



UNEP - NAIROBI CONVENTION

Meeting of the Western Indian Ocean Science to Policy Platform

5 – 7 December 2023

Proposed Theme: *Addressing Global Targets in the WIO in support of a Sustainable Blue Economy*

Draft Concept Note

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that sound scientific knowledge is required to assist policy-makers and resource managers in decision-making. Through various decisions at its Conference of the Parties (COP), the Contracting Parties of the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of Coastal and Marine Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (Nairobi Convention), have often emphasized the need to strengthen the science-policy interface. For example, Decision CP 4/ parts 3 and 4, directed the Secretariat of the Convention to facilitate the establishment of a network of academic and research institutions in the region; Decision CP 7/17 requested the Secretariat to hold and encourage partners to support regular science to policy dialogues, Decision CP 8/12 called for the establishment of a dialogue platform, and Decision CP 9/12 further directed the Secretariat to convene regular science-policy dialogues. These decisions clearly demonstrate the commitment of the Contracting Parties in a bid to ensure that decision-making and policy formulation for the sustainable management of the marine and coastal resources in the WIO region are evidence-based and take into consideration the input of most stakeholders including scientists, administrators and policy/decision-makers.

In furtherance to the COP decisions, a formal structure called the Science Policy Platform (SPP) was established in 2019 under the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention. A number of science-policy dialogue meetings have been held; one such meeting is scheduled to take place from 31st October to 2nd November 2023 with "*Addressing Global Targets in the WIO in support of a Sustainable Blue Economy*" as the theme. This Concept Note provides the framework for the meeting, particularly the areas to be considered for deliberations, the focus of the discussions, participation in the meeting and suggestions for effective implementation of the outcomes of the discussions. Considering the elevated momentum in global and regional ocean-related initiatives including the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade), the recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) treaty, and global and regional agreements related to plastics in the marine environment, the Concept Note puts special emphasis on these initiatives.

THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN SCIENCE TO POLICY PLATFORM

While acknowledging the important role that science plays in policy and decision-making, it is evident that there are barriers between the two domains that limit the uptake of science into policy, and further challenges in converting policy into action also exist. The barriers include the technical nature of scientific information provided to policy/decision-makers which may not be easily understood by non-experts in the field. There is also inadequate communication of research needs and priorities to the scientific community to enable them to tailor research to address those needs and priorities. There is also the need for proper integration of scientific knowledge into language and format that would be readily understood by policy/decision-makers to effectively and positively influence their work. The

question has always been how to bridge the gap between producers of scientific information and users of the information for policy formulation and decision-making.

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Science to Policy Platform (SPP) (hereafter referred to as WIO-SPP), was created in response to the request by the COP of the Nairobi Convention. It is “a multi-stakeholder platform comprising of representatives of formal and informal knowledge-generating institutions, practitioners, policymakers, communities and the private sector within the WIO region”. The region comprises of ten countries, namely; Comoros, France (Réunion), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania. All the countries in the region depend on the ocean for the daily protein requirements and livelihoods of a good proportion of their populations, as well as for other economic, social and cultural dimensions of the citizenry and the governments. With sustainable blue economy discussions and developments gaining momentum across the region, the value of the ocean towards national development in coastal states has been more appreciated of late than ever before.

The WIO-SPP is intended to support the efforts of the Contracting Parties of the Nairobi Convention to integrate relevant scientific evidence and findings into national and regional efforts to protect, manage and develop their coastal and marine environment sustainably. It serves as an intermediary body to bridge the gaps between science and policy, and catalyze actions for the implementation of the latter. The WIO-SPP is also expected to act as an intermediary or boundary agent between science and society and to facilitate and promote a better understanding of on-going and emerging regional environmental challenges and opportunities, and of the strategies needed to address them. It contributes to the mechanisms necessary for providing information on research needs and priorities to the science community.

