



Agenda

IORA Experts' Meeting to Enhance Intra-Regional Trade and Investment

30-31 January 2020

Hotel Holiday Inn Mauritius Mon Trésor (*To be Confirmed*)

Plaine Magnien, MAURITIUS

Wednesday, 29 January

Delegates arrive

DAY 1: Thursday, 30 January

09:00-10:00	Registration of participants
10:00-10:40	Welcome and Opening Remarks (Mauritius)
10:40-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:30	Session 1: Presentation of the Concept Note for the IORA Experts' Meeting to Enhance Intra-Regional Trade and Investment (Mauritius) The Expert's Meeting is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take forward key outcomes of the WGTI meeting held on 18 June 2019 in South Africa• provide key inputs to the next meeting of the WGTI, including updates on the implementation of the WGTI Work Plan.• Define barriers to trade in the IOR region and existing initiatives and instruments to address them.• Explore mechanisms for the enhancement of intra-regional trade and investment in the following five specific areas: Trade Facilitation; Investment Facilitation; SME's; Women's Economic Empowerment; and Investment in Goods and Services.• Set long term objectives for structured trade and investment relations - instruments for trade and investment facilitation. Background documents: Concept Note; Trade Modernisation Conference Key Takeaways; Work Plan of the WGTI.
12:30-13:30	Session 2: Post-Conference feedback session: How are IORA Member States and the Private Sector working together? (Chair/speakers to be determined) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The WGTI and IORBF met during the Trade Modernisation Conference on 17-18 June 2019. This session is an opportunity to discuss how they are working together in light of conference outcomes and the new WGTI Terms of Reference.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes: The meeting may make recommendations for forthcoming joint meetings and activities between the WGTI and IORBF, such as for Expo2020; and for effective means of communication and coordination between governments and the private sector. Background documents: Terms of Reference and Work Plan for WGTI.
13:30-14:30	Lunch
14:30-16:00	<p>Session 3: Presentation on Trade in the IORA region: Professor Peter Draper, University of Adelaide (Australia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia recently commissioned trade expert Professor Peter Draper to conduct an analysis of trade and investment flows in the Indian Ocean Rim region, building on earlier analyses including by the Chair in Indian Ocean Studies. This session will consider the study's findings and implications for Trade and Investment Facilitation within IORA. Outcome: identification of activities to address findings and/or implement recommendations flowing from the report. Background documents: Report by Professor Draper (to be circulated).
16:00-16:15	Coffee Break
16:15-17:30	<p>Session 4: Implementation of the WGTI Work Plan (Mauritius)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this session delegates can discuss the implementation of each initiative in the WGTI Work Plan. Outcome: Agreement on next steps for the implementation of Work Plan initiatives. For each initiative, objectives clarified, responsibilities assigned, partners and resources identified, and implementation timeframe agreed, to inform an updated Work Plan to be considered by the next WGTI meeting. <p>Background documents: WGTI Work Plan.</p>

DAY 2: Friday, 31 January	
09:00-10.30	Session 5: Implementation of the WGTI Work Plan (continued from Day 1)
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:30	<p>Session 6: Investment Facilitation Measures in the IORA region (Mauritius)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mauritius will present on potential measures to promote investment in the region, to complement measures contained in the WGTI Work Plan, for discussion. Outcome: potential recommendation/s for inclusion in the WGTI Work Plan.
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	<p>Session 7: Exploring new partnerships for trade and investment (Chair/speakers to be determined)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This session will review the partners IORA currently works with on trade and investment issues, and potential new partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External, such as the USA through women's SME promotion, University of Adelaide conducting a trade study, chambers of commerce and industry

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal, such as other IORA Working Groups, CIOS, IORAG ○ Potential new partners, such as UNCTAD (IORA is an observer but not active), GATF, CIPE, UNITAR, and ITC). ● Outcomes: Recommendation/s to support closer partnerships on specific initiatives.
15:00- 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30- 16:30	Adoption of report
16:30- 17:00	Closing remarks (Mauritius)

Saturday, 1 February 2020

Delegates Depart



INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)

Experts' Meeting to Enhance Intra-Regional Trade and Investment

Venue: Holiday Inn Mon Trésor Hotel, Plaine Magnien (To be Confirmed)

Date: 30-31 January 2020

Republic of Mauritius

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Dear Delegate

We are looking forward to welcome you to the Experts' Meeting to Enhance Intra-Regional Trade and Investment, which will be held on 30-31 January 2020 in Mauritius. The meeting is being hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Republic of Mauritius, in collaboration with the IORA Secretariat.

Please find below information related to the logistics and administrative arrangements for the Working Group Meeting. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the following officials:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration & International Trade

1. International Trade Division (ITD)

Mrs. Smita Tatiah-Rambajan

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Email: statiah@govmu.org

2. Regional Integration Division (RID)

Ms. Krishnaveni Nagen

Tel No.: +230 4052682

Email: knagen@govmu.org; mofarc@govmu.org

IORA Secretariat

1. Mr Sun Veer Moollye

Tel No.: +230 4541717

Email: sunveer.moollye@iora.int

2. Mr Shiv Santosha Saddul

Tel No.: +230 4541717

Email: shiv.saddul@iora.int

1. Venue and dates of the Meeting

The meeting will be held in Mauritius, from 30-31 January 2020 at Holiday Inn Mon Trésor Hotel, Plaine Magnien [TBC].

2. Registration

All nominations should go through the National Focal Point of IORA, which is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the IORA Member States and should be sent to the IORA Secretariat with copy to the Mauritius National Focal Point (i.e. RID & ITD).

The Registration Form for the meeting is attached as **Annexure 1** and must be accompanied by a copy of the delegate's passport and a passport size photograph. The duly filled **Registration Form** should be sent to IORA Secretariat with copy to the Mauritius National Focal Point (i.e. RID & ITD) **by latest 30 December 2019** on the following email addresses: statiah@govmu.org; knagen@govmu.org; sunveer.moollye@iora.int; shiv.saddul@iora.int; hq@iora.int ; mofarc@govmu.org. Kindly note that the registration of the participants will be considered as incomplete should there be any missing documents as requested above.

The organisers of the workshop will arrange and confirm booking of the air tickets and hotels after nomination of participants by the respective National Focal Points.

The deadline for registration is 30 December 2019

3. Hospitality

Full hospitality will be extended to two (2) participants from each IORA Member State, comprising Directors, chief technical officers from relevant Ministries of International Trade, Commerce, Finance and/or Investment, and IORBF delegates. Other representatives of relevant private sector institutions may be considered.

Full hospitality for funded participants will cover the air ticket (Economy Class), hotel accommodation, transport to and from the airport, and selected meals during the workshop.

Accommodation with breakfast will be provided for the duration of the meeting by the organisers. The participants would be required to check-in on 29 January 2020 at the hotel and check out on 01 February 2020 depending on the flight booking. Any additional nights will be for the own account of respective participants.

Dialogue Partners are invited to attend the meeting at their own cost

All other costs will be the private responsibility of participants and will need to be settled with the hotel before checking out.

