

# AFRICA

YOUR REGIONAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER



JANUARY 2020 | ISSUE 3 | GEF LME:LEARN

## A NEW YEAR WITH BIG AMBITION



Holger Link, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

This is a big year for the Ocean and advancing action for achieving our blue ambitions. The term "20/20" is used to express the clarity or sharpness of vision. Coincidentally, four of the ten SDG 14 targets mature in the year 2020 and we will soon review if we are on track for success, and if not, how do we sharpen our focus to do something about it.

Big events such as the World Ocean Summit, the second UN Ocean Conference, Our Ocean, & COP26 will take place, and the start of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development will be just around the corner. Indeed, a super year for nature is upon us!

We look forward to continuing our support to our community by sharing your successes and lessons learned, but also by engaging you at targeted events of our own, such as the 22nd Annual LME Consultation Meeting (see page 11 for more details).

Wishing you a brilliant year ahead

Your Coordinator

Natalie

## ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

"AFRICA" is an annual newsletter, featuring previous and upcoming activities taking place within the Africa Regional Network.

Our aim is to increase the communication flow and visibility of the different Network activities for exchange of knowledge and news.

Information about Network Meetings, regional activities, calls for participation, trainings, conferences, webinars and calls for assistance can be found in the Newsletter.

## ABOUT THE NETWORK

Established in 2017 by the [GEF LME:LEARN project](#), we are a network of professionals and practitioners involved in marine and coastal initiatives across Africa.

In our network you will find representatives of GEF-funded marine and coastal projects, projects funded by other donors, academia, national ministries, NGOs, Regional Bodies or Conventions, businesses and more.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES AND IMPACTING COASTAL COMMUNITIES ON AFRICA'S ATLANTIC COAST



MAMI WATA team field visit in la Bouche du Roy in Benin during the November 2019 Team Meeting - Credit Alison Amoussou

The MAMA WATA project, enhancing Marine Management In West, central and southern Africa through Training and Application, now in its fourth and penultimate year, continued building local and regional capacity with the aim to manage marine and coastal areas in an integrated way, ensuring the impact of human activities on marine biodiversity is sustainable.

MAMI WATA works within the 22 countries of the Abidjan Convention region to further develop their capacities on Integrated Ocean Management (IOM). Recognizing the importance of healthy marine and coastal ecosystems for human well-being and development, the project is working with countries to strengthen their conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems and biodiversity. The project's area of implementation covers a combined Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) of approximately 4.8 million km<sup>2</sup>.

Last year saw the launch of three national pilot projects: the Integrated Marine and Coastal Zone Management (GIZMaC) project in Benin; the Integrated Management of the Marine and Coastal area from Abidjan to Assinie (GIAMAA) project in Côte D'Ivoire; and the Ecosystem-based approach to Integrated Marine and Coastal Environment Management (EIMCEM) project in Ghana.

In order to promote IOM in the Abidjan Convention region, MAMI WATA has developed fruitful partnerships with three Centers of Expertise (CoEs) mandated to develop capacity on three essential tools: the International Ocean Institute – Southern Africa

(IOI-SA – South Africa) for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), the Center for Ecological Monitoring (CSE – Senegal) for the identification of Ecologically and Biologically Significant marine Areas (EBSAs), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA – Sierra Leone) for State of the Marine Environment (SoME) reporting.

It is this partnership approach and the synergies it allows through which we aim to overcome the ubiquitous challenges of:

- lack of funding for capacity development, which we address by targeted activities based on existing regional and international expertise;
- short project-cycles, working with countries to develop expertise through the direct application of tools and processes, supported by those partners able to continue providing capacity;
- limited resources for on-the-water implementation, by generating with partners those proofs of concept allowing for national and regional upscaling and replication.

The project emphasises interactions at the science-policy-practice interface by fostering a broad engagement of stakeholders around national pilot project activities. The various trainings and workshops hence brought altogether hundreds of ocean practitioners, experts, and local community representatives from different countries over the past year, in order to further strengthen capacity and develop regional policies for sustainable marine management in West Africa.

Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are also working on a transboundary project to conserve the shared waters of the Aby Lagoon and adjacent marine areas, particularly with a view to water quality, and shrimp and sardinella fishing.



WA BiCC Advocacy & Social Media training participants, including four from MAMI WATA - Credit Alison Amoussou





IOI Ocean Governance course participants in a field visit in the port of Cape Town -  
Credit Shannon Hampton

Furthermore, the national pilot project teams were able to take part in a training on Behavior Change Communication, Advocacy, and Social Media co-organized by the Abidjan Convention, West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WA BiCC) and GRID-Arendal. Participants really felt that the knowledge and skills acquired would boost the quality of their outreach work, and it has shown, with increased press coverage, social media presence, and more engaged decision-makers, civil society and local communities.

IOI-SA hosted its annual Ocean Governance course, which CSE and CIAPOL attended. The experiences learnt and the knowledge shared among the participants has enabled attendees to come back to their daily activities confident and contribute even more. On behalf of the project, CSE attended the Regional Consultation on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework for Africa in Addis Abeba in April 2019, and EPA Sierra Leone contributed to the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and Capacity Building Partnership Event in New York in February, hosted by the Bureau of [...]the Regular Process for Global Reporting and assessment of the State of the Marine Environment.

**"2019 was another breakthrough year for MAMI WATA. The three Pilot Projects and the three Centres of Expertise worked together on almost 20 workshops, trainings and events. We learned from another, shared knowledge and experience, and made strong progress on the countries' State of marine Environment reports, identifying their special marine places (EBSAs) and getting ready for Marine Spatial Planning. We look forward to the project's final year 2020, and our achievement for coastal communities and marine biodiversity!"** commented Christian Neumann, MAMI WATA project manager,

For more information please contact Marco Vinaccia ([marco.vinaccia@grida.no](mailto:marco.vinaccia@grida.no))

Follow Mami Wata on Twitter @MamiWataProject





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# SAPPHIRE: WORK IN THE WIO TOWARDS IMPROVING LME MANAGEMENT



Chumbe Island Coral Park Tanzania Peter Prokosch 2016 GridArendal

Entire regions of the world's oceans, otherwise known as Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs), are under threat from overfishing, pollution, invasive species, climate change and other human activities. Because LMEs are either shared by multiple countries or beyond any one country's national jurisdiction, fighting back against their degradation requires strong ocean governance.

The Nairobi Convention, whose ten member states formed a partnership to combat ocean degradation and strengthen the protection and sustainable management of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region, is a natural platform through which cross-country governance issues can be addressed.

The Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonisation and Institutional Reforms (SAPPHIRE) project (implemented by UNDP, executed by UNEP- Nairobi Convention) promotes policy harmonization and institutional reform to help improve the management of the WIO LME. It is building capacity among governments, regional economic communities (RECs), partners, inter-governmental organizations, and the private sector in sustainable resource management and ocean governance. In 2019, the project has made significant progress in this goal, a few of which are discussed below.

## Forging an Ocean Governance Strategy for the WIO

Oceans feed us, provide us with jobs, and serve as the engine for much of our economy. Governing a resource that benefits so many people therefore has profound impacts on our lives, which is why the SAPPHIRE project conducted an assessment on the state of ocean governance in the WIO region. The project then convened Nairobi Convention states and partners in the Seychelles in September to discuss opportunities and merits for a regional ocean governance strategy. Government representatives and other stakeholders deliberated on the strategy's structure and how it could be aligned with national and

regional priorities, as well as with global ocean governance initiatives. Participants also identified the different governance needs among WIO countries and mechanisms to contribute to the ocean governance discussion in the African Union (AU) and stressed the importance of engagement on the strategy with the AU and RECs.

To read more about the ocean governance workshop, click [here](#).

