

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SWIOP 3 — Pillar 3: Support to regional initiatives to strengthen the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems and storage of blue carbon

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) Scoping and Feasibility Study for NBS Upscaling in the Western Indian Ocean

Programme	EU Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme (SWIOP) — Pillar 3
Component / Activity	Output 2 — Activity 2.1 (Task 2.1.1): NBS Scoping and Feasibility Study
Contracting Authority	Expertise France (EF)
Implementation Modality	Technical consultancy
Level of Effort	Approximately 150 working days
Budget Envelope	Approximately €150,000
Duration	Approximately 6 months
Geographic Scope	Western Indian Ocean: Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Seychelles, Comoros, Mauritius, Madagascar
Working Languages	English
Contact	Mathilde GAUTHIER, Deputy Head of Project

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1. Presentation of the Project

1.1 Presentation of Expertise France

Expertise France (EF) is a public agency and the interministerial actor in international technical cooperation. It became a subsidiary of the French Agency for Development Group (“Agence française de développement” in French / AFD Group) in January 2022. As the second largest agency in Europe, it designs and implements projects that sustainably strengthen public policies in developing and emerging countries on a range of policy issues (e.g. sustainable development, governance, stability, health, education).

It operates in key areas of development and contributes alongside its partners to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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1.2 Context of intervention

The **Western Indian Ocean (WIO)** region encompasses a vast expanse of ocean, from the eastern coast of Africa (Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique) to the islands of the Indian Ocean, including the Seychelles, Comoros, Mauritius, and Madagascar. The WIO region includes both the marine and coastal areas of these countries, encompassing a **total surface area of approximately 330 000 km²**.

The WIO region is recognized as a **global biodiversity hotspot, home to diverse ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, and coastal wetlands**. As of 2021, it had designated 143 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) representing about 7% of the total EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone). These ecosystems are key to the regional economy and food security, and protect coastal communities from storm surges and rising sea levels, enhancing resilience to climate change.

In addition, **blue carbon ecosystems**, mangroves and seagrasses in particular, play a pivotal role in **climate mitigation** by sequestering carbon dioxide (CO₂) in coastal and marine environments. In the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), they are not only vital for carbon storage but also for supporting biodiversity, protecting coastlines, and sustaining livelihoods.

However, these ecosystems are currently under threat of severe deterioration due to a number of factors (coastal development, climate change, pollution, overfishing, etc.), making sustainable management essential for maintaining their benefits to the economy and food security of the region.

1.3 Description of the Programme

The European Union (EU), through its Blue Economy and Governance initiatives such as the Global Gateway, actively supports sustainable ocean management in the WIO. Taking into account this context, the EU has developed its Action around three complementary pillars to provide a structural and integrated response to the challenges encountered by the WIO region, under the Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme (SWIOP):

1. **Ocean governance (€17,75M)**, implemented by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), IOC and Expertise France (EF);

2. **Investment into a sustainable blue economy (€25M)**, implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) - the overall coordination of the three components will also be provided by GIZ;

3. **Improving ocean ecosystem resilience and blue carbon capture (€15,25M): implemented by Expertise France.**

The geographical scope of the overall Action of the EU through SWIOP encompasses nine (9) coastal countries in the WIO, including Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Somalia, Tanzania, and Seychelles.

1.4 SWIOP 3

Expertise France is implementing the EU-funded Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme Pillar 3 (SWIOP 3) on behalf of the European Union Delegation to Mozambique. SWIOP 3 — Resilient Ecosystems — operates with a total budget of approximately €18.25 million over 84 months, structured around three outputs:

- **Output 1:** Transboundary area and ABNJ management, including marine spatial planning and ocean conservation engagement by civil society;
- **Output 2:** Nature-based solutions (NBS) to prevent regional ecosystems degradation and restore degraded coastal and marine ecosystems;
- **Output 3:** Learning, research, outreach and knowledge management.

This Terms of Reference concerns Output 2, Activity 2.1, Task 2.1.1: the NBS Scoping and Feasibility Study. It is a foundational precondition for the subsequent major NBS upscaling grants under Activity 2.2 (Task 2.2.1), which are expected to mobilise approximately €6 million in direct grants to partner NGOs.

2. Context for the Nature-Based Solutions Scoping and Feasibility Study

2.1 The Case for Nature-Based Solutions in the WIO

The Western Indian Ocean coastline harbours some of the world's most biodiverse and productive marine ecosystems, including extensive mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, coral reefs, and coastal wetlands. These ecosystems deliver critical services: coastal protection from erosion and storm surges; carbon sequestration and storage (blue carbon); water quality improvement; nursery habitats for commercially important fish; and the livelihoods and food security of millions of coastal communities.

Despite this importance, WIO coastal ecosystems face severe and accelerating degradation:

- An estimated 60% of mangrove forests in the WIO have been lost in the past 50 years due to coastal development, with continued loss driven by aquaculture, agriculture, and urban expansion;
- Coral reefs across the region have experienced a 20–40% bleaching-related loss, compounded by ocean acidification and anthropogenic stressors;
- Seagrass beds — among the most carbon-dense ecosystems on the planet, sequestering carbon at rates up to ten times faster than rainforests — are poorly monitored and under threat from pollution and coastal modification;
- Over 4.6 million tonnes of plastic waste enter WIO waters annually, degrading coastal and marine habitat quality.

The case for NBS is both ecological and economic. The economic value of NBS in the WIO — from avoided coastal damage, reduced insurance premiums, and carbon finance — is increasingly demonstrable, with pay-for-performance financing models already piloted in the region. The Nairobi Convention's COP 11 (August 2024) adopted decisions specifically urging Contracting Parties to strengthen protection, restoration, and sustainable management of blue carbon ecosystems, including seagrass, mangroves, and salt marshes.

A variety of NBS funding programmes are already underway in the WIO region. However, a number of challenges limit their overall impact: fragmentation of efforts; insufficient coordination; limited operationalisation of carbon finance mechanisms; and the absence of a clear regional mapping of which NBS initiatives are scalable, by whom, and where. SWIOP 3 Output 2 is designed to address this — but only if the scoping and feasibility work is done rigorously first.

