

Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS): A Participatory and Multi-Stakeholder Process



2 Nov 2023



29 Nov 2023

Combined Report on “WIO Regional Ocean Governance Strategy: Online Strategy Check by the ROGS Task Force”

2 and 29 Nov 2023

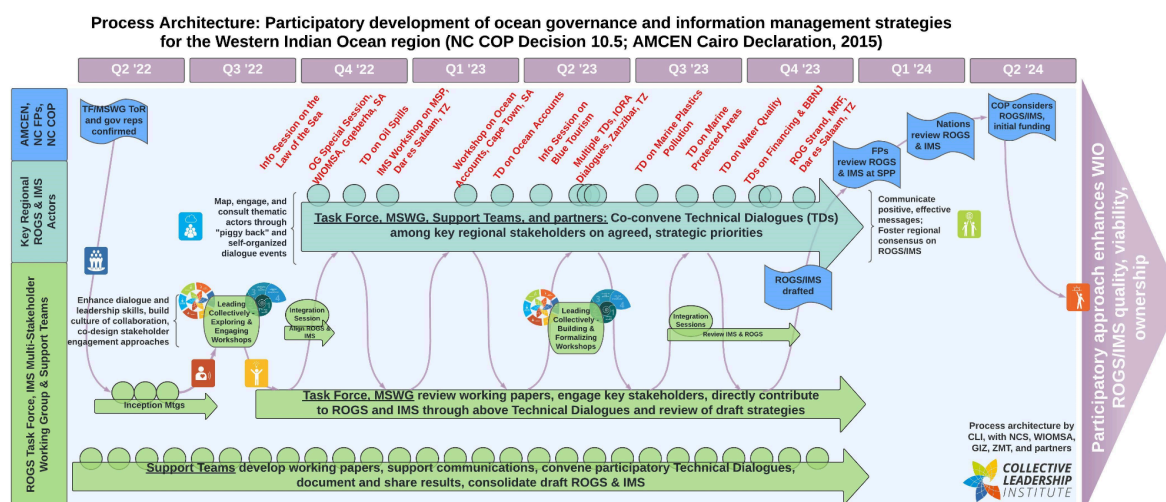
Introduction

Background

Inspired by, and contributing to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) Cairo Declaration of 2015, Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention adopted a Decision at their 10th Conference of Parties (COP) in November 2021 to develop a [Regional Ocean Governance Strategy \(ROGS\)](#) for the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) through **participatory processes**. Contracting Parties are Comoros, French Territories, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Seychelles, Somalia, and Tanzania.

The [Nairobi Convention Secretariat \(NCS\)](#) is actively supporting the implementation of this Decision in partnership with the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)* through the Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative ([WIOGI](#)), the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association ([WIOMSA](#)), and the Collective Leadership Institute ([CLI](#)), which together constitute the ROGS Support Team. Since May 2022, the ROGS Support Team has been working in tandem with a multi-actor ROGS Task Force including members from across the WIO region.

The ROGS Support Team is currently organizing the **co-development of ROGS content through a series of participatory Technical Dialogues among ROGS Task Force members and other key stakeholders**, shown as part of this process architecture:



The ROGS Support Team has completed the phase of collecting and harmonizing all the input together. The recent session was meant to verify some information and reach a consensus over the strategy document. This marks a critical juncture in the development of the Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the Western Indian Ocean (WIO).

The collective expertise and insights of the participants have played a pivotal role in shaping the strategy. Their active participation and feedback have been essential as the team works towards a comprehensive and inclusive strategy that reflects the diverse needs and priorities of the WIO region. Together, a robust and effective framework is being created to guide the sustainable management of ocean resources for years to come.

2 Nov Session Goals

- Reach a broad **Task Force consensus on key proposals in ROGS**, to ensure that, in so far as possible, the Task Force is 'speaking with one voice'
- Identify **any major outstanding issues** or areas where additional Technical Dialogues may be required
- **Prepare for the presentation of the draft ROGS** to the Nairobi Convention Focal Points on Monday, 6 November 2023

29 Nov Session Goals

- Reach a **broad Task Force consensus** on the actions proposed for each of the Cluster priorities addressed to date by the Task Force
- Identify the means to **address the outstanding priorities** and how to support any additional Technical Dialogues that may be required
- Review the means of **addressing cross-cutting issues**, in particular **Knowledge Management and Capacity Building**

Facilitators

- **Mr. Dominic Stucker** and **Ms. Mai ElAshmawy**, *Collective Leadership Institute (CLI)*

Participants

20 members of the ROGS Task Force and key stakeholders participated in the 2 November session and 17 in the 29 November session. For a complete list of participants for each session, please see the Annex.

