

News

FishFORCE



FishFORCE core team from left: Michael de Lange (FishFORCE Chief Operating Officer), Tamrin January (FishFORCE project coordinator), Megan Appollis (FishFORCE project coordinator), Professor Hennie van As (Director) and Niven Kops (FishFORCE financial administrator).

Phase 2 Awarded to FishFORCE

The Fisheries Law Enforcement Academy (FishFORCE) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a Phase 2 contract by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 3.5 years, effective from 1 July 2023.

FishFORCE's Chief Operating Officer Michael de Lange explains: "We are most appreciative of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' ongoing support and investment in our academy, and their recognition of what we have achieved to date.

"Building on the past six years of successful development and implementation of training to proactively address illegal fishing and fisheries crime, in Phase 2 we will extend our training to provide a broader reach,

"... in Phase 2 we will extend our training to ... develop a southern African network of trained fisheries law enforcement professionals."

higher level of professionalism and develop a southern African network of trained fisheries law enforcement professionals."

Fisheries crime refers to the full range of serious offences occurring throughout the fisheries value chain, both at sea and on land, including document fraud, illegal fishing, human trafficking and corruption. Fisheries crime is seriously threatening the sustainability of marine resources that are essential for food security, and compromising the rights and income of legal fishing operators, including the small-scale fishers who suffer the most from rampant marine resources poaching.

FishFORCE will be the regional institutional anchor of the southern African network,

providing national and regional platforms for education, training and research to enable cross-border action against illegal fishing and fisheries crime.

“IUU fishing and fisheries crimes often involve multiple jurisdictions, therefore one of the reasons they thrive, especially in the developing world, is due to weak cross-border law enforcement and fragmented regional cooperation, with a lack of ownership and leadership,” says De Lange.

“Law enforcement in these regions is generally bedevilled by inconsistent capacity and insufficient training and skills of fisheries enforcement officers. This situation of weak enforcement remains the status quo due to limited evidence-based research and analysis into illegal and criminal activities, which has

“Evidence-based research will be widely shared to help shape national, regional and international policies ... ”

resulted in weak fisheries and ocean policy frameworks.

“FishFORCE is well positioned, as an already recognised Southern African Development Community (SADC) centre of excellence and an independent academic institution, to play a pivotal role in changing this situation. Phase 2 will build technical expertise that will result in strengthened cooperation between agencies and across borders to facilitate knowledge- and intelligence-led investigations into illegal fishing and fisheries crimes.

“Evidence-based research will be widely shared to help shape national, regional and international policies to reflect the context and needs of the African region and to hold foreign countries accountable.”

FishFORCE is Africa’s first Law Enforcement Academy, established in 2016 in the Centre for Law in Action at Nelson Mandela University with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. FishFORCE’s Director is Professor Hennie van As, admitted advocate and public law professor.

FishFORCE was established as a result of the growth in illegal fishing and fisheries crime, which in many instances, is undertaken by international organised criminal syndicates.

FishFORCE works to address the devastating impact of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and fisheries crimes. These range from undermining the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and regional blue growth, by, for example, the collapse of local fisheries causing unfair competition for depleted resources, and employment for fishers and for women in the post-harvest sector being lost.

FishFORCE’s training improves the knowledge and skills of everyone involved in fisheries law enforcement, which is transdisciplinary by nature, requiring expertise in law, criminology, police science, fisheries science, fisheries management and marine living resources conservation. The people being trained range from fisheries control officers and inspectors to prosecutors in order to promote the prioritisation of fisheries crime and intelligence-led investigations and to improve prosecutions of fisheries crime in Africa and globally.