2.2 Rationale for This Assignment

During the SWIOP 3 appraisal and project development phase, Expertise France conducted a preliminary analysis of the NBS landscape in the WIO, identifying a number of international NGOs with established field presence and track records in marine and coastal NBS across the region's priority transboundary seascapes. These organisations were assessed based on their technical expertise, geographic footprint, and capacity to implement NBS at scale. A non-exhaustive listing of these organisations will be shared with the selected consultant team at the start of the contract.

However, that preliminary analysis was acknowledged to be insufficient for the following purposes, and did not provide Expertise France with the opportunity to conduct community-based consultation and concertation with local stakeholders — a critical component for ensuring the success and local ownership of Output 2 activities.

1. Confirming that the right geographies of intervention have been selected — and that the ecosystems and seascapes identified match the most appropriate implementing organisations in each location;
2. Providing a thorough, field-validated assessment of NGOs and other organisations active in marine and coastal NBS across the target seascapes — covering their capacity, geographic footprint, and technical positioning vis-à-vis the specific NBS types to be upscaled;
3. Identifying any additional relevant stakeholders or organisations operating in the target seascapes that were not captured in the initial analysis;
4. Providing the documented evidence base required by Expertise France's procurement rules to: (a) produce a listing of qualified implementing organisations for Activity 2.2, based on field-verified partner assessments; and (b) contribute to the design of a restricted call for proposals open to shortlisted organisations, including the preparation of eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, and scope-of-work outlines for each grant. The listing prepared by the feasibility study team will contribute to the final shortlist validated by Expertise France PMU.

The NBS Scoping and Feasibility Study was therefore added to the SWIOP 3 design as a dedicated upstream investment. Its goal is to ensure that Activity 2.2 NBS grants are directed to the right partners, in the right places, for the right ecosystems — and that the restricted call for proposals is well-designed, transparent, fair and legally sound under Expertise France rules. Expertise France's inception phase confirmed the priority and urgency of this assignment: rapid deployment of the scoping study is required to meet the targeted Activity 2.2 CfP launch in October 2026 and grant contract signature in February 2027 at the latest.

Critical procurement purpose

A central output of this study is the production of solid, field-validated analysis to support the procurement process for Activity 2.2 NBS grants. Expertise France's inception phase has confirmed that Activity 2.2 will proceed via a restricted call for proposals rather than direct contracting.

In parallel with the scoping study, EF will launch a Call for Expression of Interest (CEoI) — a light, non-binding two-page expression of interest open to any NGO wishing to signal their interest in the Activity 2.2 grants. The CEoI will be launched approximately two to four weeks after the scoping study commences and will improve EF's visibility of the field of potential applicants. It does not constitute a formal procurement stage and is not legally binding on either EF or applicants.

The study listing and the CEoI responses will together inform EF's establishment of a definitive shortlist. The full process is as follows:

- First, the feasibility study team will produce a recommended listing of qualified implementing organisations;

- Second, EF will draw on that listing alongside CEoI responses to establish a definitive shortlist of organisations;
- Third, EF will launch a restricted CfP to shortlisted organisations only.

The feasibility study must therefore generate both the evidence base for the listing and the documentation required to launch a well-designed, rigorous restricted CfP — including eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, process timeline, and consortia/local CSO participation requirements. This procurement function is co-equal with the technical scoping function of the assignment.

2.3 Overall Objective of the Assignment

The present Assignment must provide Expertise France with a comprehensive, field-validated scoping and feasibility study that:

- (i) maps and assesses scalable NBS initiatives across priority WIO transboundary seascapes;
- (ii) reviews the WIO blue carbon mechanism landscape;
- (iii) determines the most appropriate implementing partners and geographies for NBS upscaling under SWIOP 3 Output 2; and
- (iv) generates the documentation required for Expertise France to shortlist qualified implementing organisations and launch a restricted call for proposals for Activity 2.2 NBS grants.

2.4 Specific Objectives

1. Review the regional and national policy and regulatory landscape relevant to NBS in the WIO — drawing on existing national strategies, plans, and commitments where available, and with emphasis on how the policy environment shapes opportunities and constraints for NBS upscaling by non-governmental implementing organisations;
2. Conduct an in-depth mapping of ongoing NBS initiatives in priority WIO transboundary seascapes, assessing implementation mechanisms, expected impacts, stakeholder capacities, and capacity-building needs, with particular attention to positive gender impacts and women's roles in NBS governance;
3. Assess the feasibility of upscaling NBS initiatives — including documented demonstration of positive social, economic, and environmental impacts, a roadmap for upscaling, financial analysis and grant distribution modelling, and initial co-construction with foreseen partners;
4. Develop investment and business case documentation for priority NBS pipelines — including standard investment and business cases, cash-flow models, and indicative term-sheets suitable for presentation to financiers and investors, aligned with GIZ Pillar 2 pipeline development;
5. Review the WIO blue carbon mechanism landscape — assessing existing mechanisms, gaps, and opportunities for improved collaboration between financial institutions, NGOs, CSOs, governments, and local communities;
6. Produce a listing of qualified implementing organisations for Activity 2.2, based on field-verified partner assessments; and produce the documentation required to support the launch a restricted call for proposals to shortlisted organisations — including eligibility and evaluation criteria, scope-of-work outlines per grant, and a recommended process timeline.

3. Scope of Work

The study is organised into four inter-related components. The expert team will work in close collaboration with the Expertise France PMU. Initial iterative co-construction with foreseen partners (Activity 2.2) forms an integral part of this assignment.

