



Enhancing equitable economic growth by promoting sustainable fisheries in the EA-SA-IO region



4rd ECOFISH PROGRAMME STEERING COMMITTEE

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

24th MARCH 2023

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Implementing partners



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E€OFISH INTEGRATED PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT

Blue Tower | 4th Floor | Rue de L'institut

Ebène 72201 | Mauritius | Tel: +230 402 6100

info@ecofish-programme.org

www.ecofish-programme.org



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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following the ECOFISH Financial Agreement, The timely execution of the Programme Steering Committee meeting at least once a year is a mandatory requirement of the programme. The 1st SC approved an annual rotation of the presidency among the Duly Mandated Regional Organisations (DMROs), and it was the turn of IGAD to host and chair the 4th session. Accordingly, the 4th PSC meeting was organised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 24th March 2023. The session was fed by a two Technical Committee Meetings (TCM) held on the 22nd and 23rd to emphasise a technical review and strategic orientation of each work plan and their effective coordination and integration to the ECOFISH's overall objective. The Minutes of Proceedings and recommendations of the 4th PSC meeting as per the approved agenda are as follows.

2. OPENING CEREMONY

1. Speeches (See Annexe 1)
2. Introduction of Delegates (See Annexe 2)
3. Approval of Agenda
Meeting Agenda (Annexe 3)

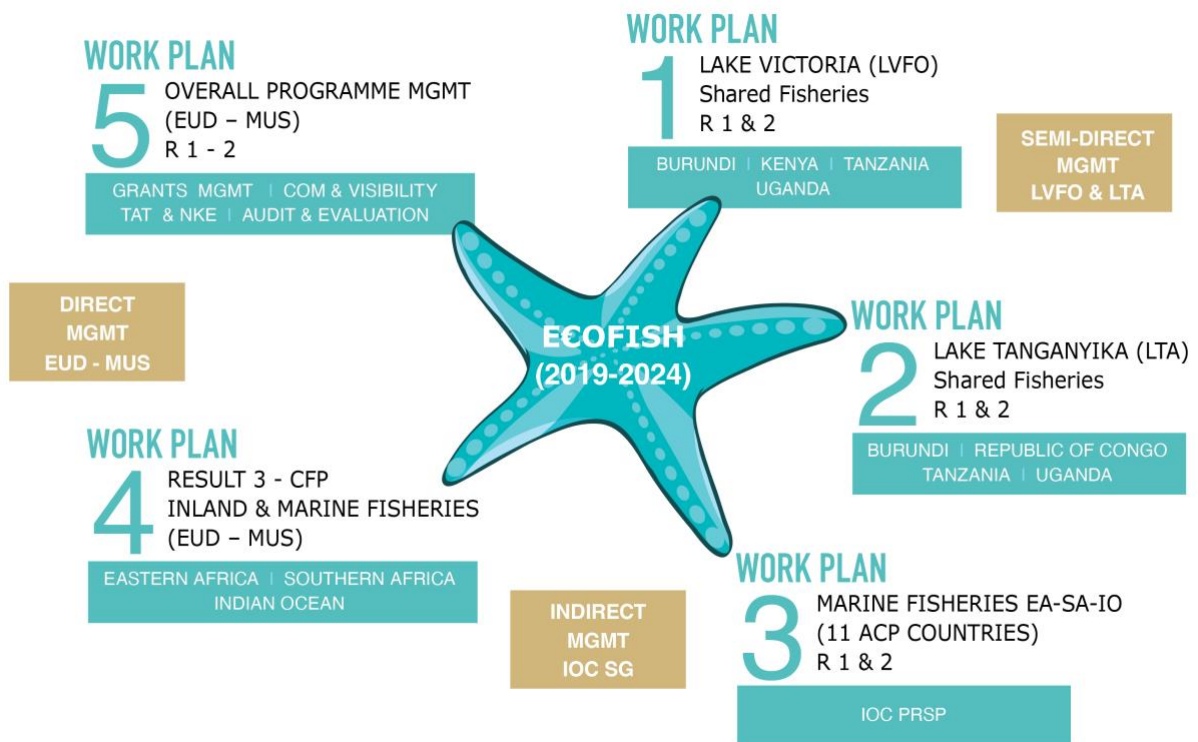
3. SETTING THE SCENE - A SYNOPSIS OF THE ECOFISH PROGRAMME

ECOFISH is a cross-regional and multifaceted programme of the 11th EDF enhancing sustainable and integrated management of selected inland and marine wild fisheries resources to contribute to the socio-economic and ecological goals of the UN Agenda 2030 and Transforming Africa 2063 in Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) region.

It is diversely managed by the EUD to Mauritius and implemented by IOC in partnership with other mandated regional economic and fisheries management organisations and strategic partners. Said differently, ECOFISH leverages regional collaboration and cooperation to enhance the operational capabilities of the sub-regional and national institutional stakeholders to mainstream the triple-bottom-line of global sustainability – irrespective of Green or Blue Economy, i.e., economic efficiency, ecological productivity and social well-being amid the unprecedented challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change and inequalities.

