

SS018: Strengthening Coastal Stewardship: From Tools to Action

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Coastal communities—especially small-scale fishers and fish workers—play a critical role in sustaining ocean health, supporting biodiversity, and contributing to global food and nutrition security. Yet they often bear the greatest costs of conservation and management efforts, while benefits flow elsewhere. Without policies, investments, and interventions that realise human rights and incentivise sustainable use, we risk leaving these communities and ocean stewards behind. This interactive session will bring together leading voices from research, policy, practice, and communities across three WIO countries to explore how we can unlock more effective and equitable approaches to managing, conserving and restoring coastal ecosystems and resources. We will focus on practical tools that can enable and incentivise coastal stewardship, including the process of securing tenure rights, social protection, subsidies, and market solutions. Following a brief introduction, stakeholders from each country will share their experiences of these tools, introducing a set of case studies. Through discussion of these case studies in a World Café, participants will explore these tools, as well as the role of policy in enabling their effective use, and reflect on lessons learned. Together, we will dig into their successes, failures, and barriers to scaling, before identifying a set of next steps to strengthen and scale models that can effectively support nature, livelihoods, and food and nutrition in the WIO region, and accelerate progress on the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap..