

THE WIOSAP PROJECT PRESENTS

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND SEYCHELLES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

WHAT IS A MARINE PROTECTED AREA?

A Marine Protected Area (MPA) is an area of ocean or coastline that has been specially-designated for protection for the benefit of nature and people. The world, including the Seychelles, committed to conserving at least 10% of its marine and coastal areas by 2020 under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.5. The *WIO MPA Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework* targets further assesses and analyzes these efforts in order to guide and strengthen marine conservation in the region towards the achievement of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

WHY ARE MPAS IMPORTANT?

Healthy oceans are critical to human survival. Oceans feed us, regulate our climate, generate most of the oxygen we breathe, and serve as the engine for much of the world's economy.

Yet the ocean and its rich resources are being damaged and depleted faster than ever before. Soon, we may no longer be able to count on the many jobs, health, and economic benefits provided by the ocean.

Marine protected areas offer one of the best options to maintain our oceans' health and avoid further degradation.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MPAS?

MPAs can bring social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Economic:

- Fisheries in the Seychelles employ 17% of the general population [1] and account for 90% of the Seychelles export revenue [2]. MPAs can protect breeding and nursery grounds for fish and prevent over-exploitation of fish stocks, helping **maintain food and job security**
- **Protect jobs linked to the tourism industry**

Social:

- Help keep alive **cultural and heritage practices** intricately linked to the ocean

Environmental:

- Help **protect species, habitats, and ecosystem** functions
- **Build resilience to climate change** events, like floods, cyclones, or sea-level rise

WHAT IS THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN (WIO) MPA OUTLOOK?

The *WIO MPA Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets* is the first publication ever to examine the current and future status of MPAs on a regional level. It documents the progress made by nine countries in the WIO region in increasing MPA coverage, highlights best practices and challenges faced by governments in managing MPAs, and provides recommendations for how to make the impact of MPAs even greater.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE MPA OUTLOOK FOR THE SEYCHELLES?

Seychelles has made astounding progress towards increasing the total coverage of MPAs. The current 16 MPAs protect a staggering 26.4% of its EEZ [3], meaning the Seychelles has surpassed its commitment to achieving SDG 14.5. Seychelles' MPAs have increased the resilience of its crucial fisheries and tourism sectors and preserved the country's natural beauty for the enjoyment and use of its citizens. Moreover, they have created safe havens for more than 2,600 documented species, some of which are endangered.

Yet there are several opportunities to build on this progress and ensure that people, the economy, and nature reap even more benefits from MPAs. Opportunities include:

- Consider creating a management plan for several MPAs, i.e. at a network level as opposed to the customary site level;
- Continuing the development of on-site conservation training courses;
- Deepening involvement of stakeholders in MPA management; sharing experiences, challenges, and lessons learned with other stakeholders;
- Institutionalizing the use of long-term biological datasets to inform management decisions.

Regional Recommendations include:

- Creating a regional framework to develop the capacity of the Seychelles and its neighbors for MPA management
- Ensuring sustainable financing to support equipment, infrastructure, skilled personnel, and effective enforcement of MPA regulations
- Working with other countries in the region, develop a standard, region-wide approach to assess management effectiveness of MPAs.

[READ THE WIO MPA OUTLOOK: TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK TARGETS AT NAIROBICONVENTION.ORG!](https://www.nairobiconvention.org/)

[1] World Bank. "Project Appraisal Document...for a Third Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth Project (Republic of Seychelles)." World Bank. 8 September 2017.

[2] Breuil, Christophe. Grima, Damien. 2014. Baseline Report Comoros. SmartFish Programme of the Indian Ocean Commission, Fisheries Management FAO component, Ebene, Seychelles. 35 pp.

[3] Seychelles declared 13 new MPAs on 26th March, 2020 after the finalization of this publication.