ECOFISH's global objective is driven by three components, **Result 1** - Enhanced fisheries policy, institutional and governance framework; **Result 2** - Strengthened

fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance capacities and **Result 3** – Call for Proposal for aspirational projects to showcase sustainable and responsible management of small-scale inland and marine fisheries in local communities. These result areas are mutually reinforced by a series of mandated strategic actions and administrative guidelines defined in the Financing Agreement. Furthermore, they are delivered by **five synergistic work plans** diversely administered by the EUD-Mauritius. The operational work plans, such as LFVO, LTA and IOC, benefit from a decentralised management and governance framework to ensure ownership and long-term sustainability of the interventions. **Result 3/Work Plan 4 and Work Plan 5** are directly administered by the EUD-Mauritius with the support of the TAT. A multistakeholder Technical Committee oversees each work plan and oversights by the Programme Steering Committee.¹ An illustration of the ECOFISH work plans is as follows:



¹ Cf ECOFISH Handbook 2020 for more detailed information available at <https://ecofish-programme.org/fr/ecofish-technical-handbook/>

4. REVIEW OF THE 3rd STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT

Recommendation 1

Regarding payment of a stipend/ allowance to participants attending virtual meetings organised by the ECOFISH programme due to social restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Administrative and Financial Officer made the new request to the EUD – Mauritius, but the latter reiterated its position to avoid potential misuse of the proposed arrangement. No further action.

Recommendation 2

To ensure more synergies with other organisations.

Effective collaboration and cooperation is the lifeblood of sustainable management of wild inland and marine fisheries resources. The following actions were taken:

1. A web-based Regional Coordination Mechanism for fisheries projects, donor agencies, and implementing partners is about to be fully operationalised;
2. Effective coordination and coordination with concurrent fisheries and fisheries-related projects, namely FISH GOV2, SIDA-UNEP NC – SWIOFC, FAO-NANSEN, AFD IORA, etc.;
3. ECOFISH Technical Coordinator is a member of the AUC Advisory Council of Africa Fisheries Reform Mechanism, which is the apex platform for connecting the programme to the African continent and vice versa;
4. A multidisciplinary study to assess the legal, institutional and organisational feasibility of transforming LVFO into EAFO (East Africa Fisheries Organisation) following a directive of the EAC Council of Fisheries Ministers;
5. Technical assistance to operationalise the LVFO-LTA Collaborative Arrangement to build synergies between the two African Great Lakes' Fisheries Management Organisations;
6. A community of Practices has been set up for the exchange of knowledge, experiential learning and mutual capacity building between Result 3 Demonstration Projects and inland regional fisheries bodies

LVFO WORK PLAN

Recommendation 3

To expedite 2nd Disbursement

Done after some delay.

The capacity of the LVFO ECOFISH PMU enhanced in understanding the EU administrative and financial procedures

LTA WORK PLAN

Recommendation 4

To improve collaboration and communication between LTA - FAO Burundi and EUD Burundi regarding the timely implementation of the project.

The following measures were undertaken:

1. The delivery partners have been motivated to address the issues. Although there have several Project Management Committee meetings, the bottlenecks have been removed satisfactorily due to the FAO's tedious bureaucratic procedures.
2. No significant improvement in the working relationship between LTA and FAO Burundi.
3. The matter will be discussed again at this SC meeting.

Recommendation 5

To review the work plan to make it more realistic

1. The Action Plan has been reviewed accordingly by the Project Management Committee.

Recommendation 6

To formulate a sustainable financing Strategy to ensure that the acquired MCS assets and operations are maintained after the project.

1. FAO will define a feasible exit strategy in collaboration with the LTA Secretariat;

Recommendation 7

IOC to assist in accelerating the 2nd Disbursement so that the LTA Fisheries Ministers Council conference can be organised promptly and project activities can progress.

1. The IOC Secretariat has no direct relationship with the LTA ECOFISH work plan as it is subject to a contribution agreement signed between EUD Burundi and FAO Burundi. And the LTA Secretariat is the beneficiary and a sub-contractor of selected activities as per the signed Letter of Agreement.

Recommendation 8

To assume proper communication, sensitisation and awareness-building regarding a lake-wide fishing closure for three months.

1. Although there has been a high-level political consensus on the above drastic measure, its socio-economic impacts (food security and livelihoods) on the local communities.
2. The additional fund has been reallocated for communication, awareness-raising and sensitisation but nothing about promoting alternative sustainable livelihood and economic opportunities. Failing to plan is planning to fail!

IOC – MARINE FISHERIES & IOC PRSP

Recommendation 9

To encourage IOC-PRSP to share its knowledge, experiential learning and management best practices with its counterparts in Western Africa.

1. The Western African countries have been informed about the IOC-PRSP through a few continent-wide and regional meetings and workshops organised by FISHGOV2 / AU-IBAR. However, better collaboration and synergies will ensure soon when IOC-PRSP attains its cruising speed.

Recommendation 10

Dr Mamo (COMESA Focal Point) proposed facilitating the link between IOC-PRSP and similar mechanisms in Western Africa.

1. The recommendation is open and still valid.

Recommendation 11

To ascertain that at least 80% of the planned intervention of Result 2 – Enhanced fisheries MCS capacities are implemented as of the next SC meeting.

