Stakeholder Engagement on Key Sustainable Development Issues for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in African Nations bordering the Atlantic

Virtual Workshop

Date: 26th May 2021
Time: 09:00 – 14:40 GMT

Organised with the support of the Abidjan Convention Secretariat

This workshop welcomed the research, policy and stakeholder communities to help achieve these aims:

- Encouraging the uptake of MSP
- Considering challenges and opportunities
- Supporting MSP education
- Establishing an African MSP network

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Abidjan Convention
Convention d'Abidjan

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

GCRF Global Challenges Research Fund

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a phenomenon gaining popularity among coastal countries in the African Atlantic Region, with a number of African countries engaged in diverse projects to implement marine spatial plans for effective management of their coastal and marine areas. Marine Spatial Planning is a public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities within the marine space to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that usually have been specified through a political process (IOC/UNESCO, 2017). It is an ecosystem-based management tool which provides a practical way to create and establish a more coherent organization of the use of marine space and the interactions between its uses, to balance demands for development with the need to protect marine ecosystems, and to achieve social-cultural and economic objectives in an open and planned manner (Ehler & Douvere, 2009). The MSP concept became widely considered globally as an important tool to implement ecosystem-based sea use management, after the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO led the preparation and publication of the first international MSP guide, "A Step by Step Approach", which rapidly became an internationally recognized standard for conducting MSP following the first international workshop on the use of MSP convened by IOC/UNESCO in 2006 (IOC/UNESCO, 2021).

The African Union Commission's (AUC) affirmation on the critical role that the Blue Economy (BE) could play in fostering structural transformation in Africa, has concentrated efforts on developing integrated, holistic and participatory approaches that includes sustainable use and management of aquatic and marine resources for societal progress in Africa (UNECA, 2016). Various actions initiated to develop Africa's BE thus include: a) the setting of Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy vision on the development of a sustainable thriving BE; b) the declaration of 2015-2025 as the "Decade of African Seas and Oceans"; c) the declaration of 25th July as the African Day of Seas and Oceans; d) the preparation of Africa's BE handbook by the United Economic Commission of Africa (UNECA); and e) the adoption of the Africa Blue Economy strategy. MSP offers the opportunity to develop robust BEs by allowing States to make informed and coordinated decisions based on a big picture view of what uses of marine resources and space are occurring where, and determine what should be occurring where, with less impact and less user conflict (Agardy et al., 2011). Within the framework of the Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS), 2050, adopting MSP by member states will help to balance frequently competing sector-based interests to ensure that: a) marine space and resources are used efficiently and sustainably; b) decisions can be taken based on sound data and in-depth knowledge of the sea and inland water ways; and c) investors have greater legal certainty, encouraging Africa's blue economic development. Following IOC/UNESCO's joint initiative with the European Commission's <u>Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries</u> (DG Mare), called 'MSPglobal', various forms of support have been given to countries to accelerate MSP worldwide.

In Africa, regional MSP workshops and training courses were organized between 2017 and 2020 in Mahe - Seychelles, Mindelo - Cape Verde, Dakar - Senegal, Mombasa – Kenya, Port Louis – Mauritius and Gulf of Guinea (online), as part of the MSPglobal initiative. Similarly,

National-level workshops which discussed issues like "Environmental pressures that impact on MSP", "Decision support tools" and "Gender and poverty perspectives of MSP" have been organized in Cameroun, Cape Verde, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, and Tanzania. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat is equally enhancing the advancement of MSP on the African continent. In partnership with GRID-Arendal, the Abidjan Convention Secretariat is implementing the Mami Wata project within the 22 Abidjan Convention countries, covering a combined Economic Exclusive Zone of approximately 4.8 million km^2, to enhance technical and institutional capacity for Integrated Ocean Management (IOM) across sectors and stakeholder groups. The Mami Wata project adopts the use of State of Marine Environment Assessments (SoME), Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) tools to achieve IOM.

Despite the significant strides being made to boost MSP across Africa, its full uptake is hindered by a number of challenges which need to be addressed holistically to achieve the strategic objectives of sustainable ocean management.

