

Dear SANCOR community,

Interested persons are invited to attend a national workshop on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) in South Africa on 29 May 2019, 9h00 – 16h00, at the Colophon Seminar Room, Centre for Biodiversity Conservation, Corner of Cherry and Upper Thistle Road, Newlands

The workshop follows up on a national workshop held at the same venue in October 2018. The aims of this workshop will be:

- i. Sharing of final EBSA boundary revisions after review process
- ii. Rapid review of status assessment results for all EBSAs
- iii. Develop/review draft zones for all EBSAs
- iv. Discussion on Management options for all EBSAs

If you would like to attend the workshop, please RSVP to Lieze Swart ([lswart@environment.gov.za](mailto:lswart@environment.gov.za)), and cc both Stephen Kirkman ([skirkman@environment.gov.za](mailto:skirkman@environment.gov.za)) and Linda Harris ([linda.harris@mandela.ac.za](mailto:linda.harris@mandela.ac.za)) by **2 May 2019**, with “EBSA workshop” as the subject line.

After the RSVP date, confirmed meeting attendees will be requested to complete an online survey regarding draft zoning and management options for EBSAs. The survey will be designed to get a sense from each participant of which activities they think should be allowed, regulated or prohibited in different zones in the EBSAs (e.g. Conservation or management zones), based on their compatibility with biodiversity objectives and pragmatic considerations of current activities. The collective responses will serve as the starting point for discussion at the EBSA meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting but would still like to contribute by completing the survey, you are welcome to do so - please RSVP and indicate this.

If you are attending please indicate if you have any dietary requirements. More background is below, and a draft agenda shall be circulated closer to the time.

### *Background*

EBSAs are areas of the oceans that have special ecological properties. EBSAs are identified and described under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through a technical and scientific exercise on the basis of a set of seven scientific criteria. For South Africa, 18 areas meeting the EBSA criteria have been previously identified through CBD processes. The descriptions of these EBSAs have been formally endorsed by the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) in October 2014.

The German-funded project “Marine Spatial Management and Governance (MARISMA)” of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) which has a duration of 5 years (08/2014 – 04/2020), is supporting the Benguela Current Commission (BCC), its three member states (South Africa, Namibia and Angola) and other key stakeholders in the marine management sector to reach the objectives of the Benguela Current Convention regarding enhanced sustainable management and governance of the BCLME’s marine biodiversity and natural resources. The main focus of the project is capacity development at various levels, to implement and institutionalize Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and to identify and describe the BCLME’s “Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs)”. The MARISMA project includes the development of management and governance strategies, policies as well as legal and institutional frameworks, which relate to and are

conducive for EBSAs and MSP. It supports partners in implementing measures for their application and coming-into-force.

In terms of EBSAs, the project supports the continuation of the EBSA process in the BCC member states by focusing on the following:

- 1) Description and verification of areas meeting the EBSA criteria
- 2) Assessment of the vulnerabilities of areas meeting the EBSA criteria

The first step is to describe new EBSAs and/or revisit the existing EBSA descriptions to verify/add to them. The technical process of doing this has been conducted by a consortium of researchers under Dr Stephen Holness of the Institute for Coastal and Marine Research, Nelson Mandela University, who were appointed in terms of the MARISMA project. They have worked closely with national EBSA task teams and in South Africa have provided regular updates to, and received feedback from, the DEA-led National Marine Biodiversity Scientific Working Group. In July 2018, input on the process was provided by an international team of expert at a regional EBSA working group meeting held in Luanda, and comments and suggestions from that workshop were incorporated and presented at a national workshop held in October 2018 at the Kirstenbosch Research Centre. Further revisions to EBSA descriptions were proposed at this workshop and have since been incorporated. An overall approach to the status assessment and the development of draft EBSA zones and suggested management requirements was agreed at this workshop. The May 2019 workshop is the next part of this process. It will focus on each EBSAs' criteria, the key features in each EBSA, the pressures acting on them, and their condition and status. Proposed EBSA zoning (Conservation or Impact Management zones) developed using a systematic approach will be reviewed. Consolidated views gathered using a structured survey beforehand on activities/uses in each zone will be discussed, and these will be developed into an "environmental ask" to feed into the MSP process for the EBSAs.

For further information, including the report of the October 2018 workshop, visit <https://cmr.mandela.ac.za/EBSA-Portal/South-Africa/SA-EBSA-Status-Assessment-Management>

*Dr Steve Kirkman*  
*DEA: Oceans and Coasts*