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Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Professionals Network (WIOMPAN) Mentorship Workshop

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Background

Conservation efforts in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region have increasingly relied on area-based approaches, such as marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), to safeguard threatened species, preserve ecosystem integrity, and support socio-economic development. Over the past decade, the coverage of MPAs and OECMs has expanded rapidly, now encompassing approximately 8% of the WIO's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)¹.

Various area-based management tools are employed in the region, including fully protected areas (FPA), partially protected areas (PPA), locally managed marine areas (LMMA), gear restriction areas (GRA), fisheries closures (FC), and particularly sensitive sea areas (PSSA). Presently, the WIO boasts 143 MPAs and over 300 locally managed marine areas, serving to protect marine biodiversity and sustain the livelihoods of coastal

communities by ensuring food security and income stability.

Expectations are high for further growth in MPAs and LMMAs across the WIO as countries strive to meet the ambitious Target 3 set forth in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which aims to conserve 30% of marine and coastal areas by 2023.

While expansion efforts are underway, equal emphasis must be placed on enhancing the equitable governance and effective management of existing MPAs and LMMAs. According to the WIO MPA Outlook report, only about 40% of MPAs in the WIO region are managed effectively. The same situation has been documented for CMAs – marine areas managed by communities. Effective Management refers to MPAs and CMAs achieving the objectives for which they were established. Conservation areas often have similar challenges to effectively manage sites, and regionally these challenges have been documented in the WIO MPA outlook¹.

In the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), managing marine conservation areas faces multifaceted challenges across various domains. In terms of Equipment and Infrastructure, there is a deficiency in operational infrastructure and equipment, exacerbated by inadequate maintenance due to budgetary constraints. This lack of resources directly impacts enforcement efforts, as highlighted by the weak boundary integrity and poor knowledge of MPA boundaries among external stakeholders. Furthermore, capacity and training gaps persist, with infrequent and insufficient job-specific staff development programs, leading to overall human resource capacity shortfalls. Operations suffer from outdated management plans that fail to address emerging issues, compounded by the overarching issue of insufficient dedicated budgets, which hinder effective management implementation. Engaging stakeholders

¹ UNEP-Nairobi Convention and WIOMSA. 2021. Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Outlook: Towards

achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets. UNEP and WIOMSA, Nairobi, Kenya, 298 pp.

and communities remain a challenge due to the absence of structured community development and engagement programs, alongside insufficient public awareness and education efforts. Finally, the deficiency in biodiversity and ecological understanding within most MPAs underscores a fundamental barrier to informed decision-making processes aimed at protecting these vital ecosystems.

Recognising the need for knowledge exchange amongst marine practitioners in the Western Indian Ocean to address these challenges, the Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Professionals Network was established in 2020, and now has more than 400 members, ranging from governance decision makers, MPA and CMA managers, operational staff (including rangers and others) and NGO's and research institutions that work closely with conservation areas.

The First Regional Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Professionals Network (WIOMPAN) meeting² was held in November 2023 in Dar es Salaam. National leaders of MPA systems from nine nations in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), alongside regional and international NGO and donor partners, convened to address various aspects related to MPA management effectiveness. Discussions aimed to define MPA management effectiveness, prioritize needs for improvement in the WIO, and evaluate potential solutions.



² WIOMSA, 2023. WIOMPAN regional knowledge exchange workshop report: No. 1. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Access here:

Figure 1: Over 80 practitioners joined the First Regional WIOMPAN meeting in November 2023, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Engagement was structured to evaluate input at regional, national, and site levels. Thirteen elements defining management effectiveness were identified, aligning with key elements from the 2021 WIO MPA Outlook report. Notably, the highest-scoring theme, as per average responses, was the *need for qualified and adequate staff*. Other critical needs included adaptive management practices, proactive law enforcement, and compliance, along with adequate information and infrastructure. Discussions at the regional level explored challenges and solutions related to these needs, emphasizing the vital role of capacity building in addressing challenges and ensuring effective MPA management in the WIO region, underscoring the importance of collaborative efforts to achieve biodiversity conservation goals.

