

MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING IS DRIVING BLUE SUSTAINABILITY

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Cross section of workshop participants

In the western Indian Ocean region, stakeholders have adopted marine spatial planning (MSP) to promote the sustainable use of ocean resources while fostering a Blue Economy.

MSP is a globally recognized tool for managing human activities in marine and coastal areas. In the WIO region, the Nairobi Convention has led efforts to integrate MSP and ecosystem-based approaches into national development plans. At the Eleventh Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention (**COP 11**), parties adopted the **WIO Marine Spatial Planning Strategy**, aiming for inclusive and sustainable management of ocean and coastal ecosystems to enhance human well-being.

This strategy, endorsed during COP 11 aligns with global frameworks and the **Sustainable Development Goals**. It adopts an ecosystem-based and systems-thinking approach to ensure evidence-based recommendations are integrated into policymaking and decision-making processes.

The role of the WIO Symphony tool

Central to the region's MSP efforts is the **WIO Symphony tool**, developed with the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management Ocean Programme. Using over 80 detailed geospatial datasets, it evaluates cumulative human impacts on marine ecosystems, guiding evidence-based decisions to balance ecological, social and economic priorities and support goals like the conservation of 30 percent of marine areas by 2030.

In October 2024, stakeholders from WIO countries gathered in Zanzibar for a **workshop** on MSP organized by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat. The workshop focused on advanced geospatial analysis, conflict resolution and sustainable data management. Over five days, participants explored advanced geographic information systems and spatial modelling for MSP efforts; addressed conflict resolution in fisheries, conservation and coastal activities; applied the WIO Symphony tool for environmental assessments and decision-making; and the developed maps to guide maps for marine biodiversity conservation and resource sustainability. Experts shared insights from successful MSP initiatives in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Madagascar, promoting regional collaboration.



Access the strategy here: [A Regional Marine Spatial Planning Strategy for the Western Indian Ocean.](#)