

**Final Evaluation linked to the project ending
of the 1st phase of the mangrove initiative
„Mangrove conservation for a sound
environment and human development“
(Save our mangroves now!)**

Final Report

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List of Abbreviations

%	percent
€	Euro
US\$	US-Dollar
AFR100	African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
approx.	approximately
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
e.g.	for example
GMA	Global Mangrove Alliance
GmbH	limited liability company (in German speaking countries)
i.e.	that is
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
incl.	including
km	kilometre
n.a.	no answer
NCCAP	National Climate Change Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
No.	Number
p.a.	per annum (per year)
PM	project management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOMN	Save Our Mangroves Now!
UN	United Nations
WIO region	Western Indian Ocean Region
WIOMSA	Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (USA: World Wildlife Fund)

Executive Summary

The evaluation took place between the end of November 2019 and the beginning of the year 2020 and focused on the implementation and the results of the mangrove initiative (SOMN).

The evaluation criteria include the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and the sustainability of the project. The evaluation process involved several stakeholders such as the WWF Germany and its implementing partners WWF-US and IUCN, as well as the donor, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Relevance

From an independent point of view, the project scope can be assessed as appropriate and necessary. This includes the project's objectives defined, the target groups identified and the different work packages and actions budgeted for implementation. The project objectives, as well as the actions designed to reach them can be assessed as consistent and coherent, as the project addressed the specific needs are linked to a previous lack of international awareness and collaboration as well as capacity development and activities on the regional level.

Effectiveness

The assessment of effectiveness needs to differentiate between governance-related and context-related effectiveness. While the context-related effectiveness focuses on the project performance, especially the target achievement, the governance-related effectiveness deals with the overall quality of the project planning, implementation and management.

Governance related effectiveness

The project is finished and due to chapter 0 all targets can be considered to be more or less achieved with some indicators outperforming and some underperformances that can be explained. There is no evidence that the project experienced severe problems. In addition, the interview partners have given a good rating to the project management and the overall project implementation. Everyone interviewed seems satisfied with the outcomes.

However, retrospectively the project start was perceived as rushed and due to the shift in the focus, it was perceived as starting without a clear mission. Several aspects still needed to be defined after the project start. Determining this project as a political project on international agenda-setting as well as experience and knowledge exchange, network building and capacity development, the joint project team was required to constantly reconfigure its planning and staffing due to the nature of this kind of projects.

Context-related effectiveness

It needs to be highlighted that the project and its effectiveness was constantly monitored by the project management. The evaluation could make use of the digitally provided monitoring overviews for the assessment of the effectiveness starting in 2018, and all related target achievement proofs available.

In total, the target achievement is in line with the overall expectations and the project is even outperforming for several indicators. Unfortunately not all the indicators and their definition were appropriate or clear. Since the approval of the project in 2016, a total of five amendments of the project's budget-lines, activities, and a prolongation of the project until end of February 2020 took place. Usually any amendment and rebalancing of budget lines should always result in a recalculation of the indicators' target values as well. However, this conceptual and evaluative task remained undone.

The second phase of the project, starting in 2020 should provide suitable indicators with targets meeting the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable and Time bound). The project team should have an ex-ante assessment of the indicators carried out and recalculate the target values at least if substantial amendments or rebalancing of budget lines takes place.

Efficiency

Whether a development cooperation project of political nature was efficiently implemented is almost impossible to assess. Raising of awareness, efforts at persuasion in a political context, experience and knowledge exchange, or capacity development on best practices needs time and should not generally be assessed by applying cost-benefit-relations on the outcome level. In this case, cost-benefit relations on the output level are not possible to extract from the financial system, as it doesn't allow a differentiation regarding the personnel expenditure.

Impact on overall development goals

The overall objective of the project is to stop the ongoing global loss of mangroves. According to the project description this contributes to the sustainable development goals (SDG). In addition to this, the contribution consists of the improvement of the living conditions for particularly vulnerable coastal communities.

This intervention logic directly links to the SDGs to be addressed. From a scientific and theoretical point of view, this mode of action seems comprehensible and logical.

Sustainability

It needs to be stressed that the sustainability of a project can usually not be assessed immediately at its very end. It's a question of time to be able to assess the sustainability properly.

However, the achieved outputs and outcomes promise positive future developments, but the mangrove initiative is not yet deep-seated and a financially self-supporting institution within the WIO region. A post funding stability shall therefore be achieved by ensuring the permanence of positive effects through concrete actions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The mangrove initiative can be assessed as success story, although the project's start was perceived as difficult and cumbersome. The first work package, the agenda setting, was especially successful and efficient and achieved its target very quickly in 2017.

Almost every target (measured by output and outcome indicators) has been achieved, although some underperformances need to be stated. Especially the targets in national policy making and national commitment in the WIO region have not been performing as expected.

The main recommendations are:

- Implement an on-going evaluation process.
- Effectively monitor the context and informal outputs.
- Put more emphasis on the regional offices and networks.
- Effectively commit the regional partners.
- Prevent double-structures and internal competition.

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Evaluation topic

According to the project proposal, the global amount of mangroves is at 15 million hectares which represents 0.1 % of the global landmass. Mangroves are considered to have ecological, economic and social importance, contributing to the conservation of biodiversity, to the mitigation and adaptation of climate change and provision of food and income opportunities for local communities. The Boston Consulting Group estimated that the value of the global mangroves is at around 1 trillion (= 1 million million or 1,000,000,000,000 €), due to their economic impact or their role as provider of environmental services such as flood protection.

Efforts on mangrove conservation have been pushed for several years already. Nevertheless, the global loss of mangroves is continuing and around 35 % of the global mangrove habitats are already lost. The loss rate is still around 3 to 5 times higher than the loss rate of terrestrial forests. The project proposal identified as main reasons for the loss of mangroves the lack of dedication to mangrove conservation on an international level, inconsistent national legal frameworks and insufficient cooperation of stakeholders on all levels.

The mangrove initiative aims to overcome these constraints by striving for international and national agenda setting and bundling together the already existing international and national efforts and initiatives effectively. International experience and knowledge exchange and network building was planned and capacity development on application of best practices and policy approaches on mangrove protection should be made available for both international and national decision-makers and users, administrators, planners and any other stakeholders of society.