4. Flights

The IORA Secretariat will send a proposed itinerary to each Delegate receiving full hospitality for confirmation, before issuing tickets.

Self-funded delegates are requested to provide their flight details on the registration form.

Any flight upgrades will be at the delegate's own cost. The delegate will need to contact the IORA Secretariat's travel agent to make these arrangements (contact sunveer.moollye@iora.int for details).

5. Accommodation

All participants receiving full hospitality will be staying at the following hotel. Mauritius will make all arrangements with respect to accommodation.

Holiday Inn Mauritius Mon Trésor (To be confirmed)

Plaine Magnien,

Mauritius

Tel: +230 [601-2700](tel:601-2700)

Email : salescoord1@himauritius.mu

Fully funded delegates will check in on 29 January 2020 and check out on 01 February 2020. Delegates wishing to extend their stay in Mauritius, should make their own arrangements accordingly. The host country will not be responsible for any arrangements other than pertaining to the Experts' Meeting.

Delegates staying in any other hotels than the Holiday Inn Mon Trésor Hotel will be responsible for their own costs and transport arrangements to attend the workshop and for official engagements.

Delegates will be sent hotel confirmation details directly by Mauritius.

6. Transportation

Delegates (whether receiving hospitality or self-funded) can reach the hotel by the free shuttle service provided by the Hotel at the airport. A free shuttle service is provided by the Holiday Inn hotel and is available every 15 minutes to and from the airport (which is 10 minutes away). The shuttle pick up upon arrival at the airport is at the counter of the Hotel at Gate No. 4.

7. Attire and language during the meeting

Business attire is suggested for the meeting. English will be the main working language during the workshop.

8. Welcome dinner

Mauritius will host a reception dinner on 30 January 2020. Mauritius will communicate details in due course.

9. Entry Visa Procedures

Mauritius Immigration Regulations require that all delegates be in possession of a valid passport (6 months' validity) and a return ticket. Nationals of Bangladesh, Iran, Somalia, and Yemen require a Visa before travelling to Mauritius.

Further information on Visas can be obtained from Mauritian diplomatic missions or through the following link:

<http://foreign.govmu.org/English/Pages/Embassies%20and%20Consulates/Mauritius-Embassies--Consulates-Abroad.aspx>

<http://passport.govmu.org/English/Passport%20and%20Visa%20Requirement%20in%20Mauritius/Pages/Visa-Requirements-in-Mauritius.aspx>

Please be reminded that Mauritius has strict customs regulations (check the links below for more information).

<https://www.mra.mu/index.php/legislations1>

<http://agriculture.govmu.org/English/Documents/Division%20of%20Veterinary%20Services/Importation%20of%20pet%20animals%20-DVS.pdf>

The IORA Secretariat will issue invitation letters to delegates to accompany confirmed tickets, should these be required for visa or other purposes.

10. Medical requirements

Valid yellow fever vaccination certificates are mandatory for delegates travelling from or through infected countries. Delegates must have medical insurance cover to cater for major ailments or medical requirements.

9. Other Information

Language

English is the official language. French is extensively used and Mauritian Creole ('Kreol Morisien') is widely spoken. Asian languages also form part of the linguistic mosaic.

Weather and climate

In Mauritius, the Summer months extend from November to April and Winter from June to September. October and May are transition periods. Coastal temperatures range between 25° C – 33° C in Summer and between 18° C and 24° C in Winter. The warm season usually lasts from December 5th to April 9th with an average daily high temperature above 29°C.

Banking and Currency

There are a number of international and local commercial banks in Mauritius with branches in Port Louis and elsewhere.

The Banking hours are from 09:00 to 16:00 on Monday to Friday. ATMs accepting international debit and credit cards are available throughout the island. Information regarding currency exchange rates is available on the website of the Bank of Mauritius at: <http://www.bom.mu>. Major Credit Cards and Travelers' Cheques are accepted by most hotels, restaurants and shops.

Time Zone

Time is uniform throughout Mauritius and is 4 hours ahead of the GMT.

Business Hours

Public Offices and major businesses are generally open from 08:45 to 16:00 from Monday to Friday.

Electricity

For delegates wishing to use personal laptops, please note that electricity power supply is 220 volts, 50 Hz and electrical sockets are usually of British Standard

type 3 pin.

Adequate power connections will be provided in the meeting venue to allow delegates to recharge their notebooks/laptops when needed.

Taxis

All main hotels provide reliable taxi services.

Smoking

Smoking in Mauritius is strictly prohibited except in designated public areas.

Annexure 1

Registration Form

EXPERTS' MEETING TO ENHANCE INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT

30-31 JANUARY 2020

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

Kindly return the completed registration form by e-mail to statiah@govmu.org, knagen@govmu.org; mofarc@govmu.org, sunveer.moollye@iora.int, shiv.saddul@iora.int, cc'd to hq@iora.int.

Country						
City of Departure						
Full Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)						
Designation						
Institution						
Position						
Phone/Mobile (Country code)						
Email						
Confirm attachments		Copy of passport				
		Passport size photograph				
Accommodation						
Flight Itinerary (For self-funded delegates only)	Date of Arrival		Flight No.		ETA	*
	Date of Departure		Flight No.		ETD	*
Dietary Restrictions		Vegetarian				
		Others, please specify:				
Approval from National Focal Point		Yes, and provide details				
		No				

200-Word Biography



IORA Experts' Meeting to Enhance Intra-Regional Trade and Investment

30-31 January 2020

Venue: Mauritius (location tbc)

Concept Note

Background Information

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) was created 22 years ago, with an objective of promoting economic dialogue and cooperation, by encouraging trade liberalisation and investment among countries of the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) region while achieving sustainable development, and economic prosperity.

Over the last twenty years North-South pattern of trade has changed to South-South pattern of trade at global level. The creation of the IORA was viewed as a possibility for the IOR countries to have access to new markets in neighbouring countries. Even after 20 years the “market access” within IORA is not fully exploited.

The first objective of the IORA Charter is “to promote the sustained growth and balanced development of the region and of the Member States, to create common ground for regional economic co-operation and to explore all possibilities and avenues for trade liberalisation, to remove impediments and lower barriers towards, freer and enhanced flow of goods, services, investment, and technology within the region”. The Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) and the Working Group of Trade and Investment (WGTI) aim to achieve the above mentioned objectives.

Trade and investment potential

The trade channel is considered as one of the traditional modes of the integration of global economy. Trade and global economic integration are closely interlinked and play an important role in enhancing development and reducing poverty. Trade, as a driver of growth and sustainable development promotes entrepreneurship, creates jobs and contributes to the Gross

National Income. A high terms of trade increases returns to producers and so raises investment and hence economic growth.

The IORA region has enormous trade and investment potential. The combined IORA Members States Gross Domestic Product amounts to around \$9 trillion, constituting 10.28% of global GDP, and accounts for about 12.21 % of global exports and 11.92 % of global imports, thus, contributing 24.84% of global trade (2017). Half of the world's container shipments, one-third of the bulk cargo traffic, two-thirds of the oil shipments and more than 50% of the world's maritime oil trade pass through the Indian Ocean. Some of the world's most important strategic chokepoints, such as the Straits of Hormuz and Malacca which transports more than 50% of the world's maritime oil trade are found in the Indian Ocean Region.