The operating principles of the WIO-SPP include the following:

- (i) Participation is open to members of the Forum for Research and Academic Institutions (FARI), including thematic experts from the institutions;
- (ii) Non-Governmental Organizations and regional programmes with a mandate to carry out research on marine and coastal issues are eligible to contribute to the SPP;
- (iii) Focal Points to the Nairobi Convention and policy development representatives from the countries are included in the SPP; and
- (iv) The SPP can, in an *ad-hoc* manner, seek advice from individual experts as may be required.

Complying with one of the decisions made at the Conference of the Parties (COP) held in Antananarivo, Madagascar in 2004, the Secretariat established the Forum for Academic and Research Institutions (FARI) with the support of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA). This was mainly to address the challenges of the absence of a mechanism for linking research and academic institutions with decision-making processes at the regional level.

THE 2023 WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN SCIENCE TO POLICY MEETING

Since 2004, a number of science to policy meetings have organized by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat together with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA); the last one was held in March 2021 leading to the production of the first edition of the WIO-SPP Series (<https://www.nairobiconvention.org/wio-science-to-policy-platform/>). The next meeting is being prepared to take place from 31 October to 2 November 2023. It is important to note that presently, several relevant global and regional initiatives have come into force or are under implementation. These include the recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Biodiversity Beyond

National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) treaty, the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and the ongoing INC negotiations for an internationally binding legal instrument on plastics.

There are also efforts underway towards developing a new programme by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat focusing on supporting the development of a sustainable and inclusive regional Blue Economy in the WIO region. This proposed programme will support implementation of a new updated Strategic Action Programme, and also takes cognizance of the current momentum, both regionally and globally, towards sustainable blue economy pathways, with cross-sectoral integration as the foundation, including new global multi-lateral environment agreements. The Paris 2015 Agreements and subsequent climate change commitments, Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, the UN Decade of Ocean Science, and the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework are specifically mentioned in the project concept note.

The 2023 WIO-SPP meeting is also being organized by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat in collaboration with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), and with support of the GEF-funded WIOSAP and SAPPHIRE projects, the Partnership project for marine and coastal governance and fisheries management for sustainable blue growth (NC-SWIOFC), and the EU Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (EU-MEAs) Project. Some key partners of the Convention have also expressed interest in supporting the Science to Policy Platform

Considerations for the meeting

Over the years, the WIO-SPP has consistently taken into consideration global, regional and national changes and initiatives in the ocean environment, including those listed below. Some of these need to be considered in the planning and organization of the 2023 meeting (additional information is provided below on some of them).

- High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.
- United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
- The UN High Seas Treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).
- The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).
- Global Ocean Alliance efforts to conserve 30% of terrestrial and marine habitat by 2030.
- International Marine Spatial Planning Forum (MSPforum).
- Global and regional initiatives on marine plastics.

The High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy is a global initiative by world leaders that is *“working to build momentum towards a sustainable ocean economy in which effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand-in-hand”*. The Presidents of Ghana, Kenya and Namibia are the members from Africa on the panel whose vision, among others, is that by 2030 *“Sustainable Ocean Plans are providing a credible basis for safeguarding the long-term health and resilience of the ocean, attracting investment and creating jobs to the benefit of coastal communities and national economies”*. This vision is relevant to the WIO-SPP.

In 2017, the United Nations proclaimed 2021-2030 as the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade), to provide a common framework to ensure that ocean science can fully support countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The desired societal outcomes from the Ocean Decade include *“A productive ocean supporting sustainable food supply and a sustainable ocean economy”*. The Ocean Decade regional consultation workshop for Africa and the Adjacent Island States was held in Nairobi in January 2020. One of the proposed outputs towards achieving Component 5 (Coordination, Regional Collaboration and Knowledge Management) of the new

Nairobi Convention Secretariat Strategic Action Programme, is that the Science to Policy Platform is aligned to the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

From the initial consultations and planning meetings under the Ocean Decade, ten Challenges were identified that outline the most urgent priorities for the Ocean Decade and each Challenge is expected to contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Ocean Decade Outcomes. For Africa, Challenge 10 (identify and overcome barriers to the behaviour change in humanity's relationship with the ocean) and Challenge 4 (equitable and sustainable ocean economy), were given the highest priority in the Africa Regional Gap Analysis report. The report notes lack of effective communication between science and policy as a major gap and recommends a need for improved ocean literacy and better communication.