1.2 Motivation and evaluation objective

The main objective for WWF having an evaluation carried out for the mangrove initiative was for all implementing partners to assess the effectiveness and design of the project and to learn from the project implementation and its results. Key findings of the evaluation shall help to improve implementation of a follow-up project (second project phase) through addressing the needs even better and achieving future targets more effectively.

The main evaluation questions focus on the implementation and the results of the project. Due to the political nature of this international project, the project management and related issues are of special interest. The evaluation criteria therefore circle the relevance as coherence and consistency of the project targets, the governance-related project effectiveness with regard to the quality of project planning, project implementation and project management as well as the ownership and motivation of the implementing partners.

The assessment of the context-related effectiveness, e.g. through the assessment of the quality of project targets and indicators for measurement as well as the target achievement is of special interest, as this provides lessons learned for future indicators for monitoring and evaluation for further projects. The efficiency of the project implementation might be assessed through the analysis of cost-benefit-relations if available.

While the aforementioned evaluation criteria (the relevance, the effectiveness and the efficiency) are either directly measurable (or at least operational issues interview partners can articulate their point of view on) the evaluation criteria addressing more strategic issues are less tangible. The contribution of the project to the sustainable development goals (SDGs), or the sustainability of the project are not directly measurable, any effects can therefore be subject to discussion, and with regard to the sustainability, might be linked to long term effects that can't be observed yet. For the complete assessment see chapter 5 .

1.3 Mission

The evaluation took place between the end of November 2019 and the beginning of the year 2020. There were neither constraints nor external factors affecting the evaluation process nor the results observed. That's why the evaluation took place under regular circumstances.

The evaluation process involved several stakeholders such as the WWF Germany and its implementing partners WWF-US and IUCN, as well as the donor, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Neither the target groups have not been involved, nor the public or NGOs other than the implementing partners.

The external evaluation team was not previously involved in the design, the implementation or the management of the project, and is therefore considered as completely independent.

2 Methodological approach

2.1 Evaluation methods

The methodological approach of the evaluation and the research tools used reflect the qualitative project scope of the mangrove initiative as a highly political project designed mainly to facilitate the implementation of mangrove conservation policies.

As a highly political project with mainly qualitative results, the research tools needed to be suitable in order to gather useful information and insights from the stakeholders. For this reason the evaluation is based mainly on desk research and a thorough qualitative content analysis of the documentation provided, and qualitative interviews with the main stakeholders.

Between December 3rd and December 19th a total of eight in-depth stakeholder interviews have been conducted, most of them by phone. In addition, on December 13th a group interview with the project management team from the WWF Germany in Hamburg was held to address specific questions and issues related to the upcoming follow-up project phase (Phase II). The reporting on the interview results and the different subject-matters is done anonymously within this report, although a total of only eight interviews might allow drawing conclusions from some of the evidences. There were no other security issues necessary as the interview partners participated voluntarily and the environment was neither insecure nor was it hostile.

Whenever possible and available quantitative data was used to underpin or validate any assessment. It needs to be mentioned that quantitative data related to the project actions are scarce and the project had never been designed to perform, nor was it intended to achieve, quantitative targets in the short term. In any case, the WWF-internal monitoring tool will be used for the evaluation to describe the specific project outputs and outcomes referred to as main project results. Even some quantitative indicators are of interest.

2.2 Critical assessment

As mentioned before the project is highly political, pursuing effects on a policy level and facilitating the implementation of conservation policies.

Usually this kind of political projects requires a closer monitoring and on-going evaluation process allowing the external evaluation team using counterfactual evidence-based methods like for example surveys on the target group or similar empirical methods to assess the effectiveness of the project more specifically.

It could have been also appropriate for the evaluation purposes to interview at least 10 to 15 persons of the target group in order to include evaluation aspects from their point of view, and have a more holistic assessment of the project. This could have been helpful to assess the communication efforts and the political lobbying regarding the outcome level. However, this was not part of the terms of references and was therefore not carried out.

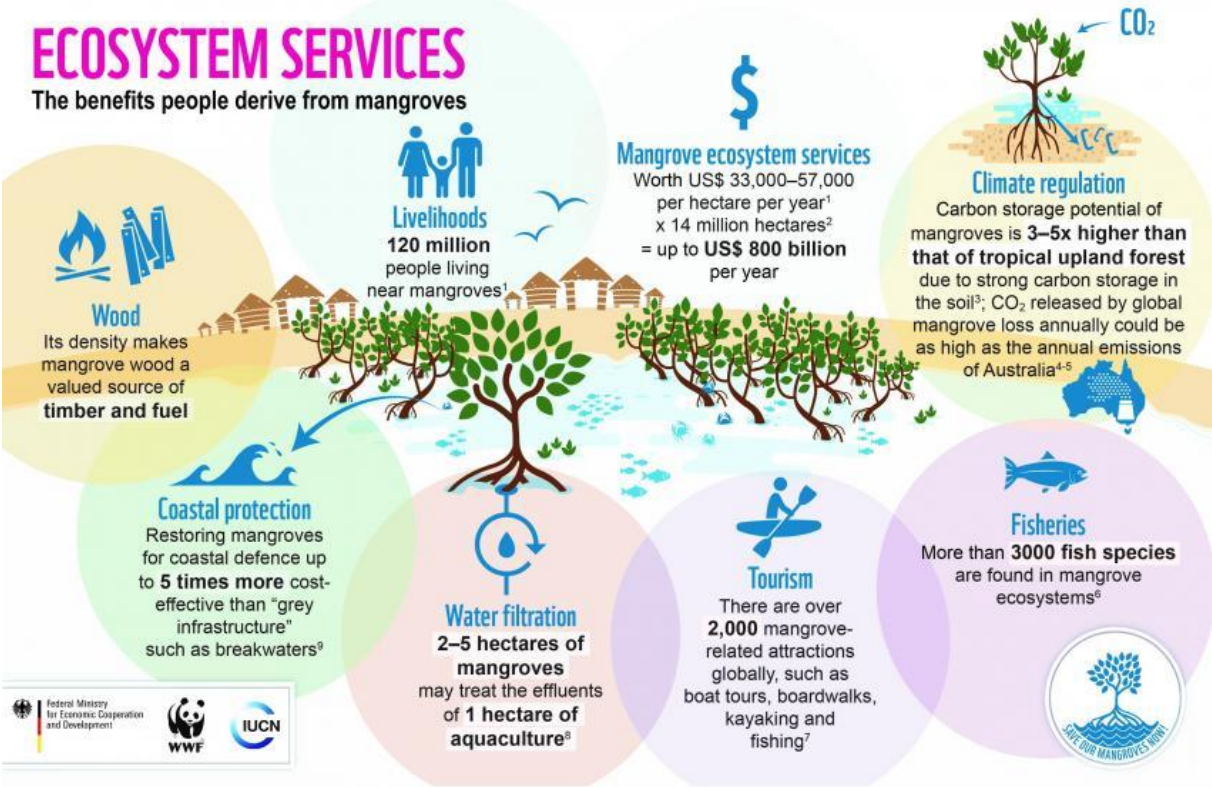
The communication concept for SOMN includes a segmentation of target groups, the identification of the most effective content-related communication in order to address the target groups in the most effective way. It should be considered for phase II to involve an external evaluation team already in the beginning of this project phase, to have a more elaborated methodological approach, also to include counterfactual elements and to allow an on-going assessment of the project, including on the communication efforts.

