

# **WIOMSA - Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association**

## **Introduction :**

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) is a regional professional non-governmental, non-profit, membership organization, registered in Zanzibar, Tanzania. The organization is dedicated to promoting the educational, scientific and technological development of all aspects of marine sciences throughout the WIO region (consists of 10 countries: Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius, Reunion (France), with a view toward sustaining the use and conservation of its marine resources. The Association has about 600 individual members as well as about 20 institutional members from within and outside the region. The association gathers and disseminates marine science information, and convenes meetings to foster marine science development and information exchange and better communication among the marine scientists and other professionals involved in the advancement of marine science research and development in the WIO Region.

WIOMSA is governed by a Board of Trustees elected every three years at a General Assembly meeting. WIOMSA is a member of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), International Foundation for Science (IFS); and the Third World Network of Scientific Organisations (TWNSO). The Association is recognised and endorsed by regional intergovernmental bodies such as the IOC Regional Committee for Cooperative Investigation in the North and Central Western Indian Ocean (IOCINCWIO) and the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention). In August 2001, WIOMSA signed Memorandum of Understanding with UNEP as the secretariat to the Nairobi Convention, whereby WIOMSA acting as a regional resource center, will be responsible for providing research, technical, managerial and advisory support to UNEP. WIOMSA in collaboration with UNEP is hosting a regional Group of Experts on Marine Protected Areas for the Eastern African region (GEMPA). GEMPA has been established with the aim of building a constituency for marine protected areas in the region and to provide a forum for linkages and dialogue between MPA practitioners and experts, and between government and non-government organizations.

## **Aims and Objectives :**

With the primary aim of sustaining the use and conservation of the marine resources of the Western Indian Ocean region, the objectives of the Association are to:

- Promote and advance the educational, scientific and technical development of all aspects of marine sciences in the Western Indian Ocean region;
- Provide fora for discussion and dissemination of research findings and information on subjects related to marine science, by organising meetings, seminars and workshops;
- Encourage the support of marine science research, development and educational activities by governments and the private sector;
- Collect and disseminate scientific, technical and other information relevant to marine science;
- Promote and foster inter-institutional linkages within and outside the region.

## **Activities:**

WIOMSA promotes marine science research through the award of research grants under the Marine Science for Management (MASMA) and the Marine Research Grant (MARG) programmes. MASMA is a competitive research grant scheme designed to support research activities in the region as well as organisation of training courses/workshop. The grants, which range from US\$ 15,000 to US\$ 50,000 per annum, are available to teams of scientists or individual researchers from the region.

In addition to the on-going capacity building program in ICM and MPA, WIOMSA has organized/hosted a number of regional workshops and meetings that provided the linkage between science and management. One such workshop was Experts and Practitioners Workshop on Integrated Coastal Area Management of Eastern Africa and the Island State, held in Tanga, Tanzania in 1996. This Workshop provided input to the Second Ministerial Policy Conference on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Eastern Africa and the Island states held in Seychelles, October 1996.

WIOMSA participates actively in building indigenous capability in marine science and technicology within the WIO region by focusing on the following activities:

- Improving communication among the marine science community of WIO states;
- Assisting in the development of institutional linkages within the region;
- Defining and developing research into problems whose solutions may require national and/or regional approaches;
- Identifying workable mechanism for the coordination of marine science research and development within the WIO region;
- Strengthening the awareness of marine science research and its importance in the development and management of the marine sector of the WIO states.

WIOMSA disseminates information and results through:

- Western Indian Ocean Journal of Marine Science (first issue due december 2002)
- Newsbriefs
- Book Series
- website [www.wiomsa.org](http://www.wiomsa.org)

## **For more information**

Executive Secretary,  
P. O. Box 3298, Zanzibar,  
United Republic of Tanzania,

Tel: + 255 24 2233472

Fax: + 255 24 2233852

e-mail [secretary@wiomsa.org](mailto:secretary@wiomsa.org)

web site [www.wiomsa.org](http://www.wiomsa.org)

**Communicated by Pr C. Conand member of the WIOMSA board**