

# WIO COMPAS

Western Indian Ocean • Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals



## PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Overview, Processes, Competences and Rules

2012

**Western Indian Ocean – Certification of Marine Protected Areas Professionals.**  
**PROGRAM HANDBOOK: *Overview, Processes, Competences and Rules***

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# PROGRAM HANDBOOK

## Overview, Processes, Competences and Rules

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# 1. Overview of the WIO-COMPAS Program

This handbook provides a detailed description of the Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) Program elements, processes, rules and policies. It is a resource to help marine protected area (MPA) professionals, MPA management authorities, donors and potential applicants understand how the Program is structured and how to engage in this unique offering. It is also a guide to assessors and members of the certifying bodies to ensure transparency and accountability to rules.

Section one provides a brief overview of the WIO-COMPAS Program and its history. Section two provides further details on the levels of certification, competences and assessment processes. Section three highlights the organizational structure, policies, procedures and the fee structure. Sections four, five and six outline the three levels of certification that are offered. The Program’s supporting documents—the Code of Ethics and Leadership as well as the detailed competences—are included as appendices.

This publication complements the WIO-COMPAS website ([www.wio-compas.org](http://www.wio-compas.org) or [www.wiomsa.net/wiocompas](http://www.wiomsa.net/wiocompas)). A list of our certified MPA PROs, their case studies, applications with the competences and other valuable information is maintained online at the WIO-COMPAS website.

***WIO-COMPAS assesses and certifies MPA professionals in the WIO Region based on recognized standards of excellence. It promotes competence, professional growth, leadership, innovation & ethical conduct.***

**Three Levels of Certification are offered:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Level 1~ Marine Field Operations:</i></b></li> </ul>	<p>professionals performing the daily duties of an MPA ranger or other marine field operators, conducting maintenance and habitat management activities, engaging communities and enforcing laws</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Level 2~ Site Management:</i></b></li> </ul>	<p>professionals at a site with supervisory responsibilities, similar to MPA manager, warden or section leaders</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Level 3~Strategy, Policy &amp; Planning:</i></b></li> </ul>	<p>professionals involved in higher-level management, strategy, planning and policy development, beyond the boundaries of individual MPAs, and often across international boundaries</p>

**Core Competence Areas of the Program**

The Program has identified seven core areas of competences needed by a range of individuals working at different levels within an MPA. The competences and standards vary for each Level.

***Seven Core Competence Areas***

- MPA Governance
- Marine Conservation: MPAs and other approaches
- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement
- Human and Financial Resources Mobilization and Management
- Management Implementation and Effectiveness
- Biophysical and Social Environment Context
- Leadership, Ethics and Innovation

This first-in-the-world certification Program for MPA professionals has been developed by the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) and the Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island (CRC/URI) in partnership with regional organizations and national governments. The Program is endorsed by several key organisations including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s World Commission on Protected Areas-Marine, World Wildlife Fund South Africa, International Ranger Federation and Game Ranger Association of Africa. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) have provided initial funding for the Program. The European Union-funded ReCoMap project (Regional Coastal Management Program) managed by the Indian Ocean Commission, has also provided additional financial support.

The overall goal of the Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) Program is to establish a professional association that provides a framework to promote competence, professionalism, leadership, innovation and ethical conduct in Marine Protected Area (MPA) management. WIO-COMPAS recognizes those individuals working in MPAs whose knowledge and skills currently meet a clearly defined professional standard. The Program then further enhances individuals’ knowledge and skills through dialogue and networking with other professionals as a way to share new ideas and thinking about MPA management and coastal governance.

This is accomplished through a process that:

- Assesses performance based on professional standards in core competence areas
- Provides professional development opportunities
- Catalyzes regional networking amongst MPA staff

More specifically, the Program:

- Defines for the first time the full spectrum of core competences required to perform a range of functions— at three professional levels— associated with the effective management of MPAs
- Establishes standards within each of these competence areas that “set the bar” for what all MPA sites should be expecting from their professionals
- Raises understanding of the profession—across geographic boundaries (i.e., it matters little if the profession is being conducted in Western Indian Ocean region, or East Asia, or elsewhere)
- Supports (does certainly not necessarily eliminate) the need for on-the-job training and provides specific guidance as to what is required
- Provides employers with a valuable staff motivation and retention tool
- Creates a career path for practitioners/professionals
- Ensures employers/donors that they are hiring appropriately qualified individuals
- Reassures communities that they have a professional committed to carrying out his/her work in an ethical manner, which includes consideration of client/stakeholder needs

The WIO-COMPAS Program is structured around the four “E” components of Experience, Examination, Education, and Ethics. While the Program is **NOT a training course**, it does provide candidates during certification assessment events with professional development sessions on emerging issues. Applicants wishing to become candidates for certification are initially assessed on their education and training background, their work experience, and their current roles and responsibilities. Successful applicants are then invited, as candidates, to a rigorous assessment event at which multiple assessment instruments are used to score candidate’s professional workplace competences in seven areas (see below). A code of ethics binds together those individuals who become certified—known as **MPA PROs**—to uphold the high standards of the Program and the profession of MPA management (Figure 1).