### Oceanographic Data/Research Management and Updating of the Marine Ecosystem Diagnostic Analyses (MEDAs)

However, if we are to effectively govern the WIO, we must better understand it. Oceanographic data has the power to tell us which ecosystems are most in danger, what mitigation measures are most useful, and where we should direct our resources. Collecting, sharing, and using such information will be essential to creating science-based policies across the region—and ensuring that the Western Indian Ocean's countless resources and benefits are enjoyed by generations to come.

In recognition of the critical role data will play in effective LME management, the SAPPHIRE project will also support the collection of scientific and local data in the WIO region and ensure it is routinely archived in national data centres, where it can be retrieved for long-term oceanographic and environmental studies.

The SAPPHIRE project held five meetings on oceanographic data and scientific research between March and June 2019 in order to build partnerships for oceanographic data and research management in the region. The sessions brought together scientists, policy makers, and partners to discuss the status of national data centres; identify priorities of countries in using, managing, and owning data findings; and agree on mechanisms and partnerships to improve data collection, sharing, and archiving, among others. SAPPHIRE has also worked on revitalizing and repopulating the Nairobi Convention Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), a data repository, visualization, and analysis tool that includes information from the Nairobi Convention-, partners, and WIO countries themselves.



Participants at the Ocean Governance Meeting in Mahe



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SAPPHIRE has also begun the process of supporting countries to update their existing national Marine Ecosystem Diagnostic Analyses (MEDAs) and regional Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA) developed under the ASCLME and South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project (SWIOFP). The MEDAs will provide each country with an updated assessment of their ecosystems within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and a baseline document upon which they can base their National Action Plans (NAP) for the sustainable management of marine resources.

Moreover, the scope of the MEDAs will be expanded to include assessments of land-based sources of pollution--i.e. issues addressed by SAPPHIRE's sister project, the Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Protection of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-Based Sources and Activities (WIOSAP), meaning that countries will have their first-ever "Ridge to Reef" assessment of their marine ecosystems. The findings will be fed into a new regional TDA and prioritize areas of concern that can be addressed through a merged Strategic Action Programme (SAP).

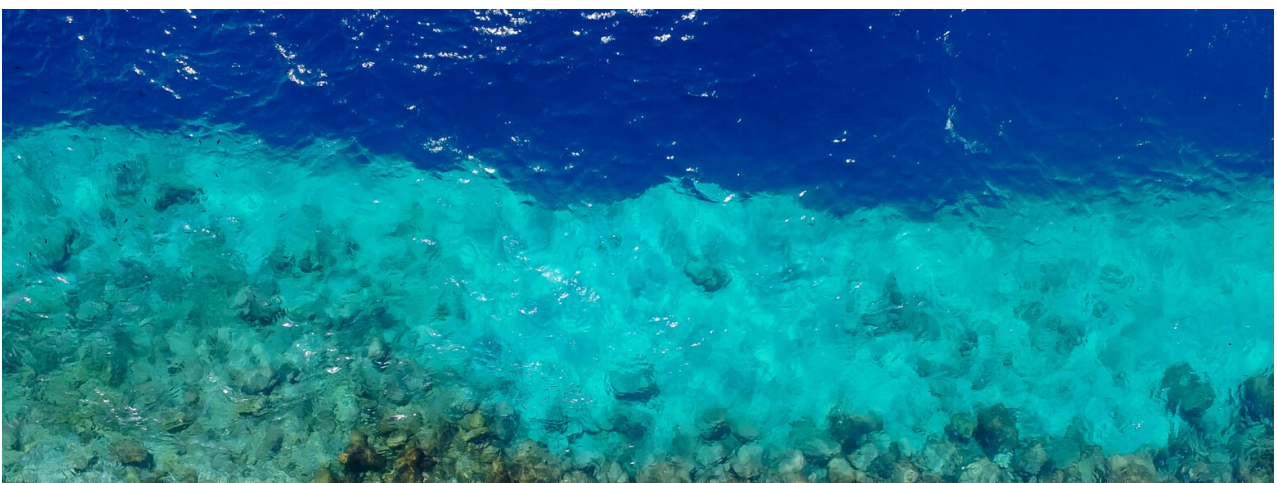
#### Demonstration Project Proposals Under Review

