



Paper Parks – or strong ecosystems as a basis for human wellbeing?

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) focus on the WIO region in their Development Cooperation Program called [SwAM Ocean](#). The aim of this program is to increase the opportunities for people to get richer lives by managing marine resources in a sustainable smart way. We believe in strong capacity to plan the future of the ocean, to take care of the ocean and to use the ocean – for the joy and benefit of all. SwAM Ocean has a focus on Marine Spatial Planning, Blue Economy and Marine Protection.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have a long history in the WIO Region and a large number of efforts, projects, programs and initiatives to protect marine values has been implemented. Despite this, the Marine Protected Areas [Outlook Report](#) (published July 2021) identified crucial needs for improvement to reach a successful and well managed marine protection. SwAM Ocean is trying to address the issue of Capacity Development connected to adaptive Management of MPAs by setting up a series of holistic seminars followed by a long term training of MPA managers in selected case studies.

Keys to success

The three Seminars (June - October 2021) was performed in close collaboration with the Nairobi Convention and WIOMSA. The aim of the seminars was to inspire & inform but most important, create an understanding of some crucial components of a qualitative network of Marine Protected Areas that are functional and effectively managed – to fulfil their goals and **not** be so called paper parks that's makes no difference for the marine ecosystems. We are not inventing the wheel here – but further developing the existing MPAs and emphasizing the need for a functional integrated marine management where different tools work together towards the same vision.

Did you miss the seminars, don't worry! View the recordings [here](#).

Five teams for a strong Capacity in MPA management

Five teams with representatives of MPA managers from Madagascar, The Comoros, Tanzania and Zanzibar are selected for this first training in using the method [Conservation Standards](#) to sharpen their capacity in adaptive management of MPAs using existing and relevant MPAs. This selection of teams is based on the Marine Protected Areas [Outlook Report](#) and discussions with the WIOMPAN network. The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management do have intentions to continue the initiatives in the WIO region and enlarge the training and capacity development to include more sites and teams. This is an important step to come closer to the global agreements to protect at least 30 % of the marine ecosystems and sustainable use the marine resources also in the future.