Component	Primary Focus	Est. Days
Component A	Regional and national NBS landscape review (desk research + stakeholder consultations)	~40 days
Component B	In-depth field-based NBS mapping and partner assessment (field missions)	~60 days
Component C	Feasibility of upscaling, investment and business cases, blue carbon mechanism review	~30 days
Component D	Procurement documentation — shortlisting and restricted call for proposals preparation	~20 days
Total		~150 days

3.1 Component A — Regional and National NBS Landscape Review

3.1.1 Policy and Programme Review

The expert team shall conduct a comprehensive desk review of:

- Existing national and regional NBS programmes, including those funded by FFEM (France), GEF, EU, UKAID (Blue Planet Fund), World Bank, and bilateral donors — assessing their coordination mechanisms, lessons learned, and good practices;
- The WIO blue carbon mechanism landscape — cataloguing existing voluntary carbon market projects, carbon certification methodologies in use (Plan Vivo, Verra VCS, Gold Standard), and emerging regulatory blue carbon frameworks in WIO countries;
- Relevant GIZ Pillar 2 (Sustainable Blue Economy) pipeline development work — to ensure coherence and avoid duplication with the investment cases to be developed under Component C.

3.1.2 Stakeholder Landscape Mapping

The expert team shall produce a comprehensive stakeholder map for NBS in the WIO, covering:

- All organisations (NGOs, INGOs, CSOs, research institutions, government agencies) active in marine and coastal NBS across the nine WIO countries — assessing their geographic footprints, technical mandates, operational capacities, and current funding portfolios;
- Identification of any additional organisations not captured in Expertise France's preliminary analysis that may be relevant to NBS upscaling in the target seascapes;
- Mapping of coordination mechanisms, networks, and platforms — including the Great Blue Wall Initiative, WIOMSA Hifadhi Blu, WIO-COMPASS, RNF/WIOMPAN network, Our Blue Future, and VARUNA project.
- Assess the role and added value of the those alliances in the WIO context, and whether SWIOP 3 engagement would strengthen or dilute coordination efforts
- Structured identification of local actors in each priority seascape, through a two-step process: (a) bibliographic and desk review of active organisations at local and national level (local NGOs, CBOs,

community fishing associations, beach management units, local government bodies); and (b) consultations with regional partners and NGOs to validate and supplement the actor list. The output shall be a classified actor list per seascape, describing each organisation’s activities, geographic focus, strengths, and weaknesses — serving both as a pre-workshop preparation tool and as a standalone input to the Component D shortlisting and CfP design work.

The expert team must remain open to identifying organisations that Expertise France may not have previously considered, while ensuring that any such organisations are rigorously assessed against the same criteria as other assessed organisations.

3.2 Component B — In-Depth Field-Based NBS Mapping and Partner Assessment

3.2.1 Field Missions

The core of this assignment is field-based verification. The expert team shall conduct field missions to the three priority intervention seascapes identified in the SWIOP 3 DoA:

Seascape	Countries	Key Ecosystems
Tanga-Pemba-Mombasa Transboundary Area	Kenya, Tanzania	Mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, LMMAs
Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas	Mozambique	Mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass beds, coastal wetlands
Saya de Malha / Salha del Malha Seascape	Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles	Seagrass banks, coral reefs, open ocean habitats

Field missions shall include:

- Structured interviews with NGO country/regional teams in each seascape — confirming their operational footprint, staffing, ongoing projects, partnerships, and organisational capacity;
- Mandatory participatory workshops with local beneficiaries and community-level stakeholders to gather direct expressions of conservation priorities from coastal communities, local CBOs, community associations, and local/county-level government authorities; to assess the degree of alignment between ongoing NGO activities and locally expressed needs; and to promote SWIOP 3 programme visibility at the local level (see workshop methodology box below);
- Ecosystem assessments and field observations — ground-truthing the condition and restoration potential of mangrove, seagrass, coral reef, and wetland ecosystems at priority sites;
- Meetings with national government focal points (Ministries of Environment, Fisheries, Climate Change) — assessing the policy and regulatory environment for NBS in each country, and identifying barriers and enablers for upscaling;
- Engagement with financial sector actors and blue carbon project developers — assessing the appetite and readiness for carbon finance, pay-for-performance mechanisms, and private investment in NBS.

- Meetings with the EU Delegation to Mozambique and, where relevant, other EU Delegations in the region – to gather their assessments of and experience with NGOs active in marine and coastal NBS, including awareness of any past issues or successful partnerships; Expertise France will facilitate introductions to relevant EU Delegation contacts.

Mandatory Participatory Workshops — Methodology and Location Guidance

A series of mandatory participatory workshops shall be conducted as part of the Component B field missions, one per priority seascape (minimum). These workshops are designed to give direct voice to the final beneficiaries and ground-level stakeholders of the SWIOP 3 NBS programme.

Target participants: Local community groups and coastal fishing communities; community-based organisations (CBOs) and community associations directly involved in or affected by NBS initiatives; smaller local NGOs operating in the seascape as potential sub-partners; and local/county-level government authorities with jurisdiction over coastal and marine resources.

Purpose: (1) Gather direct expressions of conservation needs and intervention priorities from community-level actors; (2) collect information on good practices, lessons learned, success factors, enabling conditions, and challenges from existing local conservation initiatives; (3) assess the degree of alignment between existing NGO programme activities and locally expressed priorities; (4) identify gaps in NGO coverage or engagement at community level; (5) gather evidence to inform whether mandatory local partnership or sub-contracting requirements should be built into the Activity 2.2 call for proposals; (6) generate data to contribute to the SWIOP 3 programme baseline; (7) promote the visibility of the SWIOP 3 programme among local stakeholders and reinforce early community ownership.

Format and methodology: Each workshop should be facilitated using inclusive, participatory methods that create a climate of trust and allow contributors to speak openly about local priorities, difficulties, and their experience of existing conservation initiatives. A recommended size of 15–30 participants per session. Gender-sensitive facilitation is required, with specific attention to the roles of women in local NBS governance and benefit-sharing. Each workshop shall use a structured facilitation guide covering the following data collection themes: (a) description of local NBS activities currently underway and their results; (b) success factors and enabling conditions that have made initiatives work; (c) challenges, obstacles, and lessons learned; (d) locally expressed conservation priorities and intervention needs; (e) perceptions of existing NGO presence and gaps in coverage; (f) potential for replication and scaling of effective local practices. Each workshop shall produce a written report capturing the list of participants (with gender breakdown), expressed needs, good practices identified, key themes, and recommendations for programme design.