1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

LAW FOR FCOS
Law for Fisheries Control Officials,
Inspectors and other Enforcement Officials

 69 DELEGATES TRAINED	 66 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cape Town • Gqeberha • Langebaan • Muizenburg
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

Taking of Statements

 34 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 34 DELEGATES TRAINED	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gqeberha • Kleinmond
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

Fisheries Trade Monitoring and Compliance

 8 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 10 DELEGATES TRAINED	 Namibia
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

LEPO for HMCOs




Law Enforcement by Peace Officers for Honourary Marine Conservation Officers

 43 DELEGATES TRAINED	 41 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 • Gansbaai • Kleinmond
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

PSMA Training

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Port State Measures Agreement

 66 DELEGATES TRAINED	 66 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 • Namibia • Angola
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

Train the Trainer

 10 DELEGATES TRAINED	 10 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 Kenya
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

Law Enforcement by Peace Officers for the National Department of Health at Ports of Entry

 108 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 109 DELEGATES TRAINED	 • Durban • Limpopo • Nelspruit • Johannesburg
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

Presenting of Evidence in Court

 26 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 26 DELEGATES TRAINED	 Gqeberha
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

Introductory Forensics Course for Fisheries Control Officers

 10 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 10 DELEGATES TRAINED	 Western Cape
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

UNODC E4J SLPs

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Education for Justice

 68 CERTIFICATES ISSUED	 69 DELEGATES TRAINED	 • Cape Town • Gqeberha
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1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023

Total Delegates Trained

 262	 183	445 TOTAL DELEGATES TRAINED
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FishFORCE Training, Activities and Upcoming events

1

14th Meeting of the SADC Regional Technical Team (RTT) for the SADC Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC)



14–18 August 2023



Windhoek, Namibia

The SADC Secretariat's Director of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Domingos Gove, extended the invitation to all SADC RTT and MCSCC members to attend.

The RTT was appointed by the SADC Ministers responsible for Fisheries and Aquaculture to guide the processes of establishing and operationalising the SADC Regional Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC).



14th Meeting of the SADC Regional Technical Team (RTT) for the SADC Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC).

The 14th meeting reviewed progress in the implementation of the roadmap of the Interim Project Management Unit (IPMU) on operationalisation of the MCSCC; finalised processes to initiate the appointment of candidates to the Board of Directors of the MCSCC; reviewed the implementation of projects supporting the MCSCC; finalised the procurement of MCS equipment with member states Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe for Lakes Malawi/Niassa/Nyasa and Kariba, and engaged in a write-shop to develop a draft concept note for a project to support the MCSCC.

In addition, the meeting received an update on the new Phase 2 plan for the FishFORCE Academy, which will be aligned with the coordination work of the MCSCC. The meeting was supported by the SADC Atlantic project (Stop Illegal Fishing) and South West Indian Ocean (SWIO) project (WWF).

SADC RTT and MCSCC Member States

- Angola
- Eswatini
- Mauritius
- South Africa
- Botswana
- Comoros
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Seychelles
- United Republic Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

THE AGENDA

Inter alia, the agenda included:

Updates from IPMU on SADC MCSCC:

- Matters arising from the Record of the 13th Meeting of the RTT, Gaborone, Botswana – IPMU
- Update on the signing of MCSCC Charter by Zimbabwe – Mr Milton Makumbe
- Update from Mozambique on Construction processes – Mr Esaias Mondlane
- IPMU Report on SADC MCSCC activities – Ms Maria Eulalia Vales (Coordinator IPMU)
- Update on status of Technical Assistance (TA) to the IPMU on SADC MCSCC for 2023 – Mr Per Erick Bergh (Stop Illegal Fishing - SIF)

Updates on Projects supporting MCSCC:

- SWIO Fisheries (BMZ) Evaluation and discussion – Mr Eduardo Videira & Ms Catherine Zucco
- PROFISHBLUE (AfDB) – Mr Vicente Cossa
- Bloomberg (Oceans Fund) – Mr Vicente Cossa
- SADC Atlantic – SIF
- Oceans Vigilance – SIF
- FishFORCE Academy (new phase and plan) – Mr Michael De Lange

Discussion of the study: “Status of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Systems in Southern Africa: Strengthening National and Regional Capacities for Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing – SADC Secretariat & Mr S. Ndara

Finalisation of MCS equipment for Inland fisheries under PROFISHBLUE (WWF implemented work package).



