, as listed in the Technical Handbook<sup>4</sup>, under three results, five work plans and a respective plethora of strategic actions.

The **second overall recommendation** of the MTE team is to base a revised, reorientated Programme, and any extension of it, on comprehensive stakeholder consultations, to achieve the acceptance and ownership essential for getting them on board and ensure consensus. The length of the extension should be decided during the consultations; in the view of the MTE an extension of 18 months appears appropriate. The overall goal of the consultations should be to make the Programme “leaner”, not necessarily “meaner”, realistically taking Programme resources, especially the LTE HR of fisheries management, MCS and C&V, and the remaining NKE and STE resources into account.

This recommendation includes a paradigm shift from production and growth to sustainable use and protection of resources, replacing high flying postulates for prosperity and wealth creation by “unleashing” the potential of a sector which is ailing, at best, with severely depleted stocks, some of them on the brink of collapse. It is based on findings of the MTE team which indicate receptiveness, on the part of the stakeholders consulted, of prioritizing sustainable use of resources and the protection of aquatic ecosystems before short term financial and economic gains. For a reoriented Programme this would mean to prioritize the SSF projects under result 3, in concert with the facilitation of national sector management plans included under result 1.

**Operational recommendations** are offered for the components and work plans specifically. Regarding Programme management and governance structures, the MTE recommends reviewing the present complex and complicated management and governance structure as part of the effort to make the Programme “leaner”. Focussing Programme support on sustainable utilization and management of living aquatic resources instead of attempting institutional strengthening of DMROs and FMBs *sensu latu* would be more in line with Programme resources and subject matter expertise.

An operational recommendation regarding work plan 1 proposes to continue and widen Programme support for Lake Victoria. This should include addressing eminent problems as the need to protect tilapia breeding grounds including by reducing sand mining, pollution including plastic pollution and pollution from cage culture and raise awareness of the existential problem, for the lake and connected water bodies and aquatic ecosystems, caused by the release of Chinese silver carp in Uganda. Furthermore, the Programme should support a buy-out scheme to limit access to LV fisheries resources following the suggestions of LVFO outlined above, i.e., piloting a right based management regime giving preferential access (permission to fish) to local fishers and restricting number of vessels owned by fishers.

Regarding Lake Tanganyika, work plan 2, the Programme is recommended to take an active role in resolving the present impasse caused by lack of responsiveness of FAO, which stymies the effective and efficient use of funds allocated by the Programme. This recommendation is based on the conclusion of the MTE that it is well within the realm, if not the responsibility, of the Programme to leverage the use of funds allocated according to their intended use with LATAFIMA. Finding a solution, including by changing the constellation of the present LATIFIMA set-up, is conditional for valorising Programme efforts creating conducive conditions for transboundary fisheries management and MCS.

With respect to the marine fisheries work plans under results 1 and 2, the MTE recommends following and further operationalizing the differentiation of resource management and MCS of LS industrial fisheries of tuna and tuna like fisheries, and of inland and marine SSF and artisanal fisheries. For the former, and the respective efforts postulated the marine fisheries work plan under result 1 (, see EQ 3), a nexus should be established with the SSF grant projects under result 3, and IOC-PRSP support to marine SSF, by streamlining efforts to facilitate development of effective management plans, fostering horizontal integration and learning.

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and the relevant contracts and agreements; such amendments to this decision constitute non-substantial amendment in the sense of Article 9(4) of Regulation (EU) 2015/322.

<sup>4</sup> Op. cit.

For the IOC-PRSP the MTE recommends the Programme continuing to advocate its institutionalization, with member states pledging sustainable budgetary and logistic support for regionally harmonized management of straddling stocks. This will require concerted political will to enforce compliance with, ideally, donor independent financing, and transparency and accountability of supplementary external budget support which, at the short and medium term, appears inevitable.

Regarding the grass root level SSF projects allocated grants under result 3, work plan 4, the MTE recommends the Programme to continue supporting the present, and, possibly, more grass root SSF projects in the EA-SA-IO region. The recommendation encompasses the option to reallocate budgetary provisions, saved by making the Programme “leaner”, for this purpose. Continuing and extended support should be preceded by a comprehensive and fully participatory survey *ex post* evaluation of existing projects, and a corresponding *ex ante* evaluation of additional projects<sup>5</sup>. This effort is expected to result in selection criteria for grant allocation following the OECD/DAC criteria, performance indicators and sustained monitoring developed on the base of the surveys.

It is also recommended that Programme support should facilitate sharing past experiences, continuous learning, and exchanging empirical knowledge. However, The MTE discourages building yet another digital regional platform to serve this purpose, because to service such platform would reduce the already limited HR capacity and time available to “boots on the ground” for much needed grass root level work. Instead, a yearly regional meeting, over time sufficient to exchange experiences and lessons learned “face to face”, is recommended, as well as increased focus of the C&V component of the Programme to raise project profiles and to increase chances of multiplication and impact as discussed in 3.2 above.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the conclusion of the MTE that, while management measures and MCS applied solely “from above” may be an option for MCS of LS and may be the only one for DWF vessels, will fail in inland and marine SSF and artisanal fisheries if it not done participatory, to foster acceptance and ownership of management measures.