Welcome and Opening

Dr. Tim Andrew from the Nairobi Convention Secretariat (NCS) welcomed Task Force members to both meetings. He expressed gratitude for everyone's invaluable contributions and active participation, which have been instrumental in shaping the Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the Western Indian Ocean (WIO).

He outlined the goals for the session, emphasizing the need to reach a broad consensus on the proposed actions for each of the Cluster priorities areas, identify means to tackle outstanding priorities, and determine how to support any additional Technical Dialogues that may be required. Tim also highlighted the importance of focusing on cross-cutting issues, particularly knowledge management and capacity building. He acknowledged the crucial role of the participants' expertise and commitment in creating a robust and effective framework that reflects the diverse needs and priorities of the WIO region and thanked them for their unwavering dedication to this important cause.

Approach for collecting feedback from ROGS Task Force

After the adoption of the agenda, CLI facilitators offered guidance to the Task Force on collecting inputs in shared documents to test for consensus and inform plenary discussion. On 2 November, the focus was primarily on **reviewing the ROGS framing and institutional arrangements**, while on 29 November the focus was primarily on **reviewing technical ROGS**

clusters, as well as institutional arrangement questions that arose at the intervening Marine Regions Forum.

Formatted versions of both ROGS Review Sheets can be found in Annex. Below, please find key highlights from each day.

2 November: Review of ROGS Framing and Institutional Arrangements

ROGS Framing: This discussion involved several aspects, with multiple participants providing their inputs. Here is a summary of their answers and comments:

1. **Draft decision for the COP:** Most participants agreed with the draft decision text for the COP. Two Task Force members suggested they would like to re-read the text in more detail and might propose changes.
2. **Structure of the ROGS:** The structure of the ROGS was agreed upon by participants.
3. **Vision, Objectives, Scope:** Specific suggestions to include Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) and to remove reference to Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) were made. Two participants suggested that the term "LME" could lead to confusion and proposed using "adjacent areas" instead. This was taken up and there was consensus on the vision, objectives, and scope.
4. **State of the WIO:** There was general agreement on the state of the WIO section. Suggestions for minor edits related to the section on tourism and fisheries, including unbundling of shipping, fisheries, and tourism.

Priority Clusters: An initial discussion on the 4 key ROGS Clusters took place, with participants providing their input. Here is a summary of their answers and comments:

1. **Maritime Security:** Participants agreed on the importance of maritime security for ocean governance. One Task Force member raised concerns about oil spills and the need to include input from key private sector players. Another emphasized the need to cite sources of information, especially when values are being debated. A third member suggested mentioning existing structures in the region that coordinate port activities.
2. **Blue Economy:** Again, Task Force members agreed on the importance of the blue economy as it relates to ocean governance. Suggestions included: highlighted the challenge of capturing the role of the informal economy in various sectors; including emerging aspects of the blue economy like marine bioprospecting, desalination, and renewable ocean energies; and aligning the definition of 'blue economy' with the AU definition for continental-level recognition.
3. **Natural Resources and Environment:** There was wide-spread agreement among Task Force members on the importance of this Cluster for ocean governance. Suggestions for improvements included: taking a deeper look into the section on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the role of private sector involvement in conservation; making linkages to the NC Flora and Fauna Protocol, which is currently being revised; focusing on all critical habitats; and linking to UNEP discussions on nature-based solutions for sustainable development.
4. **Knowledge Management and Capacity Building:** At least two Task Force members expressed concern at the relative lack of content in this section. They also requested that "Science" be re-integrated into the title of this Cluster.

For more detailed discussions on these Clusters, please see the results from the 29 November meeting in the next section.

Implementation Arrangements: Furthermore, the ROGS strategy check included discussions on implementation arrangements, with participants providing their input. Here is a summary of their responses and comments:

1. **Three Platforms:** Task Force members agreed on the necessity of the three ROGS platforms as previously discussed at the May 2023 IORA Dialogues in Zanzibar and presented again in this review meeting, namely Ocean Policy, Technical, and Finance Platforms. One member suggested the inclusion of other intergovernmental organizations in addition to RECs, with the platforms anchored in the AUC and/or UNECA. Others suggested looking within the WIO for regional-level hosts. Another member appreciated the idea of having space for the private sector and other stakeholders through the Technical Platform. There was general agreement that the Ocean Policy Platform would make its decisions by the Technical and Finance Platforms. Another Task Force member suggested that it would be valuable to bring the three platforms together on an occasional basis, possibly through AMCEN.
2. **Blue Finance Architecture:** Task Force members agreed on the Blue Finance Architecture as discussed at the October 2023 Technical Dialogue on a Regional Blue Finance Architecture. One participant asked about the inclusion of innovative financial mechanisms such as blue bonds and debt swaps, to which Kieran referred to the full background paper from the above Technical Dialogue.