Fisheries patrol vessel in Walvis Bay, Namibia.

2

Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) and Workshops



August–October 2023

- 1. Drone/Remote Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Workshop** in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa for KZN Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) in Durban, Port Shepstone and Richards Bay from 15 - 17 August 2023. 91 delegates attended from DFFE, SAPS, KZN Wildlife, KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Metro Police and Beach Law Enforcement.



Above: Drone workshops in KZN, 15–18 August 2023.

- 2. SLP: Law for Fisheries Control Officers (FCOs)** for inspectors and other enforcement officials in East London, Eastern Cape, South Africa, from 28 August - 01 September 2023 (16 delegates).
- 3. SLP: Law Enforcement for Peace Officers (LEPO)** for FCOs in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape, South Africa, from 28 August - 01 September 2023 (16 delegates).
- 4. Statement 212 Writing Workshop** for SANParks with regards to the Riotous Assemblies Act and its relevance to the Marine Living Resources Act in Colchester, Eastern Cape, South Africa, on 30 August 2023 (13 delegates).



SANPark delegates attending Statement 212 writing workshops in Colchester, Eastern Cape, 30 August 2023.

- 5. SLP: Species ID and gear used in illegal fishing** SLP for Honorary Marine Conservation Officers (HMCOs) in East London, Eastern Cape, South Africa, from 4–8 September 2023 (16 delegates).
- 6. Anti-Corruption SLP** for FCOs from DFFE in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape, South Africa, from 11–15 September 2023 (27 delegates).



Participants from DFFE in the anti-corruption SLP in Gqeberha/Port Elizabeth from 11 - 15 September 2023.

7. **SLP: Taking of Statements** for FCOs from DFFE, Langebaan, Western Cape from 11 - 15 September 2023 (25 delegates).
8. **LEPO** for FCOs from DFFE, Langebaan, Western Cape, from 18 - 22 September 2023 (25 delegates).
9. **SLP: Anti-Corruption** for FCOs from DFFE, Langebaan, Western Cape, from 2 - 6 October 2023 (25 delegates).



Anti-Corruption SLP in Langebaan from 2–6 October 2023.

10. **SLP: Law for FCOs** from DFFE, Langebaan, Western Cape, from 9–13 October 2023 (15 delegates).



FCOs from DFFE who attended the Law for FCOs in Langebaan, South Africa (9 - 13 Oct 2023).

11. **Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries** for Fisheries Inspectors from Namibia, Lüderitz and Walvis Bay, Namibia from 9 – 13 October and 23 – 27 October 2023. This training was delivered by FishFORCE partner, the University of Namibia.



Vessel inspection in the Port of Maputo.

Illegal Wildlife Trafficking (including Marine Living Resources) Colloquium for Mozambique and South Africa Judiciary



25–27 October 2023 in Pretoria, South Africa

The colloquium was jointly hosted by the South African Judicial Education Institute (SAJEI) and officials from Mozambique.

The objectives of the colloquium were to:

- map the nature and extent of Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in Mozambique and South Africa share cross-border judicial training initiatives on Illegal Wildlife Trafficking and determine progress since the 2019 colloquium highlight and discuss case law on Illegal Wildlife Trafficking.

FishFORCE Director Professor Hennie van As presented on the following topics:

- cross-border challenges in dealing with Illegal Wildlife Trafficking
- an overview of movement of products of Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in Africa.

The title of Prof van As' presentation was: *"Movement of products of Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in Africa"*. Prof van As also included Marine Living Resources in his presentation.

