

SS027: Fisheries Data Harmonisation in the Western Indian Ocean: Building a Regional Data Ecosystem for Resilient Small-scale Fisheries

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This session will explore the opportunities, challenges, and next steps for harmonising coastal fisheries data systems across the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. Fragmented national data systems undermine regional efforts to combat IUU fishing, conduct ecosystem-based stock assessments, and support sustainable livelihoods. Drawing from a comprehensive business case endorsed by key stakeholders, this session will discuss and structure a strategic roadmap for national and regional data integration. Key themes include the role of standardized data, digital tools, key indicators and ontologies; national governance models and how these could synergize under the Nairobi Convention; and pathways to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience through data-driven analytics. The session aims to catalyze commitments to collaborative, interoperable data systems supporting a sustainable local, national and regional blue economies.