Engaging Stakeholders in African Nations Bordering the Atlantic on Marine Spatial Planning

A regional stakeholder engagement workshop was co-organized by the Africa Centre of Excellence in Coastal Resilience – University of Cape Coast and the University of Liverpool, on 26th May 2021, to investigate the key issues to be addressed for sustainable development of Marine Spatial Planning in African Nations bordering the Atlantic Ocean. The virtual workshop brought together 169 stakeholders from 28 different countries and diverse sectors including government, academia, civil society organizations, and other institutions whose work relate to marine protection and coastal environmental governance and planning. Discussions of the workshop bordered around the importance of MSP to the African Region, MSP experiences across Atlantic Africa, and challenges and opportunities for implementing MSP in African contexts. Ten different presentations were delivered by various speakers on the main topics of the workshop, followed by question-and-answer sessions to address questions and comments from participants. Access to all presentations made at the workshop as well as a live recording of the workshop is provided on the workshop webpage[1]. Active involvement of all workshop participants to share their views and network with other stakeholders was facilitated through break-out sessions, where each participant was assigned to a group to discuss a set of questions with members of their group and present their outcomes. The questions were: a) What are the challenges facing the uptake of MSP in your country? b) How might these challenges be overcome? and c) What are the education and research needs for MSP in your country? The workshop sought to encourage the uptake of MSP in Africa, identify the major challenges and

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[1] https://acecor.ucc.edu.gh/media-centre/event/virtual-workshop-marine-spatial-planning-africa

opportunities in the uptake of MSP, support regional MSP education and establish an African MSP network.

Speakers

Welcome & background to the workshop | Prof. Denis Aheto, University of Cape Coast, Ghana & Dr. Stephen Jay, University of Liverpool, UK

Governmental welcome | Mr. Ebenezer Appah-Sampong, Deputy Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana

The Abidjan Convention and MSP | Mr. Abou Bamba, Abidjan Convention Secretariat, Côte d'Ivoire

Importance of MSP to Africa | Mr. Mika Odido, IOC Coordinator in Africa, Kenya

Mami Wata Pilot Project, Western Ghana | Ms. Peace Gbeckor-Kove, Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana

Mami Wata Project, Côte d'Ivoire | Ms. Alison Amoussou, Coordinator at the Abidjan Convention, Côte d'Ivoire

The development of MSP in South Africa | Mr. Moses Ramakulukusha, Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa

MSP and conservation | Dr. Anja Kreiner, Chief Fisheries Biologist, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia

MSP and fisheries | Prof. Francis K. E Nunoo, Associate Professor of Fisheries Science, University of Ghana

MSP and the oil & gas industry | Dr. Christian Barrientos, WCS Mesoamerica Marine Coordinator, US

MSP and coastal development in Côte d'Ivoire: the case of Grand-Bassam | Mrs. Marguerite Kouadio, GIAMAA Project Coordinator, Côte d'Ivoire

Inclusion of social-cultural systems in MSP| Dr. Bernadette Snow, University of Strathclyde, UK

Challenges Faced in the Uptake of Marine Spatial Planning in African Nations Bordering the Atlantic

Stakeholders attributed the main challenges hampering the effective uptake of Marine Spatial Planning in the Region to the following issues:

1. Institutional and legal framework for MSP

There exists a fundamental challenge in developing a single plan that coordinates the various roles and responsibilities assumed by the different already existing institutions involved in the MSP process. Multiple institutions have overlapping roles, and interests making it difficult to define who plays what role in the process and reconcile the very diverse interests and power imbalances in resource management. Also, in marine spatial planning, there are trade-offs, and in instances where the various stakeholders are not properly made aware of what they stand to lose or benefit in the process and the short-, medium- or long-term implications of the MSP, it is challenging to have all relevant stakeholders at the table. Dedicated legal framework for marine spatial planning in many African countries is lacking. Furthermore, existing laws are not adequate to cover all the relevant aspects of implementing MSP in the Region.

2. Data availability

There is usually a lack of real time data and data acquisition initiatives for research support and marine spatial plans development in Africa. Access to certain data is also limited and some available data are outdated. The extraction of some sensitive data from institutions such as the Navy is difficult. Communicating MSP goals and objectives to a broader audience to facilitate a better understanding of its purpose and enhance increased support for its implementation is poorly done.