The project conducted national level scoping missions and consultations to identify national priorities and alignment with the project's overall outcomes and goal. The participating countries have since been submitting demonstration project proposals that will contribute to SAPPHIRE Components 1 (Policy Harmonization and Institutional Management Reforms) and 2 (Community Engagement and empowerment in sustainable resources management). A technical review committee, composed of regional experts, is now evaluating the proposals.

For a more complete list of SAPPHIRE's progress, click [here](#).

#### **Contact Information:**

For more information on the SAPPHIRE project, please contact the Project Manager Sinikinesh Jimma (Sinikinesh.jimma@un.org) and for communications please contact Angela Patnode (angela.patnode@un.org).



Credit: Alex Perez @ UNSPLASH 2020



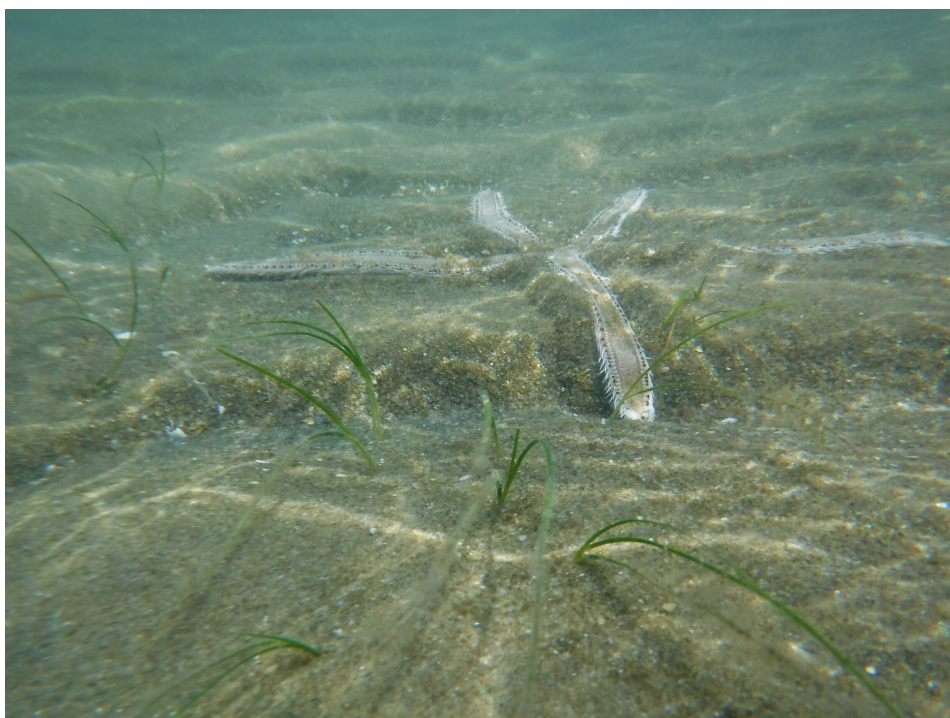
## WESTERN AFRICA IS ON THE WORLD'S SEAGRASS MAP

Seagrasses are one of the ocean's most important habitats. There are 60 seagrass species worldwide and they live in all coastal and marine areas – from shallow intertidal zones to 90 metres below the surface. The only place they aren't found is Antarctica. They provide benefits such as nursery and feeding grounds for fish and marine animals, and protect our coastlines and store carbon.

