



## Background and Situation Analysis

The Republic of Mauritius is a Small Island Developing State. It comprises the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues, which is located 560 kilometres east of Mauritius, the 2 outer islands of Agaléga, 1065 km to the north, and the archipelago of Cargados Carajos Shoals (Saint Brandon), 430 km to the northeast. The Republic of Mauritius has the 20<sup>th</sup> largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the world. The blue existing economy activities in Mauritius include coastal tourism, fishing, seafood processing and seaport activities. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these activities, excluding coastal tourism, represent [10% of the Growth Domestic Product \(GDP\) and employed around 7,000 people](#). The emerging blue economic activities, as per the Economic Development Board (EDB), include aquaculture, maritime services, marine biotechnology and oil & gas exploration.

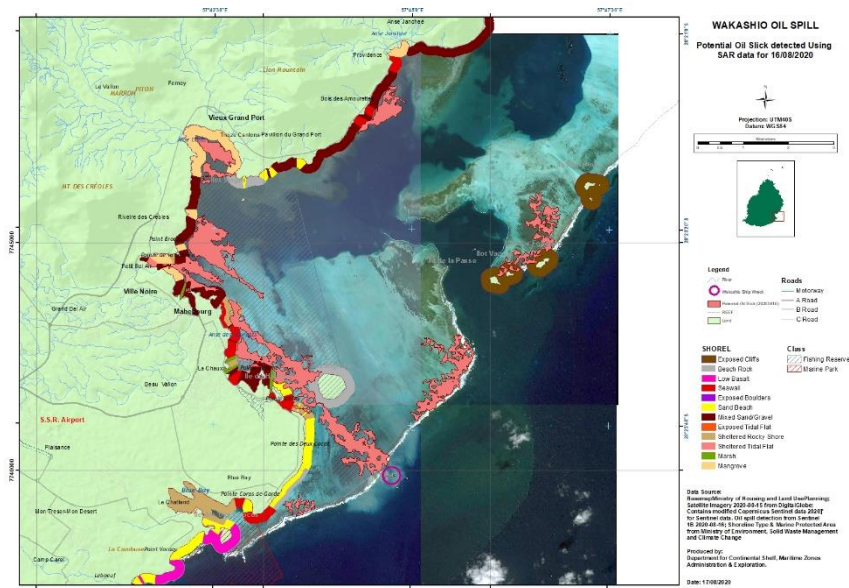


Figure 1 UNOSAT, 17 August 2020

On 25 July 2020, a bulk carrier vessel, MV Wakashio, owned by Okiyo Maritime Corp./ Nagashiki Shipping Co Ltd ran aground on the reef at Pointe d'Esny, situated in the South East coast of Mauritius. The ship ran aground while carrying 4,000 tonnes of fuel oil. Most of the oil on board was pumped out before the ship broke apart on 16 August 2020, however, [an estimated 1,000 tonnes](#)

had already spilled into the ocean causing ecological damage to the rich marine ecosystem. The oil spill took place near two environmentally protected marine ecosystems and the Blue Bay Marine Park reserve, which is a wetland of international importance and recognised as a Ramsar sites by UNESCO. The accident, which has impacted local economic activity, has generated a huge outcry from fishers, the tourist industry, civil society and the general public. The spill has so far affected 30km of the Mauritius south-east coastline, where 17 villages with a population of ~60,000.

Following the accident, the Mauritius National Oil Spill Contingency Plan was immediately activated by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change. In parallel, a Crisis Management Committee was established at ministerial level comprised of key ministries and chaired by the Prime Minister. The Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping Division is leading work related to salvage. An environmental emergency was declared on 7 August 2020 in the area of concern under section 34 (1) of the Environment Protection Act 2002. The area is restricted to the public, fishermen, pleasure crafts owners and beach users.



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In response to the spill, both artisanal and professional shore booms have been deployed along the shore from Pointe d’Esny to Blue Bay Marine Park. River booms have been placed at Riviere La Chauv, Riviere des Creoles and Riviere Champagne. Additional booms have also been placed in the lagoon. The National Coast Guard is constantly monitoring those areas to ensure maximum protection. Nevertheless, there are reported cases of oil slick moving towards Ile aux Cerfs and risk that the oil may drift further north with a change in wind direction to the far side of Baie de Grand Port.