One of the key recommendations to address the priority area of adequate staff capacity is the development of mentorship programmes, which includes training the trainer programmes. During the first WIOMPAN regional meeting a call was made for mentors to participate in a WIOMPAN mentorship programme towards increasing management effectiveness of conservation areas in the WIO region. The WIOMPAN mentorship workshop marks the second phase of this process.

Mr. Mbulelo Dopolo, the Director of Marine Protected Areas from the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and the Environment (DFFE), South Africa, opened the workshop, highlighting South Africa's commitment to the Global Biodiversity Framework's targets and the need for increased expertise and capacity towards increasing overall management effectiveness.

<https://www.wiomsa.org/publications/wiompnan-regional-knowledge-exchange-workshop-report/>

The WIOMPAN Mentorship Workshop

Overview

The mentorship workshop took place on the 22nd to the 24th of February 2024, in Cape Town, South Africa. Approximately 11 partners from IUCN, WIOMSA, SwAM, FOS, Varuna and OFB, joined the workshop, bringing critical capacity, both financially and technically to the Mentorship Workshop. The region was well represented by 17 mentors, from Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania. The participants included mentors from higher level government (national), NGO's, marine conservation consultants and research institutes.



Figure 2: Approximately 17 candidate mentors from across the region joined the mentorship workshop.

Objectives:

1. Build a register of competences and expertise, so that site managers can reach out to the relevant mentor for a specific issue.
2. Co-define the work modalities of the pool.
3. Co-develop a database of existing resources in the region or globally.

Outcomes:

- A dedicated group of mentors committed to support MPA/CMA in the WIO region within clear modalities.
- A database that outlines mentors' competence areas and specific skills.

Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) Competency Areas

To anchor skills and competencies of the potential mentors, the WIOCOMPAS³ competency areas were used. WIOCOMPAS is a certification programme developed by WIOMSA and the University of Rhodes Island that evaluates MPA practitioners against a range of competency areas and to certify that they meet the highest standards in marine conservation management. WIOMSA has certified approximately 124 practitioners across the region.

The competencies (slightly adapted for the workshop) are structured within seven priority areas outlined below:

WIOCOMPAS Competency Areas

1. MPA/OECM Governance

2. Marine Conservation: MPAs and other approaches

3. Communication & Stakeholder Engagement

4. Human & Financial Resources and Mobilisation & Management

5. Management Implementation and Effectiveness

6. Biophysical & Socio-Economic Context

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

³ WIOCOMPAS
<https://wiomsa.org/wiompan/protection-conservation/>

Defining a WIOMPAN mentor

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) worked with the participants to define a mentor in the context of WIOMPAN. Participants identified several key elements that defined a good mentor, captured below.

An expert makes us feel small, while a mentor helps us grow.

A mentor is:

A GOOD LISTENER ----- PATIENT AND NON-JUDGEMENTAL----- SOMEONE THAT PROVIDES GUIDANCE ----- HUMBLE, ROLE MODEL ----- AN ETHICAL INDIVIDUAL ----- HAS INTEGRITY ----- KNOWLEDGABLE ON SUBJECT MATTER ----- A GOOD COMMUNICATOR ----- INSPIRING ----- ABLE TO ADAPT TO THE PACE OF THE STUDENT ----- HAS ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS, AVAILABLE ----- ABLE TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE TOOLS ----- ABLE TO BUILD CONFIDENCE ----- TRUSTWORTHY ----- PROACTIVE ----- A PATIENT ENABLER

Building a WIO mentor skills database

To build a database of mentors and their respective skills in the Western Indian Ocean, participants were first asked to complete a resume form with the following information:



Name and Surname, Country of Residence, Email Address, Whatsapp number, Profession, Organisation, Languages, Countries of Work, Study Fields, Areas of Professional Experience

Secondly, participants listed their skills in their respective groups, which were then grouped according to the WIOCOMPAS competency areas. Approximately 89 skills were identified and captured within the

mentor pool and included in the mentorship database. These skills are listed below:

MPA/OECM Governance

COMPLIANCE
COUNTERING WILDLIFE CRIME
GOVERNANCE
LEGISLATION
PATROL PLANNING
INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION
JOINT SURVEILLANCE
TECHNOLOGY TRAINING
POLICY AND REGULATION
IMPROVEMENT
LMMA POLICY

Marine Conservation: MPAs and other approaches

MPA DESIGN
STRATEGIC PRIORITISATION
ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION
CO-MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS
SYSTEMS THINKING
CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS
CO-MANAGEMENT
LMMA IMPLEMENTATION

Communication & Stakeholder Engagement

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
TRAINING
COMMUNICATION
STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
WORKSHOP FACILITATION
COMMUNITY CO-MANAGEMENT
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES
SOCIO-ECONOMIC
ASSESSMENT AND
ENGAGEMENT



Figure 3: Participants discussing their skills.