As at April 2016, the total foreign exchange reserves of IORA stood at number two in the world. In the list of the first 25 countries in terms of high foreign exchange reserves, five countries are from IORA: India (8th); Singapore (10th); Indonesia (21st); Malaysia (23rd); and Iran (25th).

IORA is a platform that Member States may use to promote international trade and investment. However, it has not been able to realise its full trade and investment potential as intra-regional trade is below 15%. High trade costs within IORA region poses serious challenges for enhancing trade flows and development of regional value chains. (see Annex 1 for background on IORA efforts).

Greater trade integration could support export diversification as well as economic expansion. Trade-facilitation measures need to be introduced and implemented across all the countries of IORA because these are effective tools towards specific targets under Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. The ease of moving goods regionally and internationally has become a key determinant of export competitiveness.

Unlock the trade potential

Progress made in the IORA trade mandate has been slow and intra-regional trade cooperation has not yet been fully optimized. Time has come to adopt initiatives and instruments that would support development in general and help increase trade and investment flows within IORA. There is a need for action that will harness positive development in trade relations, develop value chains and facilitate the transfer of technology.

It is high time to come up with a more realistic approach towards closer economic cooperation with the IORA for more tangible outcome especially with respect to trade.

Tariffs & Non-Tariff Measures: Revealing indicators

For the period 2013-2017, the simple average MFN applied rate of IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners varied between 1% and 47.3%. These figures show that there are still high tariffs in some IORA Members. The liberalisation of these high tariffs would lead to enhanced trade within the region and more confidence from entrepreneurs to invest.

The table below shows some statistics on the IORA region.

Share of world population (August 2017)	30.25%
Share of world trade (2017)	12.21%
Share of world's imports (2017)	11.92 %
Inward investment (FDI) 2017	15%
Trade openness (% of GDP) 2017	91.33%

Another important aspect of trade relates to the impediments that the business community faces while trading. According to available figures mentioned in the Study on Bilateral and Regional Trade and Investment-Related Agreements and Dialogues, in 2015, most IORA Member States were applying non-tariff measures, especially sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures (SPS), technical barriers to trade (TBT) and anti-dumping measures. Figures indicate that TBT is the most commonly used non-tariff barrier within IORA. Quantitative restrictions are also imposed by some IORA countries.

Non-tariff measures that act as barriers to trade and investment might be an important factor restricting the free trade flow of goods at the level of IORA. The removal of such barriers will definitely lead to expansion in trade and investment flows.

There is a need to make an assessment of all non-tariff barriers (NTBs) that exist in the IORA region and to find solutions to streamline these NTBs to facilitate trade and investment.

Proposals

IORA's future will depend on Member States' commitment to an integration agenda. There is a need for a concerted effort in order to

revitalise the IORA trade agenda. A first step in this direction is to identify and address the key constraints affecting trade and investment in the IOR region, such as a lack of harmonised trade regulations and capacity shortfalls. The objective is to lay the foundations for a more comprehensive and broad trade and economic cooperation agreement that would eventually unlock the untapped potential within the IORA region in the near future and to agree on a roadmap for such an arrangement.

A trade cooperation roadmap is therefore recommended to:

- Identify the key constraints to trade and investment in the IOR region.
- Set out the steps Member States can take to alleviate these constraints, such as:
 - Addressing non-tariff barriers through the setting up of a mechanism similar to that of the Online Reporting Mechanism of the COMESA-SADC-EAC to receive complaints which would be circulated to all Member States for remedial actions.
 - Increasing market access for goods and trade openness.
 - Identifying areas for economic cooperation in the region.

Reconciling an eventual regional trade agreement with the national trade regime of each Member State implies a lengthy and complex process. But this is not impossible. A sequential approach may be adopted, starting with action to reduce trade barriers with the highest potential impact, based on a comprehensive study. These steps should align with the vision to pursue a Free Trade Agreement in both goods and services and movement of professionals.

IORA's expertise in different fields

It is further proposed that IORA countries come with a concrete programme to leverage on the existing experience of Member States in specific sectors and get the most to generate growth, through trade and economic cooperation. Some members have developed competitive advantages over the years. They may share their expertise so that island states and developing members benefit from the know-how of developed members in capacity building on various topics of direct relevance to the IORA.

For example, IORA could come up with a set agenda on research and development. One specific Member State could be designated as focal

point for the convening of research programs. Such programmes have the potential to become a centre for excellence in the region.

Furthermore, innovation and intellectual property could become new priority areas in IORA region. It is a fact that some IORA Members such as Australia, South Africa, the UAE, India and Singapore have the latest technologies and extensive knowledge in innovation, research and protecting their intellectual property rights. The whole IORA region could benefit from such expertise to further encourage creativity and innovation and thereafter, help deriving benefits from commercialization of creations.

Technology and Trade in IORA: Digitalisation of Trade in IORA, Trade and Blue Economy

Additionally, promoting transfer of technology can serve as engine of growth within IORA. Possibilities include Internet of Things, advanced robotics and automation systems, artificial intelligence and the use of advanced materials.

Capacity building may also be organised and technical support provided on regional trade and investment with a focus on SME development and women empowerment.

There is a need to forge new partnerships in sectors such as the Ocean Economy and the use of green energy and eco-friendly materials.

Market intelligence

In an endeavour to formulate a new trade and investment agenda for the Indian Ocean Rim Association, it is imperative that Member States focus on market surveys. Trade promotion activities should be undertaken while at the same time, collecting and analyzing data about the IORA market. Market intelligence will facilitate decision-making for both traders and investors.

In this context, the Trade Repository website (<http://www.iora-tr.org/>) launched by Indonesia, should be revamped to include detailed trade information and statistics within IORA. A well-documented database on trade and investment statistics in the IORA region would provide valuable insights to traders and investors with regard to market opportunities in the region.

Investment opportunities

It is a fact that bottlenecks to investment do exist in many IORA countries. For example, some IORA Member States, Singapore ranks 2nd, Malaysia 15th, Australia 18th, and Mauritius 20th in the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index 2019, while others rank among countries having the most cumbersome regulatory environment to do business. It is imperative that a regulatory framework be set up for investment in the IORA market which will surely impact on such a disparity. In this endeavour, existing investment regimes, opportunities and incentives of IORA countries should be assessed and recommendations should be made on how to enhance investment amongst IORA countries.

There is a need to have a platform, similar to SADC and COMESA, where projects from IORA Member States can be posted. A database dedicated to statistics on intra-IORA investment (cross-border investment) is also proposed.

Nothing should prevent IORA from exploring the best possible arrangements that will foster trade and investment in a structured manner and with clear commitments. It is proposed that the Association actively implements a coordinated investment plan to fully achieve its economic potential and ensure that investment is profitable.

A predictable regulatory framework for investment for the IORA region will attract Foreign Direct Investment and hence, create jobs and foster higher economic growth.