Possible Missing Content: Finally, Task Force members discussed more open-ended poll questions. Here is a summary of their responses and comments:

1. **Key questions or priority issues not yet addressed by the ROGS:** One Task Force member suggested that Plastic Waste and Marine Litter might not be sufficiently addressed. Kieran referred to the results of the Technical Dialogue on Marine Plastics Pollution for the related content. Another member questioned whether Blue Tourism as a sector had been covered sufficiently and agreed with Kieran that the upcoming Marine Regions Forum may add insights relevant for the WIO that may be added to the ROGS.
2. **Additional Technical Dialogues suggested:** Several members suggested additional Technical Dialogues on topics not sufficiently covered yet in the ROGS: Climate Change, Fisheries, Capacity Building, Offshore Oil and Gas, Green Ports and Shipping, Maritime Security, and Coastal and Marine Waste.
3. **Other comments:** A Task Force member from PMAESA noted the growing trend of privatization of port facilities in the region and the importance of new operators understanding the impact of port operations on marine ecosystems. Other members agreed with the need for vigilance regarding port activities.

In general, all discussions showed a collaborative effort to refine the ROGS framing and content, with participants providing constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

29 November: Review of Priorities by Cluster

The Strategy Check by the ROGS Task Force on 29 November focused on the key content of its four cluster areas. **Mr. Hassani Ahamada, Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)** co-led the discussion on **Maritime Security**, which included topics such as cooperation on maritime security; prevention and preparedness for spillages; monitoring and control of activities in the ABNJ; and securing undersea telecom cables.

Ms. Sibylle Riedmiller from Chumbe Island Coral Park (CHICOP) Ltd. co-led the discussion on the **Blue Economy**. The topics under this cluster included sustainable tourism; sustainable small-scale fisheries; prevention, reduction and control of marine plastic pollution; managing offshore extractive industries; and sustainable ports, trade, and maritime connectivity.

The **Environment and Natural Resources** cluster was discussed, with topics such as clean and healthy marine and coastal water; marine protected areas; ratification and implementation of the BBNJ Treaty; conservation of biodiversity; conservation and rehabilitation of critical ecosystems; and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

Lastly, **Mr. Francis Marsac from IRD** co-led the discussion on **Knowledge Management, Science, and Capacity Building**. This cluster focused on science for governance and the information management strategy, as well as attendant capacity building.

After framing words from each cluster co-lead, participants were guided by facilitators to work collaboratively in a shared document to collect detailed feedback on ROGS content.

Maritime Security Cluster Summary Discussion

Cooperation on Maritime Security: Task Force members agreed on enhanced regional cooperation on maritime security being a ROGS priority, adding comments on the importance of monitoring ship traffic; countering piracy; and addressing IUU fishing, while building attendance capacities among regional actors. Members also anonymously supported the proposed actions on

1. Reinforcing institutional arrangements,
2. Preparedness and response plans for potential maritime security incidents, and
3. Financing for supporting rapid emergency action.

One member suggested linking with the private sector to support monitoring and reporting. The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) was proposed to take the leadership role in convening stakeholders and initiating or updating regional cooperation plans. An IOC representative offered to facilitate communication between IOC and regional centres.

Prevention of Spillages: Involved Task Force members all agreed with the ROGS priority on the development of (or implementation of existing) regional plans to prevent spillages of oil and other pollutants, including the suggestion to involve the private sector and blue tourism associations in monitoring and reporting on remote areas and MPAs. Members all agreed with the need to implement existing draft regional contingency plans, including the

1. Creation of special areas for navigation in ecologically sensitive areas,

2. Designation of 'places of refuge' in the event of spillage, and
3. Enhanced tracking and reporting by tankers and other bulk carriers.

One member suggested taking stock of the countries that do have such contingency plans and another encouraged building on the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Jeddah Amendment. The IOC was proposed to take a leadership role in joint actions together with the IMO, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, and other regional centres of excellence for oil spill prevention and preparedness, including WIOMSA providing technical support as necessary.

Preparedness for Spillages: Task Force members discussed and agreed with the priority of approving the regional oil spill preparedness plan to enable its implementation with clear roles and responsibilities of organisations involved. Key actions proposed, discussed, and agreed involved organizing an approval process for the regional plan, including addressing commitments and resourcing arrangements. A member emphasized the need to assist WIO states in updating their national preparedness plans and supporting those without plans to develop them. The Nairobi Convention Secretariat or a designated working group was suggested to initiate the approval process, working closely with key stakeholders such as the IOC, IMO, the Funds, industry organizations, and regional port organizations. One member encouraged involvement of the private sector, including in monitoring and reporting.

