

**Fourth Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Programme Policy
Harmonization and Institutional Reforms
Project Steering Committee and Focal Points Meeting
01 March 2022
10h00 – 12h30 East Africa Time
Venue Microsoft Teams**

Meeting Report

Introduction

The Nairobi Convention is executing the Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms (SAPPHIRE) project. The project is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project promotes policy harmonization and institutional reform for the improvement of the management of the Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs). The overall objective of the project is to achieve effective long-term ecosystem management in the Western Indian Ocean LMEs, in line with the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) as endorsed by the participating countries. It has five integrated components, each of which is intended to achieve various outcomes:

- ❖ Component 1: Supporting Policy Harmonization and Management Reforms towards improved ocean governance.
- ❖ Component 2: Stress Reduction through Community Engagement and Empowerment in Sustainable Resources Management.
- ❖ Component 3: Stress Reduction through Private Sector/Industry Commitment to transformations in their operations and management practices
- ❖ Component 4: Delivering best practices and lessons through innovative ocean governance demonstration
- ❖ Component 5: Capacity Development to Realise improved ocean governance in the WIO region

The project is being implemented in nine out of ten contracting parties of the Nairobi Convention: Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, and Tanzania. The participating countries have assigned two national project focal points who are members of the regional project steering committee (PSC). The PSC forms the highest decision-making body in the project management structure. The PSC meets annually to review project progress, approve annual work plans and budgets and provide recommendations, as well as to propose joint solutions for identified problems and challenges during the implementation of planned activities, among other duties.

The first PSC meeting was held in June 2019 in Durban, South Africa. The second and third PSC meetings were held virtually in November 2020 and March 2021, respectively, due to the global travel restrictions caused by COVID-19. Since the travel restrictions and lockdowns were extended for an unexpected period, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat was forced to organize the fourth PSC meeting virtually also.

Objectives of the Meeting

The fourth SAPPHIRE PSC meeting was held to i) Review the SAPPHIRE project progress and expenditure to date, ii) Approve the project's workplan and budget for 2022, iii) Appraise the ongoing mid-term review, iv) Review the progress in the development of the regional Ocean Governance Strategy, and v) Discuss the

SAPPHIRE – Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative (WIOGI) Partnership on the Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (MSI). The MSI is broader in coverage over and above the mandate and scope of the SAPPHIRE project, necessitating the participation of all SAPPHIRE stakeholders, including Nairobi Convention focal points.

Expected Outcome

- a) Approved workplan and budget for 2022
- b) An understanding of the current timelines for the project, and agreement on the need for a project extension
- c) An understanding of the progress made in the development of the regional ocean governance strategy and the multi-stakeholder initiative

Summary of Proceedings of the 4th SAPPHIRE PSC and Focal Points Meeting

Session I: Opening Remarks

Nairobi Convention Secretariat

1. The meeting was called to order at 10h08 by Dr Tim Andrew, Coordinator, SAPPHIRE Project. He welcomed all participants to the meeting and highlighted the purpose of the meeting, including approvals for the SAPPHIRE workplan and budget for 2022, and sharing information on progress in the development of the regional ocean governance strategy and the multi-stakeholder initiative.
2. He welcomed Ms Madeleine Nyiratuza, the Regional Technical Specialist, Water & Oceans at UNDP, Addis Ababa to make opening remarks on behalf of UNDP, the SAPPHIRE Project Implementing Agency.

United Nations Development Programme

3. Ms Nyiratuza expressed her delight to participate in the 4th SAPPHIRE PSC meeting, representing UNDP. She appreciated the Nairobi Convention Secretariat (NCS) for the efforts invested in executing the project activities despite the limitations posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. She thanked the participating countries and partners for their collaboration in implementing in-country activities, especially the demonstration projects and oceanographic surveys.
5. She thanked the consultant undertaking the SAPPHIRE midterm review for his commitment to assessing progress in project implementation and anticipated that the recommendations would improve the implementation of the project.
6. In conclusion, Ms Nyiratuza wished everyone a successful meeting and looked forward to the meeting's recommendations.