Initiatives already identified as priorities, including in the IORA Action Plan 2017-2021

The IORA Action Plan (2017-2021) sets forth a series of initiatives to increase Trade and Investment which is one of the six priority areas of co-operation of the organisation's short-term activities. The WGTI which met on 18 June 2019 developed these further into a draft WGTI Work Plan that also incorporated activities that could be implemented as part of the Trade and Investment agenda as identified during the Modernising Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Region Conference on 17 June 2019.

The Trade Experts' Meeting is an opportunity to discuss the prioritization and implementation of specific activities reflected in the draft WGTI Work Plan. The meeting may also consider other initiatives which can be implemented in the near future such as:

- Organise experts' meetings on regional trade and investment facilitation.

- Develop a Framework for Regional Cooperation to promote SMEs and Innovation.

Medium-term activities include:

- Revitalise the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum as a platform to share information on trade and investment and strengthen linkages with IORA Chambers of Commerce and the private sector.
- Explore the possibilities for promotion and cooperation in the services sector, including financial services.
- Identify and reduce Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) - establish a platform for online reporting of NTBs. Promote investment flows in the region - signing of an MOU with a view to connect all investment and trade promotion agencies through a platform.

Long-term activities include:

- Establish a mechanism to organise regular shows and fairs on trade and investment in the IORA region.
- Conclude a framework agreement to cover trade, investment and economic cooperation

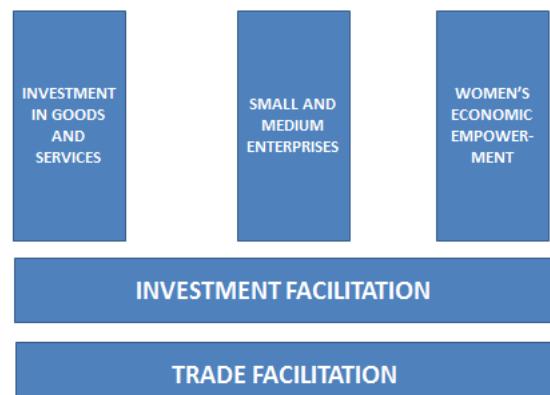
Context

At the 17th IORA Council of Ministers meeting held in Durban in October 2017, Mauritius opted to be the Lead Coordinator for the implementation of the Trade and Investment Facilitation priority area. The Mauritian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has proposed to host a High Level Experts' meeting on 30-31 January 2020.

The Experts' Meeting will deliberate on the recommendations and suggestions emerging from the Modernizing Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Conference and Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) meeting held on 17-18 June 2019 in Durban, South Africa for the enhancement of trade and investment facilitation in IORA.

Aims and Objectives

The Expert's Meeting is expected to:



- Take forward key outcomes of the WGTI meeting held on 18 June 2019 in South Africa, and provide key inputs to the next meeting of the WGTI, including the preparation and/or implementation of a Work Plan.
- Examine barriers to trade among IORA Member States.
- Review existing instruments of trade and investment facilitation.
- Explore mechanisms for the enhancement of intra-regional trade and investment in the following five specific areas: Trade Facilitation; Investment Facilitation; SME's; Women's Economic Empowerment; and Investment in Goods and Services.

Expected Outcomes

- Define barriers to trade in the IOR region and existing initiatives and instruments to address them.
- Clarify implementation arrangements of initiatives contained in the draft WGTI and IORBF Work Plans.
- Engage with the private sector on IORA's trade and investment agenda.
- Continue the momentum behind IORA's revitalised trade and investment agenda.

Level of Participation and hospitality

Member States are requested to nominate appropriate trade and investment experts comprising Directors, chief technical officers from relevant Ministries of International Trade, Commerce, Finance and/or Investment, and IORBF delegates. Other representatives of relevant private sector institutions may be considered, however background knowledge of IORA (particularly the WGTI and IORBF) will be essential for effective participation. A high-level meeting will enable decision makers to develop meaningful recommendations for implementation across IORA Member States.

It is currently envisaged that full hospitality (airfares, ground transport, accommodation and meals) will be offered to two participants from each Member State, subject to the availability of funding (including a pending Special Fund application). Hospitality and other administrative arrangements will be confirmed and circulated in due course.

Benefits to Participants

- Advance IORA's economic agenda and promote trade and investment among IORA Member States.
- Maintain and strengthen a regional network of trade experts and officials in the Indian Ocean Rim region.
- Enhance awareness and establish a mechanism to address trade and investment barriers in the IOR region.
- Share best practices in trade, industry and investment in the IOR region
- Effective use of the IORA Web Trade Repository

ANNEX 1

Background on Trade and Investment Facilitation

Mauritius held the first Ministerial Economic and Business Conference in 2013. This was the first thematic ministerial meeting alongside the Foreign Minister's Meetings. Subsequently other thematic ministerial meetings were held, such as on Tourism and Renewable Energy. The Conference was co-hosted by India and Mauritius. The theme was "Deepening Economic Linkages for Balanced, Inclusive and Sustainable Growth". Around 370 delegates including ministers, government officials, business persons and entrepreneurs from the 17 Member States participated. A number of recommendations were tabled to unlock the potential of the services sector in ICT, tourism and financial services; enhancing trade and investment; creating agri-business linkages to address food security and sustainable development; and harnessing the potential of the Ocean Economy.

The Conference encouraged the concept of 'Open Regionalism' and identified trade as an integral factor in the promotion of economic cooperation and development. Ministers urged Member States to harmonize trade practices in line with international norms and take steps to minimize barriers to trade in the Indian Ocean region and emphasize the need to build on the complementarities and identify key growth sectors including linkages between Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) and Trade Promotion Organisations (TPOs).

More recently, in 2016, UAE hosted the Second Economic and Business Ministerial Conference in conjunction with the Annual Investment Meeting (AIM), a leading emerging markets foreign direct investment forum. Under the theme of 'SMEs and Innovation: Investing in a Sustainable Future', the conference was attended by over 100 people, including 13 Ministers/Heads of Delegation from IORA Member States and 3 Heads of Delegation from Dialogue Partners. Additionally, Chambers of Commerce, Investment Promotion Agencies, diplomatic and consulate missions, representatives from international and regional organizations, and businesses from the region participated in sessions on SMEs, innovation, Blue Economy and showcased young entrepreneurs pitching their ideas to investors. During the Annual Investment Meeting, awards were given to the best Investment Promotion Agencies in the Indian Ocean, namely India, South Africa and Mauritius.

During closed meetings, Ministers affirmed that SMEs and innovation are two of the most critical elements to address poverty and drive inclusive

economic growth in IORA Member States and the world at large. Most formal jobs in emerging markets are with SMEs, which create 4 out of 5 new positions. One major constraint usually faced by SMEs is to find adequate financing mechanism for making them competitive by investing in appropriate tools and equipment. Thus, Cooperation amongst private sectors of Member States or dialogue partners of IORA could be further strengthened by facilitating capacity building, transfer of applied knowledge and technology and/or through various entrepreneurship development programmes. Ministers affirmed that IORA is a platform that can be leveraged by Member States in order to build global businesses, facilitate international trade and investment, and achieve sustainable and market-led economic growth contributing to job creation, innovation and poverty alleviation in the region. For more see: <http://iora-ebc.aim-projecttank.com/>.

