

Title: Special Session for Early Career Scientists: Scientific Storytelling Approaches

Concept Note

WIOMSA Symposium Special Session

Date: 14th October 2022

Time: 14.00-15.45

Background: The Blue Economy concept has progressed, at local and international level, to protect the marine resources on which people depend. As countries within the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region become leaders in sustainable blue economy development, they gain greater access to donors and collaboration on projects that aim to empower local and regional blue economy development. Co-design seeks to bring researchers and innovators together with stakeholders from different sectors/disciplines and communities of knowledge. It strengthens collaborations and joint efforts, and takes into account local knowledge, creating a strong connection between researchers and knowledge users. It supports sustainable partnerships and innovation in the design of projects and processes that facilitate the success of ocean science. The practice of co-design of ocean science for sustainable development is one of the key pillars of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Involving young ocean professionals in the process is a key priority.

Objectives of the Special Session: The special session will highlight the role of knowledge sharing to facilitate the co-design of ocean science for sustainable development in the WIO, with a focus on working with early-career ocean scientists and professionals (ECS) to help them participate in co-design. It will offer a bottom-up approach and provide a platform for an open dialogue on how ECS can share knowledge gained through research and contribute to the sustainable development of the WIO.

The specific objective of the session is to use short films and other means to share the “stories” of these ECS and to provide ideas, input, and lessons regarding the use of these methods in the cultural and scientific context of the Western Indian Ocean countries.

Expected Outputs:

- Participants develop and consider a number of knowledge sharing methods used to tell stories in coastal and ocean science, and climate change
- Participants understand the effective use of tools to successfully share knowledge gathered in the region, to the region and beyond
- Funders and stakeholders learn what WIO ECS are doing, how they can share knowledge and how best to work with them to ensure the continuous flow of knowledge and information throughout the lifespan of projects
- A platform is provided for funders and stakeholders to understand the needs of ECS for more effectively sharing knowledge and engaging with stakeholders

- ECS have a free-form outlet to tell their scientific stories
- 5 videos designed, produced and shared
- A tool-kit (help guide) on planning storyboards, videos and effective storytelling is developed
- Resource page created to host the tool kit, stories, bio videos, and other materials. This will be turned into a living resource for researchers and stakeholders in the WIO region and beyond

Proposed Content and Method of Delivery: The special session will consist of two elements.

1. **Asynchronous element:**

- tool kit and help guide on how to plan a storyboard, create and edit a video, and tell your story effectively with limited means. This will be shared via resource pages hosting by the partner institutions
- ECS featuring stories of WIO ECS, bios, and info material relevant to WIO researchers and stakeholders

2. **Synchronous:**

- distinct stories shared in a concise format by WIO ECS (based off asynchronous presentations)
- plenary session where WIO ECS and audience (funders and decade programmes) engage in a Q&A session.

The session will be organised in the form of one panel composed of WIO ECS and students, invited representatives from UN Ocean Decade programmes, and potential funders. A moderator will introduce the WIO ECS and invite them to share their story. The stories will be followed by questions from the audience and discussions. The second part of the session will provide space for ECS and students to carry out a discussions with Decade Programme and Funders on needs, support and collaboration opportunities.

Preparation:

- Developing videos and other media consisting of stories by ECS in the WIO region to show how they use participatory methods to share knowledge
- Webpages where stories are shared, with session participants and ECS and students across the WIO given access to view and learn from the presentations.
- WIO ECS prepare a list of questions they anticipate posing to the funders and Decade programmes to understand how funding takes storytelling into account and how funders and Decade programmes can better work with ECS.

Audience: The proposed participants for this session are WIO ECS who will share their stories and knowledge, but also learn from the sessions. The audience will consist of (1) ECS and students in the WIO region, (2) Decade programmes and (3) funders interested in supporting work carried out in the WIO region (4) Regional Organisations supporting countries on ocean, coastal and climate actions

Organisers:

1. Ocean Knowledge Action Network (OceanKAN) Seychelles hub being the *James Michel* Blue Economy Research Institute- University of Seychelles - BERI aims is to create an active academic research and knowledge network that supports an informed, fair and sustainable Blue Economy, supporting decision-makers, the wider community, and adaptive management

to ensure the ocean supports us for generations to come. There are three strategic pillars that support the achievement of this :

- 1: Creating an enabling environment for locally-driven academic research (with a focus on ocean governance, integrated ocean management, sustainable financing, capacity development, knowledge management and governance, gender equality and human rights)
- 2: Strengthen trans-disciplinary academic research synergy and outputs (focus on stakeholder engagement, policy support and development, legislations etc...)
- 3: Empower Blue Guardians to safeguard the ocean and support research (developing national science talent and a science culture, local engagement and capacity development)

2. Western Indian Ocean Early Career Scientist Network (WIOECSN) - The Western Indian Ocean Early Career Scientists Network (WIO-ECSN) is an initiative to promote scientific research through fostering strong regional ties among early career scientists and representing their collective scientific interests at an international level. The main purpose of the WIO-ECSN is to communicate research priorities from the views of early career scientists to the scientific leadership of the WIO region, as well as to provide a platform for facilitating interdisciplinary and regional research collaborations. The WIO-ECSN provides facilitation to regional programmes to contribute to the development of skills and knowledge of future generations of interdisciplinary marine scientists to shape research in the WIO region. The legacy of the WIO-ECSN will enable us to bring together the early career scientists in the region, where they will be able to share their research and knowledge of marine science across multiple disciplines of the WIO, and promote local and regional exchange.

3. Ocean Knowledge Action Network International Programme Office - The Ocean Knowledge Action Network is a unique and innovative global network of networks, bringing together scientists from natural and social science disciplines, lawyers and policy makers, stakeholders, and funders to stimulate the collaboration and knowledge exchange that is needed to find new ways of co-creating ocean science for a sustainable future.

4. Indian Ocean Commission - The Indian Ocean Commission is a regional intergovernmental organisation established in 1984 through the "Accord de Victoria" to promote regional cooperation in several environmental, economic, and social sectors. The member States are island States of the Western Indian Ocean, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and France for the island of Reunion. The IOC is engaged in several programs on climate change and coastal resilience and the involvement of youth, young scientists, and academia in its programmes.

Length of Session: 1 hr 45 mins