The United Nations High Seas Treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) was passed on 4 March 2023, after nearly two decades of negotiations, and adopted on 19 June 2023. Deliberations on these at the upcoming WIO-SPP meeting will help Member States to see the way clear on what is expected of them with the framework and treaty. The WIO Regional Ocean Governance Strategy under development should espouse how the Parties to the Nairobi Convention will work together to tap into the opportunities the High Seas Treaty provide; science will be a key plank in this ambition.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) signed by 196 nations on 19 December 2022, has 23 action-oriented global targets including taking urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to protect 30 percent of land and sea area by 2030; taking effective legal, policy, administrative and capacity-building measures at all levels, to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilization of genetic resources; ensuring the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes; and ensuring that the best available data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance. It is said that the actions to reach the targets should be implemented in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols. These targets are worth considering in the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting.

The Global Ocean Alliance which is made up of 73 countries, champions actions within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and particularly supports the target *to protect at least 30% of the global ocean in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures by the year 2030. This is known as the '30by30 target'*, and the GOA believes that *effective protection of at least 30% of the global ocean will help to reverse adverse ecological impacts, preserve fish populations, increase resilience to climate change, and sustain long-term ocean health*. Kenya and Seychelles are the only two WIO countries in the Alliance and it is essential to take this into consideration in the WIO-SPP. The WIOMSA/University of Rhode Island (Coastal Resources Center) initiative to certify MPA rangers/agents through the WIO-Compass (Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals) programme could be considered as a contribution towards achievement of the 30by30 target.

Globally, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is "recognized as a necessary area-based policy to shift the paradigm from uncoordinated and sometimes contradictory sectoral policies towards an integrated, multi-sectoral and participatory overarching process". It is noted that the BBNJ treaty, for example, has provisions for developing area-based management tools and creation of MPAs. IOC-UNESCO considers promoting ecosystem-based management through MSP as a major contribution to the Ocean Decade. At the WIO regional level, an MSP Technical Working Group (TWG) has been established under the auspices of the Nairobi Convention. Apart from advising the Convention on matters relating to MSP, the TWG and regional partners prepared a Strategic Framework for MSP in the WIO in 2022 to provide high level guidance to countries in their efforts towards national level MSP. This framework takes into account the global efforts to promote MSP mentioned above and also recognizes that the countries of the region are at different levels with their MSP processes, and encourages collaboration between contracting

parties to ensure best practice are shared within the WIO. The regional Framework for MSP is currently being utilized to guide several sub-regional and national MSP processes that contribute to regional MSP aspirations, including on transboundary issues. MSP is certainly worth considering for discussion in the WIO-SPP meeting.

The UNEA Resolution 5/14 (*End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument*) notes the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution, its serious environmental problem at a global scale and the negative impact on the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. The transboundary nature of plastic pollution in the marine environment highlights the need to strengthen the science-policy interface at all levels, and to promote effective and progressive action at the local, regional and global levels. The UNEA resolution notes the work of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter supported and implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme and prescribes that the intergovernmental negotiating committee develops an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment which could include both binding and voluntary approaches. This is a topical issue that is worth considering in the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting.