Human & Financial Resources and Mobilisation & Management

COMMUNITY TRAINING
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
FUNDRAISING
PROPOSAL WRITING
ALTERNATIVE FINANCE
MECHANISMS
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
WITH TEAM MEMBERS
BUSINESS PLANNING
CAPACITY BUILDING
DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING
COURSES
WOCOMPAS ASSESSOR
SOCIAL LEARNING
STAFF RECRUITMENT
IDENTIFICATION OF
COMPETENCY GAPS
DONOR MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPING AGENCY
CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

Monitoring and evaluation

SPECIES RED LISTING
DATA ANALYSIS
RESEARCH
CORAL REEF MONITORING
PROJECT EVALUATION
ENFORCEMENT THREAT
ASSESSMENT
RESEARCH
DATABASE MANAGEMENT
ECOLOGICAL MONITORING
SPATIAL ANALYSIS
GIS
CONSERVATION GENETICS
MANAGEMENT
EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
MONITORING AND EVALUATION
OF LMMAS
SOLUTION ORIENTED
MANGROVE MONITORING
ENFORCEMENT AND
COMPLIANCE PLANNING
SOCIO-ECONOMIC
MONITORING

Management Implementation and Effectiveness

MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING
SPECIES ACTION PLANS
COORDINATING LOGISTICS
ACROSS MULTIPLE SECTORS
(E.G. ENFORCEMENT,
TOURISM)
MANAGEMENT PLANNING
ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT
STANDARD OPERATION
PROCEDURES
CONSERVATION STANDARDS
COACH
ACTION PLAN
REPORTING
MANAGEMENT TRAINING
INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
MPA MANAGEMENT
FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
MARINE CONSERVATION
IMPLEMENTATION
CONSERVATION PLANNING

Existing mentor opportunities

A series of presentations aimed to provide real world examples of how WIOMPAN mentors may get involved in ongoing programmes. These existing initiatives and programmes are outlined below.

WIOCOMPAS

WIO-COMPAS uses a system of independent assessors to review participant credentials and competences. Assessors are responsible for evaluating candidate's competences through a rigorous process entailing application interviews, core activity documents, portfolio reviews, presentations, scenario exercises and face-to-face interviews with candidates. Assessors provide final scores, professional development guidance and certification recommendations to the Board for certification of successful candidates. Their central role is to assess applicant and candidate competences. To accomplish this task, they will mentor candidates in their core activity document and provide professional development advice overall in relation to the competences. Approximately 12 assessors from the WIO region to moderate the assessment process has been trained. However, there is a significant lack of French-speaking assessors to accommodate candidates from francophone countries.

Green List programme

The Green List programme identifies and trains local/regional Protected and Conserved Areas practitioners on the Green List Standard and Green Listing process. These practitioners support the Green List candidates (site managers) with understanding the Standard and navigating through the process. They help with the Green List Self-assessment and definition of actions to improve towards the Green List Standard. They connect the site manager with networks of peers, solution/case studies holders and other mentors from the WIOMPAN who could support with specific needs and knowledge for the implementation of these actions.

VARUNA tutorship programme

The Varuna_MPA project aims to address the requirement for technical cooperation between southwest Indian ocean marine area practitioners. Specifically, its actions include peer collaborations such as companionship and tutorship, training sessions, and exchanges on specific topics via workshops.