Government of Madagascar

7. Dr Andrew welcomed Mr Jacques Rasoanaina, the Nairobi Convention Focal Point for Madagascar, to make opening remarks on behalf of the Chair of the Nairobi Convention Bureau, the Government of Madagascar.
8. Mr Rasoanaina expressed his pleasure to participate in the 4th SAPPHIRE PSC meeting and thanked the project management team and focal points for the progress made in implementing project activities.
9. He expressed optimism that the next meeting would be held physically as countries ease travel restrictions.
10. He concluded by welcoming all participants to the meeting, wishing them fruitful discussions and declaring the meeting open.
11. Dr Andrew led the meeting through a round of introductions.

As Madagascar is the chair of the Nairobi Convention Bureau, Mr Rasoanaina chaired the remaining part of the PSC meeting.

12. Mr Rasoanaina led the meeting in reviewing the provisional agenda, which was adopted without any changes.

Session II: Presentation and Discussion

Update on project progress and expenditure to date

13. The Chair invited Dr Andrew to make a presentation on progress and expenditure in the implementation of project activities.
14. Dr Andrew invited Mr Bonface Mutisya to make a presentation on the financial agreements developed under the SAPPHIRE project to date.
 - ❖ The [presentation](#) highlighted that the SAPPHIRE project has 35 financial agreements and consultancies at different stages of development and spread over the five project components.
 - ❖ It was highlighted that the project has worked with partners to deliver a:
 - ✓ Regional ecosystem monitoring framework
 - ✓ Framework for marine spatial planning in the WIO
 - ✓ Framework for private sector engagement in the WIO
 - ✓ Leadership training on management of the coastal and marine environment for women leaders
 - ✓ Training on ocean governance
 - ❖ In conclusion, Mr Mutisya mentioned that most of the project outputs had been achieved in partnership with other projects executed by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, among other stakeholders.
15. Dr Andrew presented the project expenditure to date, which amounts to 41% of the total project budget. He mentioned that there had been significant underspending, especially in 2020 and 2021, due to the slowdown associated with COVID-19 restrictions.
16. He mentioned that the significant unspent budget (59%) motivated the request for a no-cost extension, which should form part of the recommendations from the ongoing midterm review.
17. He highlighted that the underspending can be attributed to the significant delays in the implementation of project activities at the national and regional levels, as well as the suspension of physical meetings and associated travel.
 - ❖ *Ms Nyiratuza mentioned that the issue of underspending was discussed during the 3rd PSC meeting and looked forward to learning the innovative ways in which the project management team has adapted to expedite project spending.*

Progress in the Implementation of Demo Projects

a. Kenya

18. The Chair invited Dr Joseph Kamau from the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute to make a presentation on the demonstration project on oceanographic research in the North Kenya Banks.
 - ❖ The [presentation](#) highlighted the activities undertaken in collecting oceanographic data in the North Kenya Banks as well as products developed, including manuscripts, fact sheets, information briefs and policy briefs. It was highlighted that the project was implemented in cooperation with the SOLSTICE project.
 - ❖ It was mentioned that the project outputs would inform the management of the North Kenya Banks.

- ❖ Dr Kamau finalized by highlighting the challenges faced during project implementation, including COVID 19, which affected much of the activities as well as information dissemination and high sampling intensity.

b. Tanzania

19. The Chair invited Prof Ntahondi Mcheche Nyandwi from the Institute of Marine Sciences, Zanzibar to make a presentation on oceanographic research in the North Tanzanian waters.
 - ❖ The [presentation](#) highlighted that the project was aimed at determining how seasonal patterns of oceanographic parameters (sea surface temperature, chlorophyll-a, nutrients, and surface current velocities) of the Tanzanian waters on the northern sector were linked with the tuna and tuna-like species spawning and fishing ground sites.
 - ❖ It highlighted that the project developed an oceanographic database for improved governance of coastal and marine resources. The data and information were synthesized into scientific publications and policy briefs on the mainstreaming of oceanographic data in the management of coastal and marine ecosystems.
 - ❖ Prof Nyandwi concluded by mentioning that the project has contributed to the improved capacity of communities in the management of resources through community-based institutions (Strengthened Beach Management Units, Shehia Fisheries Committees, etc).

