



WIOSAP Inception Workshop for the Government of Comoros, Moroni 25th Feb 2020

1.0 Background

The WIOSAP project was set up and is being implemented as a partnership project. Various management and coordination structures were proposed to support participatory, effective and efficient project implementation. At National Level, National Implementation Committees (NICs) have full oversight over all project interventions and perform the following roles. The Workshop will comprise of members of the National Implementation Committee (NIC) and key stakeholders for purposes of discussions on the: MPA Outlook Chapter for Comoros and the proposed demo project on MPA Planning for the country.

2.0 Roles of National Implementation Committees

National Implementation Committees are established to support implementation of project interventions in different/respective countries at national level. The Committees are chaired by respective Focal Points and perform the following roles:

- Have **oversight** on in-country project interventions
- **Review and recommend concepts** at National level for onward submission to the PMU
- Support in **mobilizing the pledged country co-financing** in the WIOSAP Programme document towards supporting projects submitted from countries
- Ensure appropriate **stakeholder engagement** in approved project interventions at National level
- Regularly **update the PMU on progress of project** implementation at National level
- Assess and recommend to the PMU any **technical or further support** required to ensure successful implementation of funded project interventions
- **Raise awareness of the WIOSAP Project** at the national inter-ministerial committee to support project implementation

The major outputs of the National Implementation Committee include:

- Recommended concepts/proposals for demo projects
- Operational NIC evidenced through meeting reports
- Co-financing reports in relation to WIOSAP demo projects implementation
- Awareness materials for WIOSAP project at national level
- Reports on profiling of WIOSAP at inter-ministerial coordination committees
- Progress reports on WIOSAP demo projects implementation
- One national stakeholder workshop on lessons learnt on WIOSAP evidenced through a workshop report

3.0 Objectives of the Comoros NIC

A call for proposals was made across the three technical Components of the Project (i.e. A, B and C) across the region. The Government of Comoros requested for technical support in the development of a proposal aligned to their national priorities. The Secretariat contracted the services of a consultant who worked with relevant partners/institutions and developed a proposal which had been reviewed by regional experts in two rounds and comments incorporated by the consultant and lead institution. Additionally, Comoros had also cleared its national chapter for the MPA Outlook being finalized under the WIOSAP Project.

The overall objective of the meeting was to formally launch and operationalize the NIC for Comoros, while the specific objectives were to:

1. Report on the progress of the WIOSAP Project since inception to the NIC members



2. Seek for any further stakeholder input into the proposal as will be led by the lead institution
3. Enhance awareness of the MPA Outlook chapter for the country and the link with the proposed project in 2 above on MPAs management planning

4.0 Opening of the Meeting

- Mr. Ambadi Issouf welcomed the participants and called the meeting to order and asked all the participants to introduce themselves.
- Jared Bosire, the WIOSAP Project Manager thanked the Government of Comoros for convening the first ever WIOSAP National Implementation Committee, which also includes the SAPPHIRE NICC members, an important aspect for integration of the interventions of the two projects at national level. He noted that this meeting should have been held much earlier but it had been put on hold several times for various logistical reasons. He emphasized that the Convention through various projects is working with Contracting Parties to address various national priorities towards the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources. It is therefore the responsibility of the government and partners to identify what these priorities are for each country within the scope of the projects. He concluded his remarks by saying that he looked forward to the NIC discussing the prioritized demo project for Comoros, endorsing it and thus allow it to be considered by the PSC as it had already undergone technical review by regional experts.
- Mr Abdoulmalik Said Mkandzile, Deputy Director General of Environment and Forests noted the as an Island nation, the wealth of the Comoros is in the sea including its EEZ. Marine resources are a main source of livelihoods for the people of Comoro besides agriculture. He appreciated the commitment of the Nairobi Convention in working with the Contracting Parties to improve the healthy of these marine resources which are continuously threatened as evidenced through the WIOSAP and SAPPHIRE projects. He noted that the convening of this workshop is another step towards a regional approach to a common issue. Our member countries cannot, on their own, respond to all facets of the complex issue of the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems. This is why a regional program is essential in order to coordinate common actions whenever possible, to share experiences, or to pool efforts and resources. He concluded his remarks by reaffirming that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy and the Environment through the General Directorate of Environment and Forests is therefore fully committed to its mission of implementing voluntary commitments under SDG 14 and the 2030 agenda in general. He declared the one-day workshop officially open.

5.0 WIOSAP Project/Other Convention Opportunities

- The Project Manager presented on the background of the WIOSAP project as a successor to the WIOLAB project, under which a SAP was developed and approved by all Contracting Parties. The WIOSAP is thus implementing some of the SAP priorities. He highlighted the goal of the project which is: to improve and maintain the environmental health of the region's coastal and marine ecosystems through improved management of land-based stresses; while the specific project objective is to: *reduce impacts from land-based sources and activities and sustainably manage critical coastal-riverine ecosystems through the implementation of the WIO-SAP priorities with the support of partnerships at national and regional levels.*
- The PM further highlighted the project Components as below:



Component A: Sustainable management of critical habitats

Component A focuses on the protection, restoration and management of critical coastal habitats and ecosystems. This component recognizes the enormous value of healthy coastal and marine habitats for the well-being of people in the WIO region. The component provides an agreed regional approach for the participating countries to launch specific actions to achieve targets defined in the SAP. It addresses the SAP Environmental Quality Objective: critical coastal habitats in the WIO Region protected, restored and managed for sustainable use.