3 Basis conditions

Mangrove conservation is on the agenda of many NGOs and international organizations, especially of those who, at an early stage, have recognized their value not only as valuable ecosystem or habitat for wildlife, but also as a livelihood for local communities. Mangroves belong to one of the most productive ecosystems worldwide. The lifecycle of around 90 % of tropical marine species includes the mangroves as habitat, providing local communities with food, an income and shelter. In total, mangroves provide ecosystem services at a value of around 800 billion US\$.

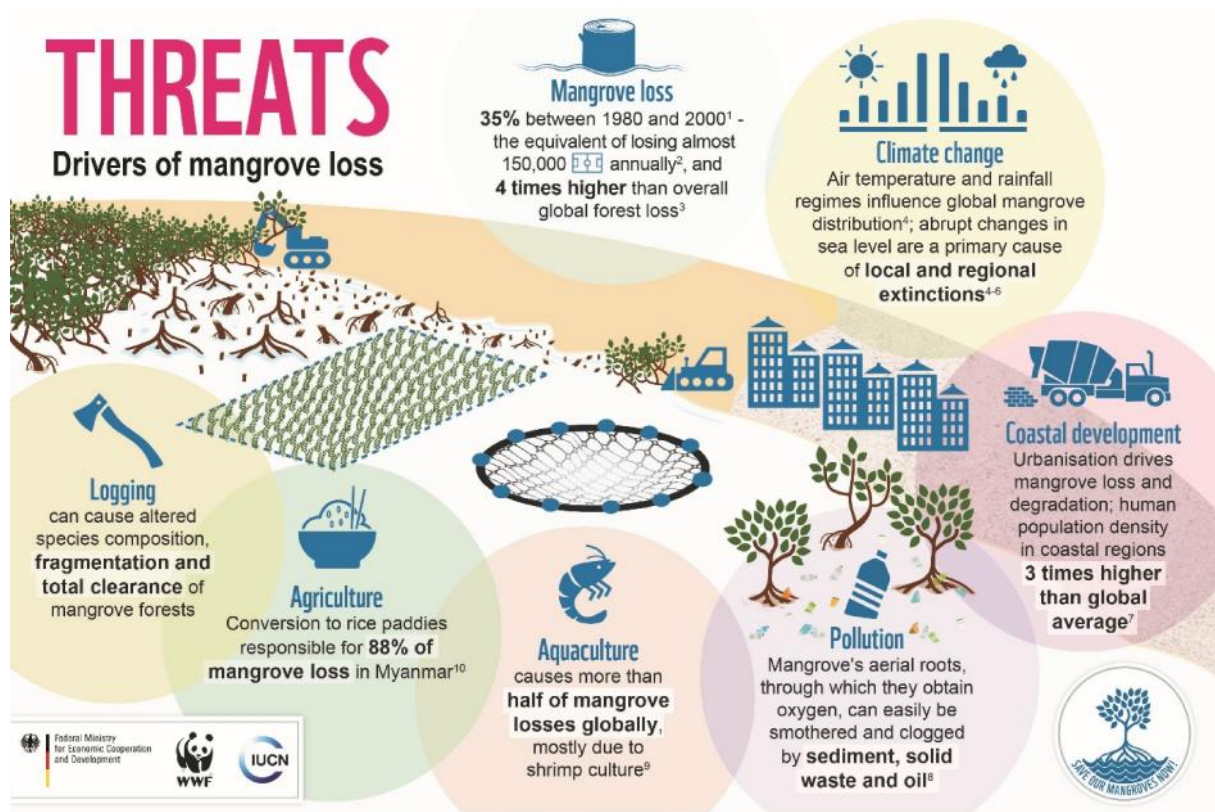
Furthermore, the mangroves' role for flood protection increases constantly as climate change and rising sea-levels affect more and more coastal areas, and coastal ecosystems get lost due to an excessive abuse of coastal natural resources. Pollution and dumping at sea, logging, aquaculture, and reclamation of land or exploitation of sand for construction are relevant man-made hazards complicating the conservation of mangroves.

Figure 1: Ecosystem services – The benefits people derive from mangroves



Source: Illustrated by IUCN and WWF,
URL: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/marine-and-polar/our-work/climate-change-and-oceans/mangroves-and-coastal-ecosystems>

Figure 2: Threats – Drivers of mangrove loss



Source: Illustrated by IUCN and WWF

URL: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/marine-and-polar/our-work/climate-change-and-oceans/mangroves-and-coastal-ecosystems>

Mangroves cover about 15 million hectares worldwide but are under threat, with the total area rapidly declining by more than 35 % since 1980. At least one-quarter of surviving mangroves are moderately to severely degraded due to poor management and increasing demand for coastal lands for development.

The loss of mangroves in the past decades increased especially in developing countries and emerging economies, such as India, the Philippines, and Vietnam, while in the Americas they are being cleared at a rate faster than tropical rainforests. In Africa, mangroves are especially endangered by the petrol industry and coastal pollution.

4 Partners' effectiveness and capacity

Both the WWF and IUCN with their respective international networks, are specialized NGOs / IGOs with focus on nature conservation and environmental protection against misuse or degradation.

They are perceived and well known as professional organizations with the necessary knowledge and structures, capable of implementing complex projects on different levels such as the raising of awareness, policy support, initiation and implementation of new projects or training and capacity building both on a national and an international level.

