



CATALYSING A COMMON BLUE FUTURE IN THE WIO:

**ENVISIONING A TRANSFORMATIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE TO
CATALYSE AMBITION, ENHANCE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND UNLOCK THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A BLUE ECONOMY IN THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN**

Virtual Workshop 1, Wednesday 21st April 2021, 9am to 3pm

Minutes

1. Participants

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| Nairobi Convention Secretariat: | Jared Bosire, Tim Andrew, |
| WIOMSA: | Arthur Tuda |
| WWF MG: | Santatra Razafindratsimba, Harifidy Ralison, Dresy Lovasoa |
| WWF DE: | Gabriel Odin, Anouk Alvaro Neuhaus |
| CORDIO EA: | David Obura |
| IUCN: | Leo Niskanen, Charles Oluchina, Thomas Sberna, Isabel Ramos |
| Wetlands International: | Julie Mulonga |
| GIZ: | Carol Mutiso (Minutes), Yvonne Waweru, Robin Farrington, Volker Koch |

2. About

The workshop took place virtually on Wednesday 21st April 2021 under the theme “*Catalysing a Common Blue Future in the WIO: Envisioning a Transformational Multi-Stakeholder Initiative to Catalyse Ambition, Enhance Socio-ecological Resilience and Unlock the Development of a Blue Economy in the Western Indian Ocean*”.

It aimed to develop clear recommendations, catalyse action and build commitment for strengthening regional ocean governance through a Multi-stakeholder Initiative for Sustainable Blue Economy in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). The workshop provided a unique space for open and productive exchange bringing together over 15 leading experts from 8 organizations in the WIO drawn from intergovernmental organisations, academia and research, non-governmental organisations and development cooperation. Designed as a multi-stakeholder and cross sectoral platform, the workshop developed options and solutions for accelerating action and commitment towards achieving a sustainable blue economy and socio-ecological resilience in the WIO through enhanced collaboration and building synergies of stakeholders at the regional, national and local levels. The messages presented in this document have been developed by the Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative (WIOGI) team as a summary of the main conclusions from the workshop.

3. Workshop Objectives

The workshop was designed as a highly participatory and co-creative meeting to enable participants to:

- a. Understand each other’s interests and aspirations for a healthy, prosperous and resilient WIO.
- b. Understand similarities and differences in each other’s perspectives on what an MSI collaboration ecosystem could do.
- c. identify other actors that need to be involved and a process for engaging them.
- d. outline an initial process and timelines for co-creating a shared vision, purpose and development roadmap for the MSI/collaboration ecosystem.
- e. identify immediate roles and responsibilities and agreed who will assume them.
- f. agree on how we will work together.
- g. express levels of commitment to continue collaborating on next steps as an informal core team.

4. Minutes

a. Introductions and scene setting

Introduction remarks were first provided by the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention followed by IUCN. GIZ then opened the workshop and offered a warm welcome on behalf of all organizing institutions and highlighted the need to think beyond 'institutional silos' and think more broadly on an ambitious and a transformative agenda for a Multi-stakeholder Initiative for Sustainable Blue Economy that can be achieved collectively by all.

Participants introduced themselves and expressed their expectations for the workshop. They welcomed the workshop as an important opportunity to brainstorm and bring together different ideas and ambitions of individual organizations into a collective vision for a Sustainable Blue Economy for the WIO and a common set of principles.

Summary of discussion:

Some of the expectations for the workshop from the participants can be clustered into the following themes:

- Visioning** – To conceptualize/develop a collective vision for a Sustainable Blue Future for the WIO that includes economic, social and environmental aspects that can bring together all participating organizations to a common understanding on what each can do individually and collectively.
- **Stakeholders** – In order to catalyse collective action, it is important to bring together all relevant stakeholders from the outset of conceptualisation. These include governments in different stages of developing BE frameworks and organizations undertaking various initiatives in the region such as private sector, climate financiers and civil society. To achieve this, participants highlighted the need to understand what each organization is undertaking on Sustainable Blue Economy and the role each plays in realizing a Blue Future, and how to improve coordination of these activities. It was also highlighted that the needs, aspirations and interests of local populations should be taken into account.
- **Thematic content** – It was highlighted that several discussions on BE had been held in the region and their recommendations are important when conceptualizing for a "Common Blue Future". It is for example, important to explore how to: a) link conservation of biodiversity with sustainable financing and investment frameworks; b) secure fair and equitable natural resource management and benefits sharing mechanisms for local communities c) attain the goodwill from private sector; d) support policy formulation by countries; and e) address emerging issues such as coastal cities and relevant actors.-.