3. Institutional capacity to develop and implement MSP

MSP is a fairly new concept to the African continent, consequently, many institutions lack the necessary technical and scientific capacity to implement it. Efforts are being made to build the capacities of various stakeholders in the Region to take up MSP through coordinated pilot projects, however, technical capacity and expertise is still lacking in various African countries to apply the MSP tool in sustainable ocean management.

4. Stakeholder involvement

Where the MSP process has been initiated in some African countries, local communities were not well integrated in the process. There are significant gaps between MSP projects and local organisations. Small-scale users are generally not effectively involved in meetings and other activities relating to the MSP process. They often have poor access to the internet and other means of creating awareness about the MSP processes. There are ongoing efforts to integrate non-formal knowledge (indigenous knowledge) in MSP, but translating that into policy/decision making is challenging. Considering arts-based participatory research/mapping as a means of including culturally significant areas into the MSP process is not always compatible with existing frameworks for designing marine spatial plans. Mapping of intangible cultural heritage also remains a challenge.

5. Public knowledge of the MSP concept and existing projects

There is poor awareness of what MSP is and what benefits it offers in integrated, sustainable management of marine resources among the public. Gaps exist between ongoing projects and local organisations. There are a number of MSP projects in the region, but the inter-connectedness and links to the general public and other stakeholders is missing.

6. Conflicts among users

The different conflicts which exist among resource users that MSPs seek to address require National and Regional collaboration, where the needs of all stakeholders are adequately tackled. Conflicts of fisheries with oil exploration, where cases of violence against fishers have been reported, and conflicts in sensitive mangrove areas, such as between tourism, fishing and salt production are a few examples of the issues MSPs can be used to address. Harmonizing the varied interests and power differences in resource use is a herculean task and usually pose a challenge in marine spatial planning.

Recommendations to Address the Various Challenges Identified by Stakeholders

1. Increase capacity building and dissemination of MSP as a tool – Greater efforts should be made towards including MSP as part of national policy; informing governments of the benefits of MSP and how it will help them achieve certain goals; strengthening institutional capacity; and bridging the science-to-policy gap.

2. Enhancement and use of current networks and creation of an African MSP network to help share knowledge and experiences – This will enhance integration of local and indigenous knowledge and sharing of data and experience among countries.

3. Increase educational and training capacity for MSP – This could be achieved locally through university courses, or widely through the use of networks and sharing of online educational material, data, and experiences.

4. Address meaningful corporate responsibilities – The beginning of any planning process will set goals, both socio-economically and environmentally. These must be conveyed to different stakeholders/institutions, with a plan clearly set out to explain the future goals, why they exist, and how these will be achieved fairly. The concept, purpose, and goals of the marine plan must be conveyed effectively to all stakeholders, from indigenous peoples to large institutions/corporations to foster understanding.

5. The stakeholder engagement process of MSP must involve all stakeholders, for example, employ the use of stakeholder roundtables and integration of indigenous knowledge. Tick box processes should be avoided and stakeholders should be allowed to make meaningful input into plans. Local communities must be a part of all planning processes that affect them – bottom-up knowledge sharing will benefit the plan. Access should be enhanced for small scale users through groups and civil society organisations that work within local communities.

6. MSP could be managed by independent bodies rather than government (because of government bias towards certain sectors) – Independent planners / international bodies / NGOs could be involved to only have an advisory, rather than legal, status, but may be preferable in an early stage of MSP.

Education and Research Needs for MSP in Africa

Education and research are key in the development and implementation of MSP. Training is required by various categories of stakeholders including, planners responsible for creating the plans; those with a mainly statutory responsibility to participate in the planning; those representing particular interests (commercial or interest-based) and individuals who require training or education in MSP to improve their skills, knowledge, and behaviour for a successful MSP process (Calado et al., 2019; Jay & Jones, 2019). Research facilitates understanding on the ecosystems to be managed in order to make holistic decisions on actions which support sustainable use. Stakeholders at the workshop presented the following as education and research needs for MSP in Africa:

- Increased funding and support from governments for marine science and planning education in general is required. This must be multi-faceted, not just for marine biologists, planners, and natural scientists, but also to include economists, sociologists, etc – ocean governance is complex and requires multi-disciplinary inputs to be successful.
- Multi-disciplinary programs created in partnership with universities, research and other relevant local institutions are required to build capacities for conducting MSP.
- Education of local communities, not just the leaders but the individuals themselves, is necessary in achieving good stakeholder engagement.
- Capacity building and skills development for MSP is needed throughout the whole African region.

