

WIO Science to Policy Platform Series

A strategic framework for coastal and marine water quality management in the Western Indian Ocean

Taljaard, Susan; Weerts, Steven P; Arabi, Sumaiya; Newman, Brent; Bosire, J

Abstract

Governments in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region, through a consultative process, have agreed on the need for a suite of national and regional actions to address major stresses on the marine environment. This is demonstrated in several initiatives, including: The Protocol for the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBSA Protocol) to the Nairobi Convention .Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities (WIOSAP) .The Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonisation and Institutional Reforms (WIO LME SAPPHIRE) .Enforcing Environmental Treaties in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries (ACP-MEA Phase III) - funded by the European Union. For coastal and marine water quality management (C&MWQM), improved capacity and the implementation of strategic frameworks can improve ecosystem integrity with consequent socio-economic and environmental benefits, locally, regionally and globally. Countries in the WIO region vary in their current planning and implementation in C&MWQM, and the development of a regional strategic framework will provide a basis for adoption and integration into national frameworks. This paper presents a strategic framework for C&MWQM to be considered for implementation in the region. Ultimately, achieving the strategic objective for coastal and marine water quality in the WIO region, which states 'Water quality in the WIO region meets international standards by the year 2035,' depends on the success of the framework and on adopting the proposed implementation thereof into national policy and best practice. It also requires political commitment to assist in securing dedicated financial resources and the skilled personnel required to execute C&MWQM programmes.