## Justification

The recent oil spill from the grounded vessel MV, Wakashio<sup>i</sup>, which has so far spilled more than 1,000 tons of fuel into the ocean, has only further exacerbated the socioeconomic challenges wrought by COVID-19. On 7 August 2020, the Government declared a “state of environmental emergency”, calling upon all actors, including the international community, to support in devising appropriate actions to contain and mitigate the impact of the spill; and to help strengthen the capacity to respond to disasters and other shocks. The Mauritius oil spill catastrophe, although relatively small compared to other oil spills in history, is likely to leave a devastating impact on the entire ecosystem and the economy for several reasons.

First, the spill has taken place near two environmentally protected marine ecosystems and the Blue Bay Marine Park reserve, which is a habitat for rare marine life and wetland designated as a site of international importance. This will threaten the global status of Mauritius as a biodiversity hotspot with a high concentration of unique animal and plant species at the risk of extinction, including the centuries-old coral that surrounds the island. According to environmental conservationists, the consequences of the massive pollution could take decades to be eliminated.

Second, it will pose devastating consequences for the economy that depends largely on tourism, which is already experiencing economic shock from the COVID-19 pandemic. The South East Mauritian waters directly employ more than 600 fishers and sustains livelihoods of thousands employed in small businesses, tourism and movie industry, many of whom will be rendered unemployed for a possibly long period.

***To enable the country to recover from the oil spill crisis, regenerate the marine ecosystem and protect the economy from its’ impact, there is urgent need of support to implement a comprehensive process of environmental impact assessment and monitoring; and increase the national capacity for disaster risk management and response.***

Responding to a request from the Government of Mauritius; the UN Resident Coordinator for Mauritius and Seychelles has so far secured the deployment of several UN Experts under the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) mechanism<sup>1</sup> for the Wakashio Oil Spill. The UNDAC

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) deployed a team of 5 experts to Mauritius who remain on site – conducting assessments of the scale of the spill; and advising government, the UNCT and civil society. <https://www.unocha.org/our-work/coordination/un-disaster-assessment-and-coordination-undac> See OCHA Flash Update No.4 <https://reliefweb.int/report/mauritius/mauritius-mv-wakashio-oil-spill-flash-update-no-4-17-august-2020>

Team is conducting rapid assessments of the scale of the spill and providing technical advice to the Government and the UNCT.

A more detailed assessment of the extent of the socioeconomic and environmental impact of the oil spill is essential to inform the basis for eco-system restoration and socioeconomic recovery of impacted livelihoods, but it will also potentially contribute to insurance and compensation payouts. To date, UNDP in Mauritius has consulted with both government and a group of self-organised civil society on the technical and advisory support needed for assessment and the need for inclusion of civil society and local fishing communities in the oil spill response.

The UNDP team, who have been on-site at the command centre for the disaster at the request of Government of Mauritius, have received further requests for support for continued technical advisory support; preparation of daily situation reports – and support from impact assessment. UNDP is one of 3 resident UN agencies in Mauritius, it is anticipated that UNDP will continue to be called upon by stakeholders to provide more coordination and technical support in the recovery stage. Furthermore, through the GEF Small Grants Programme, UNDP has facilitated a platform for government to civil society dialogue; and with the UN experts, to promote joint collaboration in the oil spill response; and advise on the optimal means for oil spill cleaning while minimizing environmental damage. UNDP is also supporting consensus building around key messages and recommendations to government from civil society. Further investment in this work is key over the next 6 to 12 months to help mitigate the potential for community and civil society discord as the full extent of the impact of the oil spill on livelihoods and the environment become increasingly apparent.

It is acknowledged that once the UNDAC Emergency Response Team depart Mauritius, there will be need for ongoing support to Government of Mauritius and the local communities to monitor oil pollution control; to conduct the environmental and socio-economic impact assessment; and, to support planning for the implementation of recovery and restoration strategies in the next six months and beyond. Effective coordination is critical to ensure that any response and recovery initiatives inclusively address the needs of the oil spill affected communities and related auxiliary industry; and, to put in place measures to increase resilience to future disasters.