Monitoring and Control of Activities in the ABNJ: The discussion revolved around the monitoring and control of activities in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). The point was made that both coastal and landlocked countries have legitimate interests in the ABNJ. ROGS Task Force members agreed with the key priority “to ensure that the collective authority of the region is effectively articulated and implemented in relation to activities in the ABNJ,” with one suggesting the need to make linkages to the Knowledge Management and Capacity Building Cluster. The key proposed action, with which present Task Force members agreed, is to convene a regional dialogue with international organizations that have jurisdiction over activities in the ABNJ. The dialogue would aim to discuss:

1. Their programme of action in the WIO;
2. How they plan to cooperate or develop synergies in areas of overlapping interest in the WIO;
3. Establishing a permanent WIO cooperation platform and programme of regional coordination backed with WIO-specific MOUs between the Conventions or their Secretariats, and
4. Formulating joint positions on deep sea mineral exploration and extraction.

There was a suggestion to engage cruise ship operators for control of effluents, as well as monitoring and reporting. The leadership for these initiatives is expected to come from the NC Secretariat with the possible support of the IOC.

Secure Undersea Telecom Cables: The Western Indian Ocean's undersea telecommunications cables are crucial for regional governance, security, finance, and trade; about 95% of all international IT transactions pass through these cables. Task Force members agreed with the priority to “Secure the integrity of the regional undersea cables network,” as well as with the proposed actions to:

1. Recognize the cables as critical regional infrastructure and part of geopolitical arrangements.

2. Recognize the risks to the IT cables network.
3. Follow up on work done by the Indian Ocean Commission on a framework for assessing risks, building resilience, providing an effective legal framework, and ensuring regional cooperative actions.

The Indian Ocean Commission is suggested to take the lead in these efforts, given its interest and work to date. One Task Force member wondered if there are any regional IT or communications organisations that should be involved and/or any related agreements that should be referenced.

Blue Economy Cluster Summary Discussion

Sustainable Tourism: The discussion revolved around the priority of promoting sustainable blue tourism in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. ROGS Task Force members present agreed with the priority to “Identify practical, cost-effective regional actions to promote sustainable blue tourism and establish means to implement these actions.” One member suggested starting with integrated governance, such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), as the blue economy framework is fundamentally about cross-sectoral and multi-thematic governance. He also emphasised the need to consider the African Union's definition of the blue economy, which includes freshwater systems. Another member highlighted the importance of government leadership on creating investment, legal, and regulatory environments to attract and incentivize best practice investors. She also suggested regulating access for unsustainable mass tourism and massive infrastructure development, and formulating policies to attract small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) investors as a way to also contribute to inclusive Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs).

Task Force members acknowledge the potential of tourism as a key non-extractive pillar in a sustainable ocean economy, which can directly support conservation and restoration of the natural environment, and revitalize cultural heritage and communities. However, they also caution against the risks of unsustainable tourism infrastructure and operations, cultural erosion, self-destructive market dynamics, volatility, high dependence on tourism income for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), user conflicts between sectors, and land conflicts.

The proposed actions, for which there was wide-spread agreement, were:

1. Establish a programme of stakeholder consultations to address the priority.
2. Prepare a set of regional strategic briefs that analyse and prioritise cost-effective regional actions and identifies the possible sources of national, external, and industry financing. These briefs may include use of tourism satellite accounts and tourism scenarios.
3. Building on existing initiatives, consider the establishment of a robust regional working group with strong industry representation to focus these efforts and maintain impetus.

Task Force members also agreed on the need for leadership, requesting the NC Secretariat, in close collaboration with UNECA and the WTO, to convene key stakeholders to identify such leadership.

Building Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Those ROGS Task Force members who were present agreed with the priority to “build sustainable small-scale and coastal fisheries.” The proposed actions, with which there was also general agreement, were:

1. Prioritise economic and social interventions for reforms based on social, economic and biological scientific advice and community-level, long-term consensus vision for the fishery.
2. Build an integrated portfolio of fisheries initiatives both at national and regional levels to create synergies, avoid duplication, generate partnerships and provide consensus on objectives, processes, impacts, timescales, and continuity of support systems.