Presentation, discussion and approval of Annual Work Plan and Budget for 2022

20. The Chair invited Dr Andrew to make a presentation on the annual work plan and budget for 2022.
21. The [presentation on the draft annual workplan for 2022](#) highlighted an overview of all activities to be undertaken under each project component in 2022, as well as the implementation timeframes for each activity.
22. Dr Andrew mentioned that there were several areas of savings/underspending from 2021, hence the overall budget to be approved for 2022 would be higher than the budget for the new activities.
 - ❖ *Mauritius sought clarification on how the low budget allocated for the new demonstration proposal under Component 4 would be allocated to the countries.*
 - ❖ *It was mentioned that the call for new demonstration proposals would be funded from several components, hence the budget would be sufficient. Additionally, it was highlighted that the criteria for the selection of the new proposals would be shared with all Focal Points.*
 - ❖ *Madagascar welcomed the initiative on the new call for proposals to support local activities and mentioned that they would be ready to submit a new proposal when the call is shared.*
23. The [presentation on the annual workplan and budget](#) mapped each of the planned activities to its corresponding budget according to the UNEP budget classes. The presentation included when the expenses for each activity would be incurred, as well as details on the unspent budget from 2021, planned expenses for 2022, and a revised budget for 2022.
24. Dr Andrew [presented the budget for each component](#) based on the UNEP sponsored classes. He finalised by presenting a [summary of the budget](#) and requested the PSC to consider and approve the 2022 annual workplan and budget as presented, bearing in mind that a budget review and adjustment would be needed should a no-cost extension be approved for SAPPHERE in the coming months.

- ❖ *South Africa appreciated the work done by the project team in providing a detailed project expenditure, justification for all activities, and a clear way forward.*
- ❖ *Madagascar sought clarification on the allocation of national activities in the budget.*
- ❖ *It was clarified that the new activities would mostly be implemented at the national level and could even be linked to ongoing national demonstration projects, especially those contributing to rebuilding after COVID-19. It was mentioned that some of the national activities would contribute to regional processes, such as marine spatial planning and ocean governance.*
- ❖ *The request to approve the 2022 annual workplan and budget as presented was proposed by South Africa and seconded by Mauritius, Kenya, Comoros and Madagascar.*

Update on the ongoing mid-term review

25. The Chair invited Dr Andrew to make remarks on the ongoing mid-term review.
26. Dr Andrew highlighted that Mr Ivica Trumbic had been recruited to conduct the mid-term review over three months, from January to March 2022. He mentioned that the mid-term review was important as it would guide the way forward for future implementation of the SAPPHIRE Project, including the question of a potential no-cost extension. He mentioned that the consultant would contact the Focal Points and other stakeholders over the next 2-3 weeks, then produce a draft mid-term review report that would be distributed to Focal Points for approval before finalisation by the end of March 2022.
27. He highlighted that COVID-19 had had unprecedented impacts on the Contracting Parties and UNEP/Nairobi Convention Secretariat in 2020 and 2021, which had implications on the overall timeframe of the project.
28. It was proposed that underspending in previous years could be addressed through a new call for proposals directed to existing demonstration projects that have shown good progress, or new demonstration projects that satisfy project requirements, or projects that directly address *building back better* after the Covid-19 pandemic.
29. He mentioned that co-financing could be drawn from: i) non-GEF-funded projects and programmes, ii) Projects or programmes that would contribute to the outcome of SAPPHIRE project, and iii) In-kind support from routine government-funded operating budgets for activities such as staff time, facilities, transport, communications, among others.
30. The PSC meeting was requested to:
 - ❖ *Provide the necessary support to the mid-term review Consultant as he engages with the PSC and other stakeholders during March 2022*
 - ❖ *Note the delays in implementation caused by COVID-19 in terms of overall project timeframes and consider if a no-cost extension beyond October 2023 may be necessary*
 - ❖ *Note and consider the suggestion of a new call for proposals to address underspending in previous years*
 - ❖ *Note the requirement for countries to report on co-financing regularly to inform the mid-term review and subsequent project reporting*
 - ❖ *It was agreed that the countries should report co-financing on an annual basis so that it could be included in the PIR report*
 - ❖ *Kenya requested the project management unit to clarify whether the no-cost extension requested was sufficient to complete the implementation of the project activities*