Although the evaluation has not dealt with the assessment of this kind of attribution to WWF or IUCN, the interviews with the donor indicated that the donor's perception of WWF's strength in communication was one of the main reasons for granting this project to the WWF working together with the IUCN as an implementing partner.

The collaboration between WWF and IUCN was very close right from the project initiation and was described by both partners as an eye-to-eye partnership.

The IUCN's role for the project's evolution was especially crucial with regard to the legal advisory as the IUCN Environmental Law Centre holds the necessary expertise which had a vital impact on the project's progress.

The mangrove conservation within the WWF Germany is centralized in the International WWF-Centre for Marine Conservation in Hamburg and is therefore working together closely with other WWF offices around the globe. With the project start in December 2016, the project team was not yet fully hired and it needed four more months for completion. The IUCN offices in charge are those in Geneva and Berlin.

As far as the evaluator is concerned, the whole team was prepared to manage a project of these characteristics. Planning workshops took place on a regular basis, including from 2019 also staff from the local teams in the Western Indian Ocean Region (WIO region). This can be assessed as a crucial prerequisite for the launch of future projects as this staff is usually not familiar with international collaboration projects and it was already planned to include the regional offices as implementing partners for phase II.

5 Assessment

5.1 Relevance

According to the WWF Senior Programme Manager (from WWF side) the project's conceptual approach originated from a project idea for a river delta project, whose objective would have been the conservation of mangroves in river deltas either in Africa or in South-East-Asia. The BMZ, as one of several potential donors for the delta project, had just set up its Ten-Point Action Plan on Marine Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries as this project idea appeared. IUCN had also previously planned a similar project on mangrove conservation.

The BMZ suggested to develop the project ideas further and position it as a political project with a focus on raising awareness on the role of mangroves on marine conservation and for a sustainable development in local coastal communities. The BMZ technical officer, in 2016 responsible for the project's approval, highlighted that this project required a much more political footprint in order to ensure its financing.

In a joint effort the WWF and IUCN worked closely together to define the actions and the distribution of tasks necessary for this common project. The project targets are therefore a direct result of this conceptual work and have been subject to approval by the BMZ.

From an independent point of view, the project scope can be assessed as appropriate and necessary. This includes the project's objectives defined, the target groups identified and the different work packages and actions budgeted for implementation.

No documented estimation on the targets based on baselines or benchmarks was provided. The targets seem to be a result of a generic estimation, based on the financial estimation for specific actions. However, it can be assumed that this estimation reflects the long-term experience of both WWF and IUCN on the several thematic areas of the project.

Another weakness of the targets is their inexplicit definition. While monitoring the project's progress, the project management had to redefine the indicators and the definition of the target values with the consequence of two different definitions: a strict definition on the targets and a less strict definition. For example for output 1.2, the less strict definition allows the counting of "administration officers" dealing with mangrove reforestation as "decision maker", while the strict definition only refers to "decision makers" in a political context. Ambiguities like these had not been addressed properly during the planning, which now causes room for interpretation.

The three work packages of the project have been:

- International Agenda-Setting,
- International experience and knowledge exchange and network building,
- Capacity development on application of best practices and policy approaches on mangrove protection in the WIO region.

The raising of international awareness is a fundamental precondition to get international agreements ratified and later work on the commitment of a large number of national governments in affected countries. While this agenda setting pushes for international political agree-

ments, the raising of awareness on the regional level needs to induce collaboration of the regional political stakeholders. Therefore a thorough approach on networking and capacity building for this target group is of importance.

Regarding this approach the project objectives, as well as the actions designed to reach them can be assessed as consistent and coherent, as the project addressed the specific needs are linked to a previous lack of international awareness and collaboration as well as capacity development and activities on the regional level. If the project objectives can actually be considered as achieved is subject to chapter 0 and the assessment of the effectiveness and impact.

However, the coherence of the project's approach was not clear in the beginning as the mangrove initiative was just one amongst several projects trying to induce change on this issue and was therefore competing with other initiatives, an issue that was perceived as severe conflict by the donor. Especially the Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA) set up by a wide range of NGOs and WWF-internally led by WWF-US can be described as such a competitor. This raised some issues that needed to be solved in an early stage of the project.

The interviews, especially with the German and the US team, showed that the project managed to mitigate any negative effects that could possibly result in double-structures or negative competitive interdependencies. In fact, WWF-US was involved in the project to manage a coherent communication and to prevent the emergence of possible double-structures.

However, SOMN is still a global initiative that achieved substantial targets in the WIO region. This focus on the WIO region was explicitly part of work package three.

5.2 Effectiveness

The assessment of effectiveness needs to differentiate between governance-related and context-related effectiveness. While the context-related effectiveness focuses on the project performance, especially target achievement, the governance-related effectiveness deals with the overall quality of the project planning, implementation and management.

5.2.1 Governance-related effectiveness

The project planning, its implementation and the project management are important elements of the overall success of a project.

The project is finished and due to chapter 0 all targets can be considered to be more or less achieved with some indicators outperforming and some underperformances that can be explained. There is no evidence that the project experienced severe problems. In addition, the interview partners have given a good rating to the project management and the overall project implementation. Everyone seems satisfied with the outcomes.

However, the project management team of the WWF Germany itself has highlighted several challenges. However, retrospectively the project start was perceived as rushed and due to the shift in the focus, it was perceived as starting without a clear mission. Several aspects still needed to be defined after the project start. Determining this project as a political project on international agenda-setting as well as experience and knowledge exchange, network building and capacity development, the joint project team was required to constantly reconfigure its planning and staffing due to the nature of this kind of projects.

In the beginning the Senior Programme Manager together with the IUCN staff and the WWF-US, who back then just recently launched the GMA, had to reconfigure the whole project from scratch. The donor's desire for an impacting political project was inter alia driven by the experience with another project, the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), which pursued to bring 100 million hectares of land in Africa into restoration by 2030. Similar expectations had been expressed prior to the start of the project.

In the beginning, the project management staff like the Project Coordination or the Project Officer were not hired yet. WWF, IUCN and WWF-US have fulfilled their role as fully equal implementing partners. However, for IUCN, an additional administrative set-up needed special confirmation by BMZ, as one of the funding prerequisites is the lead of a German project holder, which needed to be the WWF Germany. The implementing partners collaborated closely and signed responsible for their respective working packages. The project's progress was therefore based on an effective division of labour.