Several relevant comments were made by the participants. One emphasized the need for more specific language around co-management of fisheries, as well as reference to climate change resilience for small-scale fisheries communities. In this respect, another proposed more capacity building, supportive policy, and investment in fishing communities, especially regarding fisheries management and accessing regional markets. Another Task Force member proposed incentivizing partnerships between SME coastal and marine tourism operators and local artisanal fishers for the establishment and management of LMMAs. She also suggested involving SME coastal and marine tourism operators to help monitor IUU fishing, while creating and/or enforcing laws to ban fishing and trade of endangered species. A last discussant suggested reducing conflicts within the sector and providing more support for preventing IUU fishing.

The Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission was proposed as a key convenor of national stakeholders and external development partners with a strong regional engagement in fisheries, coastal communities, and focus on SME development, social reform, and other relevant areas.

Building Sustainable Tuna and HMS Fisheries: The ROGS priority focus on the “development and management of a sustainable WIO tuna fishery with a secure and more equitable sharing of benefits” was agreed by Task Force members. The proposed actions were also discussed, specifically the need to:

1. Support regional initiatives to ensure economically sustainable fisheries for highly migratory tuna species, including through the SWIOFC, joint actions in the IOTC and initiatives by SWIOTUNA and the WIO industry stakeholders which are beneficially owned in WIO countries.
2. Link the actions required to other ROGS priorities, including on maritime security and compliance, climate change, a circular economy for waste fishing gear, scientific advice, capacity building, and ocean accounts.

3. Consider parallel actions, as appropriate, in relation to the effective management and equitable distribution of benefits from sustainable deepwater fisheries. (not HMS).

The discussion emphasised the need for regional cooperation and coordination in managing sustainable tuna fisheries in the WIO, with a focus on equitable benefit sharing. One member pointed out the need to include the differences and interactions between bottom and pelagic fisheries.

While SWIOFC was identified as a key coordinating body, there were also calls to include other organizations like the IOC and SIOFA to ensure comprehensive management of both coastal and high seas resources.

Prevention, Reduction, and Control of Marine Plastic Pollution: The ROGS proposes to implement a regional marine plastic pollution (MPP) action plan. Task Force members agreed with the priority to “prevent, reduce, and control marine plastic pollution in the region,” and engaged in an animating discussion on proposed actions on:

1. Preparation, review, and support for implementation of national action plans on MPP.
2. Shared knowledge and capacity.
3. Alignment of policies and measures, including on the responsibilities of industry, on technical definitions, standards and trade classification for plastics, on consensus positions in the global plastics treaty and related WTO trade and the environment negotiations.
4. Access to affordable finance for implementation of national action plans and investment in a circular economy and its enabling environment.

The regional action plan also emphasizes the need to anticipate future negotiations and be operationally prepared. It supports the WIO governments in joining the High Ambition Coalition in INC-3 and coordinating with big donors for continued investment in safe urban and rural drinking water. The plan encourages the banning of PET and other plastic water bottles, supporting plastic bag bans and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and preserving glass bottling systems of soda drinks.

The plan also aims to develop investment policies that attract and incentivize tourism development with minimal MPP and ecological footprints. This includes encouraging zero single-use-plastic (SUP) policies, serving local cuisine and produce, promoting "Farm to Fork" supply chains from local markets, and avoiding the purchase of plastic-packaged food, drinks, and utensils.

The EXPLOI project, developed by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), is a regional project aimed at reducing and recycling plastic waste. It focuses on improving knowledge of the impacts of marine plastic pollution, environmental education and awareness of plastic pollution, and the development of a regional circular economy. However, caution is advised regarding false solutions concerning "waste-to-energy" and "chemical recycling of plastic" due to the presence of toxic chemicals in recycled plastics

Task Force members agreed with the proposal for the NC Secretariat to establish a dedicated task force to implement the regional action plan. The task force will include representatives and experts from various stakeholders involved in implementation, including industry, municipal authorities, international trade, waste-pickers, leading NGOs, consumer groups, financial partners, and the RECS.

Managing Offshore Extractive Industries: Regarding this sensitive topic, no ROGS Task Force members present explicitly agreed or disagreed with the proposed priority to “apply the Africa Mining Vision of ‘Transparent, equitable and optimal exploitation of mineral resources to underpin broad-based sustainable growth and socio-economic development’ to offshore extractive industries and related shore-based infrastructure in the WIO.” A member emphasised the need to raise more awareness of oil and gas risk management, to take a precautionary approach, and to be responsible in cases of pollution accidents. Another member voiced concerns about pollution resulting from seismic surveying and its impact on tourism and marine ecosystems.

Task Force members generally agreed with the key, proposed actions to:

1. Build national and regional capacity for SEAs (Strategic Action Plans) and EIAs (Environmental Impact Assessments), including regional expertise to interpret and assess the studies prepared by investors.
2. Support establishment of verifiable environmental baselines and indicators prior to extraction facilities.
3. Consider, in association with key stakeholders, the creation of a facility to provide independent environmental, social, and economic assessment of major investments that are likely to impact the coastal and marine environment.
4. Identify transboundary offshore oil and gas basins and principles and best practices for equitable allocation.
5. Support independent monitoring, assessment, and transparent reporting of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of extraction.