Trade Facilitation

Another area that has received strong support from Member States is removing barriers to trade (as identified in the Action Plan). Trade facilitation — the simplification, modernization and harmonization of export and import processes — has emerged as an important issue for the world trading system. One possible mechanism is the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which aims to cut bureaucratic delays and red tape. The TFA entered into force on 22 February 2017 after two-thirds of the WTO membership completed their domestic ratification process. According to the WTO, the full implementation of the TFA could reduce trade costs by an average of 14.3% and boost global trade by up to \$1 trillion per year, with the biggest gains in the poorest countries. Experiences in East and Southeast Asian countries indicate that the expected gains from increasing regional value chains are many times higher than the expected gains from Free Trade Agreements.

The TFA contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. Adoption of trade facilitation measures could improve trade linkages and could go beyond tariff liberalization such as technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, customs cooperation and harmonization of standards and conformity assessment. IORA Member States have called for harmonizing trade practices in line with international norms and adopt measures consistent with WTO obligations to stimulate growth and development in the region.

Investment Facilitation

In 2016, the share of IORA's inward Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows was 10.9% of world's total inward FDI flows which rose to 15% in 2017.

Investment facilitation and trade-facilitation go hand in hand. 80% of trade is driven by the international production networks dependent on investments from multinational firms.

IORA is working towards strengthening cooperation with the business community in order to accelerate intra-regional trade and increase FDI flows. Key areas of attention include trade facilitation, exploring options for trade policy coordination, harmonization and simplification of procedures, creating regional value chains and dissemination of information through appropriate arrangements, including trade fairs, business-to-business meetings and capacity-building workshops.

Trade investment and technology facilitation mechanism needs to be created in IORA to bolster productivity flows of South-South trade and promote investment and technology transfer.

It would also be important to enhance visibility on opportunities for inter-IORA trade and investment, both public and private. The use of technology to diffuse infrastructure projects and international bids needs to be explored.

Implementing the MoU for Cooperation in SME sector

SMEs are the most significant economic units in all IORA economies to promote the wellbeing of its peoples. SMEs represent 95% of firms and nearly 70% of employment in the world, but productivity lags behind larger firms. Focusing on SMEs makes business sense as SMEs lie at the core of inclusive growth as they connect micro-enterprises and the informal sector with larger firms and international value chains. A key milestone has been the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in SME sector in October 2017 at the COM Meeting (attached as Annex 2). The MoU identifies focal points in SME Ministries and provides a concrete platform for sharing of experiences, capacity building and building regional value chains. Implementation of the IORA MoU for Cooperation in SME sector is currently under way with 10 countries already signatories at the 17th Council of Ministers Meeting in Durban in 2017. This MoU is designed for the inclusive benefit of all, including women-led businesses.

Women's Economic Empowerment

Recognising the fact that providing greater opportunities for the economic participation of women stimulates increased economic growth and is crucial for sustainable development, IORA is committed to gender equality and women's economic empowerment. IORA agreed to establish women's economic empowerment as a special area of focus at the 13th Council of Ministers Meeting in Perth, Australia on 1 November 2013. The Perth Communiqué reflected the decision of IORA Foreign Ministers to "work together to ensure that the people of the Indian Ocean region have access to the best possible levels of education. The empowerment of women and girls in the region is a high priority for IORA."

Several subsequent Ministerial and Thematic Ministerial Declarations have further advocated for women's empowerment such as the 2014 IORA Ministerial Economic Declaration which stated that "the prosperity of the region will only be realised fully by investing in the empowerment of women" and the 2015 Ministerial Padang Communiqué, which reaffirmed "commitment to the importance of women's economic empowerment as an effective driver of economic growth and development".

Highlights to date include:

- IORA Foreign Ministers issued the IORA Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment in Bali, Indonesia (October 2016). This declaration formalizes the Member States commitment to the empowerment of women and girls as central to realising inclusive and sustainable economic growth (see below).
- Six capacity building events have been held in India (2014, 2017), Indonesia (2016), Malaysia (2014), Seychelles (2016) and Mauritius (2018). These focused on topics such as the tourism and textiles sectors; poverty alleviation; mobilizing markets and commitments, women in business and entrepreneurship. These events have provided invaluable opportunities for networking and sharing of best practices and laid the groundwork for the Ministerial Declaration.
- Publication of a first-ever baseline survey of women's empowerment along with key trends and critical issues facing the region published by UN Women, with support from the Australian Government, entitled Enabling Women's Contributions to Indian Ocean Rim Economies (October 2015).
- The Journal of the Indian Ocean Region had a special issue focusing on women's economic empowerment in the Indian Ocean Region (March 2017).

- All IORA Special Fund applications and project guidelines now require gender sensitivity in their planning and implementation and must demonstrate direct benefits to women.
- Efforts to promote the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) resulting in several companies signing around the Rim, including the first-ever signatures from Madagascar and Iran (October 2016).

Looking to the future, the IORA Action Plan also identifies women's economic empowerment as a key priority area and sets out flagship initiatives to be achieved between 2017-2021 to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These are to establish an IORA Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment led by Mauritius and Australia that will be launched in late 2018; a Women's Business Forum in the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF); cooperation with UN-Women and relevant organisations for capacity building and information exchange; champion initiatives to increase women's economic empowerment such as the Women's Empowerment Principles; implement training and capacity building programmes; and to organise activities strengthening women's economic capacity and participation in business.

ANNEX 2

Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) For Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) Between the Governments of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) For Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

The Governments of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), hereinafter referred to as the 'Participants':

Recognising the importance of deepening regional cooperation and intensifying economic integration;

Affirming their desire to promote and support small and medium enterprises (*hereinafter called SMEs including micro-enterprises*) in the Indian Ocean Rim;

Pursuing stronger connectivity among SMEs in Participants as a central element in fostering further cooperation;

Understanding that SMEs contribute significantly in all IORA economies, accounting for the majority of jobs, and are vital to the wellbeing of its people, sustainable economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation; and

Acknowledging that IORA has a significant role in promoting the creation of opportunities for SMEs in the Indian Ocean Region;

Have reached the following understandings:

1. PARTICIPANTS AND IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

- 1.1 The Participants are the Governments of the Member States of IORA.
- 1.2 The Implementing Agency representing each Participant for this MOU will be a ministry/department or coordinating organisation responsible for SME development.
- 1.3 Where appropriate, Participants may wish to collaborate with relevant stakeholders, such as Dialogue Partners and the private sector, to implement specific IORA SME initiatives.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 This MOU aims to enhance opportunities and an environment for SMEs to prosper by promoting cooperation and collaboration between participants, implementing agencies and industry associations.

3. LEGAL STATUS

- 3.1 This MOU is not legally binding and nothing in this MOU affects or alters other arrangements of the Participants, or the rights and obligations of any Participant under international law, including under any treaty to which such a Participant is a member.