WIO-COMPAS serves the needs of MPA professionals working in Comoros, Kenya, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique, Reunion, South Africa, Seychelles and the United Republic of Tanzania.

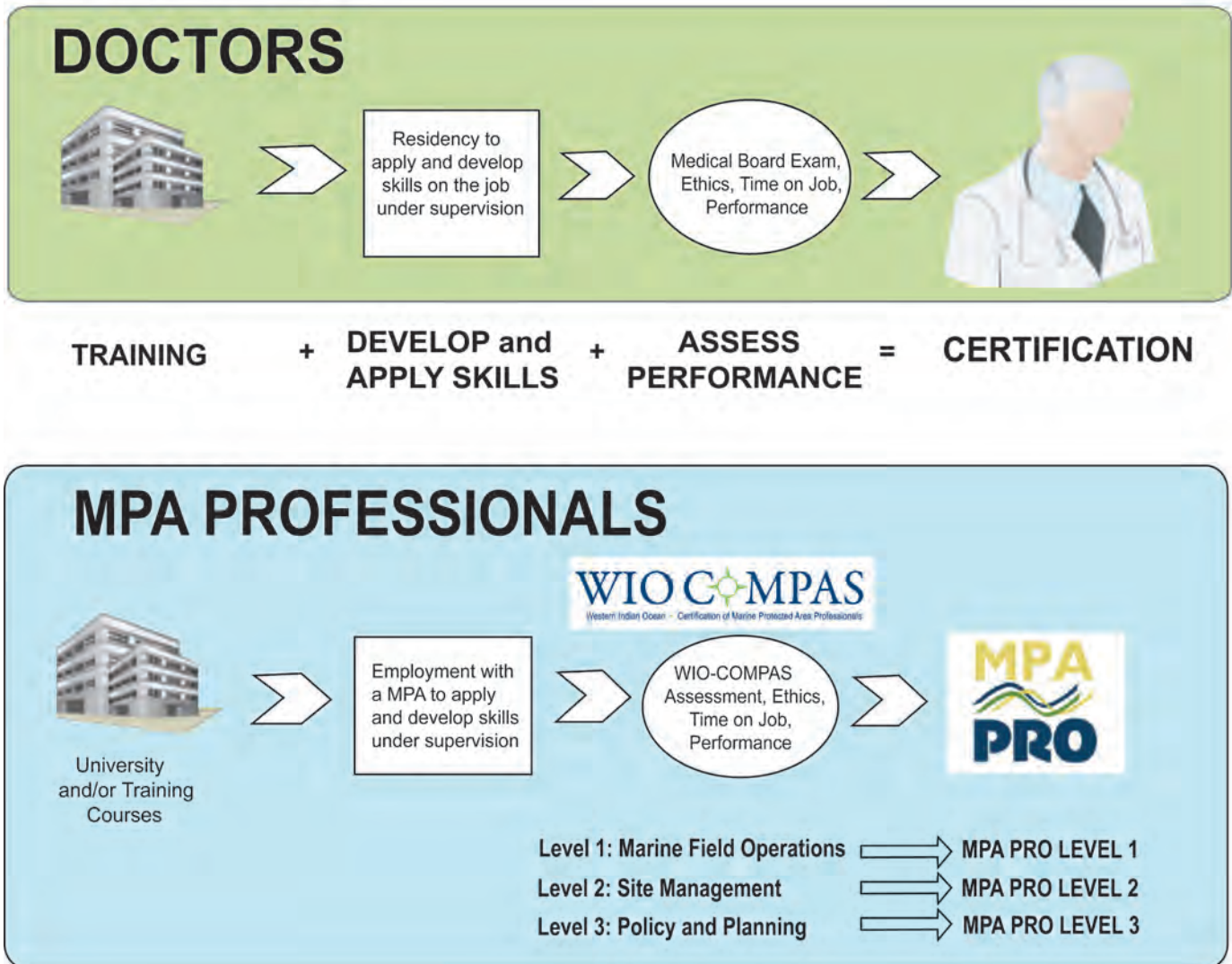


Figure 1. Comparison of WIO-COMPAS with medical school and board certified doctors.

## Certification versus Certificate

**Certificate** – a Program of training and/or education awards a certificate of completion when an individual successfully finishes a course of study.

**Certification** – signals that an individual has demonstrated certain standards of performance and shown specific skills related to a set of competences gained not only through a course of study/training, but through practical experience, application, and testing. It also signals that the individual has agreed to adhere to a set of professional standards of conduct or code of ethics.