Annually, a call for companionship and tutorship is launched to support practitioners who want to implement a project on their site, which requires specific knowledge and/or expertise they do not have and wish to acquire. Varuna's companionship actions are of short duration and involves one or more practitioners from two marine areas. On the other hand, Varuna's tutorship programme involves a very short trip (around 5 days) of the tutor to the beneficiary's marine area, to get familiar with its local context and realities, and a long-distance regular technical support (for about 1 year) to provide guidance. It is a one-on-one format (1 tutor – 1 beneficiary). Varuna covers all the cost related to these actions, as well as the tutor's technical expertise cost which are paid to the tutor's marine area. Creating a pool of mentors in the WIO region is essential for marine area practitioners who wishes to embark on tutorship programmes, as this would assist in the identification the relevant tutor with specific skills (database of competences) to help them in the challenges they are facing on their site.

Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet)

CCNet is a network of individuals with the training and experience to support teams in project development, monitoring, and adaptation using the Conservation Standards. The Conservation Standards⁴ (CS) are a widely adopted set of principles and practices that bring together common concepts, approaches, and terminology for conservation project design, management,

⁴ [About Conservation Standards \(CS\)](#)

and monitoring. With the CS, practitioners have a framework for evidence-based practice that enables learning across organizational, geographic, cultural, temporal, and spatial barriers.

Because using a results-and-evidence-based approach to planning, implementation, and monitoring often implies adjustments in how organizations and individuals organize their work, it is helpful for teams new to the Conservation Standards to receive support from a CS coach. CCNet Coaches bring people together in ways that honor a group's diverse expertise and knowledge and foster a collaborative, effective, and productive environment for decision-making and shared learning.

The Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet) is a global community of around 800 trained professional coaches that use the Conservation Standards to strengthen conservation action and results around the world. CCNet provides training, guidance, and certification for practitioners who want to become coaches. CCNet coaches regularly connect with each other ensuring that such knowledge-sharing happens across organizations, countries, and continents.

The WIOMPAN mentors would be potential candidates for being trained as coaches and thus connecting to the coaches' regional network in Africa and worldwide. Being a Conservation Standards coach is both fruitful for the mentor's individual development and for the development of the broader conservation and management approaches in the WIO.

WIOMPAN regional training opportunities

As a regional Marine Protected Areas Professionals network, WIOMPAN, conducts regional assessments to identify capacity gaps towards increasing management effectiveness in marine conservation areas. WIOMPAN in collaboration with WIOMSA holds regional trainings to fill these capacity gaps and rely

on experts (mentors) in the region to assist in the technical development of these trainings.



Figure 4: Miss Claire Relton from Foundations of Success (FOS) providing an overview of the Conservation Coaches Network.

The WIOMPAN mentorship programme – Modalities and Enabling conditions

An essential component of the workshop was to explore how a mentorship programme could practically be implemented in the Western Indian Ocean. The outline below, which includes the modalities, enabling conditions and incentives were explored to operationalise the programme.



Figure 5: Mentors brainstorming on the modalities and enabling conditions of a successful WIOMPAN mentors programme.

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Network (WIOMPAN) Mentorship Programme aims to foster professional development and capacity building for the region's MPA managers. The programme will operate under

structured **modalities** to ensure effectiveness and accountability outlined below.

1. **Measurement of Success:** Mentors will track the personal growth of mentees and assess the impact of their efforts on MPAs through predefined metrics.
2. **Formal Agreement:** Mentors and mentees will engage in a formal agreement or terms of reference outlining roles, responsibilities, and expectations, promoting accountability and responsibility.
3. **Pairing:** Mentors and mentees will be matched based on their expertise, experience, and needs, ensuring appropriate pairing for effective mentorship.
4. **Communication:**
 - a. Communication between mentors and mentees will be facilitated through official channels, such as MPA/OECM managers or partners, ensuring appropriate and professional communication channels.
 - b. Mentors will stipulate the frequency and format of communication with their mentees, whether through monthly meetings, email updates, or other channels.
 - c. A dedicated WhatsApp group will be established for mentors to facilitate real-time communication, knowledge sharing, and support within the mentorship community.
5. **Training Opportunity:** The mentorship programme will serve as a training opportunity, offering various formats such as workshops, seminars, and on-the-job training tailored to the needs of the mentees.
6. **Time Commitment:** Mentors will commit to a specified amount of time to support their mentees, with flexibility based on mutual agreement.
7. **Cost Coverage:** The programme will cover mentorship-related costs, including traveling and accommodation, to ensure accessibility for all participants.
8. **Annual Mentor Meetings:** Mentors will convene annually during WIOMPAN meetings to share experiences, best practices, and challenges, fostering collaboration and networking.
9. **Training Priorities Survey:** Mentors will participate in surveys to identify training priorities in the region, guiding programme development and resource allocation.
10. **Official Certification:** Mentors will receive official certification from WIOMPAN to validate their expertise and support the legitimacy of their mentorship role.
11. **Online Database:** WIOMPAN will develop an online database featuring profiles of mentors, accessible through the WIOMPAN website, to facilitate mentor-mentee matching and promote transparency.
12. **Country Teams and Mentor Focal Points:** Country teams and mentor focal points will be established to facilitate mentorship coordination and support at the national level, ensuring effective engagement and representation across the region.
13. **Promotion:** WIOMPAN will promote mentor profiles and programme updates through newsletters and other communication channels to raise awareness and encourage participation.



