

UK Government and Southern Africa Cooperate to Develop the Marine Economy



The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) and UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) are working with the Southern Africa and Islands Hydrographic Commission (SAIHC) to establish regulations and legislation that promote the growth of the region's ocean economy. Across the world, we are becoming increasingly reliant on our oceans, depending on them for food, energy and livelihoods, these organizations say. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), our increasing dependence on this resource will mean our global ocean economy – which includes activities ranging from shipping and fishing to renewables – will grow to reach US\$3 trillion by 2030.

Southern Africa's Coastline

This growth will have a significant effect on the countries that line Southern Africa's coastline. In Madagascar, which is situated on the Indian Ocean trade route that links Australia, Asia and the Middle East, ports and shipping lanes will experience an exponential increase in shipping traffic. The planting of mangroves along the eastern coast has the potential to generate increased income for coastal communities while helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. In South Africa, government investment in marine infrastructure through Operation Phakisa has the potential to create an estimated one million jobs by 2033.

Legislation and regulations that guide the sharing of maritime information – including up-to-date bathymetry (seabed mapping data), tides, navigational warnings and observations – will be key to helping these countries manage this change, as well as unlocking the further potential to grow their economy in a sustainable way.

Marine Spatial Planning

Legislation and regulations can underpin effective marine spatial planning, allowing governments and commercial counterparts to unlock economic potential, deliver effective protection of marine species and contribute to global conservation. They can also support navigational safety, giving mariners the information they need to reduce the likelihood of groundings that could lead to loss of life and the degradation of delicate marine environments. And, they can support the exchange of vital security information that is key to reducing the threat of piracy and illegal fishing in the region.

The UKHO and FCO worked with the SAIHC and partners across Southern Africa to develop these regulations and legislation during a five-day seminar. The sessions, which were led by government experts in maritime safety, seabed mapping and ocean science, covered:

- Hydrographic services and the development of a Hydrographic Governance Implementation Plan – these sessions promoted compliance with international obligations, identifying activities that improve the sharing of maritime safety information and advice on how to maintain the safety of navigation through seabed mapping. Sessions also led to discussions on the wider use of the data to support marine spatial planning, maritime infrastructure development, environmental protection and the management of resources; all fundamental activities for developing a sustainable blue economy.
- The creation of regional peer support networks – these sessions promoted the sharing of knowledge and best practices, while identifying activities, dependencies, costs and success measures that improve the sharing of hydrographic information and reduce maritime risk to life and delicate marine environments.

Commenting on the programme, Ian Davies, international hydrographic programmes manager, said: "This seminar was a fantastic opportunity to work with partners from the UK Government and Southern Africa to help build sustainable and resilient marine economies in the region. The oceans are vital for providing these states with resources, security and livelihoods, so it's important that we not only help them monitor these areas but also learn how to protect them through the development of strong governance and appropriate legislation."