Feed-through to CfP design: Following completion of the workshops, the expert team shall produce a synthesis of findings structured per seascape, covering: geographic priorities and most critical intervention zones; types of NBS intervention most needed and most supported at local level; types of actors and partnership arrangements most appropriate for implementation; and proposed criteria for prioritising and selecting conservation initiatives to be funded under Activity 2.2. This synthesis shall directly inform Section 3.4 (Component D) procurement documentation and eligibility and evaluation criteria design.

Contribution to programme baseline: Workshop findings shall be structured to contribute to the SWIOP 3 programme baseline, in coordination with the Expertise France PMU. This includes: a descriptive list of NBS actor networks and community organisations active in the priority seascapes; initial indicator values (where data permits) for community engagement and local NBS coverage; and documentation of the current state of community-NGO relationships in each seascape, as a reference point for measuring change over the programme period.

Location guidance by seascape:

Tanga-Pemba-Mombasa: Workshop(s) to be held in the Mombasa or Tanga coastal area. Local county authorities, community fishing associations, and beach management units (BMUs) can be convened without major logistical challenges. This is assessed as the most straightforward seascape for workshop organisation.

Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas (Mozambique): On-site workshops in the archipelago or at the nearest accessible coastal towns (e.g., Angoche, Memba/Mossuril, Pebane, or Quelimane) are strongly preferred. Expertise France considers on-site engagement essential for producing field-validated findings and intends to have PMU representatives present at these sessions where calendar permits. Proposers should specify their preferred on-site location and logistics plan, including travel and per diem costs for participants where required. Only where on-site access proves genuinely infeasible should an alternative approach — such as holding workshops in Maputo with participant travel support — be proposed, and any such fallback must be clearly justified in the technical proposal.

Saya de Malha / Comoros-Mauritius-Seychelles: Workshop(s) to be held on Mauritius, Comoros, or Seychelles, depending on the expert team's country contacts and logistical access. This seascape is generally the most straightforward for logistics. The expert team should propose the most appropriate island location given participant availability.

3.2.2 NBS Initiative Mapping

For each priority seascape, the expert team shall produce a detailed NBS mapping that integrates findings from: desk research and policy review (Component A); structured NGO interviews; and the mandatory participatory workshops with local beneficiaries and stakeholders. The mapping shall be structured around the following analytical dimensions, drawn from both the field evidence and the workshop synthesis:

- A description of each NBS initiative: type (mangrove restoration, seagrass conservation, coral reef rehabilitation, wetland management, etc.), geographic implementation area and scale, implementation mechanism, funding source and financing structure, and timeline;
- An assessment of each initiative's implementing stakeholder(s): technical capacity, organisational capacity, community relationships, existing networks, and capacity-building needs;
- An analysis of positive gender impacts — assessing women's participation in NBS governance, benefit-sharing, and livelihoods, and identifying gender-responsive NBS practices;
- An analysis of lessons learned, good practices, success factors, and enabling conditions — including what has worked, what has failed, why, and what conditions need to be in place for NBS initiatives to succeed;
- An assessment of upscaling and replication potential — identifying which initiatives have the strongest evidence of impact, the clearest pathway to scaling, the best potential for replication across other sites or seascapes, and the most appropriate implementing organisation.
- An assessment of the economic models of the project.

3.2.3 NGO Partner Assessment

The expert team shall conduct a rigorous, field-validated assessment of each NGO partner against the following criteria. Findings will inform the shortlisting recommendation and the procurement documentation in Component D, including the design of the Activity 2.2 restricted call for proposals:

Assessment Criterion	Key Assessment Questions
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Geographic presence and footprint	Does the organisation have an established operational presence (offices, staff, community relationships) in the target seascape? Is this presence documented and verifiable?
Technical specialisation	Does the organisation have demonstrated technical expertise in the specific NBS type proposed? Is this expertise exclusive or shared with other organisations in the same geography?
Operational capacity	Does the organisation have the staffing, systems, and financial management capacity to implement a multi-year, multi-million-euro NBS grant in full compliance with public donors' reporting and contractual obligations? Has it done so previously?
Community relationships and trust	Does the organisation have established, trusted relationships with coastal communities in the target seascape? Can these relationships be verified independently?
Existing programme portfolio	What relevant ongoing programmes does the organisation implement in the target seascape? How would a SWIOP 3 grant complement (not duplicate) these?
Shortlist positioning	Does this organisation's technical and geographic positioning justify inclusion on the shortlist for the Activity 2.2 restricted call for proposals? What are its distinctive comparative strengths and potential weaknesses relative to other organisations active in the same seascapes?
Gender-responsiveness	Does the organisation have documented approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment in NBS implementation?
Blue carbon expertise	Does the organisation have specific expertise in carbon certification, MRV (Measure, Report, Verify) systems, or carbon finance mechanisms relevant to coastal ecosystems?
Efficiency and value for money	Does the organisation demonstrate cost-effectiveness in its operations? Is there a risk of excessive overhead or cascading administrative costs that could reduce the share of grant funds reaching field-level activities?
Existing partners and consortia	Does the organisation have established partnerships or consortium arrangements with other NGOs, research institutions, or local organisations? How would these existing relationships shape the design and implementation of an Activity 2.2 grant?
Network membership and regional integration	Is the organisation a member of regional or international networks focused on marine biodiversity conservation? What is the relevance and added value of those networks for SWIOP 3 objectives, and does the organisation have potential to contribute to or benefit from a regional practitioners' network?

Relationship with national and local authorities	Does the organisation have established working relationships with relevant national ministries, local government bodies, and regulatory authorities in the target seascapes? Are these relationships documented and functional?
Relationship with donors	Does the organisation have a track record of successful partnerships with major donors active in the WIO region (including EU, AFD, GIZ, and others)? Are there any known issues or conflicts with past or current donors that could affect its suitability as an Activity 2.2 grantee?
Exit strategy and financial sustainability	Does the organisation have a credible exit strategy for its NBS initiatives beyond the duration of SWIOP 3 funding? Does it have experience accessing or developing innovative finance mechanisms — such as blue carbon credits, biodiversity certificates, or other revenue-generating approaches — that could sustain activities after the grant period?

The expert team shall produce brief organisational profiles for key local NGOs, CBOs, and community associations identified during field missions and participatory workshops. These profiles shall include basic organisational details (mandate, geographic focus, key contact information, and relevant ongoing activities), and shall be presented as an annex to the D4 NBS Mapping Report. This information will assist Expertise France in assessing local partnership and sub-contracting requirements for the Activity 2.2 call for proposals, including the recommended minimum share of grant budgets to be allocated to locally grounded organisations.

3.3 Component C — Feasibility of Upscaling, Investment Cases, and Blue Carbon Review

3.3.1 Feasibility of Upscaling

Drawing on the landscape review and field findings, the expert team shall produce a feasibility study for upscaling priority NBS initiatives, including:

- A documented demonstration of the positive social, economic, and environmental impact of scaling up selected NBS initiatives — including ecosystem services quantification (carbon storage, coastal protection, fisheries productivity, water quality);
- A roadmap for NBS upscaling, capitalising on existing and proven impactful practices, coordinating conservation efforts, and optimising the use of financial, human, and material resources;
- A financial analysis and grant distribution modelling for Activity 2.2 — distributing the indicative grant envelopes across seascapes and ecosystem types with justification;
- Initial iterative co-construction with foreseen NGO partners — establishing shared understanding of scope, approaches, and expected results for Activity 2.2, to be formalised in subsequent grant agreements.

3.3.2 Investment and Business Cases

The expert team shall develop a memorandum of standard investment and business cases for priority NBS project pipelines. A central objective of this component is to assess and document the economic models underpinning each NBS initiative — with particular attention to innovative finance mechanisms, revenue-generating approaches, and pathways to financial sustainability beyond SWIOP 3 funding. This includes blue carbon finance, biodiversity credits and certificates, ecosystem service payments, and other emerging instruments being piloted in the WIO region.

The memorandum shall include:

- Standard investment cases for each priority NBS pipeline — describing the project rationale, expected ecological, social, and economic returns, risk profile, and investment structure;
- Cash-flow models for each pipeline — illustrating the financial profile over the project lifecycle, including revenue streams (carbon credits, biodiversity certificates, ecosystem service payments, co-financing) and operational costs;
- Indicative term-sheets for each pipeline — providing the basic commercial terms for presentation to financiers and investors;
- An assessment of innovative finance mechanisms relevant to each pipeline — including blue carbon finance, biodiversity credits and certificates, pay-for-performance models, and access to external funding beyond the grant period — with recommendations for how each NBS initiative could achieve financial sustainability after SWIOP 3 support ends;
- Alignment review with the GIZ Pillar 2 pipeline development process — ensuring coherence between NBS feasibility work and the investment opportunities being developed through SWIOP's sustainable blue economy pillar.

These investment cases are essential for presenting bankable NBS pipelines to financiers and investors, and for ensuring that Activity 2.2 grantees enter the programme with credible exit strategies and access to diversified funding sources.

3.3.3 Blue Carbon Mechanism Review

The expert team shall produce a focused review of existing blue carbon mechanisms in the WIO region, covering:

- An inventory of operational and pipeline blue carbon projects in the WIO — by ecosystem type (mangrove, seagrass, salt marsh), country, certification standard (Plan Vivo, Verra VCS, Gold Standard, etc.), and implementing organisation;
- An assessment of the verification and MRV methodologies in use — identifying methodological gaps, particularly for seagrass ecosystems where data is weakest. When existing methodologies are in place, assess the potential for reducing the cost of verification;
- An assessment of biodiversity credits, certificates, and biodiversity finance mechanisms relevant to WIO coastal and marine ecosystems — reviewing existing and emerging standards, the state of market development, opportunities for integration with blue carbon approaches, and implications for how SWIOP 3 Activity 2.2 grantees might access biodiversity finance as part of their long-term sustainability strategies;
- An analysis of the financial and institutional architecture of existing projects — covering governance, community benefit-sharing arrangements, and the role of financial intermediaries;
- Identification of areas of improvement for the WIO blue carbon mechanism landscape — with specific attention to facilitating collaboration between financial institutions, NGOs, CSOs, governments, and local communities;
- Recommendations for how SWIOP 3 Activity 2.3 (Project Study and Preparation Facility for blue carbon) can build on existing mechanisms rather than duplicating them.

Special attention shall be given throughout to the Tahiry Honko project in southwest Madagascar — the world's first blue carbon project to issue verified carbon credits under the Plan Vivo standard, led by WWF France — as a key regional reference case.

3.4 Component D — Procurement Documentation

This component is of critical importance to Expertise France's ability to shortlist qualified organisations and launch the Activity 2.2 restricted call for proposals. Following confirmation during the inception phase that Activity 2.2 will proceed via a restricted call for proposals, the expert team shall produce the following documentation:

3.4.1 Shortlisting and Restricted Call for Proposals Documentation

The expert team shall produce:

- (a) a recommended list of qualified implementing organisations for Activity 2.2, for validation by EF; and
- (b) a restricted call for proposals technical documentation package, sufficient to enable EF to launch the Activity 2.2 restricted CfP to shortlisted organisations upon EF validation.

This documentation must:

- Be based on field-verified evidence, not solely on desk research;
- Produce a recommended list of qualified organisations — drawing on the field-validated partner assessments (Component B) and stakeholder mapping (Component A) to identify and rank organisations with the strongest technical, geographic, and operational positioning for Activity 2.2, with clear justification for each inclusion or exclusion; this shortlist shall be submitted to EF to establish the final shortlist before the restricted CfP is launched;
- Define eligibility and evaluation criteria for the restricted CfP — calibrated to the shortlisted pool of organisations and aligned with SWIOP 3 Output 2 objectives and Expertise France's procurement standards;
- Provide a recommended CfP process timeline — from publication through evaluation, award, and grant agreement signature — consistent with the Activity 2.2 implementation schedule (grant contracts targeted for February 2027).