SADC-FishFORCE Academy Regional MCS Training Programme: Law enforcement capacity and anti-corruption to address IUU fishing



30 October–3 November 2023, Johannesburg, South Africa

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a huge international problem, estimated to cost the global economy between 15 billion and 36 billion USD in direct losses annually.

IUU fishing harms aquatic ecosystems and the sustainability of fish stocks, threatens the livelihoods and food security of coastal and lakeshore communities, and often overlaps with other transnational crimes such as forced labour and the trafficking of drugs, arms, and people.

Corruption facilitates IUU by threatening effective regulation and crime prevention at every stage of fishing operations. Although rarely covered in management or governance

plans, corruption is increasingly recognised as a major challenge for the sustainable management of fisheries. It can occur at all points along the supply chain, from the issuance of unauthorised vessel registrations and illegitimate licences, to the intentional underreporting of fish at landing, and the sale of intentionally mislabelled fish.

By definition, corruption is regarded as the abuse of entrusted power or authority (public trust) for private gain. Corrupt actions, or policies that are shaped by corruption, may facilitate IUU fishing.

Compounding the problem, the global fisheries sector is a complex net of opaque activities composed of actors spread across

multiple countries operating under different authorities and jurisdictions. This complexity provides numerous opportunities to break or avoid the law or to engage in corruption. It also obscures the activities of corrupt public officials who enable the wrongdoing. Some of this corruption is willing collusion, where a bribe is offered, and the rules are subverted. Other times, the corruption may involve extortion by one of the parties, for example, where a fisherman may bring their catch to a port but is not allowed to offload unless an official is given payment.

Corruption also occurs at all levels of management and oversight: (i) at the international level (e.g. when access agreements between countries are negotiated); (ii) at

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The **FishFORCE Academy** in collaboration with **SADC** invites you to nominate four (4) delegates per country to attend a cross-border training session in South Africa at the end of October 2023. The cross-border training session is aimed at senior fisheries inspectors/officers and other relevant law enforcement officers from the following SADC Member States:

- Malawi
- Mozambique
- United Republic of Tanzania
- Zimbabwe
- Zambia

**Nominating agencies will have to certify that nominees qualify for nomination*

The 5-day training course will be structured as follows:

- Day 1 & 2: Prevention of Corruption in the Fisheries Sector
- Days 3 – 5: Taking of Statements

Purpose: The purpose is to upskill and provide guidance to enforcement officers on the use of anti-corruption techniques to more effectively prevent and combat fisheries crime and to prepare enforcement officers to compile statements adhering to the requirements and standards set by the courts and the relevant prosecuting authorities.

Dates: 30 October – 03 November 2023

Venue: Johannesburg, South Africa

The course will be presented in English with an interpreter for Portuguese speakers
FishFORCE will cover all travel and subsistence related costs

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national and regional levels (e.g. when officials manipulate statistics in exchange for bribes or due to conflicts of interest); and (iii) at the level of processors, distributors, and retailers (e.g. through bribes to avoid inspections or get exceptions to labeling requirements). It also takes many forms, from bribery and extortion in enforcement authorities to political donations in exchange for favourable policy decisions. When illegal activity, such as use of forced labour or tax evasion, is detected, it may go unpunished due to corruption.

On the other hand, the ability of the SADC countries to deter IUU fishing is hampered by low levels of effective prosecution of environmental/fisheries crimes. In part, this is due to the low priority given to environmental/fisheries crimes by prosecutors, and the low sentencing guidelines for such crimes. Across the region, experts note that not all crimes are typified in criminal code, nor are the fines and sentences an effective deterrent. In most countries, local experts report that it can be difficult to educate members of the judiciary about the issue and judges refuse to accept evidence related to fishing crimes. Equally important may be weak prosecutorial-judicial

capacity: a majority of the countries show low capacity despite considerable divergence across their prosecutorial and judicial systems.