1. About 73 % of the planned activities have been initiated or in progress.

Recommendation 12

To allocate sufficient time for IOC-PRSP to present its activity report in future meetings.

1. The PSC framework has been reviewed accordingly to provide sufficient time for technical interactions and strategic orientation and integration. Consequently, a two-day Technical Committee Meeting has been planned to encourage deeper technical interactions and strategic orientation before stepping into a one-day Steering Committee Meeting.

Recommendation 13

To ensure the Mauritius SmartFish grant closure is finalised to enable Mauritius to operationalise its EEOFISH grant for undertaking regional fisheries patrol.

1. Action has been taken, and all grant contracts have been signed and operationalised.
-

CROSS-CUTTING ITEMS

INFORMATION – COMMUNICATION -TECHNOLOGY

Recommendation 14

To ensure that Result 3 – Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries Flagship data is captured in the Programme’s Internal Monitoring and Evaluation System.

1. Result 3 is now integrated into the ECOFISH Monitoring and Evaluation database.

Recommendation 15

To operationalise the regional web-based Regional Coordination Mechanism / Project Tracking System in fisheries.

1. The web-based project tracking system was represented at a recent regional multistakeholder workshop. The current version will be presented to the delegates during the session. However, the application still requires some improvement before its official launch.

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Recommendation 16

To Ensure information security and data protection on the various interaction platforms of the programme.

1. The content management system (CMS) used for the ECOFISH website has been aligned with the IOC one, and the legal notices on the proper functioning and security of this website have been defined accordingly.

Recommendation 17

To emphasise communication for change of mentality (behaviour) and development rather than visibility.

1. Currently, the focus has been on stakeholder engagement. However, it is a first step in changing human behaviour and mindset.

[Download - 3rd PSC Recommendations](#)

[Download - Recommendations](#)

5. PSC IV - FINDINGS AND DELIBERATIONS

LVFO – WORK PLAN

Activity Review

LVFO ECOFISH Chapter progressed significantly during the reporting period, including the following outputs and milestones:

- i) Formulation and validation of its 4th Fisheries Management Plan;*
- ii) Near completion of an interdisciplinary study to assess the legal, institutional and organisational feasibility of transforming LVFO into EAFO. The final step is to organise a regional multistakeholder consultative and validation workshop,*
- iii) Completion of a capacity needs and gap analysis to reinforce national legal and judicial capabilities to combat illegal fishing on Lake Victoria.;*

The delay in implementing the project activities is partly due to a lack of understanding of the EU administrative and financial procedures. For instance, some invoices and documents were not readily available during a recent visit by an EU financial auditor.

During its last Steering Committee meeting, the management team proposed to review the approved work plan to accommodate new activities, such as identifying and marking multiple breeding and fish nurturing sites, the next biennial lake-wide Frame Survey and a re-assessment of the existing fish traceability and documentation framework for Lake Victoria.

Consequently, a new rider to the Programme Estimates and the 2nd financial replenishment was significantly delayed. Therefore, there is an urgent need to enhance the project management capacity, including proficiency in the EU administrative and financial procedures.

Apart from attending its Steering Committee meeting and ad hoc visit of the TAT members, a quarterly virtual meeting is organised with the Project Leader. As of the last meeting in January 2023, the issues regarding the budgetary reallocation were resolved, and the procurement of MCS assets and the regional approach to MCS operations were addressed.

Administration and Finance

- i) About 46 % of the budget has been committed;*
- ii) The 1st EU financial Audit was carried out in April 2022. The mission identified potential ineligible expenditure to amount of € 200,000 due to a lack of proper documentation and understanding of the EU administrative and financial procedures;*

- iii) *The IOC Secretariat has provided financial training support on site from 6-10 March 2023, and the risk of ineligible expenditure has been reduced to € 6,000 and eventually to nil.*
- iv) *The IOC mission has also prepared the PMU for the next EU external audit from 13.09.21 to 12.09.22 and the fund replenishment process.*

Recommendation 1

To formulate a new project to ensure the long-term sustainability of the ECOFISH actions.

Recommendation 2

To accelerate the operationalisation of the LVFO-LTA Collaborative Arrangement, demonstrating a pragmatic approach to effective collaboration between the regional fisheries bodies and member countries of the EA-SA-IO region.

LTA WORK PLAN

Activity Review

The LTA ECOFISH project is implemented by the FAO Regional Office in Burundi through a direct contribution Agreement with EUD-Burundi. It is, therefore, beyond the direct scrutiny of EUD-Mauritius and the TAT. Nevertheless, the TAT collaborates diligently with the implementing partners to provide solicited expert advice and technical assistance. For example, in the second half of 2023, the TAT leader visited LTA to launch the regional campaign for sustainable artisanal fishing around Lake Tanganyika. Subsequently, the MCS and C & V experts were also there for rapid situational analysis in their respective fields.

The performance of LATAFIMA during the reporting period has been moderate. The socio-economic studies were conducted by the LTA Secretariat and its national experts, especially the vulgarisation and awareness-raising campaign on the Regional Charter for Sustainable Fisheries around Lake Tanganyika. However, the FAO's tedious procurement procedures have delayed the MCS operations (Result 2). Moreover, there has not been a proper assessment of the existing hard and soft MCS capacities at the national level. Although the project intends to conduct regional fisheries patrols, it has not yet developed a Regional Standard of Practice for these operations.

