

Consortium for the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-C)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Consortium for the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (hereinafter “WIO-C” or “the Consortium”), was established at the Meeting of the Partners’ Consultative Forum for the Conservation of Marine Ecosystems in Western Indian Ocean, held in Nairobi, Kenya 31st August to 1st September 2006. The Consortium has evolved from a concept conceived through a study commissioned by IUCN and WWF entitled “Towards an Integrated Programme for Marine Conservation in the Western Indian Ocean: Priorities for Collaborative Action and Co-ordination Mechanisms”, which detailed perceptions and wishes of a broad range of stakeholders in all the 10 countries of Nairobi Convention.

Vision and Mission

WIO-C’s vision is that the Western Indian Ocean’s unique and globally significant natural resource base provides the essential goods and services that support biodiversity as well as economic development and the livelihoods of present and future generations.

WIO-C’s Mission is to achieve a healthy marine and coastal environment that sustainably support people’s livelihoods in WIO-region

Purpose

The purpose of the Consortium is to support synergy in programmes of work on marine and coastal ecosystem management and promote knowledge and information sharing amongst stakeholders in the Western Indian Ocean region.

Providing a mechanism for non-governmental entities to anchor activities in the Nairobi Convention and other intergovernmental processes and thus strengthening their implementation.

To this end, the Consortiums’ main activities focus on networking, coordination, lobbying, decision support, resource mobilisation, and programme development and implementation.

Membership

WIO-C is a consortium of NGOs in partnership with Inter-governmental organisations. The members are IUCN, WCS, WIOMSA, WWF, EAWLS, CORDIO, IOC-UNESCO, Nairobi Convention, NEPAD-Cosmar, Birdlife International and Wetlands International. Other new members that have expressed interest in joining the consortium include Blue Ventures, TNC, CI and Rare Conservation.

Membership criteria

1. Willingness to commit resources towards achieving WIO-C charter and processes
2. Willingness and commitment to work in coordination and cooperation with other members of the Consortium
3. Present and active in the WIO region
4. Ethically reputable as proven by clear organizational policies and structures that support transparency and best practice in the industry
5. Admission should be based on expression of interest

Guiding Principles

1. Partnership issue,
2. Synergy, focusing on collective strength
3. We focus on science based solution
4. WIO-C is not restrictive on areas where members decide to focus on (**).
5. We strive to provision of sustainable development and sustainable use
6. Voice in intergovernmental processes

Objectives

1. Contributing to regional policy processes and programme development that balance conservation and development needs.
2. Sharing information and lessons learned.
3. United voice to articulate issues related to coastal and marine environment in the region.
4. Provide overview of key emerging and ongoing issues that affect coastal and marine environment.
5. Implementing actions based on jointly developed programmes including fund raising

WIO-C Priorities

The agenda of the Consortium will focus on the Nairobi Convention Work Programme, however extending beyond this as appropriate and agreed by the members. Priority areas identified at the Partners Consultative Forum Meeting include:

1. *Sharing information, lessons learned and best practice*

Currently there is good exchange of information on a topical and at local level, but not on a regional scale. Translation of science findings into implementable management policy is frequently incomplete, and there are shortcomings in how information and results from a broad range of short and intermediate term projects are stored and shared.

The Consortium will develop an information sharing strategy which will, *inter alia*, include supporting regional scale exchange of information e.g. through establishing common information services; providing solutions for archiving and accessing information; preparing joint positions on particular issues and providing management and policy recommendations on a regional scale; establishing a management symposium linking with the Nairobi Convention COP and the WIOMSA scientific symposium; and supporting and improving the sustainability of other relevant structures such as the WIO-LaB clearinghouse mechanism.

2. *Promoting sustainable development and sustainable use*

An increasing number of organizations work in the poverty-environment nexus, piloting approaches to meeting the needs of human populations as well as maintaining the health of the ecosystems that they depend on. However, it is still evident that many of the key messages regarding how ecosystem and resource management underpin sustainable development is not communicated effectively to governments and other stakeholders. As a consequence, development is still frequently not reconciled with conservation, and funding opportunities that could be available to conservation efforts are lost.

The Consortium will seek to influence the development of policies that balance conservation and development needs through high profile and high-level engagement. This will be done through targeted and appropriate communication and information products, sharing of experiences and lessons learnt on relevant policy and governance structures, and the use of marine resource valuation and economic tools and instruments.

3. Supporting national and local NGOs

There are relatively few NGOs working in the marine and coastal environment in the WIO region. However, several of these organizations have a presence at the grassroots level and work directly with communities, and as such constitute an important implementation and communication mechanism for national or regional initiatives. They also possess knowledge that can strengthen government-led management schemes. However, these organizations frequently operate in relative isolation, leading to insufficient contact and exchange with each other as well as with regional organizations and government agencies.

The Consortium will seek to link NGOs in a topical way that will strengthen information sharing and exchange of experiences, tools and approaches. To this end inclusion of national and local NGOs in the Consortium is key. The role and status of national and local NGOs within the Consortium will be formalised and a strategy formulated for supporting national and local NGOs and promoting their involvement in the Consortium. The Consortium will also seek to provide opportunities for local NGOs to engage with each other and the Consortium, e.g. through sponsoring the participation of smaller NGOs in regional symposia or meetings.

