Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme

- Ocean governance
- Investing in a sustainable blue economy
- Ocean ecosystems resilience and blue carbon

Working together for a sustainable and resilient Western Indian Ocean

SWIOP is implemented by

ABOUT SWIOP

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) is one of the world's most important ocean regions, supporting globally significant biodiversity, fisheries, maritime trade and coastal livelihoods. At the same time, the region faces growing pressures from climate change, ecosystem degradation, unsustainable resource use and limited regional coordination for ocean governance.

60 million
People in the region depend on the ocean for livelihood

4 million
Are employed in the fisheries sector

€290.8 billion
Shared ocean wealth across the region

€17.4 billion
Annual ocean-based economic activity

SWIOP is a €60.5 million Global Gateway flagship initiative funded by the European Union (€58 million) and co-funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (€2.5 million). It is supporting actors in the region to strengthen ocean governance, catalyse sustainable blue economy investment and protect marine ecosystems.

Through the Global Gateway strategy, SWIOP capitalises on the power of regional cooperation to unlock the economic potential of the blue economy for enterprises and communities, while safeguarding ocean ecosystems. It contributes to global commitments under the European Green Deal, the EU International Ocean Governance Agenda, the European Ocean Pact and the African Union's Agenda 2063, while responding to the priorities of partner countries in the region.

SWIOP will contribute to sustainable, productive and climate-resilient governance and use of the WIO, by strengthening regional cooperation and addressing key environmental and economic challenges.

AN OCEAN UNDER PRESSURE

- **Limited regional coordination and fragmented policies** leave the WIO without a coherent ocean governance framework, undermining collective action on shared marine resources.
- **Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing** costs the region more than €214 million every year, depleting shared fish stocks and depriving coastal communities of vital income and food security.
- **Sustainable investment remains scarce**: less than a third of small and medium enterprises access formal finance, investment pipelines are limited, and innovative financing instruments remain rare, stifling the growth of sustainable blue businesses in the region.
- **Coastal and marine ecosystems face mounting pressure** from climate change, pollution, and unsustainable human activity, with combined maritime losses estimated at €992 million annually, equivalent to nearly 6% of the region's gross marine product.

SWIOP addresses these challenges through three mutually reinforcing pillars.

Photo: Indian Ocean Commission

PILLAR I: OCEAN GOVERNANCE

Implemented by the Nairobi Convention, European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Expertise France, this pillar strengthens regional cooperation and institutional capacity for ocean governance in the WIO, supporting countries to develop and implement effective policies, regulatory frameworks and regional coordination mechanism.

Key Focus Areas

- Building capacity and strengthening regional coordination for ocean governance and a sustainable regional blue economy.
- Supporting improved management of shared fisheries resources through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations.
- Enhancing compliance with regional management measures and supporting efforts to combat IUU fishing.
- Improving availability and use of knowledge and data.

PILLAR II: INVESTING IN A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY

Implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and aligned with the EU's Global Gateway, this pillar turns ocean potential into economic opportunity, without compromising the health of the ecosystems that make it possible. Through strategic partnerships and catalytic finance, SWIOP builds investment-ready blue economy opportunities, sustainable infrastructure, and local innovation and entrepreneurship that drive growth, create decent jobs, and accelerate climate action across the region.

Key Focus Areas

- Broadening access to finance and business services for inclusive and sustainable blue economy sectors, helping entrepreneurs move from potential to practice.
- Developing and de-risking blue economy investment opportunities, so that public and private capital can flow where it's needed, turning promising ideas into bankable projects.
- Building a world-class maritime workforce by improving the training offer for seagoing personnel to meet international standards and compete on the global stage.