WIO-COMPAS may refer individuals who are interested in but who lack the requisite skills to be accepted into the Program to specific training courses. Such training courses/certificate Program can often help individuals strengthen their skill sets to meet the performance standards necessary to gain enrollment into the Program.

## 1.1 Background

A large number of coastal countries have already developed or are in the process of developing national coastal management programs. Even in those that do not have a formal program, coastal management and coastal ecosystem governance activities are underway as communities and government recognize the value of coastal resources in providing food, livelihoods, and recreation. They also recognize the magnitude and impacts of the growing degradation—and in some cases even permanent loss—of those resources. Universally, this degradation is the result of many forces at play such as climate change, and destructive and uninformed human behavior driven by basic needs for food and income. MPAs are one effective tool/approach for helping protect and maintain the long-term physical and economic health of the marine resources upon which so many local communities in developing countries depend.

MPAs also provide a mechanism for contracting parties to meet their commitments under international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In fact, The Jakarta Mandate—the coastal and marine biodiversity program of action of the CBD—highlights MPAs as one of five thematic areas necessary for implementation of the CBD. In the Western Indian Ocean they are critical for meeting the obligations of signatory states to the Nairobi Convention.

Too often, however, management of these MPAs is less than effective. Many meetings, reports and assessments have issued a call to rectify this and have recommended that regional and national training courses for MPA staff become a high priority. In response, there have been important capacity development initiatives for MPA managers undertaken globally. This includes in the Western Indian Ocean region, where WIOMSA and its partners have conducted regional training courses in MPA management. South Africa has also developed a complementary course. These two courses are now strongly aligned with each other and with the WIO-COMPAS Level 2 competences. Three important tools for MPA managers have also been produced—*Training Manual for MPA Managers*; *Toolkit for Managing Marine Protected Areas in the Western Indian Ocean*; and *Assessing Management Effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas: A Workbook for the Western Indian Ocean*.

Collectively these and other capacity-building efforts and publications have helped to highlight the competences and practices that are essential to effective management of MPAs. The next step in helping MPA management evolve from a practice to a profession was to: 1) categorize these core competences and establish standards for each against which to assess the performance and experience of professionals working in MPAs; and 2) establish a set of ethics by which those working in the profession agree to abide. The WIO-COMPAS Program represents this “next” step and offers the first-of-its-kind certification of MPA professionals.

## 1.2 Status of WIO-COMPAS Events and MPA PROs

Since the start of WIO-COMPAS there have been seven assessment events with applications from 111 MPA professionals resulting in 37 of them achieving the title of MPA PRO certification. Events have been hosted in four of the WIO region countries. To make this all possible and maintain a rigorous and respected program we have recruited and trained over 12 assessors from the WIO region to moderate the entire assessment process. WIO-COMPAS was designed to recognize the leaders and proven professionals of MPAs in the region. These results represent quality over quantity of certified professionals. A firm foundation has been established for long-term development of WIO-COMPAS.

*Table 1. List of Assessment Events, Applicants and Certified Professionals as of June 2012.*

Year	Assessment Location	Level-Iteration	Applicants/Candidates/Certified
2008	Kenya	L2-01	35/11/9
2009	Madagascar	L2-02	12/6/4
2010	South Africa	L1-01	17/9/5
	Kenya	L1-02	15/8/6
2011	Tanzania	L1-03	16/9/9
	Kenya	L2-03	7/4/4
2012	South Africa	L3-01	9/6/5

## 1.3 Purpose of the Certification Program

### Involving Regional Experts in the Development

Development of the WIO-COMPAS Program began in 2006, led by WIOMSA and CRC-URI. It has been a collaborative process — engaging leaders and practitioners from within and outside the region at every step. Steps in the process have included:

- Conducting need and demand surveys of potential clients—both the potential candidates for the Program and those who would fund/support their participation
- Holding regional experts workshops to solicit input, ideas, and develop and agree the WIO-COMPAS model ( Kenya 2007 and Tanzania 2008) and revisions to the Program based on evaluations (Tanzania 2008)
- Hiring as part of the team, regional experts with both marine/coastal field experience and expertise in education (including certification programs), curriculum design, professional development, and learning assessments
- Developing the Program Framework, Operational Structure, and Business/Marketing Plan to include a strategy for long-term funding of the Program
- Establishing the WIO-COMPAS Advisors Committee
- Securing endorsement by the IUCN (World Conservation Union) World Commission on Protected Areas and national and regional organizations within the WIO region
- Developing a cadre of Assessors from the region to expand their leadership opportunities
- Evaluation meetings conducted after the first Assessment Events for Level 1 and 2.

In addition to being the first certification for MPA professionals in the world, WIO-COMPAS offers several innovative features that serve the needs of MPA professionals in the WIO region.