It was stated that the workshop was a first step of a series of collaborative dialogues aimed at identifying and strengthening synergies and catalysing commitments to work together to jointly develop and build a Multi-Stakeholder Initiative for the WIO.

b. Breakout sessions

i. Understanding each other's interests and aspirations for a WIO Blue Future

In the breakout session the participants engaged in discussions guided by several key questions which are summarized below.

What a Blue Future for the WIO should look like?

The discussions highlighted three major components for a Blue Future for the WIO:

- **Private Sector Engagement:** This can be achieved through forming strategic partnerships between governments, private sector and NGOs. For this to happen, the scope of the private sector and how to involve them (including changing their attitudes) and the modalities of engagement should be well defined.
- **A Blue Future is Sustainable and based on Knowledge and Information:** The WIO region has the opportunity to be a leader in Africa on Sustainable Blue Economy in different marine economic sectors. A Blue Future will be realized with due consideration of the health and integrity of the coastal and marine environment that supports economic development and livelihoods. Further, a Blue Future should be anchored on knowledge and information dissemination.
- **Conservation and Sustainable Use of WIO Coastal and Ocean Ecosystems and Biodiversity:** The WIO Blue Future should be anchored on sustaining the health of WIO coastal and ocean ecosystems and biodiversity. It was highlighted that a Blue Future should be anchored on three pillars: a) Blue Planet Pillar; b) Blue People Pillar; and c) Blue Partnership Pillar. These will also help to achieve climate resilience and social equity through mechanisms for enhancing access of resources by local communities and distribution of benefits that result from exploitation of those resources by international organizations.
- **Promoting and enhancing local stewardship:** the WIO coastline is almost 20,000 km long and its total EEZ covers more than 6 million km². Effective sustainable management of such a large area can only be achieved by empowering as many people as possible (i.e., local, national and regional stakeholders) to become stewards of the ocean and the guardian of their own resources.

Personal/organisational ambitions and interests in creating a WIO Blue Future

Ambitions for a WIO Blue Future?

- The participants expressed their desire for a framework that would enable all stakeholders to communicate and engage effectively to achieve 'a common blue future'. From the different contributions, it was highlighted that the common vision is already captured under existing frameworks such the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the CBD targets and the African Union Agenda 2063. Therefore, the ambition for the future should be to achieve the goals and targets articulated under these frameworks under a clear roadmap that involves all stakeholders in collective ocean stewardship.

The participating organizations articulated their ambitions and interests for a Common Blue Future as highlighted below:

WWF MADAGASCAR

- WWF has an interest in the management of risks to pave the way for opportunities for growth, especially for the private sector.
- There is also needed to involve new actors from different economic sectors to support sustainability efforts - e.g., fisheries.
- Globally and within the region the concept of BE development is often seen as a way of developing nations without comprehensive understanding of the ecosystems upon which a BE is based. There is need to consider this perspective while pursuing BE Agenda for the WIO region.
- WWF will start now by conducting an analysis of the risks to Blue Economy foundations, promoting SBE plans and policies in 3 WIO countries, and by promoting adoption of SBE Finance Principles by financial institutions (including the African Development Bank) investing in the region to catalyse an increased flow of investments and initiatives. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should be fully engaged in these processes.
- In face of health crisis, there is need for stronger ecological, social and economic resilience which will underpin the efforts towards SBE, through: ecologically sustainable methods; inclusive distribution of incomes; social safeguards and safety nets.
- Addressing climate change and building stronger resilient societies should be an important consideration.
- The High-level Panel on Sustainable Ocean Economy has issued a sustainable ocean plan that can be used as a blueprint for national SBE plans (countries are currently developing their Marine Spatial Plans (MSP) and base their planning on the (S)BE tenet).