From the output of their activities, some programmes like the Global Environment Monitoring System for the Ocean and Coasts (GEMS Ocean), the WIOMSA SCALABLE Programme, and the FAO EAF-Nansen Programme, may come up in the discussions at the meeting. The main aim of the GEMS Ocean is to provide the world community with relevant data, information and capacity that can accelerate action on innovative ocean and coastal management solutions on the ground and ultimately be scaled up regionally and globally. The GEMS Ocean strategy brochure outlines the programme's role at the science-policy interface. The WIOMSA SCALABLE Programme aims to strengthen the WIO science-policy interface and increase the impact of the WIOMSA's Marine Science for Management (MASMA) programme to support the implementation of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, with a focus on the WIO region. The *Dr. Fridtjof Nansen*, a research vessel that operates within the EAF-Nansen Programme of FAO, has carried out fisheries and oceanographic surveys in the maritime waters of several African countries since 1975. All the countries of the WIO region have benefitted from the surveys which have contributed immensely to the accumulated knowledge of the Western Indian Ocean in diverse fields such as fisheries, biodiversity, ocean productivity, ecosystems and physical oceanography. The results of the surveys, with respect to biodiversity, are in line with the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework. The current phase of the Programme has seen increased number of surveys in the WIO region.

Objectives of the meeting

As with previous meetings, the overall objective of the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting is to promote the linkages between science and policy for evidence-based decision-making and to provide timely technical advice and policy recommendations for consideration in the development of decisions in the upcoming COP of the Nairobi Convention. The 2022-2024 work programme of the Nairobi Convention Secretariat takes into consideration the global political processes that have taken place during the 2018–2021 period and draws from emerging coastal and marine issues in the Western Indian Ocean necessary to inform policy and decision making. It addresses new and emerging issues prioritized by Contracting Parties of the Nairobi Convention, among them marine litter and microplastics, ocean acidification, marine protected areas, coastal and marine water quality assessment and a regional ecosystems indicator monitoring frameworks.

With these in view, the specific objectives of the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting include the following:

- 1) Discussions on topical emerging scientific findings with potential policy implications for improved ocean governance and management of coastal and marine resources in the region.

- 2) Presentation of progress in the development of various regional strategies and frameworks under the Nairobi Convention for technical input.
- 3) Promote engagement and networking among various stakeholders engaged in the protection, management and development of marine and coastal resources in the WIO.
- 4) Facilitate the contribution of scientific data and information in decision-making and policy formulation.
- 5) Provide an opportunity for policy/decision-makers to think with scientists on the best ways to consider scientific data and information in policy formulation and implementation.
- 6) Assess the contribution that the WIO region can make in the implementation of global initiatives and frameworks, and achievement of global targets of the same.

Structure of the meeting

The meeting will be made up of sessions for presentation of discussion papers and progress in the development of various regional strategies and frameworks. There will be opportunities for establishing/strengthening partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to explore potential synergies for contribution to policy and decision-making in ocean governance and coastal and marine resource management for the WIO. At the beginning of the meeting, there will be a presentation that will clearly inform participants about the history, objectives, expectations and operational modalities of the WIO-SPP. This presentation may also include an inventory of key emerging initiatives, agreements, and developments and links with the WIO-SPP. A session for general discussions could look at follow up actions including application of key recommendations from the meeting, the WIO Science to Policy Platform Series and suggestions for the next meeting.

Development of papers for discussion at the meeting

As part of the preparations for the 2023 meeting and in order to ensure the inclusion of certain key initiatives in the discussion, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat will reach out to some policy experts to prepare discussion papers on selected initiatives of relevance to the theme for the meeting. The Secretariat will also send out a call for discussion papers that will potentially provide the scientific basis for decision-making at the national and regional levels with respect to the theme and/or sub-themes of the meeting.

Discussion papers from policy experts

The idea here is to reach out to specific policy persons to prepare policy-oriented papers aligned to the selected initiatives and proposed theme/sub-themes for the meeting. The proposed sub-themes under the main theme (*Addressing Global Targets in the WIO in support of a Sustainable Blue Economy*) are as follows:

- i. Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework at regional and national levels in the WIO.
- ii. Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) as Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs).
- iii. Opportunities for implementation of the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) in the WIO.
- iv. Operationalization of the international legally-binding instruments on plastics.
- v. Approaches to collaborative regional ocean governance for a sustainable Blue Economy.