At the same time, because they are one of the world's least known ecosystems, seagrasses are in dire need of protection. A key reason for seagrasses' lack of protection is the paucity of information regarding some of the most basic aspects of their distribution and health. In areas of the globe where there is more data available, protection levels for seagrasses have increased. However, except for part of the Mauritanian coastline, there has been little work mapping seagrass locations in Western Africa. Until this year.

The ResilienSEA project strengthens knowledge on seagrass meadows in Western Africa by conducting actions at selected national sites. 2019 has been a pivotal year for the project, as the collaboration with seven pilot countries was officialised and relevant sites were selected: Gamboa a Praia in Cape Verde, the Loos Islands in Guinea, Unhocomo and Unhomcomozinho in the Bijagos archipelago in Guinea-Bissau, the Banc d'Arguin National Park in Mauritania, the Sangomar Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Senegal, the Turtle Islands in Sierra Leone, and the Niumi National Park in The Gambia.

The project brings together local communities, practitioners, and researchers to collect data in order to develop the first comprehensive maps of seagrass beds in West Africa. Focusing on four strategies – Scientific research; Capacity building; Information, awareness raising, and advocacy; and Policy – the project promotes the development of new management tools and supports governments in enabling positive change around seagrasses and protecting the services they provide.



Seagrass meadows shelter a variety of species, such as this starfish in Sierra Leone.  
Credit Maria Potouroglou

The first regional training, held in Joal-Fadiouth, Senegal in the Spring, brought together more than forty practitioners (MPA managers, local authorities, academics, government representatives) from across the seven countries to learn and share knowledge around seagrass ecology, species identification, mapping and monitoring. Field trips in the Joal-Fadiouth MPA were organised, and for some participants it was their first time in the ocean!

This was followed by three national trainings on seagrass, open to members of each country's National Implementation Team (NIT), in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, where the first confirmed sighting of seagrass happened during a ResilienSEA exploration mission!

While there were challenges, such as delays in starting the pilot projects, the remaining four countries will host their respective national trainings in January and February 2020.

The year also saw the publication of the "High Level Assessment of Seagrass Ecosystem Services in West Africa" report, a collaborative effort between Duke University and GRID-Arendal providing a preliminary assessment of seagrass ecosystem services in the region.

**"2019 was really a ground-breaking year for ResilienSEA. We started the year off with the very successful regional training workshop in Joal-Fadiouth and wrapped up the year with three follow-up national trainings on seagrass ecosystems. In between, we confirmed the presence of seagrass meadows throughout the region, and even discovered previously unknown beds in some of our pilot sites! We look forward to continuing to work with our partners to produce even more impactful activities and outreach in 2020."** Commented Tanya Bryan, ResilienSEA's project coordinator.

Scheduled to be completed in 2021, ResilienSEA is coordinated by Norway-based GRID-Arendal, in partnership with Wetlands International Afrique and the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, and supported by the MAVA Foundation, a Swiss foundation with extensive experience in West Africa.

For more information please contact Marco Vinaccia ([marco.vinaccia@grida.no](mailto:marco.vinaccia@grida.no))

Website Link: [www.resiliensea.org](http://www.resiliensea.org)



Guinea national training participants in the field in Kassa.  
Credit Mohamed Lamine Sidibe



Local Serer woman gathering ark clams in the MPA of Joal-Fadiouth, Senegal. Credit Rob Barnes

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## GEF LME:LEARN ONLINE TRAINING COURSES

The online course contents and materials developed by the GEF LME:LEARN project are now open to all interested participants, with no time limit to complete the modules. Each course is rich with compulsory readings, supplementary material, links to useful websites and quizzes.

### Ocean Governance

In collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and UNDP Cap-Net, the GEF LME:LEARN offers a course to familiarize marine and coastal practitioners with key components of good ocean governance. This course aims to provide project leads, partners, and others with practical approaches, lessons on governance and illustrative case studies. It also serves to promote an integrated, collaborative approach to ocean and coastal management.

Since opening the course, 176 participants from around the world have benefited from the material.