WWF GERMANY

- Bring local economic benefits to communities, improve livelihoods.
- Increased commitment to ecosystem conservation and restoration
- A mix of small projects/measures that have local importance and provide good practice examples, and larger scale ambitions with great potential, that require more time, political effort at higher levels and involve more stakeholders.
- Mainstreaming conservation into political and economic discussions
- Strategic partnerships with other sectors
- Make WIO into a mangrove champion.

NCS

- NCS expressed that the Nairobi Convention has a strong interest in environment and is cognizant of anthropogenic pressures to the coastal and marine environment that need to be addressed.

IUCN

- IUCN representatives highlighted that the organization was originally established in 1948 with the deliberate purpose and mandate to bring together different actors to create a sustainable future that values and conserves nature at its natural resources. From this perspective the sustainable Blue Future for the WIO is at the core of this mandate. There is interest to have a plan that ensures resources are well managed, private sector is engaged, sound legislation for use of natural resources is in place and enforced as well as form a basis to guide investment at local level.
- The biggest challenge foreseen while pursuing this is how to support and develop communities without destroying nature in the process. The interest therefore is to have a common vision of BE with those who use and depend on ocean to earn a living.
- There is interest also to build stronger regional networks to mobilize private sector, governments and other key institutions to work together. To foster this legal institutional framework for e.g., a marine spatial plan can catalyse commitment of different actors and trickle down to the national level through processes such as individual countries' NDCs/NAPS.
- IUCN also mentioned its particular interest to unlock the regenerative potential of the blue economy and so that blue economy development will be synonymous of biodiversity restoration and nature conservation.

WIOMSA

- There was an emphasis on knowledge management being a foundation for sustainable development., There is interest from WIOMSA to support the WIO region stakeholders with

the capacity to harness resources through information on marine, involvement of communities, and the private sector. However, the key question is to ensure how the private sector plays a more prominent role in knowledge management.

- There is also interested to establish a better approach to incorporate and coordinate different stakeholders with different information to avoid working in parallel or duplicating efforts. From this perspective, emphasis was put on the need to engage non-government actors on the resources available and common that can be used to address core BE issues without always looking at gaps within government institutions. It is important to harness collective capacities to work on common agendas and themes as non-state actors and support governments in addressing their challenges.
- There was interest also in translating talk/discussions around BE to action on the ground.

GIZ

- The WIOGI project is keen on a wider stakeholder involvement and pursuing of a participatory approach for conservation for better livelihoods, health, economy and wellbeing of local communities.
- To catalyse change there was emphasis on the need to work towards regional governance and local empowerment (co-Management) and involve private sector and local level communities where applicable. There is a need to conserve and manage the WIO critical life-supporting ecosystems for the sake of our children and grandchildren and our existence as a species on this planet.

CORDIO

- Building the discussion on Capitals Approach used under the Northern Mozambique Channel (NMC) initiative entails that none of the sectoral activities should harm the others and also that implementing the SDG14 in marine areas should supply the Blue Future Initiative.
- Creating synergies to find common grounds and identify trade-offs is needed. To achieve such synergy the following would be crucial:
 - Put in place new or strengthen existing standards and mechanisms: aspect of inclusivity is highly important, and entails the need of capacity building for CSOs, Communities, Officials and Private sectors (underscoring the empowerment of local govts; and that all actors fully understand the importance of applying the principles of sustainability)
 - Private Sector (PS) engagement is key in all this, highly valuable for contributing to several SDGs, and very critical for sustainable blue economy (SBE)

- Recognition of the large variety of private sector actors (scales, types and sectors), and address them from the local economy scale, i.e., what types of private sector are there, what scales, and what barriers are there and develop tangible solutions at that level.
- From national level, national government there is a need to catalyse and unlock private investments through regulations that promote innovation and new developments.