Given low prosecutorial-judicial capacity, it is not surprising that examples of successful prosecution are very rare. However, the prosecution of a variety of fishing-related crimes in some SADC countries in recent years suggests that with adequate will, violations can begin to be addressed, even if spottily. This issue needs to be addressed from the fisheries enforcement point of view, to empower MCS officers with a skill and capacity to collect credible statements to support strong prosecution of fish crimes.

It is against this background that the FishFORCE Academy at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) in South Africa, in partnership with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat and the Interim Project management Unit (IPMU) of the SADC Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC), are introducing a capacity building programme to address deficient enforcement capacities and issues of corruption in the fisheries sector of the SADC region.

The objective of this programme is to upskill and provide guidance to enforcement officers on the use of anti-corruption techniques to more effectively prevent and combat fisheries crime and to prepare enforcement officers to compile statements adhering to the requirements and standards set by the courts and the relevant prosecuting authorities, in line with Article 9 of the SADC Protocol on Fisheries (2001).

The first training session was arranged in the following manner:

- Participation: Four delegates per country to attend the cross-border training session
- Focus will be on the shared inland water bodies of strategic interest: Lake Kariba (Zambia and Zimbabwe), and Lake Malawi/Niassa/Nyasha (Malawi, Mozambique and United Republic of Tanzania).

The five days were structured as follows:

- **Day 1 and 2:** Prevention of Corruption in the Fisheries Sector
- **Days 3–5:** Taking of Statements.

Cross-border training sessions

1. Pro-active protection of marine living resources

7th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Conference (GFETW) titled 'Moving from Words to Action: Innovative Collaborative Partnerships to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing', organised by the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Network, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, 31 July – 4 August 2023. Prof Hennie van As delivered a presentation titled: 'Proactive protection of marine living resources'.





Vessel inspected in the Port of Maputo, Mozambique.

2. Marine Regions Forum Conference 2023: Navigating Ocean Sustainability in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) and Beyond

7–9 November 2023 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

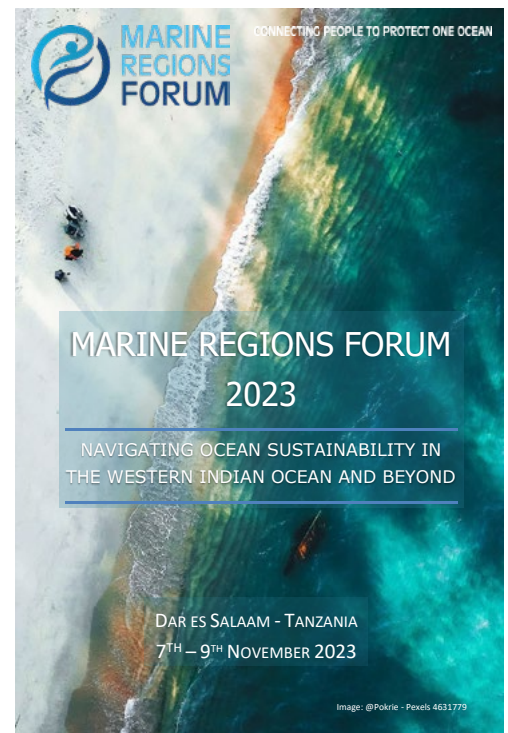
Prof Hennie van As delivered a paper titled: ‘Can we break the criminal stranglehold in Africa?’

The Welcome Note of the publication presented by the Marine Regions Forum 2023 reads as follows:

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Marine Regions Forum 2023, co-hosted by the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Seychelles, as we navigate sustainability in the Western Indian Ocean and beyond. The Marine Regions Forum 2023 provides an opportunity for informal exchange between leading scientists, decision-makers and stakeholders, all seeking to catalyse the transformation of ocean governance through regional actions and initiatives. With the goal of developing innovative ocean governance solutions, this programme offers a range of sessions that aim to facilitate joint learning between regional stakeholders from different parts of the world and explore the role of marine regions in the various global governance processes.