Conclusion

The workshop presented an important platform to engage stakeholders in addressing key sustainable development issues for the effective uptake of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in African Nations bordering the Atlantic. This platform provided a unique opportunity for sharing experiences and learning from the successes and challenges of designing and implementing marine spatial plans across the continent. Sustaining the platform for such regional exchanges and capacity building in the area of MSP design and implementation is crucial for the effective management of coastal and marine areas in Africa. Beyond this workshop, an African MSP stakeholder network is proposed to be established to engage all relevant stakeholders to foster skills and knowledge sharing, collaboration, capacity building and resource mobilization for sustainbable development of ocean economies in Africa.

References

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Event by Numbers

150+
Attendees

13 SPEAKERS

2 PANEL Q&A

BREAKOUT
GROUP
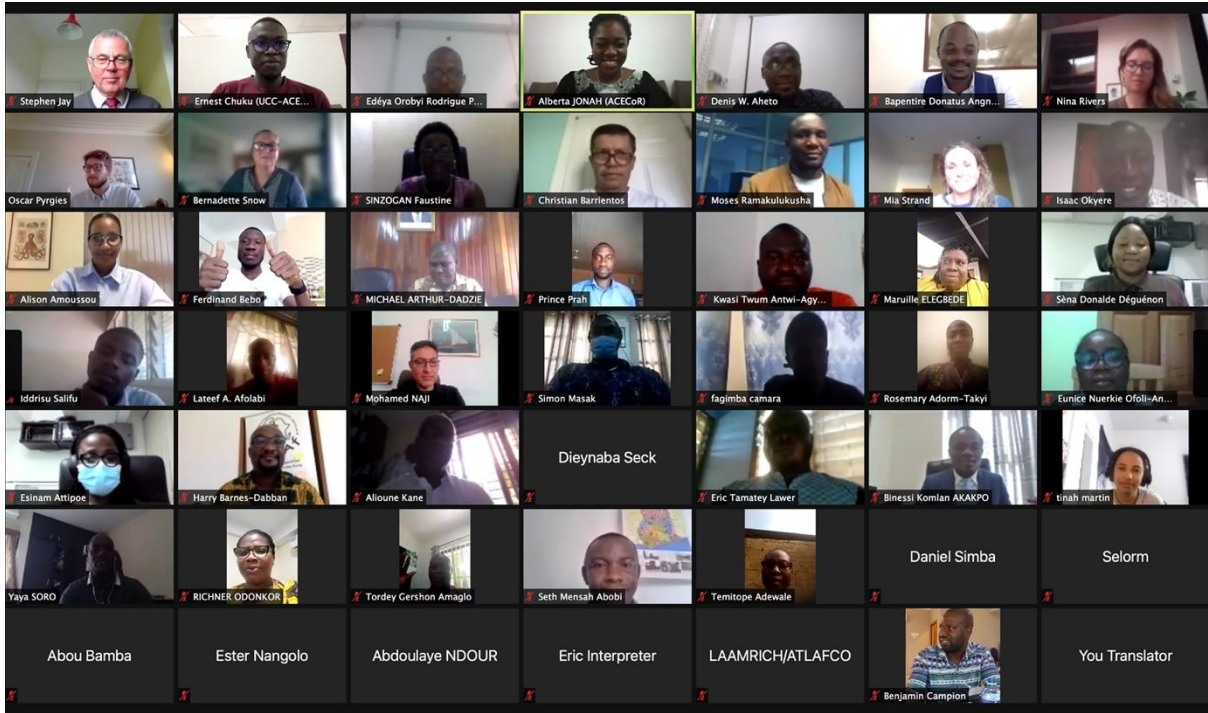DISCUSSION

28 COUNTRIES

1 DAY VIRTUAL
WORKSHOP

18 AFRICAN
NATIONS IN
ATTENDANCE

THE TEAM

Dr. Stephen Jay,
Uni. of Liverpool

Mr. Oscar Pyrgies,
Uni. of Liverpool

Prof. Denis Aheto,
Uni. of Cape Coast

Dr. Precious Mattah,
Uni. of Cape Coast

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Dr. Alberta Jonah,
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