Other general ideas that were presented include:

- Promote a regional/local ownership of the blue future.
- Develop a joint vision of marine world as an economic booster.
- A mix of top-down and bottom-up, participatory approaches
- Have “bankable” projects through key partnerships
- Have a multi-stakeholder partnership in place to bring together stakeholders.
- Support the development of sustainable ocean national plans in countries

ii. Understanding each other’s perspectives on what a MSI might do.

Guided by a set of questions, a brainstorming session was held to get perspectives of the participants on what the MSI for WIO region can/could do. Below is the summary of the issues that came out of the session.

What can an MSI do to help catalyse a Blue Future in the WIO?

- One perspective expressed was that a MSI for WIO should not only bring solidarity and clarity for the stakeholders of the region but also enhance communication and collaboration. It will provide an avenue for the relevant stakeholders to strategically define a Blue Future as a region. For this to happen there is need to expand the “we” to be more inclusive, diversify and enhance common understanding and vision, both at regional and country levels. The basis for this will be good information and communication of this common vision for all including the private sector who will eventually be brought on board for the MSI and other ocean governance processes. To achieve this there is need to support information management which will be of value to all stakeholders. Effective coordination for information management will be needed and the MSI could support this.
- Another perspective was that the MSI can be a means for advocacy and influence for example by collectively identifying influencers/catalysts in society that can influence change towards

more sustainable attitudes and ocean stewardship. The MSI can be a means to push society out of the comfort zones of conventional thinking. However, there is need to develop and package key messages on the benefits of healthy ecosystems tailored for different stakeholder groups.

- An MSI can be used for matchmaking and brokering partnerships within the WIO region hence providing a structure to have issues discussed at a larger scale in place of organization-to-organization discussions only. There are numerous organisations within the region and an MSI could be used to match their objectives and capacities for example. This perspective brought out a number of issues on coordination in relation to the MSI for example: which organization should play a leading coordinating role and the specific roles for other organizations. A collaborative ecosystem would not only enable and empowers the members of the MSI to enhance collective leadership, but also enable them to jointly mobilise resources. It would also create an ecosystem within which other initiatives can thrive.
- IUCN highlighted the Great Green Wall initiative in sub-Saharan Africa – transformational MSI for the entire region that could be replicated in terms of spirit and level of ambition, but with a focus on marine and coastal areas (even beyond WIO?). GGW is an umbrella movement, with a vision to mobilise people and institutions (including private sector) to deliver impact on the ground. It is an ambitious and transformational initiative. Genesis of GGW: project started by Heads of State in the Sahel region to prevent desertification at the fringes of the Sahara, first mainly focused on planting trees as a way to create a natural wall against the progression of the desert. It then progressively evolved into something much more holistic than planting trees (green economy) from Senegal to Djibouti, aiming at establishing a sound and strong pan-African network of sustainable landscapes that deliver both socio-economic and conservation as well as critical climate changes benefits. An MSI for the WIO could be a replication of the Great Green Wall initiative in its spirit, approach and level of ambition – in other word, something like *Great Blue Wall*.
- The Nairobi Convention Secretariat stated that the Blue Economy Strategy developed by the places emphasis on engagement of private sector. The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) also have an interest in developing blue economy strategies of their own. Some traction is therefore visible at the high level in the WIO. The MSI should include local stakeholders (existing strategies evolve at much higher level and sometimes fail to take this into consideration). It is also important to learn from existing initiatives and successful examples from the region and globally.

Some general suggestions that were brought forth include:

Purpose of an MSI:

- Bring together everyone with an interest in furthering a sustainable blue economy in the region.

- Bring together ongoing initiatives.
- Link government-level initiatives and support at other levels (private sector, communities) to ensure representation of all stakeholders.
- Foster dialogue between stakeholders
- Put pressure on reluctant stakeholders through the initiation of a movement with champions (Heads of State, CEOs, local champions) (more process than purpose)
- Provide momentum in the fight against climate change, biodiversity loss etc.
- Provide a channel to accelerate and catalyse investment into a sustainable blue economy.