Consortia and local CSO participation requirements

Drawing on the field findings, the expert team shall recommend requirements for consortium arrangements and local CSO participation within Activity 2.2 grants. This shall include: recommended minimum percentages of grant budgets to be allocated to local CSO sub-contractors or partners; guidance on how consortia between international NGOs and local organisations should be structured; and a recommended approach for ensuring that the CfP design promotes genuine local ownership and benefit. These recommendations shall be reflected in the CfP eligibility and evaluation criteria.

3.4.2 Scope Definition for Activity 2.2 Grants

Based on the feasibility findings, the expert team shall produce draft scope-of-work outlines for each of the Activity 2.2 NGO grants, covering:

- Geographic scope and priority sites confirmed by field verification;
- Ecosystem types and NBS approaches to be implemented;
- Expected results, outputs, and indicators;
- Indicative budget allocation and grant structure;
- Key risks and mitigation measures.

These scope outlines will serve as the basis for subsequent grant agreement negotiations between Expertise France and the partner NGOs.

4. Expected Deliverables

The following table presents the expected deliverables, indicative level of effort, and timing. Exact scheduling shall be confirmed at inception in agreement with Expertise France PMU.

#	Deliverable	Description	Est. Days	Timing
D1	Inception Note	Confirmed study methodology, work plan, field mission schedule, and stakeholder engagement plan. Includes proposed structure for shortlisting methodology and restricted call for proposals documentation.	3–5	Week 2–3 (June)
D2	Regional NBS Landscape Review	Comprehensive review of ongoing NBS programmes; initial stakeholder map; preliminary blue carbon inventory. Desk-based.	15–20	Month 1–2 (June–July)
D3	Field Mission Reports	One report per seascape (3 total): findings from field missions including ecosystem assessments, NGO partner interviews, government meetings, and full reports from the mandatory participatory workshops with local beneficiaries and community-level stakeholders. Workshop reports shall capture: list of participants (with gender breakdown); actor profiles of local organisations identified; expressed conservation needs and priorities; good practices and lessons learned from local initiatives; success factors and enabling conditions; challenges identified; and key messages for CfP design and programme baseline.	15–20	Month 2–3 (July–August)
D4	In-Depth NBS Mapping Report	Detailed mapping of NBS initiatives in all three priority seascapes; stakeholder capacity assessments; gender impact analysis; upscaling and replication potential matrix. Annex: classified actor list per seascape covering local NGOs, CBOs, and community associations identified during field missions and participatory workshops (including organisational profiles, geographic focus, key contacts, and relevance to Activity 2.2 local partnership requirements).	15–20	Month 3 (August)

D5	NBS Upscaling Feasibility Study	Full feasibility study including: impact demonstration; upscaling roadmap; financial analysis and grant distribution modelling; initial co-construction outcomes.	15–20	Month 4 (September)
D6	Investment and Business Case Memorandum	Standard investment cases, cash-flow models, and indicative term-sheets for priority NBS pipelines; GIZ Pillar 2 alignment note.	10–12	Month 5 (October)
D7	Blue Carbon Mechanism Review	Inventory of WIO blue carbon projects; MRV methodology assessment; financial and institutional architecture analysis; recommendations for SWIOP 3 Activity 2.3.	8–10	Month 5 (October)
D8	Procurement Documentation Package	Core deliverables: (a) Recommended listing of qualified implementing organisations for Activity 2.2, with field-validated justifications; (b) Restricted call for proposals documentation package — eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, process timeline, and consortia/local CSO participation requirements; (c) Draft Activity 2.2 grant scope outlines per seascape and ecosystem type.	10–15	Month 4 (September)
D9	Final Study Report	Synthesis of all components; executive summary; key recommendations for EF PMU on Activity 2.2 contracting pathway and NBS grant design.	5–8	Month 6 (November)

Note: All written deliverables are subject to inspection and acceptance by Expertise France PMU. The expert team shall present key findings in at least two in-person or virtual presentations to the Expertise France PMU and relevant stakeholders during the study period.

5. Key Stakeholders and Coordination

Effective coordination with the following stakeholders is essential to the quality and procurement-soundness of the study's outputs:

Stakeholder	Role / Relationship	Coordination Modality
Expertise France PMU (Rodrigo Madariaga, Mathilde Gauthier, Iolaine Thibault)	Contracting authority; primary day-to-day supervision; validation of deliverables	Monthly reporting + milestone presentations

EU Delegation to Mozambique (EUD Maputo)	Primary EU donor for SWIOP 3; valuable source of institutional knowledge on NGOs active in the WIO region, including past partnerships and issues; Expertise France will facilitate introductions and coordinate engagement	Meetings facilitated by EF PMU; consultation as needed during field missions
GIZ (SWIOP Pillar 2 — Sustainable Blue Economy)	Coordination on investment case alignment; pipeline development coherence	Technical working sessions
National Ministries of Environment / Fisheries (Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Comoros, Seychelles, Madagascar)	Policy and regulatory context; NBS enabling environment; country focal points	Country-level meetings during field missions
Nairobi Convention Secretariat	Regional NBS policy framework (COP 11 decisions on blue carbon); NBSAP alignment	Consultation as needed
WIOMSA	Scientific context; community-managed area data; Elinor tool	Consultation as needed
Financial sector / blue carbon project developers	Investment appetite; carbon market readiness	Interviews during field missions

6. Implementation Arrangements

6.1 Supervision and Reporting

- The expert team operates under the supervision of the Expertise France PMU (technical oversight: Rodrigo Madariaga, Programme Director & Mathilde Gauthier, Deputy Team Leader; day-to-day exchanges on the contract: Iolaine Thibault, Project Officer).
- All deliverables are subject to inspection and acceptance by Expertise France in accordance with contract procedures. Acceptance authority: Expertise France PMU.
- Progress reporting shall include monthly short updates and presentation of key findings at milestone stages.
- All recommendations provided by the expert team are advisory and subject to validation by Expertise France PMU. The expert team shall not represent Expertise France in any external capacity.

