



NEWSFLASH 20: April 2007

An occasional newsletter to update participants in SWIOFP on current developments.

Notwithstanding the numerous administrative hurdles and necessary formalities that needed to be completed, the good news is that SWIOFP is on the verge of being fully implemented. Considering the number of countries involved, it has been an outstanding achievement to have reached the final stages. It is expected that the Project will fully come underway in September 2007.

ADMINISTRATION

Following the transfer of the SWIOFP administration from Mozambique to Kenya, there have been several developments. As the finalization to secure funding had been somewhat delayed, it was decided to appoint an Interim Regional Manager so as to initiate momentum in the Project. After a democratic election process, Mr Kaitira Ibrahim Katonda from was chosen to be seconded to this position from his home institution of Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TAFIRI) in Tanzania. Kaitira has considerable experience in this field, having been involved in the Lake Victoria multinational programme. Once funding becomes available later in 2007, the Regional Management Unit (RMU) positions for the Regional Manager and the Finance & Procurement Manager will be advertised and filled.

Meanwhile the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) in Mombasa, has taken several initiatives towards formalising the RMU. This has included the addition of a fine suite of offices and associated facilities at KMFRI headquarters in Mombasa.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

GRANT AND PROJECT AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

Despite the complexities of multinational negotiations, a milestone was reached when all countries formally completed negotiations and acceded to the project agreement. All SWIOFP participants have now submitted signed minutes of their negotiations to the World Bank. This was followed by finalization of the Concept Note for submission to the Bank's Board of Directors for approval.

It is anticipated that all approvals will be finalised by May 2007. After that countries have up to three months to meet the "Effectiveness" conditions of their Grant and Project Agreements. Most of these are process-oriented and not expected to be problematic. Then, after the financial structures have been put in place, the project funding should become available in September 2007.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

One of the key documents that underpins the multinational collaboration of SWIOFP is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was developed during the last Plenary. It is an understanding between the SWIOFP countries and does not directly implicate the World Bank. However, the Bank requires this to be formalised and therefore acts as "facilitator" to have the MOU concluded. The draft of the MOU was circulated to all participating countries for final comment. South Africa and Mauritius made further useful changes and the MOU is now ready to be signed by all participants.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL - PIM

The project implementation manual (PIM), as required by all GEF-World Bank projects, is in its final stages. This PIM provides guidance to the RMU and project managers in the implementation of SWIOFP and is designed to strengthen financial management, monitoring and evaluation. Additional useful comments have been integrated and the final document will be available well before the starting date of the project.

CRUISE PROGRAMME

One of the key strengths of SWIOFP lies in its research cruise programme. A draft plan has been compiled that is designed to make optimal use of research ships as well as leased commercial vessels from several of the participating countries. Norwegian support for research ship's time greatly enhances the SWIOFP activities while requests for South African research ship's time have also been positively received and are likely to be undertaken in collaboration with FAO.

TDA

One of the essential activities, and conditions of GEF support, is the need to undertake a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Plan (SAP). It was originally planned to be a simultaneous exercise with the WIOLab and ASCLME projects. However, as the WIOLab project has already passed its midway stage, the TDAs will be integrated once all three studies have been completed. The WIOLab recently initiated its TDA activities and linkages with SWIOFP have already been established.

SOUTH WEST INDIAN OCEAN FISHERIES COMMISSION (SWIOFC)

As envisaged, the relationship between the SWIOF-Commission and the SWIOF-Project, have followed a natural progression of collaboration. This has been especially effective in relation to the development of systems to generate robust fisheries statistics for the SWIO region. At the end of April the SWIOFC-Working group on Fisheries Statistics held its first meeting in Mombasa. Hosted by KMFRI, this meeting endorsed the information and data management strategies that would be developed by Component-1 of SWIOFP. It was concluded that the results of SWIOFP would feed directly into the scientific working group of SWIOFC and thus to the Commission itself. Clearly this is of significance as it provides a direct link between of the scientific results of SWIOFP and regional management over resource use. The next SWIOFC scientific meeting is to be held in the first week of August in Mauritius, where more progress is anticipated. Although Yemen and Maldives are not formal participants of the SWIOFP, they are members of SWIOFC and play a significant role in its activities, further strengthening the overall goal of sustainable fisheries management in the WIO.

The working group evaluated a number of options for information management and steps were initiated to explore adoption of several existing data management and meta-data systems.

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