

# WIOSAP

Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme  
for the Protection of the Western Indian Ocean  
from Land-Based Sources and Activities

## *The Challenge*

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) and coast is home to some of the most astounding natural treasures on earth—from the unparalleled coral reefs in the Northern Mozambique Channel to pristine beaches to nature reserves teeming with wildlife.

These resources play a central role in the lives of millions who live along the coast and depend upon the sea for their livelihoods. The WIO serves as a critical food and employment source, helps protect against the effects of climate change, and injects \$20.8 billion/year into the regional economy.

Yet these same services are endangered by our actions on land, sometimes even far away from the sea. Activities such as development, pollution, deforestation, etc. can place undue stress on our oceans, putting our ecosystems, jobs, and even health at risk.





## *Towards a Solution*

The Nairobi Convention, whose ten Member States have pledged to reduce land-based stresses on the Western Indian Ocean, is well-placed to harness the capacity, partnerships, and political will necessary to tackle such a large problem. For this reason, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) gave funding to the Convention to implement the WIOSAP project. WIOSAP strives to reduce land-based stresses on the WIO by protecting critical habitats, improving water quality, and managing river flows.

### *Results (non-exhaustive list as of October 2019):*

**Demonstration projects:** WIOSAP is funding several projects in select sites to reduce land-based stresses on marine and coastal ecosystems. Fifteen project proposals on critical habitat management, improving water quality, and sustainable river flow management have been approved by the WIOSAP's Project Steering Committee (PSC) for funding, thus paving the way for actual implementation of the demonstration projects.

**Creation of Regional Task Forces (RTFs):** three RTFs (on Sustainable Management of Critical Habitats; Water Quality, and River Flows) have been established to ensure effective regional collaboration, shared learning and quality control of the products to be delivered through WIOSAP.

**Marine Protected Area (MPA) and Critical Habitats Outlook:** The MPA Outlook is the first government-endorsed publication ever to examine the current and future status of MPAs on a regional level and progress made by nine countries in the WIO towards increasing MPA coverage and achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.5. The Critical Habitats Outlook, to be launched in 2020, will outline the state of critical habitats in the WIO and address their role in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

**Launching of three guidelines/toolkits:** the PSC has launched guidelines on mangrove restoration, seagrass restoration, and environmental flows assessments, which outline WIO-specific case studies on how various interventions have worked and lessons learnt. Additional guidelines on ecosystem valuation and climate change vulnerability assessments will be available soon.

**Clearing House Mechanism (CHM):** WIOSAP is helping to revitalize the CHM, a one stop data resource that will provide critical information to policy makers and partners as they work to protect and manage the WIO.

**Strengthening the Science to Policy interface in WIO:** WIOSAP has supported the Nairobi Convention's convening of five science to policy forums in the region, in recognition of the need for science-based policy making and adaptive management.

**5 Workshops/trainings on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP):** The workshops provided a platform for countries to examine MSP practices and tailor its implementation to their own maritime domains. The Nairobi Convention Secretariat is now developing a Regional MSP strategy and establishing an MSP technical working group.

**Partnership Meeting with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Commissions:** the Nairobi Convention organized this meeting with the goal of forging partnerships to enhance sustainable management of coastal and marine resources.

*For a full list of progress made under WIOSAP, visit [nairobiconvention.org/projects](http://nairobiconvention.org/projects)*