4. Monitoring for improved management

Monitoring of management impact is generally weak in the region, whether ecological, social or economic. This is largely due to the fact that monitoring and evaluation are frequently overlooked in conservation programmes and thus under-funded, as well as due to capacity constraints in several of the institutions involved in management. Further, reporting mechanisms for management impact and management effectiveness are often weak, and in some cases better/more appropriate indicators are required.

The Consortium will focus on strengthening monitoring and evaluation of management impact in the region, drawing on existing initiatives and structures in this process, e.g. through the Forum of Academic and Research Institutions (FARI). This will include

striving to influence management institutions, building capacity and reviewing, identifying and recommending best practices.

5. Building Capacity

While capacity shortages are often cited as one of the main reasons behind the failings of marine and coastal conservation in the region, the capacity building requirements among local NGOs and government institutions are not well known. With a lead from WIOMSA, the Consortium will, through a working group or other suitable approach, take stock on such capacity building needs in the region, based on which a strategy will be devised. This may also include developing curricula and training programmes with formal certification to support professional advancement and career building. Further, the Consortium will facilitate the dissemination of tools developed at project or national level of the region as many of these tools have an application in the region as a whole.

Institutional Arrangements

WIO-C has a three-tier structure: the core group, acting as a steering committee; a general membership; and a rotating secretariat, hosted by one of the core group members.

Core Group (Steering Committee)

The core group consists of the founding members of the Consortium¹. These are, in alphabetical order: Coastal Ocean Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO); Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO); IUCN – The World Conservation Union (IUCN); New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); United Nations Environment Programme Nairobi Convention Secretariat (UNEP Nairobi Convention); Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA); Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS); and World Wide Fund for Nature Eastern African Marine Ecoregion (WWF-EAME).

By their membership in the core group, founding members commit to taking turns in hosting the secretariat, carrying out tasks as specified below and coordinating core group activities².

Members

The general membership of the Consortium consists of Inter-governmental Organisations (IGO) and regional NGOs, as well as national and local NGOs, and is envisaged to grow and become broader with time. Membership is restricted to organisations or institutions and should not be individual. The Consortium should seek a

¹ Initially this core group constitutes the entire membership.

² Some founding members will serve the Consortium in capacities other than hosting the secretariat, e.g. the Nairobi Convention, which on behalf of the Consortium members can organize Consortium meetings as required or take Consortium decisions and recommendations to the Conference of Parties.

geographically balanced membership (e.g. islands-mainland), and strive to engage organizations from all countries in the region. Country representation in the Consortium will be through participation of the Nairobi Convention Bureau in the Consortium's core group.

Members shall demonstrate commitment to the Consortium through submitting a written note to that effect to the secretariat [Annex standard note]. Members also commit to attending Consortium meetings and consultations, such as formal meetings and workshops, teleconferences, or remote discussions, regularly through appropriate representation (see section representation).

Secretariat

The secretariat is responsible for supporting the core functions of the Consortium, including co-ordination of the core members. The secretariat will be rotated among the core members on an annual basis, unless otherwise agreed on by the core members. WWF-EAME will host the Consortium secretariat during the first year of operation and leading up to the official launch of the Consortium.

Specifically, the roles and responsibilities of the secretariat include:

- Managing all documentation and records relating to the Consortium and act as a repository;
- Convening meetings: Coordinating virtual discussions, meetings of the steering committee and other meetings, acting as secretary for all steering committee meetings, developing agendas, preparing and distributing minutes and other documents and handling necessary logistics;
- Acting as a communication centre and a conduit for information flow;
- Facilitating the development of an annual work programme for the Consortium;
- Managing budgets, keeping accounts and producing financial reports for the Consortium core functions;
- Facilitating and keeping track of member recruitment to the Consortium;
- Leading fundraising efforts in close consultation with the Steering Committee.

General Conditions

Meetings

The steering committee shall meet at least annually, as possible in association with other relevant events to minimize travel related costs. Other meetings shall be convened on needs-basis. The Consortium shall seek to conduct as much as possible of its deliberations and interaction using electronic communication.

Representation

Members should be represented at appropriate level at Consortium steering committee or other meetings. Representatives must be mandated to communicate the position of the member as well as to take decisions on behalf of the member.

Funding arrangements

Costs related to members' participation in Consortium meetings and activities should be met by the individual members. Similarly, co-ordination costs will also be met through finances from members. The Consortium, under the leadership of the secretariat, shall seek to secure donor funding specifically for this purpose. Activities implemented under the umbrella of the Consortium will be funded jointly by the participating partners or through specific grants.

Program Coordination

The Consortium shall seek to set a programme of work that builds on and reinforces those of member organizations without duplicating these. The initial focus of the Consortium is on information exchange, which should serve as a framework for improving coordination between organisations as well as non-governmental and governmental processes. Activities that fall within the remit of the Consortium as detailed herein shall be defined and executed jointly by members of the Consortium. Such identification of activities and joint implementation shall build on the comparative advantages of members, and lead agencies for specific tasks shall be assigned accordingly. Lead agencies should be defined for each activity to facilitate coordination between members in undertaking the activity.

Institutional Review

The Consortium shall seek to review progress as well as institutional efficiency on a regular basis with a view to increasing the impact of the Consortium as well as strengthening it institutionally. After the initial two years of operations, the role of the Consortium steering committee, secretariat and members will be evaluated and necessary changes to guiding principles, membership, operational procedures or priority focal areas made. The possible entry of additional members to the steering committee will be considered based on criteria set up by the steering committee.