4. AREAS OF COOPERATION

- 4.1 The Participants will cooperate on mutually agreed terms and conditions, in accordance with their respective laws and regulations, in the following areas including to:
 - a) Develop linkages and cooperation between institutions working for development of SMEs, industry associations, academic and research institutions, with the counterpart organisations, and SMEs of the Participants in the areas of cooperation listed above;
 - b) Encourage participation of SME entrepreneurs in business forums, trade fairs, seminars and other relevant platforms;
 - c) Exchange lessons learnt on how to improve the business environment for SMEs and entrepreneurs including sharing ways to improve compliance of standards, certification and access to technology;
 - d) Facilitate greater access to markets through better compliance of standards, certification and technology improvements;

- e) Promote youth, people living with disability and women's economic empowerment, including their inclusive participation across all efforts to support entrepreneurs;
- f) Facilitate capacity building, entrepreneurship and skill development programmes;
- g) Assist SMEs to explore the opportunities and markets in the Indian Ocean Rim region;
- h) Share best practices to enhance competitiveness through innovation and technology, including in e-commerce and the digital economy;
- i) Encourage synergies with the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum;
- j) Conduct studies and analysis of SME sectors in the Indian Ocean region; and
- k) Exchange information and publications on SME policies, programmes, regulatory practices and capacity building initiatives (noting these resources remain the intellectual property of the Participant).

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The IORA Secretariat will coordinate the implementation of the MOU, in collaboration with the Participants.
- 5.2 The Participants will regularly exchange information relating to SMEs, development and business opportunities and possibilities of initialising partnerships through appropriate channels and platforms including on the IORA website.
- 5.3 Participants will provide contact details of their respective Implementing Agencies to the IORA Secretariat.

6. FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 Participants may wish to access the IORA Special Fund or other IORA mechanisms through their National Focal Point to carry out activities envisaged under this MOU.
- 6.2 A Participant may approach other non-signatories or institutions for funding projects for SME development to fulfil the objectives of the MOU and share detailed income and expenditure statements with other Participants.

7. COMMENCEMENT, AMENDMENT AND DURATION

- 7.1 This MOU will take effect upon signature by at least five Participants and, thereafter, will take effect for each Participant from the date of signature by that Participant.
- 7.2 This MOU may be amended by the written mutual consent of all the Participants. Any notice of amendment made under the MOU must be made in writing to the IORA Secretariat. Such notice of change should be deliberated at an IORA meeting or communicated through a *Note Verbale* to National Focal Points and be agreed to by the Participants before it is accepted.
- 7.3 This MOU will remain in effect indefinitely unless the Participants decide otherwise by written mutual consent.

8. DISPUTE AND WITHDRAWAL

- 8.1 Any dispute between the Participants arising out of the interpretation and implementation or application of this MOU may be settled amicably through consultation or negotiation and through diplomatic channels between the disputing Participants.
- 8.2 Any Participants may withdraw from this MOU at any time by giving three months' notice in writing to the IORA Secretariat.

9. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING MECHANISM

- 9.1 The Parties undertake to set up a Joint Committee, composed of senior officials of the relevant government departments of the Parties and stakeholders, which shall meet as and when required to monitor implementation of this MOU and to identify further areas of cooperation.

**Terms of Reference
Working Group on Trade and Investment**

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 IORA's Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) was established under IORA's founding Charter of 1997 and first met in Oman in January 2000 with the mandate to study and recommend measures to achieve IORA's trade and investment related objectives and enhance economic and technical cooperation amongst Member States. The WGTI was envisaged as the primary body to oversee work in Trade, Investment and Finance, which was approved as one of IORA's six priority areas by the Council of Ministers' (COM) Meeting in Iran in 2007. This priority area was renamed Trade and Investment Facilitation at the Council of Ministers' Meeting in India in 2011.
- 1.2 The IORA Economic Declaration, adopted by the Council of Ministers' Meeting in October 2014 in Australia, sets out the guiding principles for IORA Member States' cooperation to facilitate trade and investment. These principles recognise the importance of the private sector, Blue Economy, global rules-based trading system and the empowerment of women in boosting growth, creating employment and reducing poverty in the Indian Ocean region.
- 1.3 IORA Heads of State/Government endorsed IORA's commitment to Trade and Investment Facilitation at the Leaders' Summit in Indonesia in March 2017 through the Jakarta Concord and IORA Action Plan 2017-21, identifying seven flagship trade and investment initiatives. It was decided in 2017 that Mauritius would coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan with respect to Trade and Investment Facilitation for a period of two years.
- 1.4 The WGTI was established primarily to play a key role in cooperating with the private sector to boost trade and investment. In 2017 the IORA Business Summit produced the Joint Declaration on the IORA Business Community to Build Partnerships for a Sustainable and Equitable Economic Growth, reaffirming the potential of the private sector as a complementary partner of IORA governments.
- 1.5 The IORA Charter was amended at the COM Meeting held in Durban, South Africa, on 2 November 2018, requiring all Functional Bodies including the WGTI to be constituted through Modalities and Terms of Reference.

2. Vision

To promote sustainable economic development through facilitation of trade and investment in the Indian Ocean Rim region.

3. Purpose and objectives of the WGTI

The objectives of the WGTI are:

- 3.1 To study and recommend measures to be endorsed by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and COM that address impediments to trade in goods, services and investment thereby promoting IORA's trade and investment related objectives and enhancing economic and technical cooperation amongst Member States.
- 3.2 To deepen engagement with the business community (including through closer collaboration with the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) and business-to-government interactions).
- 3.3 To implement the IORA Action Plan and WGTI Work Plan.
- 3.4 To create a common platform for dialogue and exchange of information, including on opportunities, challenges, and best practices.
- 3.5 To encourage Member States and Dialogue Partners to offer training and capacity building programmes to meet the needs of and improve livelihoods in Member States.
- 3.6 To propose over the medium to long term an appropriate framework to unlock the trade and investment potential of IORA.

4. Focus

The WGTI will focus mainly, but not exclusively, on the following areas to support inclusive and sustainable economic development:

- 4.1 Cooperation with, and support for the World Trade Organization trading system, including to foster economic opportunities
- 4.2 Non-Tariff Barriers
- 4.3 Small and Medium Enterprises
- 4.4 Public Promotion opportunities for increasing trade and investment
- 4.5 Facilitating government and business engagement

5. Structure and Operation

5.1 Coordinating/host country

- 5.1.1 Any Member State can volunteer to be the Coordinating Country for the Trade and Investment Facilitation priority area for two years.
- 5.1.2 Selection of the Coordinating Country for the Trade and Investment Facilitation priority area will be on a consensus basis, on the recommendation of the WGTI. This will be endorsed by the CSO for approval by the COM.
- 5.1.3 Whereas the designated Coordinating Country for the Trade and Investment Facilitation priority area will hold the position for two years, other Member States or Dialogue Partners may volunteer to host any of the WGTI meetings.
- 5.1.4 Where more than one Member State offers to host the WGTI meetings, the decision will be based on consensus.

