

Africa's 30x30 Marine Leap

Science-to-policy perspectives from the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), the Benguela, Gulf of Guinea and West Africa

A. Abstract:

Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries have endorsed the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF), including the ambitious Target 3 (30x30), which calls for protecting 30% of coastal and marine ecosystems by 2030. However, implementation across SSA remains uneven due to governance capacity, financing, and institutional support challenges.

The session will feature presentations from the Alliance's existing African partnerships from the Western Indian Ocean, Seychelles, the southern Gulf of Guinea and the Benguela Current Region, including a West Africa high seas and sustainable finance perspectives. Special attention will be given to the application of science for informed decision making to improve marine conservation and the effective management of protected areas. Given Africa's high density coastal populations and competing priorities, it is important to incorporate climate change, socio-economics, local governance and cultural considerations in marine conservation planning, and to ensure it is inclusive and representative.

Key insights from the session will be synthesized into a concise policy brief on the lessons, opportunities and challenges for science to policy to society to achieve Target 3 of the KM-GBF 30x30. This will align with the Nairobi Convention's Science-to-Policy Dialogue and can inform policy at the African Union, the East African Community and SADC.

B. Keywords (5-7)

Science to policy, conservation planning, Target 3, MSP, finance, inclusive governance.

C. Detailed Narrative Description:

1. Objectives and Motivation:

- To share perspectives on the use of science as evidence to support 30x30 implementation. Mindful that natural sciences need to be considered in view of socio-economic, economic, governance, climate change and development indicators.
- To foster dialogue across marine conservation practitioners, policymakers, and traditional knowledge holders.
- To extract actionable recommendations for informing regional and global policy platforms, particularly CoP 12 of the Nairobi Convention.

2. Novelty and Innovation:

The Blue Nature Alliance has 4 partnerships in Sub-Saharan Africa. With WIOMSA for the WIO, with SeyCCAT for Seychelles, with the WCS for the southern Gulf of Guinea, and with TNC for the Benguela Current region. These partnerships share a common objective to improve marine conservation and associated capacities for maintenance and management. It would be the first time that the Alliance, in partnership with WIOMSA, will bring together all project partners in Africa to share and exchange experiences, good practice and lessons learned, with a focus on what can be replicated to improve the quality of outcomes, ensure sustainability and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of development finance.

A key novelty is to expose stakeholders along the Atlantic Ocean in Africa (north-west, central and south-west) to WIOMSA and the Nairobi Convention as a good practice institutional models for enabling and driving the marine conservation science-to-policy agenda.

3. Session Format:

- Short presentations (10 - 15 minutes each) by regional project partners
- Panel discussion with regional representatives
- Moderated panel including donor, policy, and community perspectives
- Plenary Q&A and co-creation of actionable recommendations

4. Session topics

- Enabling conditions and capacities to achieve 30x30.
- Inclusive governance and participatory design of marine conservation areas.
- Sustainable finance for maintenance and management of marine conservation.
- Sustainable livelihoods, cultural and climate change considerations.
- Marine conservation in the context of Blue Economy.

5. Tentative Timeline/ Schedule:

#	Time	Agenda Item	Speaker/ Presenter
1	09:00	Speaker and participant arrival	All
2	09:25	Session opening and presentation of the objectives	Nico Willemse
3		Opening remarks: Nairobi Convention	Mr. Jared Bosire
4	09:30	Screen the WIO-Alliance video (4m20s)	
5	09:35	Presentations of regional perspectives on 30x30	Nico Willemse
6	09:40	• Western Indian Ocean	Dr. Arthur Tuda

#	Time	Agenda Item	Speaker/ Presenter
7	09:55	• Southern Gulf of Guinea (Gabon and RoC)	Mr. Godefroy de Bruyn
8	10:10	• Benguela Current Convention (Angola, Namibia and South Africa)	Ms. Maria Sardinha
9	10:25	Short wellness break	All
10	10:40	• ECOWAS 30x30 commitment and scoping for a potential High Seas MPA	Ms. Sikeade Egbuwalo
10	10:55	• Seychelles 30x30 journey (SIDS perspective)	Ms. Marie-May Jeremie
11	11:10	• Sustainable finance for the implementation of science to policy	Ms. Sabrina Cao
13	11:25	Discussion and recommendations	Nico Willemse
14	12:00	Way forward	Dr. Arthur Tuda
15	12:30	Session closure	Kenya WIOMPAN Member

6. Target Audience:

Marine conservation practitioners, science-policy experts, early-career researchers, coastal community leaders, Indigenous knowledge holders, donors, and regional/national policymakers involved in 30x30 efforts.

7. Identified Presentations / Speakers (if any):

- Dr. Arthur Tuda, WIOMSA – WIO 30x30 perspectives.
- Mr. Godefroy de Bruyn, WCS – Gulf of Guinea 30x30 perspectives.
- Ms. Maria Sardinha, BCC – Benguela Current Convention 30x30 perspectives.
- Ms. Sikeade Egbuwalo, Nigeria – ECOWAS 30x30 commitment and scoping for a potential High Seas MPA - perspective on a sub-regional approach in relation to BBNJ.
- Ms. Marie May Jeremie, Seychelles’ Government-led 30x30 process and perspectives as a small island and developing state (SIDS).
- Ms. Sabrina Cao, Blue Nature Alliance – Sustainable finance for the implementation of science to policy.

8. Prior Session History (if applicable):

In July 2024, the IUCN organized the Africa Ocean Forum (AOF) that brought together numerous partners and projects/ programs working toward the GBF 30x30. The Forum had an opening plenary session on “Africanizing 30x30” which aimed at highlighting key issues that need consideration in the context of GBF 30x30 and, sharing of experiences to progress toward 30x30. This session was attended by more than 150 persons, representing governments (ministerial levels), development partners (donors and technical support), community-based and civil society organizations and projects/

programs. This session will build on some of the messages from the AOF with an aim to address barriers and challenges that can enable progress to achieve Target 3.

9. Session Outcomes:

- A cross-regional synthesis of best practices and lessons learned in science-to-policy to achieve Target 3 of the KM-GBF 30x30.
- Identification of enabling conditions for successful marine protection.
- Inclusive dialogue and capacity exchange across SSA coastal regions
- Submission of a session report and a concise policy brief to the Nairobi Convention Secretariat.
- Positioning of African marine conservation voices in global 30x30 dialogues.

For more information contact:

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Please share this concept note with your partners and networks via email and social media (incl. WhatsApp).



The poster features a map of Africa and the surrounding oceans. It includes logos for WIOMSA and the 13th Scientific Symposium. The text is as follows:

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Join us for an exciting session
2 Oct 2025 from 09:00-12:30

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West Africa

For more info contact:
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