Regional actors and institutions need to play a vital role: providing platforms for cross-sectoral cooperation that forge links between local stakeholders, national governments, and international institutions; bringing together scientists and policymakers to identify effective responses to pressing challenges; and ensuring a transparent process of accelerated implementation.

We are indebted to our partners, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, session co-chairs, Advisory Board and Steering Group members, and countless others who have worked tirelessly to make the Marine Regions Forum 2023 possible. We would like to thank the European Commission, the Swedish Ministry for Climate and Enterprise and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, for their invaluable partnership and financial backing. It has been our honour to work with you all and to receive your generous support. It is thanks to your participation that the Marine Regions Forum can become a thriving platform.





FishFORCE Training the Seychelles Fishing Authority on species identification.

Outline of the 2023 Marine Regions Forum Conference

The two host countries, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Seychelles represent mainland and island states in the region and their collaboration is indicative of the importance of an inclusive, regional approach to ocean governance. The conference builds on the outcomes achieved and lessons learned from the first Marine Regions Forum conference in 2019. This second edition of the Marine Regions Forum conference will be organised in cooperation with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat and regional partners. The conference focuses on action and implementation and is supporting ongoing ocean governance efforts in the region. The conference programme has been co-developed with global and regional stakeholders.

The Marine Regions Forum strives to strengthen ocean action at three different scales: supporting progress within marine regions, advancing dialogue among marine regions, and giving regional ocean governance a voice in global processes.

“... the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference aims to support the development of governance solutions that catalyse action towards the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean.”

The conference will provide a space outside of formal governance arrangements where stakeholders engage in discussion as individual experts, rather than representatives of organisations, and focus on activities at the regional level.

By bringing diverse stakeholders together for exchange, joint learning, and showcasing of existing collaborative efforts, the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference aims to support the development of governance solutions that catalyse action towards the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean. The conference will draw on the latest developments in the global policy framework to explore what this means for marine regions and how regional action can contribute to global processes, in support of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) and other relevant policy processes.

Long-term Vision

The long-term vision of the Marine Regions Forum is to facilitate transformations towards integrated ocean governance for marine regions. It aims to advance ocean dialogue and action by:

- **Connecting people:** Marine Regions Forum engages diverse decision-makers and stakeholders from non-governmental organisations, industry, government and the scientific community.
- **Strengthening regional governance:** Regional efforts to improve marine management have a long track record of success and play a critical role in facilitating cooperation, yet they are often overlooked and underfunded.
- **Co-developing solutions:** Working together to find effective and scalable responses to pressing ocean sustainability challenges.
- **Linking knowledge to policy:** An interface between science and policy, developed by independent research institutes and think tanks, together with a network of experts, in dialogue with decision-makers and civil society.
- **Providing informal and inclusive spaces:** A space outside the constraints of formal

governance arrangements and political negotiations, where stakeholders can speak freely and equally as experts.

Topical strand descriptions:

1. Tackling the triple planetary crisis: The interconnected environmental emergencies of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution need to be addressed together. It impacts ecosystems, human health, and the global economy while worsening inequalities. This strand examines equitable conservation, cutting-edge innovative solutions, and transformative actions needed to effectively address the crisis in the Western Indian Ocean and regions beyond.

2. Fostering the sustainable blue economy: With its global impact on livelihoods, the ocean serves as a lifeline for millions. As countries recognise the ocean's potential for economic growth, it becomes imperative to ensure the blue economy is sustainable, equitable, and inclusive. This strand delves into the responsible utilisation of ocean resources while safeguarding vital ecosystems. Engaging sessions on circular economy, sustainable economic development, marine spatial

planning, and private sector involvement aim to foster a sustainable and vibrant blue economy.