The solicited papers will constitute keynote presentations. In the discussions after the presentations, the following will be considered:

- Where and how policy and decision-makers can obtain the scientific information and advice needed for action and how to assess the suitability of the available data and information.
- The adequacy and reliability of the available data and information, and possibilities for improvement in methodologies, data collection, scope of research, etc.
- The need for focal agencies to make room for discussions with experts - scientists and others - with relevant knowledge and competencies on the subject matter.

The WIO-SPP should now also be of global significance and not just regional, and should be seen as facilitating the actions necessary for Member States to deliver towards global targets related to implementation of relevant global initiatives. The discussion paper on BBNJ, for example, needs to address the science and policy support for its implementation and how to take forward the recommended actions. Thus, the questions for discussion on each of the prioritized initiatives must include the following:

- a. Do we understand or are we prepared for the implementation of this instrument at the national, or regional level?
- b. What could be the WIO region's contribution to the global debate on the subject?
- c. What are the policy limitations or science gaps that may hinder the attainment of the global targets?
- d. Should national targets be set, and is there a desire or mechanism available to monitor the target?
- e. Is there anything that needs to be done at the regional level to enhance attainment of targets at the national and global levels?

The deliberations will include what the Nairobi Convention Member States need to take on board in their policies as well as the contribution that the WIO region can make in furtherance to the achievement of global targets for the various treaties. It would also be desirable to provide the opportunity to examine the links between related treaties and protocols; this will ensure that national experts working on the various items will see the need to work together.

Discussion papers from other experts

Presentation of the selected papers that will come from the "*call for discussion papers*", will follow the keynote presentation. Each discussion paper should address at least one of the sub-themes and should contribute to addressing at least one of the three areas listed above. It is envisaged that the papers will have regional relevance, applicability and alignment with WIO country priorities and will potentially provide the scientific basis for decision-making at the national and regional levels with respect to the theme and/or sub-themes of the meeting. The papers should also contribute to the preparation of potential policy decisions to be considered at the next COP of the Nairobi Convention. For "Innovative and transformative blue economy initiatives", case studies covering national and/or regional levels will be most welcome.

The discussions papers must have the following structure:

1. Background and rationale;
2. Linkage to regional and global processes;
3. The subject matter being addressed in the paper – i.e. state-of-the-art; etc.
4. Recommendations which can be both of a technical and/or policy nature as well as the national, regional and global dimensions of the same.

Each paper should not exceed five (5) A4 pages and should preferably be in Times New Roman font with font size 12 and single spacing. The papers are to be submitted to the Nairobi Convention Secretariat (to Jared Bosire (jared.bosire@un.org) and Tim Andrew (timothy.andrew@un.org)) for consideration with copy to the Executive Secretary of WIOMSA (secretary@wiomsa.org). Each paper will be reviewed to determine suitability for its presentation at the meeting. The following criteria will be followed in the review:

- 1) Alignment to the Nairobi Convention 2022-2024 Work Programme, COP Decisions and Protocols;
- 2) Addressing emerging issues in the WIO region;
- 3) Alignment to global strategies and processes such as the UN Decade of Ocean Science, UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions on marine and coastal issues, Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Protocol, High Seas Treaty, Paris 2015 Agreement, ongoing inter-governmental negotiations, etc. The focus should be on the opportunities for the domestication and implementation of these policy commitments and the role of science; and
- 4) Focal area (to be regional rather than specific or limited to particular sites, countries or an institution's or project/programme's work).

Authors of selected papers will be notified prior to the meeting to enable them prepare adequately for the presentation at the meeting.