**The course is available at:**

**[www.campus.cap-net.org/en/course/ogiwl33-gef-lmelearn-ocean-governance-2019](http://www.campus.cap-net.org/en/course/ogiwl33-gef-lmelearn-ocean-governance-2019)**

**The course is available in:**

**English:**

**[www.campus.cap-net.org/en/course/msp29-gef-lmelearn-transboundary-marine-spatial-planning](http://www.campus.cap-net.org/en/course/msp29-gef-lmelearn-transboundary-marine-spatial-planning)**

**French:**

**[www.campus.cap-net.org/en/course/psm30-planification-spatiale-maritime-transfrontaliere](http://www.campus.cap-net.org/en/course/psm30-planification-spatiale-maritime-transfrontaliere)**

**Spanish:**

**[www.campus.cap-net.org/es/curso/msp31-planificacion-espacial-marina-pem-y-economia-azul](http://www.campus.cap-net.org/es/curso/msp31-planificacion-espacial-marina-pem-y-economia-azul)**

### Marine Spatial Planning and Blue Economy

In collaboration with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) and UNDP Cap-Net, the GEF LME:LEARN offers a course to familiarize participants with an understanding of what marine spatial planning is about, what benefits it can have, and what results you can expect. Furthermore, the course is designed to present the basic steps of MSP process, actors and responsibilities, legislation and finances needed, the MSP tools and techniques, and finally transboundary and cross-border contexts for MSP with a special emphasis on Large Marine Ecosystems. This course aims to provide project leads, partners, and others with practical approaches, lessons on MSP and illustrative case studies. It also serves to promote an integrated, collaborative approach to ocean and coastal management with a special emphasis on LMEs.

Since opening the courses, 253 participants from around the world have benefited from the materials.



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# LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH: GETTING READY FOR AN UPGRADE

Marine and coastal practitioners representing GEF and non-GEF funded projects, international and national organizations, and institutions met in Cartagena, Colombia on 18-20 September 2019 for the 21st Annual Large Marine Ecosystem Consultation (LME21).

A number of existing and potential future partners in LME partnerships were brought together and informed of the benefits of their cooperation and collaboration and exchanged good practices and lessons learnt for establishing and maintaining partnerships. Under the banner “The Large Marine Ecosystems are everyone’s business”, several interactive sessions were organised where participants had the opportunity to exchange views, experiences, lessons learned and ideas for future collaboration.

With generous sponsorship and support from SUEZ and its local subsidiary, Aguas de Cartagenas, a provider of water supply and sanitation, participants undertook technical site visits to the Cartagena wastewater treatment plant and La Boquilla mangrove restoration area.

**The next LME Annual Consultation Meeting (LME22) will be held in Paris, France from 6-9 July 2020. The agenda and more information will be circulated soon.**

For more information on the LME21 please visit the meeting’s website. Additional information on the GEF LME:LEARN project can be found on the website, or please contact the GEF IW:LEARN project manager, Mish Hamid ([mish@iwlearn.org](mailto:mish@iwlearn.org)).



Approximately 80 participants from around the world attended the 21th Annual LME Consultative Meeting. Credit: GEF LME:LEARN

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# GLOBAL OCEAN SUMMIT: LINKING LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS TO LOCAL SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development will commence in 2021. Its critical preparatory phase is well underway and the ocean community needs to be ready to shepherd the entire world into seeing the sea as an essential resource for food, revenue and recreation. Additionally, people from all regions must comprehend the vulnerability of the oceans along with the coastal communities around them, particularly with population and climate pressures.

The best chance for success is to build on existing international frameworks, in particular Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs), which for 35 years have encouraged ecosystem and socioeconomic science, wise management and intergovernmental cooperation. Also, it is important to learn from successful local initiatives, such as those by the Coastal Resources Center and its partners. With the dawn of the Decade imminent, the time is now to catalyze a new conversation on the ocean, and move aggressively to enabling solutions. The University of Rhode Island, the flagship university in the Ocean State, helped grow the LME concept and continues to lead in coastal and ocean science and management locally and around the world. This will be a great opportunity to have a rich conversation on ocean issues and pursue opportunities for sustainability.