- ❖ *The project coordinator mentioned that the exact duration of the no-cost extension would be agreed upon based on the recommendations from the mid-term review, hence the PSC meeting should agree on the concept of no-cost extension rather than the specific timeframes*
- ❖ *The requests to the PSC meeting were noted by all participating countries without any objections*

Presentation and Discussion on progress in the development of the regional Ocean Governance Strategy

31. The Chair invited Dr Andrew to make a presentation on the progress made in the development of the regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROG).
32. Dr Andrew highlighted the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), during a meeting in April 2020, had agreed to take a leading role in the development of a regional ocean governance strategy. This was followed by a call for the nomination of an expert to participate in a training on ocean governance in August/September 2021.
33. He mentioned that funds had been allocated for the process, and partners such as Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative (WIOGI), Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), Collective Leadership Institute (CLI), among others, had been invited to cooperate in the process.
34. He presented a [flow chart](#) showing workstreams, stakeholders, responsibilities, planned steps and timeframes towards the delivery of the regional ocean governance strategy. The ocean governance strategy development process would be driven by a core group of experts, comprised of participants from the August/September training, representatives from RECs, and non-state actors from the region. The overall process would be coordinated by a consultant recruited by the SAPPHERE project.
 - ❖ *South Africa sought clarification on the linkage between the Western Indian Ocean regional ocean governance strategy development process and the process of developing an African Ocean Governance strategy, led by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and coordinated by the UNEP - Regional Office for Africa.*
 - ❖ *It was mentioned that the Nairobi Convention Conference of the Parties (CoP) had agreed that the processes should run in parallel so that the Regional Ocean Governance strategy could contribute to the overall African Union Ocean Governance strategy. The regional ocean governance strategy would be detailed on the needs of the region, thus contributing to the implementation of the Africa Union Ocean Governance strategy. It was highlighted that there is close collaboration in the development of the two strategies.*
 - ❖ *South Africa requested for further discussions to ensure cooperation and clear synergies between the regional ocean governance strategy and the African Union Ocean Governance strategy development processes.*

Presentation and Discussion on the Multi-Stakeholders Initiative (MSI)

35. Dr Andrew highlighted that the proposed Multi-Stakeholders Initiative (MSI) would support the ROG development process, especially in bringing in private sector interests. He invited Mr Robin Farrington, Project Manager, GIZ – WIOGI to make a [presentation on the Multi-stakeholder Initiative \(MSI\)](#) for a sustainable blue economy in the WIO.

36. Mr Farrington highlighted that the WIOGI project seeks to strengthen cooperation between relevant actors at the regional and local levels for the protection and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity in the WIO region. He highlighted that the multi-stakeholder approach would help to harmonize the interests and perspectives of different groups, resulting in improved empowerment, collective responsibility and transparency and accountability.
37. He mentioned that the MSI would be an alliance between governments, business, civil society, research, and international organisations working towards a sustainable blue economy in the WIO at the regional and local levels.
38. The MSI would support the Nairobi Convention stakeholders by acting as a consultation mechanism for regional strategy/policy development, mobilising greater collective resources and expertise to support regional and local action, organising partners to support the piloting of regional policies and strategies, supporting dialogue, communications and advocacy for change at all levels, and acting as a regional learning mechanism and capacity developer for local sustainable blue economy partnerships and projects.
39. He concluded by requesting the Focal Points to participate in the MSI development to ensure it supported the implementation of government policies at the local level and the development of sector-specific projects, as well as contribute to the development of regional strategies. In order not to overwhelm the developing governance structure in terms of numbers of representatives, it was suggested that it may be desirable to invite countries with a special interest in being part of the MSI to participate in the preliminary governance structure; potentially with representation from an Island State, a Mainland state, and the Chair of the Bureau.
 - ❖ *South Africa requested the WIOGI project manager to explain how the WIO countries would benefit from the MSI.*
 - ❖ *It was mentioned that the project seeks to build a partnership to drive change at the local level by promoting good practices.*
 - ❖ *Madagascar mentioned that they were ready to engage and collaborate with the WIOGI project*
 - ❖ *Mauritius mentioned that they would have to discuss with the Ministry of Blue Economy before engaging with the WIOGI project.*
 - ❖ *The WIOGI team would develop information material for countries to use during internal consultations.*
 - ❖ *It was mentioned that there would be follow-ups with countries to confirm their willingness to participate in the initial MSI governance process.*

