

## **Open Data for Regional Marine Spatial Planning Decision Support**

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### **Abstract**

Geospatial decision support tools (DSTs) embedded in a philosophy of ecosystem-based management can be considered the most useful and effective assistant to decision makers working to deliver marine spatial plans (MSP). However robust decisions based on DSTs should be based on high quality information products, which in turn depend on confidence in source data and their interpretation and analysis. WIO Symphony (WIOSym) which is a DST for ecosystem-based MSP aims at regional and national scale MSP processes is currently in development for the WIO region. It is a SIDA funded project lead by the Swedish Agency for Water Management (SwAM) with technical support from the Geological Survey of Sweden, co-developed with the Nairobi Convention via the WIO MSP Technical Working Group. It is a collaborative approach to WIOSym data development embedded in 'open data principles', creating a framework for future development. WIOSym tool provides examples of how unpublishable sensitive data can be transformed and published in a desensitized form while still providing essential information to decision makers. The WIOSym tool under development provides motivation for repositories to be collaboratively developed and improved to support iteratively improved MSP decisions in the WIO. The paper is aligned to the Nairobi Convention Conference of Parties decision with CP 4/8 urging contracting Parties to develop and/or organize, in collaboration with partners in the Region, outreach, information and public awareness programmes on marine and coastal issues and Decision CP.9/10 on Marine Spatial Planning for the blue and ocean economy which urges the Contracting Parties to continue to advance blue and ocean economy approaches in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 14. The approach outlined and being embraced by WIOSym addresses the SDGs 4, 9, 14 & 17. The paper recommends the following;

- Stakeholders in the WIO to consider adopting an approach that ensures that open-data principles are the default for sharing of marine data both in support of and resulting from joint analysis and DSTs.
- Define and agree on regional data and metadata standards for marine data.
- Ensure data are available for download via open access archives.
- Create training and support materials on data principles and standards.
- Publish summary metadata on restricted and open data assets via a central portal.
- Publish regular updates on gaps and quality issues in the data, information and knowledge available.