Figure 6: Participants brainstorming on the enabling conditions to become a WIOMPAN mentor.

To enhance the WIOMPAN Mentorship Programme and leverage existing initiatives while incorporating **enabling conditions**, several strategies can be employed:

1. **Integration with Ongoing Initiatives:** The operationalisation of the mentorship programme will synergize with existing initiatives like WIOCOMPAS by WIOMSA, the Green List programme, and the VARUNA tutorship programme. ;[Collaboration with these initiatives will facilitate knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and mentorship coordination.
2. **Informal Exchanges:** Acknowledging the value of informal exchanges, the programme will encourage and support informal networking and knowledge sharing among participants across the region, complementing formal mentorship activities.
3. **Fundraising:** Fundraising efforts will be undertaken to support mentorship activities, covering costs such as training, travel, and

accommodation, ensuring accessibility for both mentors and mentees.

4. **Training Opportunities for Mentors:** Mentors will have opportunities for ongoing training and professional development to enhance their mentoring skills and keep abreast of emerging trends and best practices in MPA management.
5. **Redirecting Mentees:** In cases where a mentor-mentee pairing is not optimal, mechanisms will be in place to redirect mentees to a more appropriate mentor, ensuring the effectiveness of the mentorship relationship.
6. **Understanding Mentee Context:** Mentors will be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the context and specific needs of their mentees, tailoring mentorship activities to address relevant challenges and opportunities.
7. **Mentorship Coordinator:** A dedicated mentorship coordinator will oversee the implementation of the programme, providing guidance, support, and coordination to mentors and mentees.
8. **Building Personal Relationships:** Mentors will prioritise building personal relationships with their mentees, fostering trust, mutual respect, and a supportive environment for learning and growth.
9. **Sharing Lessons Learned:** Mentors will be encouraged to share lessons learned and best practices with mentees, facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity building within the mentorship community.
10. **Incentives:** To enable mentor participation incentives are critical. These may include:
 - a. Financial input.
 - b. Sharing knowledge and skills where required.
 - c. Promotion of affiliate organisations.
 - d. Increased networking.

- e. Self-development.
- f. Working facilities (like computers).
- g. Support costs.
- h. Official recognition.
- i. Training opportunities.

The WIOMPAN mentorship programme

– A process for mentors

Using the proposed modalities and enabling conditions, a process for mentorship became apparent. This process is captured below.

WIOMPAN Mentoring Process

Application and Selection:

- A call for mentors will be made by the WIOMPAN mentor programme coordinator.
- Prospective mentors will submit applications detailing their expertise, experience, availability, and interest in mentoring.
- A selection committee comprising representatives from WIOMPAN, partner organizations, and experienced mentors will review applications and select mentors based on criteria such as relevant experience, communication skills, and commitment.

Orientation and Training:

- Selected mentors will undergo an orientation session to familiarize themselves with the programme objectives, guidelines, and expectations.
- If required training sessions will be provided to mentors to enhance their mentoring skills, covering topics such as effective communication, feedback delivery, cultural sensitivity, and understanding mentee needs.

Matching Process:

- Mentors will be matched with mentees based on their expertise, experience, availability, and mentee preferences.
- The matching process will ensure correct pairing to facilitate productive and meaningful mentorship relationships.