During the project the relationships and the configuration changed and evolved. As for IUCN's involvement it needs to be stressed, that the administrative set-up was especially important to compensate the administrative burden regarding financial statements and controls the project caused for all partners. However, administrative tasks related to financial aspects of publically funded projects are necessary to comply with the funding rules.

5.2.2 Context-related effectiveness

First of all, it needs to be highlighted that the project and its effectiveness was constantly being monitored by the project management. The evaluation could make use of the digitally provided monitoring overviews for the assessment of the effectiveness starting in 2018, and all related target achievement proofs available.

In general, the target achievement was documented and reproducible. Random checks led to the same results. As shown in the following figure, most of the output indicators show a target achievement both for a strict definition of the target values and a less strict definition. The definitions (strict vs. less strict) broadly discussed in chapter 5.1 can lead to a different qualitative assessment of the target achievement.

The indicators are highlighted in different colours reflecting the degree of performance.

- Green = Good performance or outperformance; the target achievement (x) met the targets or is situated well above the expectations ($x \geq 100\%$).
- Orange = Slight underperformance; although targets have not been achieved, they are still in line with the overall expectations (target). The target achievement (x) is above 75 but below 100 % ($75\% < x < 100\%$).
- Red = Strong Underperformance; target achievement (x) is below 75 % ($x < 75\%$).

The figure shows that the degree of underperformance is twofold. Assuming a strict definition of performance, output 1.2 and 3.2 would be assessed as strong underperforming. The same applies for the second of the two outcomes. In addition, output 2.2 would be assessed as slightly underperforming and the same applies to the first of the two outcomes.

All other indicators performed within the expectations and achieved the targets or outperformed, and doubled the target originally set such as for output 1.1.2 or 2.1.2., or it even quintupled (output 3.1) what would be an excellent performance. The first work package, the agenda setting, was especially successful and achieved its target very quickly in 2017.

However, a project of this very political nature should not be assessed assuming a strict definition and especially not assessing the output applying only a strict definition. There are many shades of grey and therefore underperformance needs to take into account partial target achievements and appreciate the reasons for a possible underperformance.

The less strict definition of the target values allows a different assessment. Especially a strong underperformance for output 1.2 now turns into an outperformance. If the definition of “decision-maker” is interpreted less strictly, the target is achieved. The same applies to the first outcome indicator, which outperforms applying the less strict definition of “nation-state delegations” allowing the counting of individuals and not delegations, or the mere representation of a country through a NGO without a proven governmental delegation.

Especially the target values for the second outcome, which is unfortunately the same as for output 3.2, the only reproducible target achievement is the Kenya NCCAP, which was adopted in 2018. The target achievement is therefore only at 50 %.

The government of Madagascar promised to commit on a national plan on mangrove protection, but has not yet delivered on this promise. The Madagascar partnership meeting minutes could be interpreted as if a commitment existed, but even under a less strict definition this would not be sufficient to count Madagascar's efforts.

Mozambique is currently developing a national mangrove strategy that would definitely count as a voluntary commitment, but this strategy is not adopted yet.

Figure 3: Monitoring of target achievement as of December 31st 2019

	Output Description	Indicator	Target	Actual (strict definition)	Actual (less strict definition)	Verification	Progress
Outcome:	<i>Goal of the initiative</i>						
	<i>Decision-makers at the global and national level, within international donors and in partner countries are sensitized for the importance of mangroves and enhance their engagement for mangrove conservation</i>	<i>At least 75 nation-state delegations participate in side events (organized by WWF and IUCN) on mangroves at international high-level conferences.</i>	75	71	106	Participants lists	✔
		<i>A minimum of 2 voluntary commitments of partner countries on mangrove protection, e.g. for integration of mangroves in national development strategies such as marine protection programmes or NDCs, have been made.</i>	2	1	1	NDC documents/ national development plans adopted	⚠
Work package 1:	<i>International Agenda-Setting</i>						
Output 1.1:	<i>Mangrove protection is part of the agenda of international high-level conferences and visible priority of relevant international organizations.</i>	<i>Mangrove protection is explicitly adopted by the "SDG 14 Call for Action"</i>	1	1	1	Call for Action document	✔
		<i>Number of mangrove-focused side events</i>	5	10	10	Documentation, media coverage, participants lists	✔
Output 1.2:	<i>An international awareness campaign for decision-makers is developed and conducted.</i>	<i>Number of decision-makers reached by the campaign</i>	250	157	940	Participants lists, proof of personal contact (business cards, contact list entries), social media & web analysis	⚠
Work package 2:	<i>International experience and knowledge exchange and network building</i>						
Output 2.1:	<i>State-of-the-art guidelines on mangrove protection for political decision-makers, practitioners, planners and administration, adapted to the specific target group needs, are developed and accessible.</i>	<i>Guidelines are elaborated</i>	3	4	4	Studies	✔
		<i>Guidelines are in demand by relevant decision-makers</i>	1000	2.178	3.110	Hardcopies and web download counter	✔
Output 2.2:	<i>The exchange of experiences and knowledge between relevant stakeholders at the international level is strengthened.</i>	<i>Internationally influential NGOs agreed on a joint mangrove conservation strategy, developed a common work plan and started implementation of both (target value: 1 MoU, 1 work plan and 2 partnership meetings).</i>	4	3	3	MoU and work plan document; meeting documentation; participants list	✔
Work package 3:	<i>Capacity development on application of best practices and policy approaches on mangrove protection in the WIO region</i>						
Output 3.1:	<i>Capacities of regional and national decision-makers with key functions in politics, civil society and private sector in the pilot region are strengthened.</i>	<i>At least 45 stakeholders from politics, civil society and private sector in the pilot region are trained in the application of best practices on mangrove protection</i>	45	246	246	Training documentation, participants lists	✔
Output 3.2:	<i>The framework conditions for the integration of mangrove protection into national policies are improved.</i>	<i>At least 2 countries in the pilot region have integrated mangrove protection in their development plans and national commitments such as the NDCs</i>	2	1	1	NDC documents/ national development plans adopted	⚠

Source: Illustrated by the WWF based on the proofs of target achievement

As the NDC review is planned for 2020, it can be assumed that all four countries will include the mangrove protection into their reviewed NDC. Thus, this outcome and output with a target value of 2 to be achieved until 2019 already was actually not well planned and therefore not appropriate. Taking this into account, both strongly underperforming indicators should be re-assessed as only slightly underperforming.

In total, the target achievement is in line with the overall expectations and the project is even outperforming for several indicators.