Setting the objective and reflecting on the process:

- Need to reflect together (e.g., within the WIO Consortium) to define the critical contribution of the non-state actors (NSA)/NGOs in furthering the development of the sustainable blue economy.
- Have big ambition (head in the sky) while being action oriented and aligning our resources and means at hands (e.g., Nairobi Convention process, regional projects, WIOGI, IUCN's coastal and ocean resilience programme, other NGOs resources, partnerships, influences, etc.) with clear objectives/goals we want to reach.
- Do this by recognizing the limits of the Environment Ministries' convening power/influence. It is therefore important to think how we can engage other sectors and sectoral ministries. At regional level, they can be engaged through the RECs, and directly with other ministries at national level (through the Nairobi Convention Focal Points, for example).
- Need to balance the engagement of different types of stakeholders (as MSI), e.g., NSAs and state actors → Need to run parallel types of engagement mechanisms or platforms (also at regional and at national level).

Suggestions for the structure of MSI:

- Regional platform with inputs from national level (easier for local engagement of private sector)
- Strong core team with influential organisations on board has the potential to launch a movement.
- A structure that centralises discussions on investment (rather than one-to-one approach) at WIO level in line with a regional Blue Future
- Regional champions such as Kenya, the Seychelles must be built upon

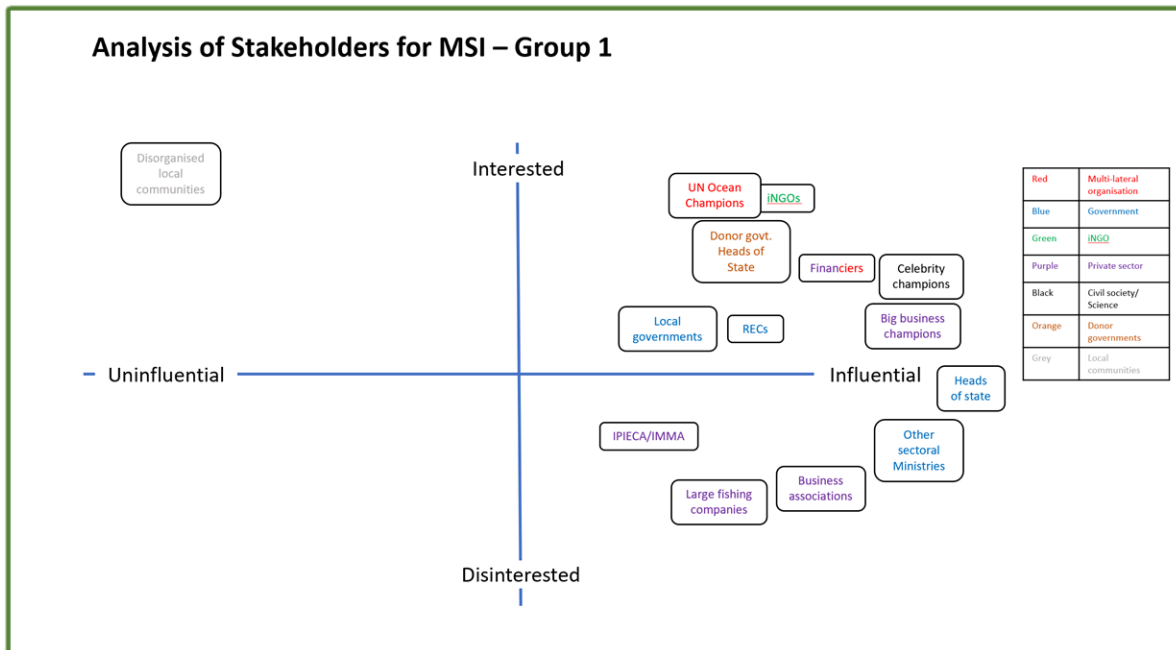
There was a discussion on what the MSI for WIO should not do:

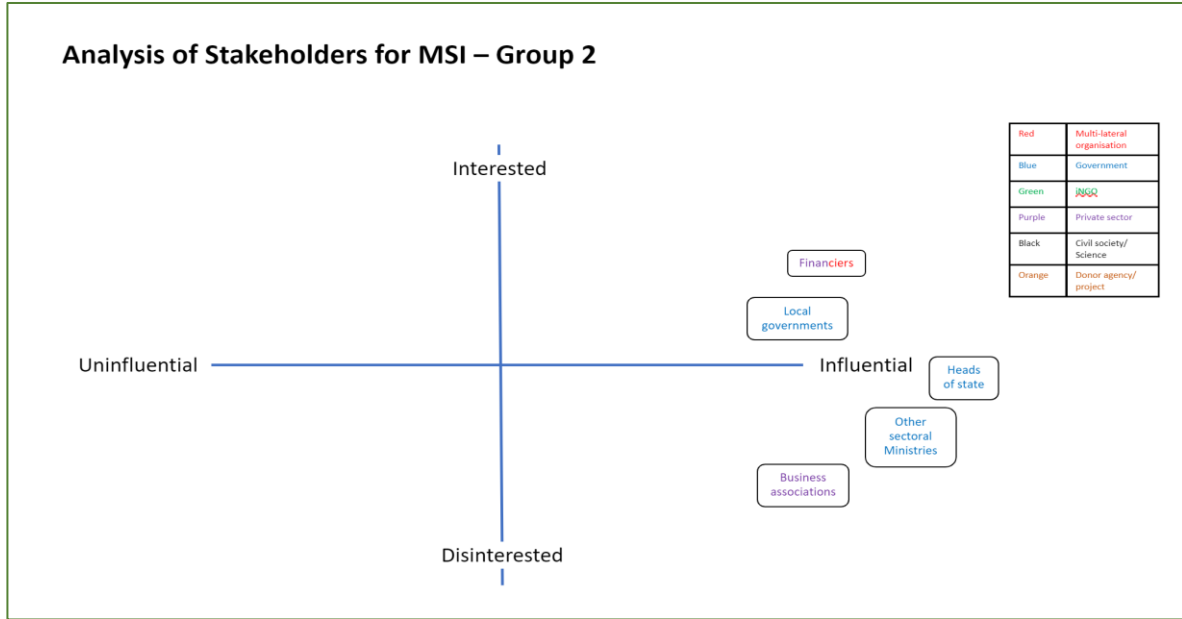
- Be territorial or competitive.
- Encourage disjointed efforts.
- Fall into the trap of "business as usual" thinking or operating – e.g., chasing donor funding without sustainable business models.
- Be perceived to be trying to put conservation above growth and jobs but rather that both are needed simultaneously to be sustainable.

iii. Identifying critical actors and strategic partners in developing MSI

The diversity and large number of actors within the WIO region means that the most critical ones should be identified for initial engagement, and strategic partnerships to support the development of an MSI should be forged. Below are the results of the initial stakeholder mapping exercise.

Mapping out stakeholder levels of interest and importance in developing the MSI





Potential opponents should also be considered, including organized crime groups, vested interest groups (wealthy and powerful), sectoral regulators (e.g., mining, transport), politicians, regional players, distant Water Fishing Fleets: China, EU, UK, regional/Sectoral Association Groups e.g., mining, fishing, maritime disputes hinder dialogue, communication and collaboration.

Stakeholder mapping by levels – Group 3

| Stakeholder | Regional | National level | Local level |
|------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Key | Nairobi Convention | | Civil society |
| Primary | Private sector representatives (Multiple BE sectors) | Private sector representatives (Multiple BE sectors) | Community managed organizations |
| | WIO consortium | Academic and research institutions | |
| | Relevant ministries through the Environment ministries | Private sector alliances | |
| Secondary | RECS (SADC, IGAD, EAC, COMESA) | | |
| | Indian Ocean Commission | | |
| | AU | | |
| Secondary | Media | Media | |

iv. Outlining a process for early development of the MSI

A brainstorming session was held to compile a list of priority actions that will be undertaken by the different organizations represented in the meeting.