- 5.1.5 The Coordinating Country will chair the WGTI meetings. The host country (if different) will co-chair the WGTI meetings.
- 5.1.6 The Coordinating Country or the host country (if different) will be responsible for arranging, coordinating, and hosting the WGTI meetings with the Secretariat's support as required.

5.2 Composition

- 5.2.1 Member States will nominate their representatives on the WGTI through their respective National Focal Points. Each Member State should consider designating senior government officials from relevant Ministries such as Commerce, Trade and Industry. Member States are encouraged to ensure gender parity in their delegation compositions reflecting IORA's commitment to women's empowerment.
- 5.2.2 Representatives of other relevant sectors such as the private sector, civil society and academia (for example, members of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group, IORAG) may be invited to attend and present at the WGTI meetings.
- 5.2.3 Dialogue Partners will be invited to WGTI meetings. Dialogue Partners will be encouraged to participate actively in the meetings as well as on specific projects and activities. Following IORA practices, Dialogue Partners can participate in the discussions of meetings, but not in the decision-making processes (if and when required dedicated/closed sessions of Member States may be held).

5.3 Agendas

- 5.3.1 The Coordinating Country or host country (if different) and the IORA Chair will consult on the meeting agenda and activities and circulate to Member States preferably eight weeks in advance.
- 5.3.2 All Member States can propose agenda items through the IORA Secretariat at least six weeks before each scheduled meeting.
- 5.3.3 The IORA Chair will review the agenda before the Secretariat circulates the meeting documents to all Member States at least four weeks prior to the scheduled meeting

5.4 Reporting

- 5.4.1 The Coordinating Country or host country (if different) and the IORA Secretariat will prepare an outcome report of the meeting and its recommendations and circulate via email within four weeks of the conclusion of the meeting.
- 5.4.2 The Coordinating Country will present a report on the progress of the WGTI to the CSO in consultation with the IORA Chair.

5.5 Meeting Procedures

- 5.5.1 IORA rules of procedure, where applicable, will apply for the functioning of the WGTI.

- 5.5.2 The WGTI will hold at least one meeting annually. It is recommended this is held at least eight weeks before a CSO meeting to enable its outcomes report to be circulated to all Member States in time for the COM meeting. Intersessional work by Trade and Investment Facilitation cluster countries is encouraged.
- 5.5.3 Logistical arrangements for each meeting will be the responsibility of the Member State hosting the meeting.
- 5.5.4 The WGTI should set realistic objectives and strategic implementation through a Work Plan, aligned to the IORA Action Plan, to achieve better focus and outcomes.
- 5.5.5 The WGTI may consider ad hoc sub groups to deal with specific topics when required.

5.6 Funding arrangements

- 5.6.1 All financial expenses for administrative and logistical arrangements will be borne by the Coordinating Country or host country (if different) of the WGTI with contributions from the IORA Special Fund where applicable, subject to its rules and procedures.
- 5.6.2 Voluntary commitments and contributions by Member States, Dialogue Partners and other partners are also welcome.

5.7 Language

The working language of all WGTI meetings will be English.

5.8 Hospitality

- 5.8.1 Hospitality for delegates attending the WGTI may be offered at the discretion of the host country.
- 5.8.2 Full hospitality will be extended to two officials from the IORA Secretariat.

5.9 Responsibilities of IORA Secretariat

- 5.9.1 Providing administrative and logistical support including guidance on IORA meetings and maintaining archives and files.
- 5.9.2 Assisting with the preparation of agendas and reports of the WGTI in the prescribed formats.
- 5.9.3 Creating and maintaining a database of representatives designated by the National Focal Points and facilitating communications between representatives and other stakeholders.
- 5.9.4 Facilitating information sharing between participants, including circulating agendas and outcome reports to Member States and Dialogue Partners, prior to consultation and approval of IORA Chair.
- 5.9.5 Overseeing and assisting implementation of and reporting on the WGTI Work Plan.

5.10 Revision of the TOR

Endorsed by 19th COM, 7 November 2019, Abu Dhabi

These TORs will be reviewed every two years if necessary.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
Work Plan: Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI)

Objective	Indicators	Activities Short Term (2019-20)	Activities Medium Term (2021-22)	Activities Long Term (2022-)	Outcome/Impact	Resources and Support	Responsibility (Country/ Organisation)	
Cooperation with, and support for, the World Trade Organization (WTO) trading system								
1	Support Member State implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.	Number of initiatives undertaken to promote WTO TFA implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a review of the status of WTO TFA implementation among Member States. • Promote capacity building opportunities with expert organisations (GATF, CIPE, etc) to implement the WTO TFA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regional technical workshop on WTO TFA implementation in Member States and Dialogue Partners. 	Member States capacity to implement WTO TFA increased.	Expertise on WTO TFA (eg GATF, CIPE, etc). In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. More developed Member States may assist other Member States in need of implementation support.	To be determined. Australia Singapore UAE South Africa	
Reducing Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)								
2	Identify and reduce Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs).	Completion of several studies that clearly identify steps IORA Member States can take to reduce NTBs. Effective mechanisms to reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a study on trade among IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners and identify mechanisms to boost existing trade levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a business-to-government dialogue on NTBs. • Establish online feedback systems for private sector to register NTB complaints for response/action by governments (such as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	Greater information facilitates improved policymaking on trade and investment. Barriers are removed, increasing the ease and attractiveness of trade and investment.	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. International organisations (CIPE, etc). International Trade Centre, University of Adelaide (supported by Australia)	Australia (study on trade among MSs and DPs). To be determined (dialogue, feedback systems).

Approved as considered by CSO on 5-6 Nov 2019

Objective		Indicators	Activities Short Term (2019-20)	Activities Medium Term (2021-22)	Activities Long Term (2022-)	Outcome/Impact	Resources and Support	Responsibility (Country/ Organisation)
		NTBs are implemented.		COMESA's NTB portal).			CIOS	
3	Facilitate movement of businesspeople in the region.	New measures agreed and adopted by participating Member States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct study on options to facilitate movement of business people. Consider IORBFI recommendation for an IORA Business Travel Card. Consider a program to recognize star traders/manufacturers, to be given faster port clearances (like the Authorised Economic Operator program of the World Customs Organisation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member States select priority recommendations for implementation. 		Business travel is made easier in the IORA region.	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners.	To be determined. India (star traders program).
Promoting regional supply chains and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)								
4	Promote Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the region.	Number of events and SME participants engaged in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remaining Member States consider signing IORA MOU on for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Regional workshop held to begin cooperation on at least one area of cooperation identified in the SME MOU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of the SME policy environment in IORA Member States. Consider a joint project with IORBFI and/or WGWE to promote SMEs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of SME MOU. 	SMEs grow across the region, including women-led SMEs, increasing domestic and regional trade and investment.	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. International organization eg OECD, UNCTAD. IORBFI. WGWE.	To be determined.
5	Support regional value chains that boost trade and investment.	Completion of several studies that clearly identify steps IORA Member States can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a study on trade among IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners and identify mechanisms to support regional value chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of recommendations of the study Organise capacity building events 		Businesses increase participation in regional supply chains, boosting trade and investment	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. International organisations (CIPE, etc).	Australia (TBC)