Starting in 2018 the experience and knowledge exchange led to several reports published and highly appreciated by the scientific community. Especially the legal framework study on mangrove conservation was mentioned as an important milestone for the international mangrove conservation efforts. The download numbers not only for this study but also for the other studies and guidelines exceed the expectations, as downloads are count only since 2019 and the target achievement is more than doubled. Output 2.1.2 is therefore outperforming.

Other effects incl. negative or counterproductive effects on an output level or other direct effects have not been observed by any of the interview partners.

Since the approval of the project in 2016, a total of five amendments of the project's budget lines, activities, and a prolongation of the project until the end of March 2020 took place. However, it was stated by the interview partners the overall reason for these amendments was the rush in which the proposal needed to be handed in due to additional funding available at BMZ in 2016. Hence, planning was not as detailed and profound as it should have been and therefore more adaptation during the implementation was necessary.

The five amendments therefore covered in slight changes in the focus of the project actions, and in a few cases, an early target achievement and, thus, the rebalancing of budget lines.

Usually any amendment and rebalancing of budget lines should always result in a recalculation of the indicators' target values as well. Once a budget line has gained weight, of course it is possible to achieve higher targets. But as previously mentioned, the target values have not been based on benchmarks, and thus, it could have been a struggle to argue amended target values. However, this conceptual and evaluative task remained unfinished. Nevertheless the most of the targets have been achieved.

If in an early stage of the project an external evaluator had assessed the indicators, targets and target values, the aforementioned weakness (strict vs. less strict definition of targets) in the monitoring design could have been identified earlier. In addition, the doubling of the second outcome indicator and the output indicator 3.2 should have been noticed. It is important to distinguish between outputs and outcomes and therefore using the same indicators for different intervention criteria is usually not allowed.

The second phase of the project, starting in 2020 should provide suitable indicators with targets meeting the SMART criteria (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**easonable and **T**ime bound). The project team should have an ex-ante assessment of the indicators carried out and recalculate the target values at least if substantial amendments or rebalancing of budget lines takes place.

5.3 Efficiency

Whether a development cooperation project of political nature was efficiently implemented is almost impossible to assess. Raising awareness, efforts at persuasion in a political context, experience and knowledge exchange, or capacity development on best practices needs time and should not generally be assessed by applying cost-benefit-relations for the outcomes.

Nevertheless, it could be possible to apply cost-benefit relations on the output level, as some specific outputs might be related to the financial resources deployed to achieve the targets. However this is applicable only for outputs that have measurable, and therefore comparable indicators. In this case, cost-benefit relations for the outputs are not possible to extract from the financial system, as it doesn't allow a differentiation regarding the personnel expenditure.

The following table shows a breakdown of the costs for the project as of December 31st 2019 focusing the output-related expenditure. The annex provides a detailed breakdown. Personnel expenditure is figured separately in the detailed breakdown. However, the project management staff explained that they had to do overtime often due to the abundance of tasks to be performed. Additional project management staff could have been an option to solve this shortcoming, but the limited budget has not allowed additional employments for the German team.

Table 4: Financial overview as of December 31st 2019

Work Packages, Outputs and Budget Lines / Activities	Total expenditure (in €)
Inception Workshop	31.823
Work Package 1 - International Agenda Setting	
Output 1.1	230.818
Output 1.2	366.279
Work Package 2 - International experience and knowledge exchange and network building	
Output 2.1	315.886
Output 2.2	50.180
Work Package 3 - Capacity development on mangrove protection in the WIO region	
Output 3.1	44.242
Output 3.2	370.209
Human resources / PM	611.533
Other	3.498
Subtotal	2.024.468
Overhead (10 % of Subtotal)	202.447
Total	2.226.915
Funding (PLAN: 90 % of Total)	1.993.582
Own budget (PLAN: 10 % of Total)	233.333

Source: Own illustration based on the financial statements delivered as of December 31st 2019. Financial statements still partly include planned budgets. Final data to be expected by the end of March 2020 and probably not exceeding the planned budgets.

With a total amount of 2.1 million Euro public funding (PLAN) and an additional 233.333 Euro own resources the project is within the budget as of December 31st 2019. The remaining funding of approx. 100.000 Euro is supposed to be cleared by the end of March 2020.

5.4 Impact on overall development goals

The overall objective of the project is to stop the on-going global loss of mangroves. According to the project description this contributes to the following sustainable development goals (SDG):

SDG 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

SDG 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

SDG 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt the loss of biodiversity.

In addition to this, the contribution consists of the improvement of the living conditions for particularly vulnerable coastal communities, through a contribution to:

SDG 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

SDG 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Figure 5: System of project objectives



Source: Own illustration using the official UN SDG pictograms (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>)

The overall objective is operationalized through the main goals of the initiative, which consists of the raising of awareness of the decision-makers on international and national level, amongst donors and partner countries in order to increase their dedication to mangrove protection. This intervention logic directly links to the SDGs to be addressed. From a scientific and theoretical point of view, this mode of action seems comprehensible and logical.

Mangrove conservation will lead to a sound environment and human development as the habitats will remain intact and preserve its functions for both life below water and on land. This enables the functioning of the living conditions for the local communities and allows a continuous economic and social development. Furthermore, the mangroves will retain their ability of flood protection, which is a crucial aspect of adaptation to climate change.

However the specific local and regional circumstances and socio-demographic structural situation might be different to this ideal development path and shows disproportionate impacts. Once mangroves are destroyed, the development will either focus on their full recovery, or on a complete transformation and economic exploitation of the former mangroves. Either way, both development paths will induce a transformation not only for the surrounding environment but also for the local communities' way of life.

As a political project, influencing decision-makers and raising their awareness might contribute to increasing the financial commitment to mangrove protection or lead to stricter conservation policies. Shaping rules or a framework for organizing this impact eventually leads to the implementation of adoption processes and policies.

All of the interview partners underlined that this project has a unique and exemplary character, as it was the first time that mangroves starred in an international political project focusing on conservation and immediately managed to contribute enhancing international law through the resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on July 6th 2017, which in chapter 13 appeals to the international community

We call upon all stakeholders to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development by taking, inter alia, the following actions on an urgent basis, including by building on existing institutions and partnerships:

[...]

k) Develop and implement effective adaptation and mitigation measures that contribute to increasing and supporting resilience to ocean and coastal acidification, sea level rise and increase in ocean temperatures, and to addressing the other harmful impacts of climate change on the ocean as well as coastal and blue carbon ecosystems, such as mangroves, tidal marshes, seagrass and coral reefs, and wider interconnected ecosystems impacting on our ocean, and ensure the implementation of relevant obligations and commitments.