Although the LTA Secretariat has adequate in-house and a regional network of national fisheries and environmental capabilities, its position as a Regional Fisheries Body and a strategic partner in the EA-SA-IO region has been underestimated in conceptualising the ECOFISH programme. In other words, LTA's role has been reduced to a passive beneficiary and sub-contractor of its project. However, the

Letter of Agreement signed between LTA and FAO-Burundi is limited to a total disbursement of EUR 100,000 annually, which is not feasible.

The project is overseen by a tripartite Project Management Committee (LTA - EUD – FAO). It is therefore proposed to establish an adequate Multistakeholder Steering Committee to conduct periodic performance reviews, strategic orientations and effective coordination of the project activities. The membership to this statutory meeting should be extended to a representative of EUD-Mauritius and the TAT. Moreover, an LTA representative is invited to attend the LVFO ECOFISH project Steering Committee, and the same principle can be applied to enhance synergies between the two African Great Lakes.

Based on scientific recommendations, LTA will enforce a three-month fishing close season annually. However, the main challenge is the availability of sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities for the fishing communities. Therefore, the TAT intend to assist LTA in performing a socio-economic scoping and mapping study.

Administration and Finance

The key points are as follows:

- i) About 50% of the budget has been committed and 38% disbursed.*
- ii) The Letter of Agreement signed between FAO Burundi and LTA Secretariat is limited to transactions of US\$ 100,000 per year, which is a major constraint for the timely completion of the project activities;*
- iii) Due to the high inflation rate and decline of the Euro-Dollar Exchange rate, the budget in real terms has decreased, and some activities dropped out;*
- iv) A new budgetary reallocation will be required.*

Recommendation 3

EUD Burundi to broker a realistic collaboration between LTA and FAO-Burundi to ensure effective and timely execution of the project activities, specifically regarding the scope of the Letter of Agreement

Recommendation 4

To adjust the project activities with the approved objectives and guidelines of the ECOFISH programmes as recommended by the external Mid-Term Evaluation and endorsed by the SC with an extension of up to 18 months at no additional cost.

Recommendation 5

The Signatories of the Contribution Agreement, in collaboration with LTA, request EUD Mauritius additional STE to support the implementation of the LTA work plan, such as technical expertise in the field of MCS and the

development of alternative sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunities for the local fishing communities.

Recommendation 6

To establish a proper multistakeholder Steering Committee for the LTA work plan as a mandatory requirement of the ECOFISH financial agreement for ensuring the ownership of the institutional stakeholder at the national level.

Recommendation 7

To facilitate designing a project to drive sustainable and integrated management of the Lake fisheries resources to contribute to the socio-economic and environmental goals of Africa Agenda 2063 and the Blue Economy of the member states.

IOC MARINE FISHERIES WORK PLAN

Activity Review

Result 1 – Enhanced Fisheries Policy and Institutional Framework

Among the eight strategic actions of Result 1, most have crossed the preliminary research, stakeholder consultation, and planning to converge into the implementation phase. The main activities carried out were as follows:

Result 1.1(a) - *A knowledge and experience exchange workshop was organised for the inland fisheries involved in relevant Result 3 projects and the inland regional fisheries bodies and the Regional Economic Communities;*

Result 1.1(b) - *The 2nd annual IGAD Fisheries Coordination Platform was organised in Addis Ababa to finalise the first annual work plan for the Horn of Africa.*

Result 1.1(c) - *A web-based Regional Coordination portal for coastal marine fisheries and associated projects was developed. Although the programme needs some improvements, a professional programmer will be hired to finish the work.*

Result 1.2 - *An inventory and assessment of various fishery management strategies and plans at the national level in the SWIO region have been completed. A high-level regional workshop was held to validate the nationwide inventory and evaluation fishery management plans and to select national priority fisheries, such as the sea cucumber, octopus and crab.*

Result 1.3 - *A review of the definition and characterisation of the different segments of the small-scale fisheries to promote transparency and equity was undertaken. It will feed into the upcoming research on registration and licensing in the Small-scale fisheries in the SWIO region*

Result 1.4 - *It is demand-driven. Mauritius has benefited from an STE for reactivating its National Ocean Council, i.e., the National Blue Economy Coordination*

Mechanism. In addition, a Socio-Economic Work Group Framework has been developed for the SWIOFC. However, the RFB is almost inactive. The BA (Hons) Law, Blue Economy and Sustainable Fisheries programme has entered its 3rd year and is now seeking sponsors to attract more African students for its next intake.

