

Durban, KwaZulu-Natal

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) Scientific Symposium

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Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA)

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) is dedicated to promoting the educational, scientific, and technological development of all aspects of marine sciences with a view toward sustaining the use and conservation of its marine resources throughout the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region, which consists of 10 countries: Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Réunion (France). WIOMSA is particularly interested in linking the knowledge that emerges from research to the management and governance issues that affect the region's marine and coastal ecosystems.

Sustainable Seas Trust (SST)

Sustainable Seas Trust (SST) is a science-based organisation that works to protect Africa's marine resources for the benefit of all who live on the continent. SST was founded in 2006 as a long-term education trust aimed at ensuring marine sustainability and alleviating the poverty of coastal communities through education and skills development.

The organisation originated out of the African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP) when it was a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) flagship programme. ACEP operates in the Western Indian Ocean with partners in Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, and Tanzania.

The Sector WIOMSA and SST Operate In

Both WIOMSA and SST fall under the blue economy, which advocates for the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and job creation while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem.

WIOMSA is dedicated to promoting the educational, scientific and technological development of all aspects of marine sciences in the Western Indian Ocean region.

SST cares about the marine environment, the animals that make the oceans their home, and the people who use and enjoy them. The organisation aims to grow a network of stakeholders in the conservation and waste-management sectors to facilitate best practices around conserving our seas and managing the waste that flows into them.

The 12th WIOMSA Scientific Symposium

The WIOMSA Scientific Symposium is a triennial event that was first held in Mombasa, Kenya, in 1990. In partnership with the Sun International Boardwalk, Nelson Mandela University, and Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, SST put in a proposal to jointly host the 12th WIOMSA Scientific Symposium - the largest open scientific conference focused on the marine and coastal environment in the Western Indian Ocean.



The event offers a unique region-wide and global platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, capacity development, strategic action, and cooperation.

It presents an opportunity to showcase innovative solutions for addressing the challenges facing coastal communities, policymakers, management authorities, and the private sector in the region.

Date: 9 – 15 October 2022

Venue: Boardwalk Convention Centre

Value to the South Africa economy

The WIOMSA Scientific Symposium is Africa's foremost meeting of minds in marine science. The 2022 event drew 1 000 delegates - many representing key policy influencers from 33 countries across the continent. It boasted a rich scientific programme, which included 7 Keynote presentations on topics of regional and global importance, 150 oral, and 315 poster presentations, and 13 mini symposia. Due to the extensive range of ongoing research activities in the Western Indian Ocean, the symposium included 56 separately themed sessions.

Such was the significance of the WIOMSA Scientific Symposium that the United Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development endorsed the symposium as an official UN Ocean Decade action. The symposium also served as the launch platform for *Our Blue Future*, a multi-stakeholder regional alliance uniting a diverse group of stakeholders with the common goal of ensuring a healthy, prosperous, and resilient future for the communities, businesses, and ecosystems of the West Indian Ocean.

Events such as these aid in fulfilling the mandate of increasing arrivals to South Africa, bolstering the economy, and positioning the country as a world-class events destination. The impact cannot be underestimated: During the Meetings Africa conference in 2018, it was announced that business events contributed R115 billion (9.4% of South Africa's gross economic product) to its economy in 2017. The country welcomes more than 1 million business event delegates annually, and the business events industry created over 250 000 jobs, both directly and indirectly.

Partnering with the South Africa National Convention Bureau

The South Africa National Convention Bureau (SANCB) supported the 12th WIOMSA Scientific and made a significant contribution to the event's success, particularly with regard to the bidding process for WIOMSA.

The collaboration the with SANCB also gave participants the opportunity to partake in local tourist and leisure activities.

The last day of the symposium was set aside for participants to take part in post-conference excursions and tours organised by Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

Testimonials

The symposium has been recognised at a global level as a very important activity that contributes to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, [which is to say] we need to establish the science that we need for the oceans that we want in Africa. – **Dr Arthur Tuda, WIOMSA Executive Secretary**

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