Transboundary issues and capacity building in the WIO region

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Many countries of the WIO are embracing more expansive roles of the ocean based economy commonly called the Blue Economy. A Trans-boundary Diagnostic Analysis was carried during the SWIOFP and ASCLME project in the period 2008-2013 which lead to the prioritization of major areas of concern in the oceanic environment in the region. The major areas of concern were water quality degradation, habitat and community modification, declines in marine living resources and, unpredictable environmental variability and extreme events. Subsequently root-cause-analysis was conducted to determine the underlying causes. Among the root causes was inadequate financial and human resources. Inadequate financial resources was a common root cause linked to inappropriate governance, inadequate knowledge and awareness and economic drivers. Some of the intermediary causes were failure of MCS operations, inadequate priority setting, low research funding, lack of evidence for need of enforcement and, lack of education and training.

IOCAFRICA office conducted a survey in 2015 to identify existing capacities. The survey included African marine experts in terms of expertise, qualification and gender. Planned and requested cruises was also listed for 2015-2017 as well as on-going work on key variables. There was notably low reporting for key time series sampling both for operational and research data. In response to the above initiatives short term trainings are now being organized in the WIO region under the OTGA project of the IOC-UNESCO. A comprehensive list of cruises from 1965 to 2015 has also been undertaken by IOC-UNESCO to provide a baseline for the on-going IIOE-2 expedition. More effort is still required in training and education to support the regional economies.