Result 1.5 - *A Small Scale Fisheries Sustainable Development Framework has been developed against several integrative activities of Result 1.2 to create a realistic Fisheries Information Management System for informed policy making. In addition, a regional multistakeholder workshop has validated the framework.*

Result 1.6 - *After validating the Regional Blue Economy Fisheries Satellite Account (BEFSA) Framework, the system is implemented on a trial basis in Kenya in collaboration with the Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute. Thereafter, BEFSA will be rolled out in other participating countries.*

Result 1.7 - *A regional workshop was arranged to validate a regional study on the potential socio-economic impact of climate change on the coastal fisheries ecosystems, fish production, lives and livelihood of the fishing communities of the SWIO region. The study has also developed a regional Climate Sensitivity and Vulnerability Matrix. The creation of the Regional Fisheries-Climate Observatory led the Mauritius Oceanography Institute in collaboration with other national marine research agencies. Selected participating countries will be facilitated to mainstream climate adaptation measures in their national fisheries policies and management strategies.*

Result 1.8 – *A call for interest has been launched to provide technical assistance and associated services to the selective public, private and Non-State initiatives in conserving and restoring coastal biodiversity and livelihoods with the involvement of local fishing communities across the marine façade of Eastern Africa.*

In a nutshell, despite the low level of disbursement, Result 1.0 is on track, as the TAT provided the most technical expertise. It is now ready to implement a second wave of activities through the national chapters. Also, more emphasis will be laid on supporting IGAD in implementing its priorities intervention in the coastal countries of the Horn of Africa.

Result 2 – Strengthened fisheries MCS Capacities

Activity Review

The expected result has been tailored to facilitate the consolidation and institutionalisation of the IOC Regional Fisheries Surveillance Plan, commonly referred to as IOC-PRSP. The Regional MCS Coordination Mechanism has been from the EU financial and technical assistance since its inception in 2007. It was declared one of the EU flagships to combat IUU fishing in the SWIO region at the World Ocean Conference in 2018. However, the interventions focus more on industrial tuna fisheries and are expected to broaden their scope to embrace small-scale fisheries progressively.

The IOC-PRSP is an autonomous mechanism hosted by the IOC Secretariat. It has its governance structure, while the functional service of the IOC Secretariat supports the management processes. The regional MCS officer hired by the ECOFISH PMU is considered the Technical Coordinator of the PRSP Regional Coordination Unit (Operations) and Extended Regional Coordination Unit (Decision Making Organs or Steering Committee). In addition, the TAT MCS Expert assists the Result 2. The current activities of Result 2 are as follows.

1. *Four (4) regional sea patrols have been organised since the inception of ECOFISH and the reactivation of IOC-PRSP with the financial support of the ERDF/INTERREG through Reunion/France*
2. *Three (3) PRSP Regional Coordination Unit meetings and one (1) enlarged Regional Coordination Unit (Decision-making Organ) have taken place.*
3. *Seventeen (17) over forty -three (43) activities to support IOC-PRSP were implemented (approximately 40%);*
4. *The current year focuses on strengthening collaboration and cooperation with other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, Regional MCS Coordination Centres and Strategic partners, such as IOTC, SIOFA, SADC MCS CC, EFCA, etc. However, the inter-agency collaboration with the Regional Maritime Security Programme implemented by the IOC Secretariat is on standby due to a lack of cooperation of the latter.*

The upcoming activities include the following

1. *Enhance sharing MCS data and strategic intelligence, such as VMS, AIS and StaRFISH, a homegrown Standard Realtime Fisheries Information System Hub) web-based system for regional fisheries information exchanges*
2. *Foundational works for the Institutionalisation of PRSP, including various socio-economic studies and Cost-Benefit Analysis joint fisheries patrols;*
3. *Training programme (3-to-6-month learning) for Regional Fisheries Inspectors for their accreditation*

Administration and Finance

Although only 21 % of the total budget was committed, 45 % of the activities of Results 1 and 2 have been implemented. The main reasons for the high earned value are:

1. *At the inception of the project during the COVID-19 pandemic and the inactivity of the PMU, most STEs were hired from the ECOFISH Frame Service Contract with Incatema Consortium to reinforce the operational capacity of three (3) African RECs (COMESA, IGAD and SADC) equivalent to 270 working days under Result 1 and 30 working days for Result 2 to formulate national grant contacts for regional patrols.*

2. The TAT has undertaken several technical studies, estimated at 10 STE contracts to avoid delays in rolling out the project activities.
3. Over-budgeting of the project activities. It is also explicable because the EU PRAG II allows a single Programme Estimates for the project lifespan, and therefore, the planned activities are evolving.

Main Challenges and Bottlenecks

1. Human Resources at the PMU - The backlog of the delay of one (1) year in mobilising the PMU staff after the project's inception. The staffing has not been completed yet. Moreover, the Regional Fisheries Management Officer post has been vacant since his retirement in June 2022. A programme Assistant has been hired this February but is compelled to work outside his ToR to support Result 1 activities

2. Reinforcement of the PMU staff – In the current situation, it will be impossible to enhance the implementation of the project activities as they will cause severe bottlenecks in the administrative and Finance Services. It is, therefore, imperative to reinforce the PMU staff based on the lessons learnt and best practices of a similar IOC programme, SMARTFISH.

Furthermore, the final report of Audit 1 is still pending, and the financial Audit for 13/9/21 – 12/9/22) is in progress.

Recommendation 7

The Committee commended the regional strategic tools developed by Result 1 despite the lack of technical staff at the PMU. It also approved the operationalisation of these mechanisms in selective participating countries through the ECOFISH National Chapters and sharing the lesson learnt and best practices with the other inland fisheries work plan, LVFO and LTA.

Recommendation 8

The Committee warranted the IGAD Secretariat to implement its priority activities in its constituency following the recommendations of the 2nd coordination platform meeting.