6.2 Role Boundaries

The expert team shall not:

- Represent Expertise France or the SWIOP 3 project vis-à-vis the European Union, partner organisations, governments, or other external stakeholders;
- Make procurement decisions or commitments on behalf of Expertise France;

- Manage budgets, contracts, or administrative processes;
- Negotiate grant terms or financial arrangements with any of the NGO partners assessed.

6.3 Field Missions

- Expertise France shall be informed of field missions in advance. The mission schedule shall be agreed upon at inception.
- The expert team shall coordinate field mission planning with the NGOs and relevant national government contacts. Expertise France shall introduce the expert team to the relevant EU Delegation representatives. For any high-level or institutional meeting, the expert team shall include Expertise France in all preliminary communications and shall inform Expertise France of any issue in the organisation of those meetings.
- Mission reports shall be submitted within 10 working days of each mission.
- The expert team should take note that the Expertise France PMU has representatives in Kenya and Mozambique — coordination with the EF PMU on timing and logistics is required.

6.4 Ownership of Outputs

All study outputs — reports, data, investment cases, procurement documentation, and any other materials produced under this assignment — are the property of Expertise France / the SWIOP 3 project. Materials shall be submitted for validation in editable formats (Word, Excel) and for final versions in PDF format. They shall be available for use in subsequent SWIOP 3 procurement processes.

7. Expert Profile(s)

The exact number and composition of expert profiles for this assignment is not pre-defined: applicants may propose as many specialist profiles as they deem necessary. The following indicative profiles are recommended. Applicants are required to justify their team composition in the technical proposal.

Profile 1 — Senior NBS and Marine Conservation Expert (Lead)

Criterion	Requirement
Education	Advanced degree (Master's or PhD) in Marine Science, Ecology, Environmental Management, Conservation Biology, or related field
Experience	Minimum 12 years in marine and coastal conservation, NBS programme development, or related fields in international / development cooperation contexts
Regional	Demonstrated experience working in the WIO region; knowledge of at least three WIO country contexts; familiarity with conservation organisations at regional level
Technical	Expertise in NBS feasibility assessment, coastal ecosystem restoration (mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass), and stakeholder capacity assessment; experience with NBSAP/NDC review processes

Procurement	Experience designing or contributing to competitive calls for proposals in development cooperation contexts, including eligibility and evaluation criteria design, is an asset
Languages	English mandatory; French highly desirable; Portuguese an asset
Gender	Demonstrated integration of gender-responsive approaches in conservation programmes

Profile 2 — Blue Carbon and Climate Finance Specialist

Criterion	Requirement
Education	Advanced degree in Environmental Finance, Climate Science, Environmental Economics, or related field
Experience	Minimum 8 years in blue carbon project development, carbon certification, climate finance mechanisms, or NBS investment cases
Technical	Hands-on experience with at least one carbon certification standard applicable to coastal ecosystems (Plan Vivo, Verra VCS, Gold Standard); experience developing investment cases and cash-flow models for conservation projects
Regional	WIO or broader East/Southern Africa experience preferred
Languages	English mandatory; French desirable

Profile 3 — Stakeholder Engagement and Field Assessment Specialist

Criterion	Requirement
Education	Degree in Social Sciences, Community Development, Anthropology, Conservation, or related field
Experience	Minimum 6 years conducting qualitative field research, stakeholder mapping, and community consultations in coastal or marine conservation contexts
Technical	Experience facilitating community consultations; gender-sensitive participatory methods; organisational capacity assessment; field ecosystem assessment
Regional	WIO or broader East/Southern Africa experience required

Languages	English mandatory; French and/or Portuguese desirable; Kiswahili an asset for Kenya/Tanzania field work
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Profile 4 — Economic and Innovative Finance Specialist

Criterion	Requirement
Education	Advanced degree in Economics, Environmental Economics, Finance, or related field
Experience	Minimum 8 years in economic analysis, innovative finance, or investment structuring in conservation, natural resources, or development cooperation contexts
Technical	Demonstrated experience developing economic models and business cases for NBS or conservation projects; hands-on experience with innovative finance mechanisms including biodiversity credits, blue carbon finance, ecosystem service payments, or pay-for-performance models; experience assessing financial sustainability and exit strategies for grant-funded programmes
Regional	WIO or broader East/Southern Africa experience preferred
Languages	English mandatory; French desirable

Profile 5 — Environmental and Social (E&S) Specialist

Criterion	Requirement
Education	Advanced degree in Social Sciences, Environmental Studies, Development Studies, or related field
Experience	Minimum 8 years in environmental and social assessment, community engagement, or participatory development in conservation or natural resources management contexts
Technical	Demonstrated experience conducting social impact assessments and E&S due diligence in conservation or NBS programmes; experience facilitating participatory processes with coastal communities and local organisations; gender-sensitive approaches to community engagement; familiarity with safeguard frameworks relevant to EU-funded development programmes
Regional	WIO or broader East/Southern Africa experience required

Languages	English mandatory; French and/or Portuguese desirable; Kiswahili an asset
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8. Budget Envelope

The indicative budget for this assignment is approximately €150,000, covering approximately 100 working days of expert consultancy.

Financial proposals may not exceed €199,999; any proposal above this fixed cost will be ineligible.

Budget Component	Notes
Expert fees (96–120 days)	Breakdown by expert profile required in financial proposal
Field missions (3 seascapes)	Indicative travel costs for missions to Kenya/Tanzania, Mozambique, and Comoros/Mauritius/Seychelles, including consultation workshops, to be detailed in financial proposal
Translation / interpretation	For community consultations and government meetings in French and Portuguese-speaking contexts
Deliverable production costs	Editing, design, printing of final reports if required
Total indicative envelope	~€150,000 (all-in, inclusive of fees, missions, and incidentals)

Financial proposals must include a detailed breakdown of day rates, mission costs, and any other cost items. Proposers are invited to suggest the most cost-effective team configuration within the budget envelope.

