I. Background

Blue Ventures has helped setting up an independent Observatory to promote sustainable artisanal fisheries and to help the government tackle IUU fishing in the EEZ of Madagascar, with three years of funding from Oceans 5 Foundation. Basically, the observatory is an informative monitoring tool that allows for real-time tracking of potential IUU fishing activities in the EEZ of Madagascar and in the Indian Ocean region. The objective of the independent observatory “FITSINJO” is to assist the government through promoting transparency and good governance in fisheries management, promote the interests of Malagasy sustainable fisheries, and to help the government tackle IUU fishing activities in its EEZ.

Fitsinjo aims to be a collaborative project uniting conservation groups (Blue Ventures, World Wildlife Fund, Wildlife Conservation Fund, Community-Centered Conservation, Conservation International), small-scale fishers (MIHARI), local civil society and the Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy in a common effort to tackle these challenges. Fitsinjo works with AIS technology (in partnership with Ocean Mind, Global Fishing Watch, and the Joint Analytical Cell) as well as human intelligence collected by small-scale fishers and conservation organizations to monitor and analyze industrial fishing activity in the EEZ.

II. Session objectives and expected outputs

The session will present the new Fitsinjo Observatory in Madagascar, its aims, structure, and methodology. It will also present a baseline study on patterns of IUUF in the EEZ of Madagascar, conducted by Ocean Mind. The study shows how various fleets engage in potential IUUF activity, such as turning off their AIS when they enter the EEZ of Madagascar to conduct undetected fishing activities, fishing inside the 2 nautical mile Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) and fishing without national or IOTC licenses.

The session will also invite participation from efforts in other WIOMSA countries to tackle IUUF and promote good governance and nationally-oriented fisheries. One of the aims of the session is to prepare for a regional WIO symposium on tackling IUUF in WIO to be held in Madagascar in 2023, supported by the US Embassy to Madagascar and Comoros.
The expected outcome of the session is greater coordination between WIO countries’ civil society and academics on tackling IUUF in the WIO region. The aim is to establish a WIO working group on IUUF, which will meet for the first time at the Madagascar symposium in 2023 and will coordinate more closely on regional efforts to tackle IUUF in WIO.

III. Targeted audience

The targeted audience is all of the WIO actors who are actively involved in researching, analysing and tackling IUUF in the WIO region. The aim is to inform the audience about efforts to tackle IUUF in the EEZ of Madagascar, but also to establish a regional working group on IUUF in the WIO region. As IUUF couldn’t be addressed only by one country, these regional actions are keys to leverage the impact of each country's strategy.

In particular, the audience will include:

- Academics and researchers
- Government representatives working on fisheries surveillance and good governance of the fisheries sector
- Officials from conservation organizations
- Analytical organizations working on IUUF
- Technology companies
- Representatives of Small-Scale Fishers (SSF) and artisanal fishing communities.

IV. Tentative session programme

A. Presentation of Ocean Mind study on patterns of IUUF in Madagascar’s EEZ (20 minutes)
B. Presentation of Fitsinjo Observatory: its aims, structure, and methodology (15 minutes)
C. Question and Answers on presentations (15 minutes)
D. Presentations on other national efforts to tackle IUUF (20 minutes, 4 presentations of 5 minutes each)
E. Planning of regional working group on IUUF: aims, objectives and participants

V. The organisers

The session will be organized by the staff of the Fitsinjo Observatory, with support from Blue Ventures. We will seek out co-sponsors and presenters from other WIO countries to participate in the session.