Recommendation 9

To provide for a closing event at the EA-SA-IO level to communicate the certified deliverable, experiential learning, best practices, and existing strategies to guide future development cooperation in the fisheries sector.

Recommendation 10

To formulate and operationalise a Quality Assurance Protocol for organising meetings and workshops to ensure efficient communication equipment and services.

Recommendation 11

To reach an understanding between the IOC-Marine Fisheries Work Plan and the EUD-Mauritius to allocate a pool of five (5) STE contracts to compensate the STEs overdrawn under the Frame Service Contract with Incatema Consortium during the COVID-19 pandemic to respond the current needs of the other delivery partners like LVFO and LTA.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recognised the contribution of the France/Reunion through the IOC to facilitate regional fisheries patrols in the SWIO basin with the financing of the ERDF/INTERREG. It asked the PMU to probe the possibility of acquiring financial assistance from the latter to support the institutionalisation and future operations of IOC-PRSP.

Recommendation 13

To ensure the operational autonomy of PRSP within the IOC institutional ecosystem from the intended extension period as a test for its long-term sustainability.

Recommendation 14

To facilitate discussion and signing of a fair Memorandum of Understanding between IOC-PRSP and SADC MCS CC in a proactive and farsighted manner in the best interests of the African continent. Likewise, it recommended effective collaboration with other existing or emerging centres, such as the IGAD MCS Information Exchange Hub.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommended an external evaluation of PRSP in its institutionalisation as a full-fledged regional MCS Coordination Centre by assessing its internal forces within the regional geopolitical dynamics.

Recommendation 16

The Committee urged the IOC Secretariat to solve the human resources challenges at the PMU by fast-tracking the recruitment process, including hiring a Procurement Assistant, to initiate any budget re-allocations and riders in consultation with the EUD Mauritius for optimising the value money of the investments.

Recommendation 17

The Committee approved the extension of up to 18 months at no additional cost to the programme.

WORK PLAN 4 / RESULT 3 – SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES FLAGSHIPS

Work Plan 4 embraces Result 3 Call for Proposal for field projects to mainstream the sustainable development fundamentals in the inland and marine small-scale fisheries and fish value chains at the grassroots in the EA-SA-IO region. These projects are administered by the EUD – Mauritius and technically monitored by the TAT. A tenth project promoted by the fishing organisations in La Reunion, awaiting funding from the ERD/INTERREG, is considered the 10th ECOFISH's demonstration project.

A regional online network has been created for the project teams to brainstorm and share practical experiences, knowledge, best practices and self-help capacity building under the Marine Fisheries Strategic Action 1.1 - Enhanced regional collaboration and cooperation in sustainable management of fisheries resources. In addition, a one-on-one technical monitoring meeting is organised semesterly, coupled with occasional field visits.

As the activities advance, their impacts are increasingly visible in the communities. They have become the headlines of the audio-visual and written media. On the sideline of the last Steering Committee meeting at Lusaka,

As the activities progress and their impact increasingly felt on the ground, a mega-event will be organised for sharing success stories, experiential learning and model projects with other stakeholders across the African continent.

Administration and Finance

Nine projects (4 inland and 5 marine) across the EA-SA-IO region for a total amount of € 7.7 million for a total budget of € 8.0 million and the balance of € 300,000 transferred by EUD Mauritius to the marine Fisheries Work Plan Result 1.1 to stimulate practical collaboration and cooperation in the sustainable development and management of small-scale fisheries in the EA-SA-IO region. As of this date, 92% of the financing has been disbursed to the projects.

Recommendation 18

The Committee underscored the recommendation of the MTE to commend the performance of Work Plan 4/Result 3 and recommend sharing the success stories, experiential learnings and best practices to influence future development cooperation in the small-scale fisheries and local livelihood improvement.

WORK PLAN 5 – DIRECTLY ADMINISTERED BY EUD-MAURITIUS

It is a multi-dimensional component that includes the Frame Service Contract (signed with the Incatema Consortium to provide the Technical Assistance Team and fast-tracked Short-Term expertise through a pool of senior and junior consultants; allocation and management of Direct Grants to eligible PRSP participating countries, an overarching communication and visibility budget and other administrative and financial management processes, such as external financial audits and mid-term and final programme evaluation.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM

A two-day Technical Coordination Meeting has been proposed as a part of the Steering Committee meeting to provide an adequate platform for technical brainstorming in an interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional approach. The TAT presented the scope and depth of its mandate / Terms of Reference, focused on assisting EU Mauritius in implementing the ECOFISH programme, including the organisational, technical and institutional aspects.

The TAT comprises three thematic experts, a permanent Fisheries Economist, the Team Leader and Technical Coordinator, an MCS Expert and Communication and Visibility Expert on a quasi-full-time and part-time basis. It provides technical assistance and coordination, expert advice, strategic orientation and policy dialogues across the functional work plans of the programmes.

The performance of the TAT has been exemplary. However, the quota of working days for:

POOL OF SHORT-TERM EXPERTISE

The programme started with a pool of 700 working days of Short-Term expertise that could be mobilised or fast-tracked in a specific field by the functional work plan with the prior approval of EUD-Mauritius. However, a significant number of days were utilised to reinforce the DMROs fisheries capacities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the other delivery partners, such as LTA and LVFO, have also benefited from the STE pool.