Approved as considered by CSO on 5-6 Nov 2019

Objective		Indicators	Activities Short Term (2019-20)	Activities Medium Term (2021-22)	Activities Long Term (2022-)	Outcome/Impact	Resources and Support	Responsibility (Country/ Organisation)
		take to facilitate value chains.		on priority actions.				
6	Foster innovative regional partnerships to promote entrepreneurs .	Number and quality of partnerships established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange lessons on existing partnerships (such as between India, FICCI and Lockheed Martin). Consider dedicated event to promote innovation and growth through entrepreneurship in IORA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider joint event with WGWE and/or IORBF to promote innovative partnerships with women-led SMEs. 		Individuals and businesses supported to enter into new types of commercially beneficial partnerships, boosting trade and investment	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. IORBF. WGWE. CIOS.	India (TBC)
7	Identify and implement ways to boost maritime trade in the region, in conjunction with Working Group on the Blue Economy (WGBE).	Completion of studies that identify steps IORA Member States can take to boost maritime trade. Effective mechanisms to boost maritime trade are implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a study on key maritime infrastructure bottlenecks/needs in the region (eg ports, shipping capacity routes and ship repair facilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an integrated IORA Maritime Industry Strategy to unleash the potential of the ocean economy including implementation and enforcement of International Maritime Conventions and Maritime Security strategy. 		Use of ports and shipping becomes easier, leading to growth in regional trade and economies.	WGBE (see also WGBE Work Plan items on maritime connectivity). IORBF. In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. CIOS.	To be determined.

Objective		Indicators	Activities Short Term (2019-20)	Activities Medium Term (2021-22)	Activities Long Term (2022-)	Outcome/Impact	Resources and Support	Responsibility (Country/ Organisation)
8	Build a system/ database of supply chain information among IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners.	Active use of platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study completed for an IORA Trade Community System. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations of feasibility study actioned (eg if recommended, detailed project design completed). 	Project implementation commences.	Key supply chain information linked between seaports/airports/etc for public and private operators using trusted technology.	Technical design and construction of systems. Ongoing maintenance (coordinating updates, IT). In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners.	To be determined
Publicly promoting trade and investment opportunities								
9	Promote trade and investment resources and opportunities.	Active use of chosen products/ platforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish mechanism for Member States to regularly submit updated information for the IORA Trade Repository website (www.iora-tr.org). Reassess proposed IORA Investment Guide and determine way forward. Organise periodic IORA Trade Fairs and other events to promote trade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish online platform to connect potential traders and investors with opportunities in Member States. Online platform could model the Invest India Grid, where possibilities are listed sector wise and state wise. Review of IORA Trade Repository conducted and any 		Greater information available leads to increased interest in trade and investment opportunities.	Trade Repository website already built. Ongoing maintenance (coordinating updates, IT). In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. International data and advisory companies (Euromonitor, etc).	Indonesia (TBC)

Objective		Indicators	Activities Short Term (2019-20)	Activities Medium Term (2021-22)	Activities Long Term (2022-)	Outcome/Impact	Resources and Support	Responsibility (Country/ Organisation)
				recommendations actioned.				
1 0	Maintain a strong IORA presence at the World Expo 2020 to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, between 20 October 2020 and 10 April 2021.	To be advised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make arrangements for IORA's desired trade presence (eg an exhibition, trade fair or IORA Pavilion). Launch presence in October 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain presence until April 2021. Review presence for lessons learned and consider participation in next World Expo. 		IORA's profile and international engagement increased.	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. Outsourced project manager if required. IORBF identified as a priority (led by South Africa, Australia, India and UAE).	United Arab Emirates (TBC)
1 1	Promote investment flows in the region.	Completion of studies that identify steps Member States can take to promote investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a study of the investment and/or financial policy environment in the region and make recommendations on how to enhance investment in the IORA region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibility of cooperating in the field of financial services among Member States. 		Inwards and outwards FDI flows increase.	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. International organisations (eg OECD, UNCTAD). CIOS.	To be determined.
1 2	Promote tools to support women's economic empowerment .	Number of companies signatories to Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote WEPs to companies during WGTI events (supporting efforts by WGWE and UN Women). Input into proposed Guidance Note on Gender Impacts of Trade Agreements (UN Women). A mechanism could be established between the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider creating a SheTrades IORA network in conjunction with WGWE. 		More companies focus on women's empowerment (eg via WEPs) increasing economic opportunities for women	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners. UN Women, International Trade Centre (SheTrades), WeConnect, etc.	Australia and Mauritius (Co-Chairs of the WGWE).

Objective		Indicators	Activities Short Term (2019-20)	Activities Medium Term (2021-22)	Activities Long Term (2022-)	Outcome/Impact	Resources and Support	Responsibility (Country/Organisation)
			Working Group on Trade and Investment and Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment so as to ensure the exchange of information pertaining to gender mainstreaming issues.					
Facilitating government, business and academic engagement								
1 3	Greater public-private trade and investment policy dialogue on the region.	Regular interactions held between private sector and government trade representatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an Annual Trade Dialogue to review trade developments and potential new initiatives, jointly with IORBF. Consider other new or existing public-private mechanisms to promote dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Annual Trade Dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Annual Trade Dialogue. 	NTBs identified and steps taken to address them, facilitating trade and investment in the region.	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners, IORBF. National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs).	To be determined.
1 4	Build networks among trade and investment officials to build capacity and share experiences.	Participation of officials in networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct online training course on selected trade/investment topics. Support networking of course participants. Connect trade and investment promotion agencies in IORA, including through a potential MOU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate establishing regular online training course on selected trade/investment topics for IORA officials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider establishing IORA Trade Academy for junior trade officials. 	Officials' better able to pursue trade/investment reform. Networks established to facilitate regular information exchange.	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners.	To be determined.
1 5	Strengthen dispute resolution mechanisms in the Indian Ocean.	Use of established alternative dispute mechanisms such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement 'Creation of an IORA Centre of Excellence for Dispute Resolution' project (2017-2021). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider an expanded IORA project to harmonise implementation of key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and expand IORA Centre of Excellence for Dispute 	Dispute resolution made easier in the region, facilitating increased	MCCI and IORA Special Fund (for current MCCI project).	Mauritius

Approved as considered by CSO on 5-6 Nov 2019

Objective		Indicators	Activities Short Term (2019-20)	Activities Medium Term (2021-22)	Activities Long Term (2022-)	Outcome/Impact	Resources and Support	Responsibility (Country/ Organisation)
		arbitration and mediation to resolve trade and investment disputes in the IORA.		alternative dispute resolution mechanisms for disputes arising out of international agreements.	Resolution project (e.g. by considering establishing focal points within each IORA Member State.)	trade and investment.	In-kind or financial support from Member States, Dialogue Partners.	