The Global Ocean (GO) Summit will be a multi-day event that brings together leaders and motivated individuals in science, management and business to discuss challenges and opportunities provided by the sea and its resources to link Coastal Zone Management (CZM), Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), science and management communities to scale science-based actions within the spatial domain of the world's 66 LMEs. As the climate changes, critical food and environmental resources are at risk while coastal populations, development and investments are on the rise. In addition to keynote presentations, panel discussions and break-out groups, a networking event and celebration banquet will encourage dialog and information exchange to stimulate new collaborations for the Decade. Media engagement opportunities and a post-Summit inspirational summary will share highlights and specific recommendations for action.

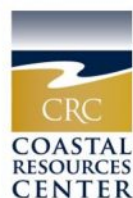
**Date:** 1-4 April 2020

**Location:** University of Rhode Island Narragansett Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI 02882, USA

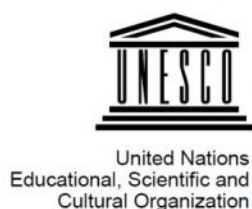
**Website:** [www.web.uri.edu/globaloceansummit/](http://www.web.uri.edu/globaloceansummit/)

**Registration Deadline:** 1 February 2020

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# 2020 EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- RAMPAO General Assembly: 25-26 February 2020 - [www.rampao.org](http://www.rampao.org)
- World Ocean Summit: 9-10 March 2020 - [www.woi.economist.com/world-ocean-summit](http://www.woi.economist.com/world-ocean-summit)
- PRCM Forum: 25-28 March 2020 - [www.prcmarine.org](http://www.prcmarine.org)
- Global Ocean Summit-University of Rhode Island: 1-4 April 2020 - [www.web.uri.edu/globaloceansummit](http://www.web.uri.edu/globaloceansummit)
- Abidjan Convention COP 13: 27 April – 1 May 2020 - [www.abidjanconvention.org](http://www.abidjanconvention.org)
- UN Ocean Conference: 2-6 June 2020 - [www.oceanconference.un.org](http://www.oceanconference.un.org)
- IUCN World Congress: 11-19 June 2020 - [www.iucncongress2020.org](http://www.iucncongress2020.org)
- 22nd Large Marine Ecosystem Annual Consultation Meeting: 6-9 July 2020
- Our Ocean: 17-18 August 2020 - [www.ourocean2020.pw](http://www.ourocean2020.pw)
- World Seagrass Congress: 9-14 August 2020 - [www.isbw14.org](http://www.isbw14.org)
- CBD COP: October 2020 - [www.cbd.int/meetings](http://www.cbd.int/meetings)
- 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC: 9-19 November 2020

## SAPPHIRE Project Events

- Regional Workshop on Cooperation in Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution Incidents on 3 - 5 March 2020
- Regional workshop on private sectors engaging strategy in sustainable management of resources in the WIO region (TBD)
- Regional Science to Policy forum (TBD)
- National consultations and dialogues on policies, legislations and strategies that support SAP implementation (TBD)
- Regional ocean governance training (TBD)
- Launching of MEDAs and TDA updating process at regional level, 15 January 2020

For more information on SAPPHIRE events, please contact Sinikinesh Beyene Jimma ([sinikinesh.jimma@un.org](mailto:sinikinesh.jimma@un.org)) or Angela Patnode ([angela.patnode@un.org](mailto:angela.patnode@un.org))

The GEF LME:LEARN project seeks to improve global ecosystem-based governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and their coasts by generating knowledge, building capacity, harnessing public and private partners and supporting south-to-south learning and north-to-south learning. This project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and executed by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC).

For more information on the project, consult our website: [iwlearn.net/marine](http://iwlearn.net/marine)