3. Implementing global goals at the regional level: Despite a troubled geopolitical context, the international community continues to rely on multilateralism to develop new environmental commitments. In recent months, a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and a treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of high seas biodiversity have been adopted. Negotiations for a treaty on plastics have also started, and states are discussing the future of deep-seabed mining. This strand examines the role of marine regions in achieving global goals and contributing to international negotiations.

4. Regional Ocean Governance: The Nairobi Convention is in the process of developing a Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the Western Indian Ocean to contribute to and support the continental process of working towards more effective ocean governance arrangements. In this strand, sessions will explore: What can other regions learn from this process? Who does what, when and how in terms of implementation? And how will this be financed?



FishFORCE Facilitator and Expert Investigator JD Kotze checking legal documentation for a fishing vessel in Tanzania.



Delegates at the high-level stakeholders' meeting in Livingstone, Zambia, 31 October 2023.

FishFORCE High-level Stakeholder's Meeting



Livingstone, Zambia 31 October 2023

The overall aim was to discuss the expansion of the FishFORCE project into additional countries in Africa, namely Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi as part of its Phase 2, which includes land-locked countries to cover inland waters.

The meeting was attended by the political and executive level of key ministries and agencies from these countries. 17 delegates attended from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

At the meeting, the FishFORCE Academy project was formally presented to the delegates, together with the fisheries crime law enforcement model that underpins the project.

The FishFORCE project established FishFORCE Chapters in Kenya in 2018, Tanzania in 2019, Mozambique in 2020 and Namibia in 2022, and the intention is to roll this out and adapt it to all interested new partner-countries. At the meeting FishFORCE aimed to obtain the buy-in of the relevant government departments and agencies. This will be key to ensuring the success of the Academy in the respective countries.

On completion of the meeting, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi were requested to indicate their interest and provide the name and contact particulars of a focal point with whom the FishFORCE Academy could liaise to drive the project. The intention was that after the meeting, each country would form a Country Chapter to ensure that a training programme addressing the training needs of participating countries is organically developed.

The FishFORCE Academy will assist new partners administratively and financially to develop curricula, and harness existing local expertise to ensure that the Academy is technically relevant in the particular partner country. The FishFORCE Project Management Team will meet with the Country Chapter at the commencement of the project implementation.

FishFORCE COO, Michael de Lange reported back on the meeting:

The High-Level Stakeholders Meeting deliberated on the suitability of the FishFORCE model, consisting of training, post-training support

and research and evaluation, as a model to address organised fisheries crime.

The model is further based on a move away from lack of training, or *ad hoc* training for others, to the offering of formal, university-accredited training programmes that address the needs of its stakeholders, including the role players in the criminal justice system and other relevant agencies; and furthermore, that this model is premised on the principle that knowledge and expertise should be shared and that, as far as possible, academic institutions be obliged to collaborate with one another as well as with government agencies.

In South Africa, for example, this concept receives the support of *Operation Phakisa* and as such, the support of Government. It was also noted that this concept has been embraced to a certain extent in the countries present at this meeting. In order to take the initiative forward, representatives from various countries and institutions present at the Livingstone High Level Stakeholders Meeting on Fisheries Crime Law Enforcement Academy resolved to:

1. Provide the name and contact particulars of a focal point with whom the FishFORCE Academy can liaise to drive the project (The Contact Focal Point) and who takes responsibility to bring these resolutions to the attention of their relevant government authority.
2. The Contact Focal point and the Country Participant to facilitate the establishment of a Country Specific Chapter (Reference Group) of the FishForce Academy which will, with the assistance of the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) FishFORCE Academy, develop a curriculum and harness existing local expertise to ensure that the Academy is technically relevant in the particular partner country.
3. In the development of the curriculum, the Reference Group will liaise with the Core Reference Group (to be set up by the interim steering committee of the Fish Force Academy Project) to ensure that international expertise and research feed into the curriculum and to function as a quality assurance instrument.
4. The Core Reference Group to establish a collective forum of training institutions to coordinate and support the delivery of training programmes developed to combat fisheries crime.

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