

# 7 The Ocean Data and Information Network of Africa



## The Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa

The Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa was launched to address the challenges identified in various fora for and by African coastal countries. These included the IOC Regional Committees for the Western Indian Ocean (IOCWIO), and the Central and Eastern Atlantic (IOCEA), the UNEP Regional Seas Programme (the 1985 Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region; and the 1981 Abidjan Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African region), the Pan African Conference on Sustainable Coastal Management – PACSICOM (1998, Maputo, Mozambique), and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002, Johannesburg, South Africa).

The network, which started off with libraries in seven member states in Eastern Africa (Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania), sharing resources to improve access to scientific literature by marine and freshwater professionals now encompasses more than forty institutions in twenty-five countries all over Africa. The scope has also grown to include data processing, archiving, analysis and interpretation as well as installation of tide gauges.

The librarians have worked together to develop institutional library catalogues that have been merged into a union catalogue. They have also developed directories of marine and freshwater professionals, and repository of marine related publications from Africa. They have formed an African chapter of the International Association of Marine Science Libraries and Information Centres. Nine of the institutions from Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania and Tunisia have been accepted as input centres for the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries – ASFA database.

The National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODC's) have on the other hand developed infrastructure for processing, analysis and interpretation of data. They have acquired data collected from their national waters available in other data centres in the region and internationally, and enriched these with information available in national institutions to create national ocean databases. Some of the specialized databases created cover datasets such as marine biodiversity databases, hydrographic data, and environmental data. They have joined forces to create the African Marine Atlas. Tide gauges were installed at selected locations along the African coastline.

The network has developed strong links with other organizations and programmes such as the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association, the

secretariat for the Coastal and Marine sub-theme for the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD/COSMAR), the African Coelacanth Project (ACEP), and the United Nations Environment Programmes Division of Early Warning (DEWA). These enabled the joint implementation of activities and sharing of resources.

In this chapter, the ODINAFRICA contacts in 19 countries have provided important national marine information, including key issues that need to be addressed, as well as information on the development of the NODCs and information centres. Each section starts with a map and table of demographic, socio-economic and environmental statistics. The information is derived from a set of international sources referenced at the end of the chapter, or is derived from the alternative data sources noted.

Figure 1. Map showing countries participating in ODINAFRICA.

