

Call for applications: Regional Training Workshop on the use of Underwater Camera Systems to sample Benthic Invertebrate Communities of the Western Indian Ocean

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), in collaboration with the University of Comoros and the University of Dar es Salaam (Institute of Marine Sciences and the College of Agriculture Sciences and Fisheries Technology), are organizing a **Regional Training Workshop** on “**The Use of Underwater Camera Systems to Sample Benthic Invertebrate Communities of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Region**”. The workshop is sponsored by WIOMSA, through its Marine and Coastal Science for Management (MASMA) Programme and will be held in **Cape Town, South Africa, from the 20th to the 30th October 2020**.

Background: Following the Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2) regional training cruises hosted by DEA in 2017 and 2018, it was recognized that a better understanding of both coastal and deep-sea benthic invertebrate communities in the WIO is required. The current workshop aims to train participants from various institutes in the region on how to sample benthic invertebrate communities using camera systems from large and small vessels. These tools are non-destructive and provide a suitable means to conduct standardized research within high priority conservation areas such as Marine Protected Areas.

Participants will be exposed to lectures, practical training, and interactive sessions with experts in Benthic Biodiversity, Underwater Imagery and Marine Protected Areas from various institutes within the WIO region. Data management, processing and analyses of imagery and video footage data will also be covered. The workshop will also provide a unique opportunity for participants to process and analyse data collected during the IIOE-2 expeditions of 2017 and 2018.

The ultimate goal of the workshop is to produce a cohort of scientists adequately trained in sampling, processing and analyzing benthic invertebrate communities using an Underwater Imagery platform to better understand benthic ecosystems, and consequently, to strengthen conservation decisions.

Eligibility: The workshop is open to researchers, technical staff and post graduate students engaged in Benthic Invertebrate Biodiversity programmes within the WIO. In order to build institutional capacity, preference will be given to those that will use the expertise acquired in their current, or future position.

Funding: Financial support will be provided to the selected participants.

Application Details:

Please submit the following:

1. A copy of your CV,
2. A supporting letter from a supervisor/head of department, and
3. A motivational letter (1 page) indicating clearly how you would apply the acquired knowledge to your work/research.

The above documents should be sent via email to Dr Tanya Haupt (benthicbiodeff@gmail.com) on or before the **18 May 2020**, and a copy to WIOMSA (secretary@wiomsa.org).