Task Force members agreed with these proposed actions, but emphasised the importance of remaining aware of conflicting economic policy choices, such as balancing blue tourism with the potential environmental impacts of extractive industries

Task Force members agreed that the NC Secretariat should convene key stakeholders to establish a process to support implementation of consensus actions.

Deep Seabed Minerals: As above, this topic is quite sensitive. No Task Force members present explicitly agreed or disagreed with the stated priority to engage in “Regional capacity building and institutional development to ensure the WIO region can benefit from any deep sea mining (DSM) and protect WIO ocean ecosystems.” Comments on this statement included a call by three Task Force members for a moratorium on DSM in the WIO. One of these Task Force members pointed out that it may not be possible to “benefit from DSM *and* protect WIO ocean ecosystems.” Another expressed concern about calling for a moratorium, as doing so might “be a real barrier to the broader adoption of the strategy by regional policy stakeholders.”

The proposed actions included:

1. Make full use of the capacity building and advisory support provided by the ISA and other organisations, including to review legal and institutional requirements at national level.
2. Take measures to ensure policy coherence at AU, REC and national levels, including formulation of a common position in international fora (such as the ISA, IORA).
3. Consider means of engagement in any exploration activities in the Indian Ocean.

Only one Task Force member explicitly indicated support for these actions, also calling for the addition of “Design marine spatial plans based on the environment to ensure the sustainability of the Indian Ocean's regional ecological capital.”

The leadership of this initiative is proposed to be the Indian Ocean Commission, in close collaboration with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat and the African Union. Two Task Force members indicated their support, none disagreed, and there were no further comments offered.

Environment and Natural Resources Summary of Discussion:

Clean and healthy marine and coastal waters: The ROGS proposes “to take action to prevent, reduce, and control marine, estuarine, coastal, and ocean water pollution” in WIO. The priority focus, with which all Task Force members present agreed, is to ensure that “water quality in the WIO region meets international standards by 2035.”

The proposed actions, with which Task Force members also agreed, are:

1. Adopting the Strategic Framework for Coastal and Marine Water Quality Management in the WIO Region and the Guidelines for Setting Water and Sediment Quality Targets for Coastal and Marine areas.
2. Elevating the WIOSAP – Regional Task Force for Water, Sediment, and Biota Quality - to the level of a NC Regional Task Force on Water Quality (WQTF).
3. Mandating the WQTF to coordinate regional water quality activities, facilitate national actions, collect and compile standardized regional information on water quality, and identify pollution hotspots and constraints to achieving water quality targets.
4. Contributing to the formulation of regional projects or initiatives to reduce water pollution.
5. Considering the progressive introduction of mandatory water quality reporting for major hotspots under the NC Land-Based Sources of Pollution (LBS) Protocol.

An additional comment was made on the need to provide safe drinking water in urban and rural contexts, pointing out that tap water usage would make possible moving away from bottled water.

The proposed leadership for these actions is the NC Secretariat upon the direction of the COP and with the support of the existing Task Force and partners. There was general agreement with this proposal.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Conservation of Biodiversity: A Technical Dialogue on MPAs was held on 9 August 2023 and it was noted that the generated content is being integrated into the ROGS. It was also noted that a separate Technical Dialogue on

Conservation of Biodiversity would also be valuable. Additional comments by Task Force members noted the following.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is encouraging policy development and best practices for Privately Protected Areas (PPAs) to help achieve the 30x30 target set by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The 30x30 target aims to protect 30% of land and ocean by 2030. The CBD has called for private conservation to play a stronger role in achieving these Biodiversity Targets.

The Kunming Commitment No.5 suggests adopting other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM). This includes creating enabling investment policies, legal and regulatory environments for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the blue tourism sector to directly support marine conservation. These operators, who are often on the ground, can build local alliances with other resource users and may invest directly in marine conservation. In the WIO, new destinations pioneered by SME investors represent about 90% of tourism investments. These have more local ownership and better potential for scaling up compared to corporate or chain hotels.

The WIO, with about 143 MPAs and biodiversity hotspots, is identified as a potential area for the implementation of PPAs. Despite many of these being "paper parks" with great win-win potential, they can have dedicated legal frameworks, management institutions, and budgets. Private sector SMEs can invest in PPAs and OECMs, forming partnerships with MPAs, local communities, tourism operators, and NGOs for inclusive and effective MPA management.