Formal Agreement:

- Mentors and mentees will enter into a formal agreement or terms of reference outlining roles, responsibilities, expectations, and communication protocols.
- The agreement will foster accountability, transparency, and mutual understanding between mentors and mentees.

Engagement with Mentees:

- Mentors will engage with their mentees regularly through agreed-upon communication channels, such as monthly meetings, email exchanges, or video calls.
- Mentors will take the initiative to understand the context and specific needs of their mentees, tailoring mentorship activities accordingly.

Support and Resources:

- Mentors will provide guidance, support, and resources to mentees to address challenges, develop skills, and achieve their professional goals.
- Mentors will leverage existing resources, networks, and initiatives such as WIOCOMPAS, Green List programme mentorship, and VARUNA tutorship programme to enhance mentorship outcomes.

Feedback and Reflection:

- Mentors will encourage open communication and feedback from mentees, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- Regular reflection sessions will be conducted to evaluate mentorship progress, identify areas for improvement, and celebrate achievements.

A learning fieldtrip

As part of the knowledge exchange process of the workshops for participants, the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Environment (DFFE) facilitated a field trip to the Langebaan Marine Protected Area.



Figure 7: The Langebaan Marine Protected Area, in the Eastern Cape of South Africa.

The story of Langebaan MPA traces back to its proclamation as a marine reserve under the Sea Fisheries Act in 1973. Later, in 1985, it was designated as the Langebaan National Park, eventually renamed the West Coast National Park. The significance of Langebaan's ecological diversity was further recognized when it was declared a Ramsar site on April 25, 1988.

Participants were taken by boat to the various proclaimed zones of the MPA and field rangers were on hand to answer the questions from the passionate and knowledgeable mentors.

Langebaan Lagoon, the heart of the MPA, boasts unique ecological features that set it apart. Unlike many coastal lagoons, Langebaan is entirely marine, with no rivers feeding into its waters. This distinctive characteristic has led to the formation of expansive salt marshes, constituting approximately 32% of South Africa's total salt marsh habitat – the largest in the country.

The lagoon's stable salinity levels provide ideal conditions for a diverse array of marine life. From dense populations of mollusks and crustaceans to 71 species of

marine algae, Langebaan teems with biodiversity. Furthermore, the lagoon serves as a crucial nursery for juvenile fish, while its extensive intertidal areas support up to 55,000 water birds in summer, including 23 species of waders, with 15 regular Palaearctic migrants.

Exploring these wonderful ecosystems and biodiversity with the knowledgeable staff was truly a unique experience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the WIOMPAN Mentorship Programme represents a significant step forward in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced in managing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Conservation Areas (CAs) within the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. As the WIO region continues to expand its coverage of MPAs and works towards meeting ambitious biodiversity conservation targets, it is imperative to enhance the equitable governance and effective management of existing conservation areas.

The establishment of WIOMPAN and the subsequent initiation of the mentorship programme signify a concerted effort to foster knowledge exchange, capacity building, and collaboration among marine practitioners in the WIO region. The mentorship programme aims to build a register of competences and expertise, allowing site managers to access relevant mentors for specific issues, thereby addressing the identified challenges in MPA management effectively. Through co-defining the work modalities of the mentorship pool and developing a comprehensive database of existing resources, the programme seeks to facilitate tailored mentorship experiences and maximize the impact of mentorship efforts.

The WIOMPAN Mentorship Programme has already garnered significant interest and participation from marine professionals across the region, reflecting a collective commitment to advancing MPA management effectiveness in the WIO. By leveraging the modalities and enabling conditions outlined in previous discussions,

the programme is poised to deliver tangible outcomes, including a dedicated group of mentors, a comprehensive database of mentor skills, and enhanced management capacity within conservation areas.

As we move forward, it is essential to sustain momentum and engagement within the mentorship programme, ensuring ongoing support and collaboration among mentors, mentees, and stakeholders. By prioritizing transparency, accountability, and continuous learning, the programme will contribute to the achievement of biodiversity conservation goals in the WIO region and beyond. Through collaborative efforts and shared commitment, we can pave the way for a more resilient and sustainable future for marine conservation in the Western Indian Ocean.

FOLLOW OUR WORK!



Thank you for your time and consideration!



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