There are only 75 STE days on INCATEMA's Contract. Therefore, the Committee proposed a swap of STE contracts between the Marine Fisheries Work Plan and the STE Pool managed by the INCATEMA Consortium to restore the balance. **Cf. Recommendation 11.**

DIRECT GRANTS FOR REGIONAL FISHERIES PATROLS

The direct grant contracts with seven (7) eligible PRSP participating countries have been signed and operationalised. The latest one has been Mauritius. Currently, 37%

grant budget has been disbursement, and the execution of the first joint patrol is in the pipeline.

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

About 83% of the total budget for Communication and Visibility has been consumed. An internal reallocation in the marine fisheries budget will be conducted to cater more substantially for social innovation and marketing, cultural development and awareness-building and sensitisation campaigns.

The first phase of communication and visibility activities consisted of setting up the regional communication Architecture for the programme, and currently, all these platforms and tools are functional. The main objectives of these communication mechanisms were as follows:

- i) to ensure the visibility of the program;*
- ii) to define the objectives of communication and*
- iii) to provide a way to use these tools optimally and sustainably.*

The next phase of the communication strategy consisted of stakeholders' engagement, cultural development and social innovations and marketing to ensure positive and sustainable change in the social and human behaviours regarding nature-positive sustainable fisheries and livelihoods. The following initiatives were carried out or are in the pipeline:

- i) Training of written, audio-visual journalists;*
- ii) Undertaking awareness campaigns in participating countries;*
- iii) Exchange success stories, knowledge and experience across the African continent*
- iv) Promotion of ECOFISH activities on international media, etc.*

In the final phase of the programme, the Communication and Visibility Component will emphasise the certified deliverables, outcomes and impacts, dissemination of lessons learned and management best practices and exit strategies.

INTEGRATE INFORMATION AND DATABASE MANAGEMENT

The programme has an internal Monitoring and Evaluation database that assesses the earned value of the Marine Fisheries Work Plan by intersecting Activity performed with its Budget disbursement and planned Schedule. The extension of the system to Work Plan 4 / Result 3 is in the pipeline. It can also be adapted and shared with the other functional work plan as a project management tool.

All publications, technical documents and meeting reports of the programme are kept on a separate platform in physical and digital archives of the IOC Secretariat that can be accessed at https://www.zotero.org/groups/303882/commission_ocean_indien. Moreover, these reports are also published on the ECOFISH website at: www.ecofish-programme.org

MID-TERM EVALUATION

REVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of the Mid-Term Evaluation findings and recommendations was presented to TCM and SC meetings.

The Committee inferred that the findings and recommendations of the MTE were generic and lacked operationality.

The MTE has not fully understood the modus operandi and scope of ECOFISH as a cross-regional initiative leveraging collaboration and cooperation among mandated regional economic and fisheries organisations and strategic partners to drive sustainable management of wild inland and marine fisheries resources in the EA-SA-IO region.

Furthermore, the MTE underestimated the significance of effective policy and institutional frameworks to mainstream the sustainable development fundamentals in the fisheries sector in the Blue Economy paradigm.

The generalisation of illegal fishing in industrial and small-scale marine and inland fisheries in the EA-SA-IO is misguided. Moreover, the mission was confused about the development potential of sustainably managed fisheries as a growth sector for shared prosperity.

However, the Committee appreciated the MTE for reiterating the proposals of the LVFO and LTA as firm recommendations, although these issues were deliberated at their previous Steering and Management Committee.

The MTE also commended the performance of the Work Plan 4 /Result 3 Projects. It recommended sharing the success stories, lessons learnt and best practices in the region and facilitating appropriate exit strategies and replication projects.

Overall, the Committee approved the MTE's recommendations, particularly the one related to extending the programme lifespan for up to 18 months at no additional cost.

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION AND POLICY DIALOGUES

It is a custom for the Steering Committee to provide a slot for strategic reflection and policy dialogues on the burning issues in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the EA-SA-IO region and the African continent. The global objective of the ECOFISH programme is to enhance the sustainable management of selected inland and marine fisheries resources to contribute to the Blue Economy of the EA-SA-IO region. Therefore, the main discussion was on the status of the fisheries sector compared to the global sustainability standards. What policy guidance is required for the transformative change?

Over time, the scope of fisheries management has evolved from conservation and management of the fish stock (biological dimension) to sustainable management without adequately integrating the economic and social dimensions and investigating

the existing governance systems. Moreover, the Blue Economy has different meanings to different stakeholders. Besides its sectoral connotations, it is also about adopting the triple bottom line of sustainability, emphasising the regenerative and resilient capacity of living species and ecosystems.

Transitioning the fisheries sector from the current chaotic status to a more sustainable, responsible and inclusive growth sector for shared prosperity cannot be achieved in underregulated common prosperity rights of tenure exacerbated by the free market and liberal capitalism based on competition and greed. It requires restoring moral and ethical economics based on trust and community values. Sustainably managed, the fisheries sector can be a game changer in transforming the local, national and regional economies. The plenary discussion concluded with the following recommendations:

Recommendation 19

To re-engineer the political economy of the fisheries sector by formulating a realistic, Sustainable and profitable Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategy for Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika and the maritime façade of Eastern Africa.