Component B: Improved water quality

The degradation of the quality of the coastal and marine waters in the WIO Region is a growing problem as elaborated in the TDA. The main source and cause of water quality degradation in the region is the discharge of untreated municipal wastewater and effluents. This in some areas is already threatening human health and integrity of the coastal and marine ecosystems. Monitoring pollutant loads and treatment of wastewater discharges to acceptable standards will help sustain ecosystem functions and the livelihoods of the local communities.

Component C: Sustainable management of river flows

Component C aims at promoting wise management of river basins in the WIO Region through implementation of a suite of activities for building the capacity in the WIO Region for Environmental Flows Assessments (EFA) and implementation through adoption of appropriate EFA methodologies and their application in specific river basins in the region. The component addresses the WIO-SAP Environmental Quality Objective: River flows in the WIO region are wisely and sustainably managed.

Component D: Governance and Regional Collaboration

Component D will focus on strengthening governance and awareness in the WIO region with a view to facilitating sustainable management of critical coastal ecosystems and habitats. Inadequacies in governance frameworks are considered to be one of the main root causes of the degradation of the critical coastal and marine ecosystems in the WIO region. This has negative impacts on the people and the economies of countries in the region. The component focuses on the SAP Environmental Quality Objective that aims at ensuring that 'by 2015, stakeholders in the WIO region will collaborate effectively at the regional level in addressing transboundary challenges. The component addresses one of the main root causes of degradation of the coastal and marine environment in the WIO Region.

- The PM further informed the meeting that a call of concepts and proposals on demonstration had already been made under Components A-C and Comoros submitted one concept whose proposal will be a subject in this meeting.
- The PM also informed the meeting on other opportunities available from the Convention including the SAPPHERE, EU-MEAs and the SIDA partnerships project with FAO, which all have great synergy with the WIOSAP project.

6.0 WIOSAP Progress

- The WIOSAP Project Manager presented on the key highlights on progress for the WIOSAP, which included: Establishment of National and regional coordination structures i.e. National Implementation Committees and Regional Task Forces; Approval of



demonstration projects; Development of key project Guidelines/Toolkits for application in demo project implementation and wider regional application; Baselines for SDG 14.2 and 14.5: under the Critical Habitats and MPA Outlooks being developed; Capacity building in leadership, marine spatial planning, LBSA protocol, Environmental Flow Assessment; Partnership development with RECs, PMAESA among others; ICZM Protocol negotiation finalized and support of the Science to Policy Forum through which key policy decisions have been made.

7.0 Comoros Demo Project

- The government of Comoros had requested the Secretariat through the WIOSAP project to provide it with technical support in the development of a full proposal for consideration for funding. Jude Bijoux from Seychelles was hired by the Secretariat for this purpose.
- Jude presented the proposal entitled: *Sustainable management of shallow marine habitats in the Comoros through improved management planning and rehabilitation of degraded sites* with the following objectives:
 - Have the site management plans, inclusive of spatial zoning designs, for the four MPAs completed and approved by the General Directorate of Environment and Forest before the end of the project
 - One ha of mangrove and 1 ha of seagrass ecosystems restored through community involvement by the end of the project
 - To enhance capacities (capacity building/enhancement) of local communities in environmental conservation
 - Prepare and disseminate at least five different types of education and awareness materials focused on the National Parks of the Comoros, shallow marine habitats of Comoros and on the rehabilitation of marine ecosystems by the end of the project
- The consultant emphasized that the proposal had been developed by working closely with relevant government agencies and stakeholders.
- The NIC members acknowledged the importance of the proposal especially in supporting the government better manage its MPAs and meet its SDG 14 commitments.
- The members noted that waste management is a serious challenge in the country and asked whether WIOSAP could support the development of a demo project on waste management especially land-based pollution to the marine environment. The PM indicated that this request will be further discussed with the Focal Point.
- The meeting also asked whether NIC can receive support from the Convention to operationalize its operations. The PM indicated that this is possible and an SSFA could be developed to address this need.
- The NIC members approved the proposal and appreciated the support from the Convention through the technical expertise provided.
- The PM indicated that the proposal will now be presented to the PSC for consideration and final decision making.

8.0 Comoros MPA Chapter

- The PM gave a background to the development a regional MPA Outlook as baseline on SDG14.5. He highlighted on how the country experts were selected, development of the Outlook, involvement of the Governments through the Focal Points for review, validation and approval of the country chapters.
- Mr. Houssoyni Housseni who is the lead expert for the Comoros presented on the content and focus of the country chapter



- The NIC members asked to know whether the territory of Comoros has been well defined to include Mayotte. Houssoyni confirmed in the affirmative.
- The NIC endorsed the country's MPA chapter.

9.0 Outcomes of the meeting:

1. NIC fully operationalized
2. Enhanced awareness of the WIOSAP and other Convention projects
3. Appreciation of progress made under WIOSAP by NIC members
4. Relevant input into the demo project proposal and enhanced national ownership and link to the MPA Outlook chapter for the country.

10.0 Institutional visits

The WIOSAP Project Manager also had follow up discussions with senior officers from various government agencies as below:

- Mr Ali Mohamed Youssouf, Deputy Director of Fisheries
- Mr Ahmed Abdoul, Head of Oceanographic Research Service, National Center for Documentation and Scientific Research (CNDRS)
- Dr Soule Hamidou, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, University of the Comoros
- Mr. Ismael Bachirou, Point Focal National de la Convention de Nairobi, Permanent Secretary, Ministère de la Production, de l'Environnement, de l'Energie,