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Western Indian Ocean Regional Science to Policy Workshop

27-29 May 2019

Port Louis, Mauritius

CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE WIO REGIONAL SCIENCE TO POLICY WORKSHOP



UNEP Nairobi Convention WIO Regional Science to Policy Workshop

Mauritius, May 27-29 May 2019

Concept Note

Introduction

Various COP Decision have supported the strengthening of the link between science and policy formulation/implementation in the management of coastal and marine resources in the WIO region. Decision CP 4/ parts 3 and 4 directed the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention, in collaboration with other organizations, to facilitate the establishment of the network of academic and research institutions in the region; Decision CP 7/17 of the seventh Conference of Parties (COP) to the Nairobi Convention requested the secretariat to hold, and encourage partners to support, regular science to policy dialogues; The Eight Conference of Parties Decision CP 8/12 also requested for the establishment of a dialogue platform to strengthen links between science, policy and action.

To address the request from Contracting Parties and in the absence of a technical and advisory body to provide the Conference of the Parties (COP) timely advice relating to the implementation of the Convention as well as report regularly to the COP on all aspects of its work, the Convention established the Forum for Academic and Research Institutions (FARI) with WIOMSA playing the Secretariat role of hosting the Forum. The Forum comprises of experts from academic/universities and research institutions in the region with a mandate in marine sciences but it doesn't have government representation to bring in the policy dimension. In convening Science to Policy Platforms, the Convention has been inviting government representatives and FARI members to support science-policy dialogues, with many recommendations from the Platform informing a number of COP Decisions. The Science to Policy Platform has therefore been an ad hoc structure, which now needs to be strengthened to include the policy dimension and offer scientific and technical advice to the Convention in the implementation of its Work-Programme and projects.

This will lead to an expanded FARI to ensure the policy dimension is catered for. In its operations, FARI has made various achievements. Under the 'Addressing land-based activities in the Western Indian Ocean' (WIO-LaB) project FARI: provided technical support to the project through membership in technical working groups, reviewed and validated the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) through a Scientific and Technical Review Committee established within the Forum's framework and participated in the preparation of the Strategic Action programme (SAP), and was recognized as an important mechanism for coordination of the implementation of the SAP. Under the Agulhas Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystems (ASCLME) project, FARI participated in the review and

validation of the Marine Ecosystem Diagnostic Analysis (MEDAs) for nine WIO countries and was involved in a number of leadership workshops in the WIO region.

Proposed Science to Policy Platform

In the delivery of its Work-Programme, the Convention executes various projects with partners across the region. Currently, the Convention is executing two GEF Projects: *'Implementation of the Strategic Action Project for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities'* (WIOSAP) implemented by UN Environment; and *Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms'* (WIO LME SAPPHIRE) project implemented by UNDP. The WIOSAP Project has proposed the establishment of a science-policy exchange platform under the Nairobi Convention for policy and for consensus on key LBSA and ICZM issues in the WIO Region; while the SAPPHIRE Project has proposed the establishment of a scientific and technical advisory panel (STAP) to serve as key point (bridge) to science to policy interface for improve ocean governance, evidence-based decision making and adaptive management.

It is therefore proposed that one body is established at Convention level to serve these projects needs and wider Convention science and policy related matters. This body shall be called the Science to Policy Platform (SPP) for the Convention.

Rationale of the Proposed Science to Policy Platform

The proposed Science to Policy Platform (SPP) will be "A multi-stakeholder platform comprising of representatives of formal and informal knowledge generating institutions, practitioners, policy makers, communities and the private sector within the WIO region which serves as an intermediary body to bridge the gaps between science, policy and practice". The SPP is intended to "support the efforts of the Contracting Parties of the Nairobi Convention to integrate relevant scientific evidence and findings into their efforts to protect, manage and develop their coastal and marine environment in a sustainable manner". It 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 problems and of the strategies needed to address them".

Thus, the Science to Policy Platform is expected to provide the necessary information for evidenced-based decision making and for the Platform's primary role of knowledge generation and dissemination as well as dialogue and consensus building under the two GEF projects of the Secretariat, WIOSAP and SAPPHIRE.

SPP will provide a framework for

- (i) Facilitating sharing of information between institutions and the Nairobi Convention and other regional processes,

- (ii) Offering scientific and technical advice on priorities for management, assessment and information dissemination to the regional initiatives,
- (iii) Enhancing cooperation among universities and research institutions in the region,
- (iv) Coordinating and facilitating identification of opportunities for collaborative research and
- (v) Serving as a pressure point for enforcing sustainable utilization of coastal and marine resources.

Objectives of the Science to Policy Platform

- a) Information sharing between academic and research institutions and the Nairobi Convention;
- b) Cooperation amongst universities and research institutions in the WIO region;
- c) Cooperation and facilitating identification of opportunities for collaborative research in line with the Nairobi Convention Work Programme;
- d) Providing critical linkage between research and decision making processes, and
- e) Providing quality assurance for the scientific research products by experts in the WIO region.

Terms of Reference for the Science to Policy Platform

- a) Serve as key point (bridge) to science to policy interface for improve ocean governance, evidence-based decision making and adaptive management;
- b) Providing quality assurance to elements of the Nairobi Convention Work programme and other regional stakeholders;
- c) Contributing to the development of the Nairobi Convention Work Programme;
- d) Identifying new and emergent fields of research, including the application of new technologies and innovative research approaches;
- e) Providing expert technical support in the peer-review of projects, management decisions and policies;
- f) Facilitating the sharing and exchange of information between partners and stakeholders;
- g) Stimulating high quality science through developing and undertaking co-operative national, regional and international scientific research programmes;
- h) Contributing to capacity and career building, inter alia through benchmarking of training opportunities;
- i) Contributing to maintenance of ethical standards in research and the protection of intellectual property rights;
- j) Providing co-ordination, review, debate and assessment of the activities undertaken by, or under the auspices of the Nairobi Convention;
- k) Support the Convention in the development of an ecosystem/indicator monitoring framework for the region to facilitate a harmonised system of assessing and reporting on the health of ecosystems;

- l) Support in gap identification as well as providing capacity building trainings (as resource persons/experts);
- m) Advise on scientific data collection and management (assist countries);
 - n) Advise the Convention on policy related issues;
 - o) Play a key role in the process of updating MEDAs, TDAs and SAPs
 - p) Review of incoming data/conclusions and development of Adaptive Management Guidelines and Policy Briefs (including monitoring of results from management and policy decisions)
 - q) Working closely with appropriate national and regional scientific institutions to advise on any strong trends in the scientific data that need fast action at the management level.
 - r) Review data handling and analysis/modelling at the LME level and ensure effective access and sharing where appropriate.
 - s) Lead brainstorming exercises on adaptation scenarios and options for the more pressing effects of climate change on communities;
 - t) Facilitate regional think-tanks and/or high-level round tables on fast-track delivery of management options and possible policy realignments based on incoming data; etc.

Science to Policy Platform's Operations

- (i) Membership is open to relevant heads of academic and research institutions,
- (ii) Representation for each institution shall be by the head of the academic or research institution. The institution should formally identify an alternate who may attend meetings in the absence of the member and such alternates should preferably be the deputy to the head,
- (iii) The **Science to Policy Platform** can seek advice from other individual experts as may be required in an ad-hoc manner,
- (iv) Governmental institutions, NGOs and regional programmes with mandate to conduct research on marine and coastal issues are eligible for membership of **The Science to Policy Platform**,
- (v) Membership is a formal process based on application and admission procedures.

Members of the Science to Policy Platform

1. Department of Zoology –University of Nairobi,
2. Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI),
3. Faculty of Aquatic Science and Technology (FAST) – University of Dar es Salaam,
4. Institute of Marine Sciences - University of Dar es Salaam
5. Oceanographic Research Institute of South Africa (ORI).
6. World Conservation Society (WCS),
7. Coastal Research and Development Organization in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO) and the
8. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO's Regional Committee for the Western Indian Ocean.

9. University of Seychelles, Mahe,

Seychelles

10. University of Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, Mozambique
11. National Fisheries Research Institute, Maputo, Mozambique
12. Mauritius Oceanographic Institute, Albion, Mauritius
13. National Research Center for Environment, Antananarivo, Madagascar
14. University of Toliara- institute of Fisheries and Marine Science, Toliara, Madagascar
15. National centre for marine Science from Madagascar
16. Research Institution(university) from Somali and
17. Research Institution(university) from Comoros
18. Nairobi Convention Focal Points

Objectives of the SPP Meeting in May

The overall Goal of the meeting will be to establish and operationalize the Science to Policy Platform as a core structure within the Nairobi Convention

The specific objectives will include:

1. Review of the TORs of the Platform, its membership and *modus operandi*;
2. Discussions on the need for a regional ecosystem/indicator monitoring framework and road map on its development;
3. Discussions on topical emerging scientific findings with potential policy implications in the management of coastal and marine resources in the region;
4. Regional stock-taking of oceanographic research and data in the region;
5. Discussion of various regional toolkits and Guidelines supporting implementation of the WIOSAP project.

Regional Experts Stock-taking Workshop on Oceanographic Research and Data in the WIO Region: Objective 4 above will be delivered through a dedicated workshop within the meeting.

The regional stocktaking workshop of experts on ocean/LME assessment in the WIO will review the existing and planned initiatives on scientific data as well as marine and oceanographic research. It will enable to keep the countries in the region informed on who is doing what in the field, that will identify needs and gaps to be addressed through any future initiatives through coordination and collaboration with wider partners.

Objective:

- The workshop will enable to take stocks of research cruises/ocean-based monitoring and identify the gaps in data capturing and management.
- To design appropriate mechanism to support the countries to improve their access to oceanographic/marine science data collected by a number of ongoing and forthcoming initiatives in WIO, through TDA/ MEDAs update.
- Bringing together all partners to exchange information and coordinate efforts to stretch collective impacts of our respective investments(programmes) in the WIO.



The meeting will have about 100 pax and the language of communication will be English. The meeting will adopt plenary and parallel sessions to address common and distinct aspects of the SAPPHIRE and WIOSAP Projects respectively.