The EAF-Nansen Programme: Research contributions in the Indian Ocean in support of regional and global policy and management processes

5th July, Mauritius
11.30 - 18.00

Background

The EAF-Nansen Programme is a collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) of Bergen, Norway.

The Programme represents the most recent phase of the long-lasting “Nansen Programme” that started its activities in the Indian Ocean in 1975 through surveys with the research vessel Dr Fridtjof Nansen.

In 2018, an extensive survey programme was implemented in the Indian Ocean, and cruises were conducted with the RV Dr Fridtjof Nansen in the waters of five countries of the Western Indian Ocean and four countries in the Bay of Bengal, as well as in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Overall, 247 participants from coastal countries of the Indian Ocean took part in the surveys and a substantial amount of data and samples were collected contributing to studies of physical, chemical and biological oceanography, pelagic and demersal living resources, bottom habitats, sea mammals and seabirds.

Samples were also collected for assessing occurrence of microplastics and marine debris, and for analyzing marketable species for substances affecting food safety.

The rationale for the survey programme is described in the EAF-Nansen Science Plan (http://www.fao.org/in-action/eaf-nansen/programme-outcome/science/en/).
Session objective and expected outputs

The objectives of the special session are as follows:

- Present and discuss results from the surveys in the Western Indian Ocean in 2018
- Present and discuss preliminary results from research projects identified in post-survey meetings.
- Discuss and provide guidance on the way forward for the main research projects identified and suggest revisions as necessary.
- Suggest new research ideas and relevant partners - Discuss policy and management relevance of the results, and priorities for future work.

Target audience

- Scientists who are already part of EAF-Nansen Programme research activities identified as follow-up to the surveys.
- Interested WIOMSA Symposium participants.

The session will also be of interest to:

- Scientists from the Western Indian Ocean Countries
- Relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supporting improved fisheries research and management and improved ocean governance.
- Stakeholders from governments and regional intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).

Tentative session programme

The special session on the EAF-Nansen Programme will include three main sessions, of which the second session on research results will cover three thematic themes. An overall moderator and thematic theme moderators will lead this special session. The three main sessions are as follows:

1. Setting the scene: The EAF-Nansen Programme research: Opportunities, thematic priorities and policy and management relevance.

2. Results of 2018 Western Indian Ocean investigations and their contributions to EAF-Nansen science themes
   i) Living resources, physical and chemical oceanography, climate (Themes 1-4 and 9-10)
   ii) Bottom Habitats and benthic biodiversity (Themes 4, 5 and 7)
   iii) Pollution (Themes 5, 6 and 8)

3. Final discussions
   Relevance of findings, guidance on the way forward for the main research projects identified, key gaps etc.