

SS029: Coastal Ecosystems at Risk: Red List of Ecosystems in the WIO

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Coastal ecosystems are vital for biodiversity, fisheries, carbon storage, and coastal protection across the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). Yet their risk of degradation remains poorly quantified, and decision-makers often lack the information needed to prioritise protection and restoration. Through the ReSEA project—a partnership between IUCN, WIOMSA, WIOMN, and CORDIO—countries in the region are advancing national-level Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) assessments for seagrasses, mangroves, and coral reefs.

This special session will present the outcomes of 2025 feasibility studies on seagrasses in Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Comoros, and Tanzania, together with preliminary national mangrove assessments in Kenya and Tanzania, and the WIO coral reef RLE that has scaled into global and national processes. These efforts reveal key technical and institutional challenges, while also highlighting opportunities for data harmonisation, coordinated reporting, and policy uptake.

The session will feature presentations from national and regional experts, followed by interactive discussions to exchange lessons, identify regional needs, and define next steps toward full ecosystem risk assessments. It will also explore how WIO experiences are contributing to global RLE initiatives, positioning the region as a leader in advancing evidence-based coastal conservation.