

Ecosystem Monitoring Framework for the Western Indian Ocean

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Abstract

Ecosystem health determines the sustainability and productivity of these activities to support human well-being and, thus, relies on the successful management of the Ocean. Regional ecosystem monitoring provides a tool to assess the status and trends of both ecosystem health and management blueprints over long periods of time. Monitoring of ecosystems is undertaken through constant and long-term data collection of regional and national indicators relevant to evaluate the environmental status and trends, and sustainable ecosystem services usage. It represents a proactive, dynamic and adaptive process which is continuously under review and refinement in terms of the procedures, tools, methods, and approaches used. Thus, it is based on the adaptive management principle. The Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention have committed under Article 15 (on Scientific and Technical Cooperation) of the Amended Convention to cooperate in scientific research, monitoring and the exchange of data and information in relation to the Convention and its Protocols. The regional framework for ecosystem monitoring should be considered as a guide to support contracting parties and the region to assess their efforts and progress in achieving regional and global conventions and commitments.

Contracting Parties are urged, after appraisal and suggested amendments, to approve and incorporate this framework for ecosystem monitoring into their national planning processes taking into consideration the following supportive actions:

- The priority indicators suggested in this framework should be evaluated, discussed and approved by the Contracting Parties in order to standardize data gathering for the regional monitoring.
- National Data Coordinators (NDCs) from the National Data Centres of each Contracting Party should be nominated to oversee implementation.
- NDCs should designate Indicator Coordinators, who will evaluate the indicator data, oversee the progress and review the indicator monitoring for quality control and assurance.
- The NDCs, Indicator Coordinator and Expert Groups should discuss the specific methodology and parameters to be collected for each of the priority indicators to ensure regional standardization, continuous updating and evaluation of data.
- A capacity development programme to support the above recommendations should be initiated to strengthen the capacity of NDCs to participate and contribute to regional ecosystem monitoring requirements.

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