Further recommendations included the development of large marine protected areas carried by one or more States together in whole or in part in the ABNJ zone, including the seabed and seamounts of the Indian Ocean. It was also suggested to build a useful network of protected areas that takes into account the interstitial spaces between these areas. Finally, raising awareness of payment for environmental services rather than encouraging industrial activities with regional risks was also recommended.

Knowledge Management and Capacity Building Cluster: Summary Discussion

Initial discussion on this cluster included the following, while noting that a dedicated Technical Dialogue in early 2024 would help further refine content. The Knowledge Management and Capacity Building Cluster aims to support scientific activities that enhance understanding of coastal and marine ecosystems. This is achieved by integrating knowledge from various disciplines such as natural, physical, technological, and social sciences. The goal is to provide key information for policy-makers to design or align public policies for the ocean.

The cluster's priority is to ensure a knowledge-based approach in public decision-making, mobilize resources for monitoring at sea and coastal systems, and foster institutional arrangements that enable effective communication between the scientific community and policy makers.

The cluster's actions include promoting the pivotal role of scientific knowledge in strategic sectors in the WIO, fostering capacity building for early career scientists, and mobilizing financial and educational resources to address challenges in the management of transboundary and shared fish stocks, ecosystems, and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

The cluster identifies several challenges where scientific and other sectoral knowledge is needed, including sustainable fisheries, combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, understanding the interaction between marine megafauna and human activities, monitoring climate and anthropogenic impacts on marine activities and biodiversity, climate change adaptation, capacity building and academic curriculum, bathymetric surveys, and providing scientific advisory support for agreements and institutional arrangements for the peaceful co-management of natural marine areas.

The cluster seeks support from organizations such as the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, IOC, WIOMSA, FARI, etc., to encourage cooperation between research institutes, universities, and provide means of communication on a regional exchange platform. The main regional scientific organizations, institutions, associations, and platforms should be involved as marine and coastal science actors to ensure the strengthening of the scientific part of governance support.

One Task Force member emphasized the importance of reintroducing "science" in the title of the cluster and highlighted the pivotal role of scientific knowledge in sectors such as fisheries assessments, marine conservation, and climate change impacts monitoring. The ROGS Advisor, Mr. Kieran Kelleher, encouraged a focus on managing science in the region, including communications of science to policy, and organizing capacity building at a regional level. Mr. Tim Andrew, from the ROGS Support Team, suggested enhancing existing processes on science to policy processes that already exist, e.g., through Science to Policy Platform and WIOMSA. Mr. Dominic Stucker, another ROGS Support Team member, encouraged making reference to the Information Management Strategy (IMS) in this Cluster.

29 November: Institutional Arrangements Issues from the Marine Regions Forum

The Marine Regions Forum (MRF) took place between the first Strategy Check on 2 November and the second one on 29 November. Several ROGS-relevant discussions took place at the MRF, which were shared with all present.

Related to all ROGS Platforms (Policy, Financial, and Technical), especially the proposed Policy Platform, the question of "How can we best balance ownership and responsibility for ROGS implementation among WIO countries and RECs / regional institutions?" was discussed with the following results:

- Include a "feedback loop," especially with Contracting Parties of the NC, e.g. through an annual forum convened by the NCS among NC FPs and RECs / regional institutions
- Circulate topical policy documents to countries and relevant institutions for consultation and feedback
- Build capacity among RECS / regional institutions to offer above feedback to NC Focal Points, e.g. identify and/or hire individuals within RECS / regional institutions that have an explicit ROG focus

- Draw on networks like WIOMPAN and other regional projects taking place, i.e. GEMS Africa, Copernicus, to support the RECs by supplying key policy-relevant outcomes from their work
- Be sure that ROGS Platforms are complementary to existing platforms, especially in relationship to institutions that have ROG-related mandates
- Do not talk about different ROGS platforms in a hierarchical manner; they will work best when they work together

Related to the proposed Technical Platform, the question of “How can we best ensure inclusion of civil society groups in the Technical Platform?” was discussed with the following results:

- Hold an annual or bi-annual “Local Voices for Regional Ocean Governance Forum” to integrate local perspectives into our regional efforts
- Create a “Regional LMMA Platform” such that locally managed marine areas can speak with one, more influential voice
- Consider engaging environmental civil society bodies in our work

A Task Force member asked the related question “How to identify and engage more private sector representatives / participants in the ROGS co-development and implementation process?” Task Force members agreed that it is important to be aware of diverse perspectives and potential conflicts of interest within certain levels of the private sector, as well as within other sectors more broadly. A ROGS Support Team member remarked that, for the co-development process, many private sector individuals were approached, but turned down the invitation to participate. This gap that could be filled through the Technical Platform. There was general agreement that including regional level private sector interests is important.