AOB

40. Madagascar requested the SAPPHIRE project management unit to expedite the transfer of funds for the demonstration projects. The FP mentioned that the amended SAPPHIRE project document had been shared with the Secretary-General for signing.
41. The Chair was appreciated for successfully guiding the 4th SAPPHIRE PSC meeting.
42. Ms Nyiratuza requested the Focal Points to follow up with the relevant Government officials to sign the amended SAPPHIRE project document.
43. Mauritius thanked the project management unit for organising a productive PSC meeting and requested it to expedite the review of the national Marine Ecosystems Diagnostic Analysis (MEDA) reports to ensure the activity is completed within the agreed timeframe. It was mentioned that the Government

had reviewed and approved the small scale funding agreement on oil spill consultation and sensitivity mapping and looked forward to signing the final agreement. He finalised by committing to work with Mr Ivica through the midterm review process. Ms Nyiratuza was requested to reshare the amended SAPPHIRE project document with Mauritius.

44. South Africa committed to having the amended SAPPHIRE project document signed by the end of the week and thanked the Chair for a successful meeting.
45. Tanzania mentioned that they were in the process of having the document signed.

Session III: Closing Remarks

46. Ms Nyiratuza thanked the Chair for moderating the PSC meeting well and appreciated the presenters for informative presentations. She reminded the focal points and partners of their commitment to support Mr Ivica through the MTR process. She emphasised that the Focal Points should work with all relevant national stakeholders to provide information on co-financing.
47. She mentioned that the PMU should wait for the MTR recommendations before deciding on the request for a no-cost extension. She appreciated the PMU for working on an increased budget to fund new demonstration projects at the national and regional levels. She expressed her confidence in the PMU in utilizing the GEF resources for the benefit of the WIO region.
48. Dr Andrew thanked all the participants for their input during the meeting and apologised for the extended meeting. He thanked UNDP for their support in executing the project. He thanked Madagascar for a well-coordinated meeting and appreciated all partners for participating in the meeting. He finalised by mentioning that the focal points would be engaged to confirm the people who would participate in the ROG Strategy development process and representation in the MSI, which are important aspects of the SAPPHIRE project.
49. Mr Jacques Rasoanaina thanked the participants for their cooperation throughout the meeting. He was optimistic that the meeting recommendations would contribute to achieving the project goals and objectives. He thanked UNDP for their support of the Nairobi Convention. He thanked the PMU and all Focal Points for the progress made in the implementation of the project.
50. There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 13h45 EAT.

Annex

1. Meeting Documents

The documents presented/discussed during the fourth SAPPHIRE PSC meeting can be accessed online by [clicking here](#).

2. Provisional Agenda

Time	Programme	Presenter/Facilitator
I. Opening Session		
15min	Opening Remark(s)	Nairobi Convention Secretariat (NCS), UNDP and Government of Madagascar
5min	Adoption of Agenda	Chair
II. Presentation and Discussion Session		
15min	Update on project progress and expenditure to date	NCS and SAPPHIRE Focal Points
20min	Progress in the Implementation of Demo Projects: Kenya and Tanzania	KMFRI and IMS
20min	Presentation, discussion and approval of Annual Work Plan and Budget for 2022	NCS and SAPPHIRE Focal Points
15min	Update on the ongoing mid-term review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possibility of a no-cost extension - Possibility of a new call for proposals - Requirement for reporting on co-financing 	NCS and SAPPHIRE Focal Points
10min	Break	All
15min	Presentation and Discussion on progress in the development of the regional Ocean Governance Strategy	NCS and All
20min	Presentation and Discussion on the Multi-Stakeholders Initiative (MSI)	NCS and All
10min	AOB	All
III. Closing Session		
05min	Closing Remarks	Chair, UNDP and NCS

3. List of Participants 4th SAPPHIRE PSC and Focal Points Meeting

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