This concept note, therefore, seeks US\$300,000 to facilitate UNDP Mauritius to work in collaboration with sister agencies IOM and WHO, and civil society to provide the needed support to government to effectively respond to the oil spill emergency. The support will:

- i. Strengthen the coordination role of the Government in the response, recovery and restoration efforts.
- ii. Support the government in undertaking assessments on the impact of the oil spill and identify appropriate recovery restoration initiatives.
- iii. Develop a continued medium- and long-term recovery and restoration strategy program.

## Project title: Emergency Response to Wakashio Oil Spill in Mauritius 2020

Expected output	Key Activities	Time frame						Responsible party	Budget description	Amount (USD)
		May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct			
<b>Output 1: Enhanced Coordination Capacity for response and recovery from the Oil Spill</b>  Indicator: Number of coordination meetings facilitated	i. Provide support national coordination structures and strengthen day to day information sharing on the oil spill ii. Provide technical assistance to facilitate data collection and monitoring, and information analysis, sharing and management	X	X	X	X	X	X	UNDP, UNRC	TRAC 1.1.3	58,250
<b>Output 2. Multi-sectoral assessment to determine the extent of the impact of oil spill and identify restoration and recovery needs.</b>  Indicator; assessment report	i. Conduct a joint environmental and socio-economic impact assessment to determine specific community recovery needs and appropriate ecosystem restoration and resilience building. ii. Support recovery and restoration planning processes iii. Support to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Fishers	X	X	X		X		UNDP	TRAC 1.1.3	91,750
<b>Output 3: Recovery, Restoration and Resilience Framework Developed</b>  Indicator: Recovery Framework	i. Develop a recovery and resilience framework				X	X	X	UNDP	TRAC 1.1.3	50,000
										<b>USD 300,000</b>

Description	Quantity	Estimated Amount per Unit (USD)	Estimated Total (USD)
<b>Equipment &amp; Consumables</b>			
Underwater Drones (ROV)	2	10,000	<b>20,000</b>
Dive Computer	6	500	<b>3,000</b>

Description	Quantity	Estimated Amount per Unit (USD)	Estimated Total (USD)
BCD T - one	5	350	1,750
Wetsuit 3mm	5	70	350
Cylinder 12 L	5	150	750
Dive regulator -MK2 EVO package	10	800	8,000
Diving Mask	20	200	4,000
Fins (Various sizes)	10 pairs	200	2,000
Weight belt	10	30	300
Diving Weight	15	40	600
Diving boots	10 pairs	200	2,000
Underwater Camera - DC2000 Pro Duo Set	4	500	2,000
Micro centrifuge	1	1500	1,500
Tabletop autoclave	1	1200	1,200
Waterpik	2	25	50
Data loggers - HOBO MX2202	10	250	2,500
Measuring tape - 100m	10	20	200
Mini Freezer	2	250	500
Underwater slates	15	30	450
Buoys	10	35	350
Collection bottle - (50ml, 100ml, 500ml)	60 each	10	600
Storage box	10	35	350
Plankton net	6	350	2,100
Distilled water unit	1	100	100
Fluorescence Microscope	1	300	300
Shovel	20	20	400
Electric Grinder 4.5 inch	1	150	150
Grinder Cutting Disc (4.5 inch)	40	15	600
Electric Drill	2	40	80
Drill mesh	10 (2sets)	10	100

Description	Quantity	Estimated Amount per Unit (USD)	Estimated Total (USD)
Hack saw	5	20	100
Safety gloves	30 Pairs	15	450
Safety boots	10 pairs	25	250
Safety glasses	10	12	120
Hammer	10	20	200
Cable ties	10 packs (2 packs of various sizes)	20	100
DW40 spray	10	5	50
Ice box	5	200	1,000
Computer Laptop	3	1500	4,500
Projector	1	2000	2,000
Satellite Imagery	8 (Archive and New)	400	3,200
50 HP SUZUKI Four Stroke	1	7500	7,500
Projector screen	1		
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>75,750</b>
<b>Capacity Building</b>			
GIS Training and other software training	10	1200	12,000
First Aid training	10 Staff	400	4,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>16,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>91,750</b>

<sup>1</sup> <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Environment/Japanese-ship-Wakashio-involved-in-Mauritius-oil-spill-breaks-apart>