Financial proposals must also include a breakdown of the overall cost per component and deliverable.

9. Required Submission Documents

- Technical proposal (maximum 12 pages, single-spaced): understanding of the assignment; proposed study approach and methodology; work plan and field mission schedule; team composition and role allocation.
- Curriculum Vitae(s) of proposed expert(s): highlighting relevant experience in NBS, blue carbon, WIO region, and procurement documentation.
- At least two references of comparable previous assignments (NBS feasibility studies, conservation investment cases, or restricted/competitive call for proposals design work in conservation/development cooperation contexts).
- Financial proposal: detailed breakdown of expert day rates, mission costs, and total budget.

Annex A: Priority Intervention Seascapes — Summary Profiles

The three priority intervention seascapes for SWIOP 3 Output 2 were selected through a multi-criteria analysis during the project appraisal phase, based on: existence and concentration of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Ecologically/Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs); ecological connectivity; presence of LMMAs, MPAs, and OECMs; existing conservation programmes; institutional transboundary cooperation; safety and operational accessibility; and revenue-generating potential for long-term sustainability.

Criterion	Tanga-Pemba-Mombasa	Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas	Saya de Malha
Countries	Kenya, Tanzania	Mozambique	Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles
Key ecosystems	Mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, LMMAs	Mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, coastal wetlands	Seagrass banks, coral reefs, open ocean, pelagic habitat
Blue carbon potential	High — extensive mangrove systems; active LMMAs; carbon market projects present	High — significant mangrove extent; Mozambique NDC includes blue carbon targets	High — Saya de Malha holds one of the world's largest seagrass meadows
Transboundary governance	Kenya-Tanzania Joint Management Area; active SWIOFC PP2	Mozambique Channel; NoCaMo active	Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Management Area
Key active programmes	NoCaMo, SWIOFC PP2, Blue Planet Fund, VARUNA	NoCaMo, Futuro Azul, ECO-DDR	Great Blue Wall (IUCN), Seychelles Blue Bond
Field mission priority	Highest — most active NBS portfolio; multiple NGOs to assess	High — critical Mozambique sites; EF PMU field mission planned	Medium — may require remote/desktop approach for open ocean components

Annex B: WIO Blue Carbon Context — Key Reference Data

The following ecosystem data provides key contextual reference for the blue carbon mechanism review under Component C. These figures are drawn from the SWIOP 3 Description of Action and peer-reviewed sources.

Ecosystem	Carbon Storage Capacity	WIO Status	Key Threats
Mangroves	Up to 1,000 tonnes CO ₂ /ha in biomass and soils; among the most carbon-dense ecosystems globally	60% of WIO mangroves lost in past 50 years; continued loss from coastal development and aquaculture	Coastal development, aquaculture, agriculture, sea-level rise
Seagrass meadows	Sequester carbon at rates up to 10x faster than rainforests; ~10% of ocean's total carbon storage	Saya de Malha holds one of the world's largest seagrass banks; poorly monitored across WIO	Pollution, coastal modification, boat anchoring, climate change
Coral reefs	Indirect blue carbon role; critical for coastal protection and fisheries productivity	20–40% bleaching-related loss across WIO; ocean acidification accelerating	Climate change (bleaching), ocean acidification, overfishing, coastal development
Salt marshes / coastal wetlands	Significant carbon sequestration; often overlooked in WIO context	Limited data for WIO; underrepresented in carbon certification programmes	Drainage, coastal development, pollution

The Nairobi Convention COP 11 (August 2024) adopted specific decisions urging Contracting Parties to: strengthen protection, restoration, and sustainable management of blue carbon ecosystems; improve institutional arrangements and data-sharing practices; and develop a regional seagrass strategy. These COP 11 decisions provide the intergovernmental mandate within which SWIOP 3 Activity 2.3 (blue carbon Project Study and Preparation Facility) shall operate.

Annex C: Reference Programmes and NBS Duplication Risk Map

The following active and recently completed programmes are most relevant to the landscape review in Component A and the duplication avoidance requirements of the feasibility study:

Programme	Status	NBS Overlap	Feasibility Study Action
NoCaMo (FFEM / NC / WWF / WCS / CORDIO)	Active	NMC MSP, NBS guidelines, DTO, mangrove restoration	Component A review; coordinate with NoCaMo team during field missions in NMC area
WIOCOR (FFEM / IUCN ESARO)	Active	Coral reef restoration; community co-management	Component A review; assess overlap with Component B NGO assessment
Tahiry Honko (WWF France / Plan Vivo)	Operational — ongoing	World's first Plan Vivo coastal blue carbon project; mangroves, SW Madagascar	Key reference case for blue carbon review (Component C); verify current status
TransFORM (World Bank / WWF)	Active	Fisheries-NBS linkages in SWIO	Assess complementarity; include in Component A stakeholder map
Great Blue Wall Initiative (IUCN / Mitsubishi Foundation)	Active	Pan-African ocean conservation; IUCN NBS Hub model	Key reference for Component B NGO assessment
Save Our Mangroves Now! (IUCN / German Government)	Active	Mangrove conservation and restoration across WIO	Component A review; overlap assessment with IUCN ESARO grant scope
ReefCloud (WCS / AIMS / AI)	Active	AI-based coral reef monitoring across WIO	Key WCS technology asset; include in Component B WCS assessment
GIZ SWIOP Pillar 2 (Sustainable Blue Economy)	Active	Blue economy investment; NBS-investment linkages	Coordination for Component C investment case alignment
CEPF WIO Hotspot	Active	Biodiversity grants to local CSOs	Avoid overlap with TOR 2 CSO grants; include in Component A

*End of Terms of Reference — TOR 3: NBS Scoping and Feasibility Study — SWIOP 3 Output 2
Expertise France — SWIOP 3 — Draft for Internal Review — April 21, 2026*