Participant Feedback Summary

At the end of the sessions, participant feedback showed **an average goal achievement of 4.6/ 5.0**. Furthermore, **the organization and facilitation of the sessions was scored at 4.8/ 5.0**. In an optional comment field, one participant remarked:

“Through diverse participation, the development of the ROG strategy looks to be highly enriched. We have a multitude of experts from all levels contributing to the development and direction of the strategy. The process would not be possible without the guiding leadership of the facilitators who encourage in-depth discussions and input. I look forward to participating in onward technical dialogues to complete remaining sections. All the best for our further development of the ROGS!”

Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Dr. Tim Andrew from NCS closed the meeting, emphasizing these key upcoming events in the ROGS co-development process:

The onward ROGS co-development process

- **4 Dec:** NC Focal Points and RECs Meeting, Maputo, Mozambique
- **5-7 Dec:** WIO Science to Policy Platform, Maputo, Mozambique
 - *The ROGS Comment Document will remain open for Task Force inputs through 8 Dec*
- **Dec and first months of 2024:** Possible onward Technical Dialogues to further fill out ROGS content
- **May or June 2024:** Nairobi Convention Conference of Parties (COP)

This report is posted to the Nairobi Convention Community of Practice to enable a period of public consultation. If you wish to participate, [please sign up for the Nairobi Convention Community of Practice here](#) and add your comments. Thank you!

Together with public comments, the content generated during this Session will be integrated into the ROGS and delivered in draft form to Nairobi Convention Focal Points leading up to the Nairobi Convention COP in early 2024.

Learn more about the ROGS Task Force and participatory strategy development process [on the Nairobi Convention website.](#)

Annex

Participants in 2 Nov ROGS Strategy Check Webinar

	Name	Organization	Country
1	Florence Galletti	Institute of Research for sustainable Development (IRD)	France
2	Francis Marsac	IRD	France
3	Kieran Kelleher	ROGS Advisor	Ireland
4	Carol Mutiso	GIZ WIOGI	Kenya
5	Yvonne Waweru	GIZ WIOGI	Kenya
6	Timothy Andrew	Nairobi Convention Secretariat (NCS)	Kenya
7	Bonface Mutisya	NCS	Kenya
8	Melisa Wandia Mureithi	NCS	Kenya
9	Mubarak Sodha	Port Management Association for Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA)	Kenya
10	Gina Bonne	Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)	Mauritius
11	Nived Seenundun	Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change	Mauritius
12	Ramchurn Seenauth	MESWMCC	Mauritius
13	Henna Ramdour	MESWMCC	Mauritius
14	Moniz Munguambe	Ministério do Mar, Águas Interiores e Pescas (MIMAIP)	Mozambique
15	Mohamed Ali Muse	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	Somalia
16	Yamkela Mngxe	Department of Environmental Affairs, Ocean and Coasts Branch	South Africa
17	Alex Benkenstein	South African Institute of International Affairs	South Africa
18	Dominic Stucker	Collective Leadership Institute	Spain
19	Immaculate Sware Semesi	National Environment Management Council	Tanzania

20	Sibylle Riedmiller	Chumbe Island Coral Park (CHICOP), Ltd	Tanzania / Zanzibar
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Participants in 29 Nov ROGS Strategy Check Webinar

	Name	Organization	Country
1	Hassani Ahamada Soilihi	Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)	Comoros
2	Mai ElAshmawy	Collective Leadership Institute	Egypt
3	Florence Galletti	Institute of Research for sustainable Development (IRD)	France
4	Francis Marsac	IRD	France
5	Kieran Kelleher	ROGS Advisor	Ireland
6	Agnes Mukami Muriuki	Nairobi Convention Secretariat (NCS)	Kenya
7	Timothy Andrew	NCS	Kenya
8	Bellinda Akello	National Environment Tribunal	Kenya
9	Mubarak Sodha	Port Management Association for Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA)	Kenya
10	Sharon Gerry	Ministry of Environment, Energy, and Climate Change	Seychelles
11	Mohamed Ali Muse	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	Somalia
12	Alex Benkenstein	South African Institute of International Affairs	South Africa
13	Dominic Stucker	Collective Leadership Institute	Spain
14	Immaculate Sware Semesi	National Environment Management Council	Tanzania
15	Julius Francis	University of Dar es Salaam	Tanzania
16	Obakeng Momelu	WIOMSA	Tanzania
17	Sibylle Riedmiller	Chumbe Island Coral Park (CHICOP), Ltd	Tanzania / Zanzibar