Presentations by Partners

It is important also to look at emerging policy areas on issues that partners operating in the same marine space and supporting the dialogue on, and implementation of programmes of relevance to the WIO-SPP may be aware of. Two or three such key partners – UN organizations like IOC-UNESCO, Conservation organizations like WWF and IUCN, and regional/national NGOs – should be identified and requested to prepare presentations for discussion at the meeting. IUCN, for example, released a report a couple of years ago that gave a series of recommendations to build ambition when the BBNJ agreement was still under discussion.

In addition, WIOMSA should be requested to identify scientific institutions – both within and outside the region – that could also lead discussions on emerging science on areas of interest within the Nairobi Convention work programme. These could also be selected from the responses to the “call for discussion papers”.

Meeting Participants

As clearly demonstrated over the years, the Science to Policy Platform is not about the scientist and the policy maker as the related processes require the participation of all governance organs – civil society, private sector and relevant IGOs. One of the recommendations from the Second Consultative Meeting on the Development of African Strategy for Ocean Governance, held in October 2020, is that scientists and researchers should play a role in ocean governance. It is thus proposed that the focal point institutions for the global and regional initiatives selected for discussions should be asked to nominate key persons to attend the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting. This will ensure that the nominees are better equipped to understand the initiative and the expected impacts as well as the responsibilities required of their agencies.

With this in mind, and as was done for previous meetings, participation in the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting should be from relevant stakeholders engaged in science and policy development for coastal and marine resources in the WIO region. These include the following:

- a) Focal Points of the Nairobi Convention SAPPHERE, WIOSAP and other projects.
- b) Representatives from relevant government ministries engaged in policy making on marine and coastal issues.
- c) Regional Economic Commissions and Communities (RECs).
- d) Consortium for the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-C).
- e) Forum for Academic and Research Institutions (FARI).
- f) Regional Intergovernmental Organizations.
- g) Relevant international organizations and institutions working in the WIO.
- h)** Regional Fisheries Bodies and Fisheries Management Organizations.
- i) Other non-state actors and the private sector.
- j) Potential donors.

Expected outputs

As is widely acknowledged, policies, regulations and programmes are stronger and more relevant when informed by scientific knowledge and information. However, many researchers have questions and misunderstandings about the decision-making process and what is expected of them in the process. Similarly, policy and decision-makers often do not know what data and information to request from scientists to support their work.

It is expected that, as a follow-up to earlier meetings, the 2023 WIO-SPP meeting will provide an opportunity for scientists, policy makers and governance agencies to articulate their needs and thereby influence the setting of research priorities and facilitate access to appropriate data and information for policy formulation and implementation. The meeting is expected to strengthen dialogue and build trust between the parties. Specifically, the meeting is also expected to facilitate:

- i. Preparation of a list of priority issues upon which decisions for the next COP of the Nairobi Convention could be based.
- ii. Policy recommendations for consideration in the decisions at the next COP.
- iii. Validation of various strategies and frameworks under development for the WIO region.
- iv. Strengthening of partnerships between technical experts and policy makers.
- v. Demystifying the type of scientific information needed to take into consideration in policy formulation and implementation.
- vi. Further description and understanding of the process for linking science to policy within the framework of the Nairobi Convention, taking cognisance of practical implementation mechanisms.
- vii. Key areas where countries should invest in.

Ultimately, the meeting should give a fresh perspective to the structure of the WIO Science to Policy Platform, as well as an indication of the provisional agenda for the next meeting. This should inform WIOMSA, as a major collaborator in the WIO-SPP, on the way forward for some of its programmes e.g. MASMA, to enable its members to make appropriate input into the forum. Additionally, the results of the meeting should enable the scientists to see what is missing and the current limitations in the required science to support emerging priorities and to direct future efforts. The participants should understand the concept and principles of the discussed initiatives and should appreciate the public benefits from the ocean and the role of the discussed initiatives in the sustainable use and management of marine ecosystems, underpinned by effective regional ocean governance mechanisms.