[...]

Given this, the development of structures and raising of awareness by the mangrove initiative is an important global milestone having a strong impact also on the WIO region.

No other effects incl. negative or counterproductive effects have been described by any of the interview partners. The project management team's and the implementing partners' main focus has been a target-oriented project implementation and maximization of outputs. As previously explained, the GMA and the SOMN could have led to double-structures. However, the project management managed to mitigate this risk.

5.5 Sustainability

First of all, it needs to be stressed that the sustainability of a project can usually not be assessed immediately as soon as it ends. Time is needed to properly be able to assess the sustainability.

Directly at the end of a project, stakeholders would usually emphasize that the achieved outputs and outcomes will last for a long time and ensure stability, permanence and even perpetuity of a project's effects, and thus determine the project's sustainability. But except for the project's impact and acceptance in the WIO region, there's no evidence so far that the project will sustain without further commitment of the project partners. The political nature of the project with the resulting increase in awareness of decision-makers and developed capacities now needs to be transformed into policies, binding plans and policy documents and best practice projects, which is planned so far for phase II.

Of course the achieved outputs and outcomes promise such developments, but the mangrove initiative is not yet deep-seated and a financially self-supporting institution within the WIO region.

For this reason, the implementing partners and the donor have decided to design a second phase for the project to continue the work, offering some regional stakeholders to become future implementing partners by themselves, and especially implement actions together with the regional stakeholders.

A post funding stability shall therefore be achieved by ensuring the permanence of positive effects through concrete actions. However, this would be the result of another, subsequent funding and it would be necessary to assess its sustainability again after this second phase. Ideally this future evaluation will focus on the long-term effects of the first project phase and its influence on the second phase.

The second phase should also focus on the risks and potentials for sustainable effectiveness on an organizational level and related to the target groups.

To ensure sustainability in the long-term, the actions of phase I need to be perpetuated and the implementing partners should constantly work on keeping the awareness high and turning into tangible actions, policies, institutions etc.

To further sustain project phase I's effects the regional stakeholders should always be reminded of the positive outcomes already achieved, and pursue advanced capacity development. For example the country workshops held between 2018 and 2019 should definitely be repeated to keep the national networks together and strengthen the links between the different stakeholders, and the new stakeholders should be involved, too.

The implementing partners should put emphasis on the yearly planning workshops creating motivating environment. It is important to stress the achieved and, starting from that, pursuing the new targets. The second phase needs to ensure motivating yearly planning workshops or similar actions and on-board the future implementing partners. Formats contributing to an emotionally-led commitment might help to immerse more quickly. Otherwise there's the risk of disorganization of the networks and the fall into oblivion of the common strategic objective – saving the mangroves now!

6 Horizontal issues

German strategy on development policy for 2030

This report refers to the German horizontal issues in development policy as specified in the German strategy on development policy for 2030.

1. Combat poverty and food security
2. Education
3. Health and demographics
4. Climate protection
5. Renewable energies
6. Environment and biodiversity
7. Fair trade and digitalization
8. Economy and jobs
9. Good Governance
10. Human rights and women empowerment

Not each of these horizontal issues are in the focus of the project. Of course, the project's scope is political and it has a strong environmental focus, but the mangrove's role as ecosystem is crucial as well for the social and economic development especially of local communities.

The efforts on mangrove protection therefore contribute to the horizontal issues to different degrees. Besides the environmental benefits such as climate protection and biodiversity, the protection of existing mangroves will have, for example, an impact on the food security for the local communities as well, as fish is one of the main sources of protein. This implies better health. Fisheries might remain a viable job opportunity for many local people, instead of looking for jobs in the urban areas. Economic development might also arise from national and international tourism, which could allow sustainable economic growth and allow combatting poverty. Even good (environmental) governance is achieved through SOMN. However, other scenarios or development paths are applicable as well.

The continuous destruction or vanishing of mangroves would definitely have a huge negative impact not only on the German horizontal issues in development policy, but furthermore to the UN SDGs.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The mangrove initiative can be assessed as success story, although the project's start was perceived as difficult and cumbersome. The first work package, the agenda setting, was especially successful and efficient and achieved its target very quickly in 2017.

Almost every target (measured by output and outcome indicators) has been achieved, although some underperformances need to be stated. Especially the targets in national policy making and national commitment in the WIO region have not been performing as expected.

In 2017 the experience and knowledge exchange and networking started and led to several studies published and highly appreciated by the scientific community. Especially the legal framework study on mangrove conservation was mentioned as important milestone for the international mangrove conservation efforts. In 2018 the mangrove best-practice workshop and the WIOMSA conference took place, but the main effort in capacity development activities on the regional level started in 2019 and brought together the national stakeholders in the WIO region. This is believed as the most important milestone for the upcoming activities to foster the regional networks and induce projects.

The contribution of the project to the sustainable development goals as highlighted in chapter 5.4 are obvious, because this project directly contributes to raising awareness on the SDGs and promotes mangrove conservation as a good contribution to achieve several SDGs. In addition, the project is facilitating future projects as it established the basis for policy making in the WIO region. This resulted in increased political and financial commitments (e.g. in Madagascar) and will enable international fundraising.

7.2 Recommendations and lessons learned

Implement an on-going evaluation process

It was found, that in an early stage of the project an external evaluator could have identified the weaknesses in the monitoring design earlier. The now beginning second phase should provide suitable indicators with targets meeting the SMART criteria (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**easonable and **T**ime bound).

It is recommended that the project team should have an ex-ante assessment of the indicators carried out and recalculate the target values at least if substantial amendments or re-balancing of budget lines takes place. This task might be carried out during an on-going evaluation, also assessing the impact of certain new actions and approaches.

Effectively monitor the context and informal outputs

While the project monitoring focused on the agreed output and outcome indicators, several other data and information on mangroves could have been monitored as well on a regular basis. As the global mangrove coverage initially stated is just an estimation, a monitoring of

the regional mangrove coverage based on remote sensing or field studies could be good added value and would especially allow the regional partners to contribute to powerful data-bases.

