Terms of Reference (ToR) – Strengthening Sea Level Monitoring and Data Management in East Africa for Coastal Resilience and Community Safety (SEAMARCS) Project Steering Committee

1. Background

The SEAMARCS Project is a flagship initiative implemented by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO), with funding support from the Flanders UNESCO Science Trust Fund (FUST). The project is jointly led by the IOC Sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States (IOCAFRICA) and the IOC Tsunami Resilience Section (IOC/TRS), bringing together regional expertise and global technical leadership in ocean observation, disaster risk reduction, and coastal resilience. It is delivered in close collaboration with the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) and other regional and national partners, including institutions in Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles, and Madagascar. Through the deployment of innovative sea-level monitoring technologies and targeted capacity-building efforts, SEAMARCS aims to enhance coastal risk preparedness, support data-driven policy and decision-making, and strengthen institutional and technical capacities for long-term resilience and sustainable ocean governance in Eastern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean.

2. Purpose

The Steering Committee shall provide overall strategic direction, coordination oversight, and ensure the alignment of project activities with national, regional, and global priorities. It will serve as the primary governance mechanism of the project.

3. Composition

The SEAMARCS Steering Committee shall comprise the following members:

- One (1) representative from the IOC Sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States (IOCAFRICA) – *Co-Chair*
- One (1) representative from the IOC Tsunami Resilience Section (IOC/TRS) – *Co-Chair*
- One (1) representative from the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ)
- One (1) representative from the FUST Secretariat
- One (1) representative from each of the national implementing institutions:
  - Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Kenya
  - Instituto Oceanografico de Mocambique (INoM),
  - Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Seychelles
  - Seychelles Meteorological Authority
  - Centre National de Recherches Océanographiques (CNRO), Madagascar

Additional technical experts or observers may be invited to participate in specific meetings as needed.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Steering Committee shall:

- Provide strategic oversight and ensure that the project is progressing toward its expected results.
- Approve the project workplan, timelines, and key deliverables, including revisions to the Theory of Change, Results Framework, and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms.
- Review technical reports submitted by the implementing partners.
- Facilitate coordination and collaboration among stakeholders and support the resolution of implementation bottlenecks.
- Provide guidance on risk mitigation, sustainability, and exit strategies.
- Promote the visibility of the project, including communication with national authorities and relevant partners.
- Support efforts toward resource mobilization and partnerships for scaling up project outcomes.

5. Meetings and Decision-Making

- The Steering Committee shall meet at least twice per year, with additional meetings convened as necessary.
- Meetings can be held in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid format.
- Decisions shall be made by consensus. In case of disagreement, a simple majority vote will apply, with each institution holding one vote.

6. Secretariat Support

IOCAFRICA, in close coordination with IOC/TRS, will provide secretariat support including:

- Organizing meetings and disseminating materials;
- Preparing and circulating minutes and decisions;
- Following up on action points and decisions;
- Maintaining records and archives of Steering Committee deliberations.

7. Duration

The Steering Committee will remain active for the full duration of the SEAMARCS project and may be extended to support the transition to sustainability or replication efforts post-project.