- There was an emphasis on appointment of an organization lead/focal point for the subsequent discussions. This will not only ensure continuity but also ensure that there is a dedicated representative within the respective organizations to follow up on agreed MSI related issues and actions. **By next meeting ALL organizations ideally should have appointed a focal person.**
- The importance of having an organization coordinate the MSI process was also highlighted. The risk of a single organization coordinating the process was expressed as this might cause structural delays to the MSI processes. The recommendation was to consider having the coordination roles shared between two organizations. A proposal from one group was that the WIOGI and SOMN team could help with initial coordination but have critical organizations from that workshop involved in the conceptualization to be able to put in resources where necessary to advance the discussions. It was suggested that this needs to be further discussed at the next meeting.

| Action | Who | When |
|---|-----|-----------------|
| Appointment of a focal point | ALL | By next meeting |
| Consider options for coordinating organization(s) for MSI process | ALL | By next meeting |

- MSI discussions will need the buy-in of different stakeholder groups including the RECs. The NC informed the participants of an upcoming meeting with the RECS which can be used to relay the discussions so far on the MSI to the RECs. The RECs will be involved in the MSI process and informing them on the MSI discussions paves the way for future REC engagement. **(end of April REC meeting) GIZ, NCS.** Other avenues will be explored to update members of WIO-C of the MSI meeting **(end of April) NCS.** Preliminary proposals on the MSI were made during the 2021 Science to Policy Meeting and this will be presented again at the next Nairobi Convention Conference of Parties.
- IUCN also mentioned its existing MoU with several RECS (including SADC, IOC and EAC) and its ongoing initiatives with these RECS, hence also able to engage them on the possibility to collaborate on establishing an MSI.
- The importance of having a clearer picture of the scope of the MSI was discussed and it was agreed that a joint vision will be developed to provide a clearer picture and convergence points for all organizations involved. Other proposals from the discussions are highlighted below:

| Proposed actions |
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| Identify avenues to disseminate information on MSI |
| Develop MSI recommendations for Nairobi Convention CoP |
| Define resources and roadmap for development which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of “zero-draft joint vision/concept”. Out of this Joint development of ToR for a scoping study to gather intelligence, identify ongoing initiatives, map out existing resources both financial and human from existing partnership, conceptual design, review of other MSI |

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| <p>in the region; further conceptualisation to define options of what the MSI might do to be able to communicate ideas and bring others on board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deeper stakeholder mapping (internal); stakeholder engagement strategy (including intermediaries, messengers and champions and their desired outcomes. To build on the Framework for Private Sector Engagement developed by the Nairobi Convention in 2020. |
| <p>Gathering lessons learned on other MSIs (Creating inspiration and ideas by hearing from other MSIs, simultaneously better understanding needs and opportunities; learning lessons from other MSIs (Great Green Wall for e.g.)</p> |
| <p>Communications plan to be developed from the start with key messages delivered to stakeholders. Joint messaging to different donors is also needed.</p> |
| <p>Initiate dialogue with key stakeholders (including the private sector, academia, research institutions) that are identified as critical for development phase, to build common understanding</p> |
| <p>Identify low-hanging fruit to support “multi-stakeholder action on the ground” that can show impact and inspire people, and identify significant impact projects that can be pursued as part of a twin track approach e.g., through CI</p> |
| <p>Identify potential incubator organisations/donors that have the capacity to take this forward or have interest already in the region e.g., EU, ADB</p> |
| <p>Explore avenues to advance discussions e.g. meeting with Portugal to discuss how to develop the initiative ahead of SDG14 conference (IUCN), approach the Mozambique Government to potentially host a high-level segment during the next regional blue Economy conference (Mozambique being the host) IUCN’s World Conservation Congress, connection with the AU and RECs through the ongoing initiatives within IUCN among others as a way to build on and operationalise its existing MoUs with these organisations.</p> <p>Explore the possibility to involve an external high-level convener that could help steer and create high-level momentum and support.</p> |

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| <p>Next steps, how we will work together, commitments and offers of support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCS and GIZ stated that they have resources to commit to help develop the MSI. - WWF and IUCN also indicated that they have already secured resources (human and financial) to support the development of such MSI. - Proposed date for next meeting: 11 May 2021 |
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