

A regional Marine Spatial Planning strategy for the Western Indian Ocean

Amanda Lombard *et al*
Nelson Mandela University

Abstract

This paper addresses the aims and objectives of marine spatial planning (MSP) strategy and the process towards its development to date, including key concepts and themes to be included in the document. The overall purpose of the MSP strategy is to support the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) with principles and guidelines for national MSP initiatives that will address transboundary and cross-sectoral challenges and issues. In an attempt to apply a bottom-up approach to developing the MSP strategy, a series of discussion questions were posed to the technical working group (TWG) and relevant stakeholders, to identify the key issues in the region and challenges for MSP implementation, the main objectives and strategic priorities that should be included in a regional MSP strategy, and to identify the potential uptake and feasibility of MSP at a national level. The MSP strategy will serve as a guiding document that can assist regional and national implementation of ocean governance systems and mechanisms. Recognizing that countries of the WIO are at different stages and have different priorities with regards to MSP, the countries of the Nairobi Convention are asked to:

- Agree to ratify and adopt the marine spatial planning strategy for the region to achieve improved governance of the WIO.
- Agree to harmonise in-country MSP development in support of regional marine ocean use and planning.
- Secure funding and develop capacity for regional and in-country MSP.
- Develop regional partnerships with regional economic communities (e.g., SADC), regional fisheries management organizations and other regional communities (e.g., the IOC).
- Ensure that MSP follows an ecosystems-based approach, according to the “Malawi Principles” and the IOI-UNESCO steps.
- Harmonize in-country MSP processes with the regional strategy.
- Promote an enabling policy environment for development of in-country MSP legislation.
- Assist with establishment of in-country cross-sectoral forums/committees/working groups to provide integration of sectoral policies and to assist with the MSP process.
- Develop in-country knowledge management systems that contribute to, and benefit from, a regional knowledge management system.

(Supported by the Nairobi Convention under the SAPPHERE, and WIOSAP and ACP MEAs Projects working with the Regional MSP Working Group)