

Concept Note

Capacity development in Marine Spatial Planning Tools and Information Management in the WIO

Region

Mombasa, Kenya

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A. Background

Coastal and marine ecosystems support livelihoods for coastal communities, provide food security and immense opportunities for sustainable blue economy from tourism, shipping, fishing, energy among others. At the same time, however, the ecosystems are facing increasing pressures from their unsustainable use, increasing human activities causing pollution, degradation of critical habitats and further compounded by climate change.

As human activities continue to increase in the ocean space, there is a need for integrated management of coastal and marine resources through ecosystem- and area-based management approaches for ocean governance. In this regard, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) has been fronted as a globally recognized inter-disciplinary instrument for the management of the distribution of human activities in space and time in and around seas and oceans. MSP aims to achieve ecological, economic and societal objectives and outcomes and is a critical enabler of sustainable blue economy and the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources.

There are a number of enabling African Union and global policies and initiatives advancing MSP, including the African Union's Agenda 2063; the 2014 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIMS); the 2014 Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS); the 2015 UN Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs); and the 2016 African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter). While regional and international efforts to foster MSP practices exist, legal and policy frameworks are often missing, and the implementation of ecosystem-based and climate-smart approaches remains elusive. Ultimately, contrasting national political agendas result in disparate and ineffective MSP practices.

B. Developments in Support of MSP in the Western Indian Ocean Region

Countries of the WIO region have progressively extended economic exploitation of their marine and coastal resources especially for fisheries, mining, geo-engineering and exploitation of genetic resources, often times exerting pressure on these fragile marine resources. Through MSP, thoughtful cross-sectorial strategic and operative plans in the WIO may spur blue growth while maintaining endangered ecosystems and habitats and ensuring that consequent environmental impacts are minimized. The ten Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region have appreciated the need for marine spatial planning (MSP) as a tool to promote integrated management of coastal and marine resources as highlighted below:

i. Conference of Parties Decisions

Several decisions of the Conferences of Parties (COPs) have made commitments for MSP, including Decision CP.9/10 on Marine spatial planning to promote blue economy pathways and to develop capacity-building programmes on marine spatial planning as a tool for sustainable economic growth. One of the outcomes of Decision CP.10/8 on area-based planning tools for sustainable blue economy is

the Nairobi Convention MSP strategy for the Western Indian Ocean. The decision urges Contracting Parties to mainstream marine spatial planning and the ecosystems-based approach into national development planning processes.

ii. Regional Marine Spatial Planning Framework and Technical Working Group

The Nairobi Convention countries with support of partners have developed a **Regional Marine Spatial Planning Framework** to support the region to address transboundary and cross-sectoral marine management challenges through MSP. The process was led by the **Marine Spatial Planning Technical Working Group (MSP-TWG)**. Countries in the WIO region have developed and adopted MSP approaches for different purposes and are currently at different stages of implementation. An update on the readiness of countries on mainstreaming MSP into their national processes will be shared by the MSP technical working group. Participants' capacities on MSP will be enhanced during the workshop drawing from the regional framework and lessons learned from MSP demonstration activities from the countries.

iii. WIO Symphony Tool

WIO Symphony is a practical tool for environmental assessment in support of ecosystem-based MSP in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). The tool has more than 80 maps (1×1 km) of selected regional-specific ecosystem components and pressures from human activity, parameterized using openly available data sources. Coupled with a WIO-specific sensitivity matrix, the tool indicates how vulnerable the considered ecosystems are to different pressures across the WIO. Most importantly, it allows for analysis of cumulative impacts and the expected environmental outcomes of different planning options and management scenarios. From late 2022, the WIO Symphony tool has been hosted by the Nairobi Convention and available to all member states. Training on the use and application of the tool will be paramount in the region, and will be provided during the workshop dates.

C. MSP Data, Information Management and Ocean Governance Nexus

Development of MSP requires data and information to enable planners and managers to make informed decisions. As MSP may cover very large areas, detailed data and information from various sources and significant computational power are needed to integrate environmental considerations transparently and effectively into the marine planning process. MSP being a transdisciplinary process however presents challenges of sharing and integration of data from disparate fields.

Ongoing MSP processes at the regional and national level could be supported by mainstreaming the **Regional Information Management Strategy (IMS)**. IMS responds to Decision 10.5/3 on strengthening national data centers, through capacity development on information and knowledge management to support informed decision-making for ocean governance.

The IMS is intended to provide a framework for continuous access to comprehensive data and information (including MSP data) and that increasingly disparate and diverse sets of data and information available in the region are analyzed, collected, consolidated, and linked in a common information base accessible to Contracting Parties, partners, and other stakeholders. The IMS process is at the sunset stage and will be presented to participants for any final inputs.

There is a clear nexus between IMS, MSP, and Ocean Governance-it is vital that MSP datasets and information are managed in a coordinated manner to maximize the integrity of the data available, complying with relevant legislation, to enable decisions that are sustainable and evidence-based to support integrated ocean governance.

D. Objectives of the Workshop

The objective of the workshop is to raise awareness of the regional MSP strategy for the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), to promote harmonization of MSP processes between national government, local government, and municipalities, and to enhance national capacities for information and data management for MSP implementation in support of ocean governance. The workshop will also seek to



strengthen national data experts on data handling and integration for Marine Spatial Planning.

Participants will gain hands-on skills and knowledge on updating the WIO Symphony tool, and related data analysis to boost its relevance in the assessment of cumulative impacts of human activities in the WIO.

E. Expected Outcomes

- i. Participants will appreciate MSP as a tool for addressing the challenges and opportunities in the protection and management of the WIO Large Marine Ecosystems
- ii. Participants will gain a better understanding of the process of developing Marine Spatial Plans including the data required.
- iii. Participants will enhance their expertise and capabilities for effective MSP implementation.
- iv. Best practices and lesson learnt on Marine Spatial Planning shared in the region
- v. Empowered National Data Centers with the knowledge and skills necessary to regularly update and seamlessly integrate relevant data into the WIO Symphony tool to support their country's marine spatial planning efforts effectively.

F. Workshop Provisional Programme

Day 1: Status of the regional MSP Framework

- Setting the scene
- A-Z of MSP
- Regional Status of the MSP framework
- Status of MSP at the national level

Day 2: MSP – assessing cumulative impacts of human activities:

- Tools for MSP
- WIOSymphony and MSP

Day 3: MSP – assessing cumulative impacts of human activities

- Applications of WIOSymphony
- Data and information management

Day 4: Institutional foundation for MSP

- Policy, planning, capacity, legal and financial frameworks for MSP including partnerships:
- Plenary - way forward for MSP in the Western Indian Ocean

Day 5: Field trip