Recommendation 20

To develop a budgeted actions plan accompanied by an innovative and sustainable financing Strategy back-to-back with the contemplated Regional Fisheries Strategic Framework.

Recommendation 21

To undertake an institutional and organisation pre-feasibility study for promoting the Regional Fisheries Ministerial Conference for coastal and island countries of Eastern Africa following the COMHAFAT/ATLAFCO model of West Africa to close the loop on the African continent.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND CLOSURE OF THE WORKSHOP

Dr Anthony Taabu Munyaho from EAC was designated Chairperson of the ECOFISH Programme from April 2023 to March 2024. He thanked all members present for accepting his nomination and expressed his motivation to collaborate with the excellent team of the E€OFISH programme and all the regional economic and fisheries organisations and strategic partners.

Mr Marc Maminaiaina, the representative of the IOC, thanked the PMU members, delegates and all those who contributed to the success of this PSC meeting.

The Chairperson, Dr Wassie Anteneh from the IGAD, also congratulated IPMU and TAT team and the ECOFISH delivery partners for the job well done and requested them to uphold the momentum. He also thanked the Government of Ethiopia for hosting this three-day meeting in the beautiful city of Addis Ababa before closing the meeting.

The Meeting ended at 15.00hrs

ANNEXE 1

Speeches

Missing Speech by Fikru Regassa, State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture Ethiopia

[Download - Speech of EUD - Mrs Florence Van Houtte, Team Leader](#)

[Download - Speech of IOC - Mr Dev Phokeer, Director](#)

ANNEXE 2

List of delegates

ANNEXE 3

Agenda



ECOFISH INTEGRATED PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT

Blue Tower | 4th floor | Rue de l'Institut | Ebène 72201

Mauritius | Tel: +230 402 6100

info@ecofish-programme.org

www.ecofish-programme.org

4th ECOFISH PROGRAMME STEERING COMMITTEE

24th March 2023 in Addis Ababa

OPENING CEREMONY		
TIME	ITEMS	SPEAKER
09.30 – 10.00	Registration	ECOFISH Secretariat
10.00	Introduction	MC
10.05	Welcome address	IGAD representative
10.10	Remarks	EU Representative
10.15	Remarks	IOC Representative
10.20	Remarks and Opening of the meeting	Representative of the local authorities
Group Photo and Tea Break		

REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE		
TIME	ITEMS	SPEAKER
11.00	Introduction of participants	Chair
	Approval of Provisional Agenda	All
	Housekeeping: nomination of 2 Rapporteurs, Meeting procedures etc.	Chair
	Video presentation: impact of ECOFISH	
11.30	Review of the 3rd PSC recommendations	Technical Coordinator
Work Plan 1 – Update of the LVFO PE		
11.40	TCM Synthesis and propose recommendations	Dr Anthony Taabu Mnyaho Chairman/All
Work Plan 2 – Update of the LTA PE		
11.50	TCM Synthesis and propose recommendations	Beatrice Marwa Chairman/All

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TIME	ITEMS	SPEAKER
Work Plan 3 - Marine Fisheries (IOC PE)		
12.00	Result 1: TCM Synthesis and propose recommendations	Subhas/Sunil Chair / All
12.10	Result 2: TCM Synthesis and propose recommendations	Tiana/Jude Chair / All
12.20	Administration and Finance	Rudy
	Discussions and recommendations	Chair/All
Work Plan 4 - Demonstration Projects / Result 3 (EUD)		
12.35	TCM Synthesis and propose recommendations	Madev/Sunil Chair / All
Work Plan 5 - Technical Assistance, grant contracts, service contracts, NKEs (managed by EUD)		
12.45	TCM Synthesis and propose recommendations	Madev/Sunil Chair / All
Cross-cutting Activities		
12.55	IT and archive – Discussion and Recommendations	Said
13.05	Communication and visibility - Discussion and Recommendations	Shirley
13.15	TAT: TCM Synthesis and propose recommendations	Sunil Chair/All
Status reports: ECOFISH Programme Integration Management (Admin & Finance)		
13.25	IOC	Vicky
	EU	MB
	A.O.B / Announcement	Chair
	Summing up of meeting	Chair/TC
	Nomination of Chair, Venue and Dates for the next meeting	Chair
13.55	Closing Remarks / Words of Thanks	
END OF THE MEETING		

ANNEXE 4

PPT presentations

[Download - Setting the scene](#)

[Download - 3rd PSC Recommendations](#)

[Download - 4th PSC Recommendations](#)

[Download - Result 2](#)

[Download - Communication & Visibility](#)

[Download - Administration & Finance](#)

[Download - Administrative & Finance - IOC](#)

[Download - EUD - Result 3](#)

[Download - ICT & Archive](#)



ECOFISH INTEGRATED PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT

BLUE TOWER | 4th FLOOR | RUE DE L'INSTITUT | EBÈNE 72201 | MAURITIUS | TEL: +230 402 6100

info@ecofish-programme.org

www.ecofish-programme.org