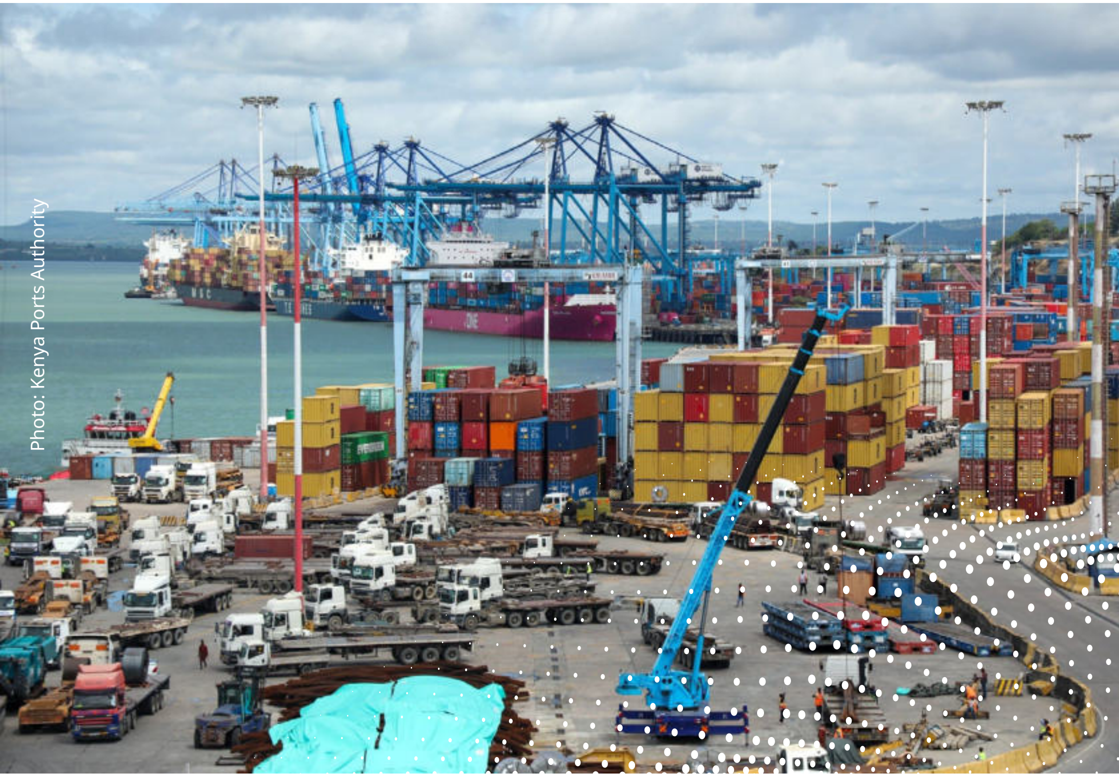

Photo: Kenya Ports Authority

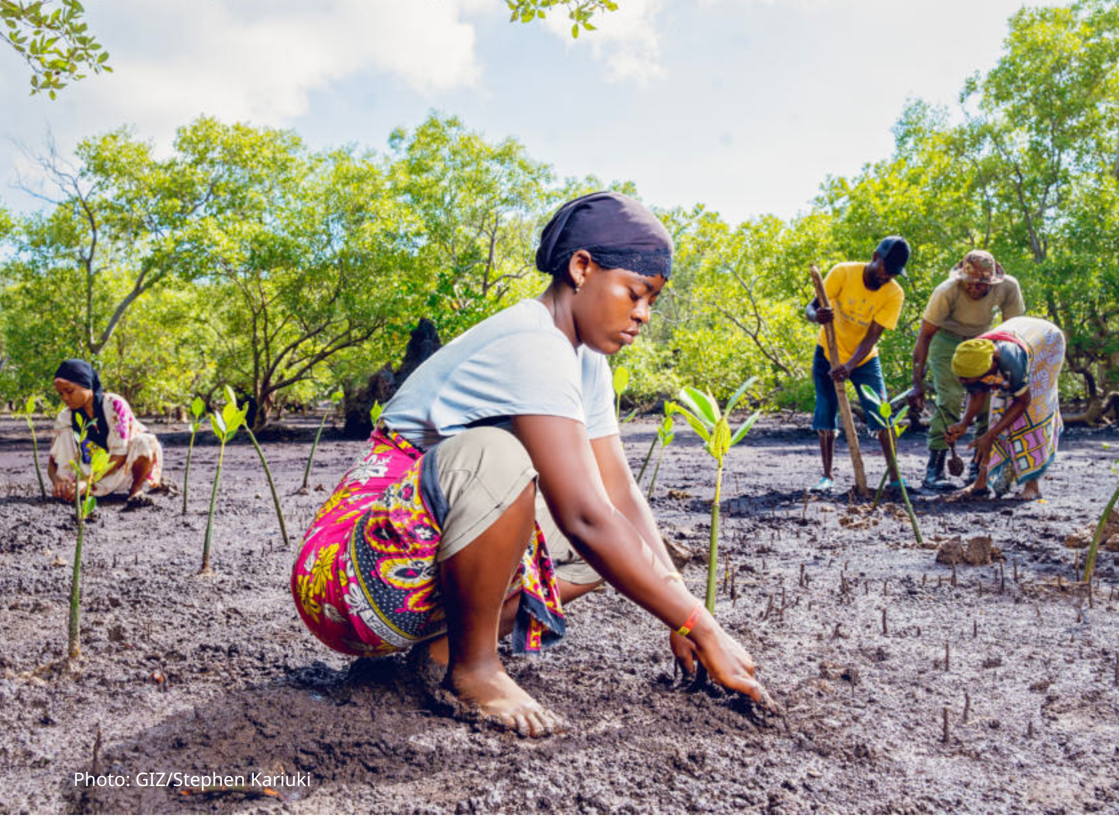

Photo: GIZ/Stephen Kariuki

PILLAR III: OCEAN ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE & BLUE CARBON

Implemented by Expertise France, this pillar strengthens the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems, recognising that healthy ocean ecosystems are the foundation of sustainable blue economies and coastal livelihoods.

Key Focus Areas

- Improving the management of transboundary areas and areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJs) to support ocean conservation initiatives.
- Implementing nature-based solutions to prevent regional ecosystem degradation and restore degraded coastal and marine ecosystems.
- Improving learning, research, outreach and knowledge of marine and coastal science.

The programme will be implemented across the 9 countries in the WIO region:

- Comoros
- Djibouti
- Kenya
- Madagscar
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Seychelles
- Somalia
- Tanzania

KEY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Implementing Partners: Nairobi Convention, European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and Expertise France

CONTACT US

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