In addition, users of the material elaborated (e.g. the law study) or website visitors should be surveyed more effectively as it is not known what their purpose on downloading studies or guidelines is. It is recommended that a survey among the regional stakeholders is carried out focusing on the impact of the mangrove initiative and its products on their daily business.

Prevent double-structures and internal competition

The existence and almost simultaneous appearance of two initiatives (SOMN and the GMA), both striving for international agenda setting, knowledge exchange, and network building, has caused severe organizational challenges for the implementing partners WWF and IUCN within the bigger but less financially equipped GMA. Apart from the GMA's initiator, the WWF-US, other NGOs have not participated in SOMN.

It is understandable that this may have caused some dispute and rivalry, but in the end the GMA partners managed to get along with each other and work together on an effective communication. Although the rivalry could have easily caused double-structures the partners managed to set up a common website and communication strategy and therefore benefitted from one another.

Put more emphasis on the regional offices and networks

The role of the local offices and the effective collaboration of local NGOs to increase financial independence by raising its own funding is not well developed yet. It was mentioned, that WWF, just like other NGOs, still struggles to retain its leaders and qualified staff, and ensure compliance.

In total, the participation of the African Offices in the project was not yet sufficient. This lack of involvement should be diminished in phase II. It is recommended that WWF and IUCN as well as the newly involved implementation partners should focus on the empowerment of the regional offices and networks working more self-sufficiently.

Effectively commit the regional partners

Sustainability in the long-term can be achieved by perpetuating the actions of phase I. The regional stakeholders should always be reminded of the positive outcomes already achieved, keep the awareness high, and pursue advanced capacity development. Successful actions should be repeated to keep the national networks together, strengthen the links between the different stakeholders, and involve new stakeholders.

It is recommended that the implementing partners should effectively network and commit new regional partners. By stressing the achieved and, starting from that, pursuing the new targets, the second phase needs to ensure these or similar actions are consistently carried out and allow positive and motivating outcomes. Otherwise there's the risk of disorganization of the networks and the fall into oblivion of the common strategic objective – saving the mangroves now!

8 Annexes

8.1.1 Terms of Reference (ToR)

separate document

8.1.2 List of References

Reports, Documents

UN General Assembly (2017): Our ocean, our future: call for action. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017.

WWF and IUCN (2018): Increasing success and effectiveness of mangrove conservation investment – A guide for project developers, donors and investors.

WWF and IUCN (2018): Legal frameworks for mangrove governance, conservation and use. Assessment summary.

WWF and IUCN (2019): Tangled roots and changing tides – Mangrove governance for conservation and sustainable use.

Interviews

Interview held December 3rd 2019 with Mrs. Dorothee Herr (IUCN)

Interview held December 9th 2019 with Mrs. Karen Douthwaite (WWF-US)

Interview held December 13th 2019 with Mrs. Anouk Neuhaus (WWF)

Interview held December 13th 2019 with Mrs. Julika Tribukait (WWF)

Joint interview/workshop with Julika Tribukait and Anouk Neuhaus December 13th 2019

Interview held December 16th 2019 with Mr. Henri Döring (BMZ)

Interview held December 17th 2019 with Mr. Michael Crispino (WWF-US)

Interview held December 18th 2019 with Mr. Uwe Johannsen (WWF)

Interview held December 19th 2019 with Mrs. Christine Plastrotmann (BMZ)

Detailed financial breakdown

Table 6: Detailed financial breakdown as of December 31st 2019

Work Packages, Outputs and Budget Lines		Total expenditure (in €)
Inception Workshop		31.823
Budget-Line 4.1.2.1	Activity 1	31.823
Work Package 1 - International Agenda Setting		597.097
Output 1.1		230.818
Budget-Line 4.1.2.2	Activity 2	9.925
Budget-Line 4.1.2.3	Activity 3	9.564
Budget-Line 4.1.2.4	Activity 4	132.255
Budget-Line 4.1.2.5	---	0
Budget-Line 4.1.2.6	Activity 5	79.074
Output 1.2		366.279
Budget-Line 4.1.2.7	Conferences (IUCN)	105.920
Budget-Line 4.1.2.8	Activity 6	145.891
Budget-Line 4.1.2.9	Activity 7	114.468
Work Package 2 - International experience and knowledge exchange and network building		366.066
Output 2.1		315.886
Budget-Line 4.1.2.10	Activity 8	142.220
Budget-Line 4.1.2.11	Activity 9	70.347
Budget-Line 4.1.2.12	Activity 10	100.122
Budget-Line 4.1.2.13	Activity 11	3.197
Output 2.2		50.180
Budget-Line 4.1.2.14	Activity 12	20.127
Budget-Line 4.1.2.15	Activity 13	47
Budget-Line 4.1.2.16	Knowledge Sharing (IUCN)	30.006
Work Package 3 - Capacity development on mangrove protection in the WIO region		414.451
Output 3.1		44.242
Budget-Line 4.1.2.17	Activity 14	0
Budget-Line 4.1.2.18	Activity 15	14.774
Budget-Line 4.1.2.19	Activity 16	23.227
Budget-Line 4.1.2.20	Activity 17	6.241
Output 3.2		370.209
Budget-Line 4.1.2.21	Capacity Building (IUCN)	197.538
Budget-Line 4.1.2.22	Activity 18	3.561
Budget-Line 4.1.2.23	Activity 19	0
Budget-Line 4.1.2.24	Activity 20	48.965
Budget-Line 4.1.2.25	Activity 21	15.518
Budget-Line 4.1.2.26	National Policies (IUCN)	19.428
Budget-Line 4.1.2.27	Rapid Sediment Assessment Guidance Manual	85.199
Human Resources		611.533
Budget-Line 4.1.3.1	Project Manager	200.598
Budget-Line 4.1.3.2	Project Coordinator	83.720
Budget-Line 4.1.3.3	Project Administrator	32.100
Budget-Line 4.1.3.4	Communications Officer	29.283
Budget-Line 4.1.3.5	Senior Director (WWF US)	51.078
Budget-Line 4.1.3.6	Communications Officer (WWF US or WWF International)	102.516
Budget-Line 4.1.3.7	Project Administration IUCN	29.010
Budget-Line 4.1.3.8	Project Officer Technical Support	83.228
Other		3.498
Subtotal		2.024.468
Administrative Costs	Overhead (10 % of Subtotal)	202.447
Total		2.226.915

Source: Own illustration based on the financial statements delivered as of December 31st 2019.