- Independent Assessors. WIO-COMPAS uses a system of independent assessors to review participant credentials and competences. This helps ensure quality and rigor of the certification process. Being awarded the title “MPA PRO” signals to the world that the recipient has been certified by a reputable group of experts, that they possess the necessary skills and experience, and commits to the professional code of ethics. MPA-PRO identifies them as a competent MPA professional.
- Focused on WIO Region—the Program caters to the unique context of WIO through the diversity of languages and decentralized strategy for sustainability. You will be assessed on the skills and standards that are tuned to realities of the region. We speak your language!
- Assessments focus on what candidates have done in the past. Professional development sessions provide candidates with the latest tools and experience for acting in the future.

## 1.4 Professional Development

In addition to assessing a candidate’s proven competence based on previous on-the-job performance, WIO-COMPAS is committed to providing professional development. All certification levels include Assessment Events that provide presentation and discussion sessions targeting emerging issues of concern to MPA management. Events also include sessions focused on professional skills building as a way to strengthen candidates’ competences. These sessions are not, however, part of the scoring process. Assessors also provide individualized career guidance to candidates to help them improve their competence gaps and gain certification at the next level—as one step to advancing their career development.

Guest speakers invited to the Assessment Event summarize the latest advances on topics relevant to MPA management and review international practices and lead specific skills building exercises to help candidates improve performance. Examples of the types of topics that might be included are:

- Ecological networks of MPAs
- Coastal adaptation to climate change
- Linking MPAs to wider ICM Programs
- Guidelines for MPA management
- Management of people and leadership
- Conflict management
- Proposal writing and fundraising strategies
- Communications and presentations

## 1.5 MPA PRO Networking

There is more to the WIO-COMPAS Program after the assessments are conducted. MPA PROs—the title given to certified MPA professionals—can continue to benefit by participating in and becoming an active member of the WIO-COMPAS network of MPA professionals in the region. The WIO-COMPAS website ([www.wio-compas.org](http://www.wio-compas.org) or <http://www.wiomsa.net/wiocompas/>) highlights the achievements and experience of its MPA PROs including sharing case studies written by MPA PROs. As this library of experience and case studies grows, it becomes a valued resource for capturing field experience in MPA management for the WIO region. The website includes profiles of the WIO-COMPAS MPA PROs. Making these profiles available also helps in the goal of networking.

MPA PROs with each other and with other MPA professionals throughout the region. Additional services and benefits will be provided based on needs and demands of MPA PROs.

MPA PROs with the appropriate skills, experience and enthusiasm are invited to become assessors for future certification offerings. This is part of the overarching WIO-COMPAS strategy to decentralize the Program and provide opportunities for MPA PROs to expand their leadership roles.

## 1.6 Code of Ethics and Leadership

Equally important as setting the technical and management standards by which an MPA professional is judged, the Program has established ethical rules and good practices that underpin effective MPA management. At the end of the assessment event, the candidates discuss the ethical challenges in conducting their jobs and share practical solutions to overcoming the issues. Candidates jointly sign the Code of Ethics and Leadership with their fellow candidates at the closing ceremony. See Appendix B for the Code of Ethics and Leadership as well as Section 3.7 for the rules related to ethical violations of MPA PROs.



© C. Hicks

Marina on the South Coast, Kenya.

## 2. The Certification Program

### 2.1 Levels of Certification

WIO-COMPAS offers three levels of certification for MPA professionals based on their work experience and proven performance capabilities. Each level addresses a unique set of skills that contribute to the effective management of MPAs. Professionals can be certified at multiple levels to reflect their diverse areas of expertise and performance.

#### *Level 1~ Marine Field Operations*

Level 1 is designed for the professional who performs practical functions and has responsibility for the day-to-day management of an MPA such as engaging communities and enforcing laws, and who has basic administrative responsibilities.

**Ideal candidate:** equivalent of an MPA Ranger, Officer or Marine Field Operator, operating within an MPA

#### **Examples of experience could include:**

- Providing input to development of site workplans and implementing aspects of those and management plans
- Active involvement in compliance and enforcement activities, practical habitat management/conservation, monitoring, budget management of tasks or workplan elements
- Direct interaction/communication with local residents, resource users, visitors, staff, volunteers, contractors, and local media
- Supervising and providing on the job skill building through guidance, mentoring and support to junior personnel, volunteers and contractors
- Producing routine reports and local media articles

#### *Level 2~ Site Management*

Level 2 is designed for the professional who is performing management, supervisory and administrative functions and responsibilities, principally at the site level, but may also cover a number of adjacent MPAs.

**Ideal candidate:** an MPA Manager, Assistant Manager, Site Manager, Senior Warden or Section Ranger

#### **Examples of experience could include:**

- Developing management plans and supervising their implementation
- Providing input into organizational policy
- Engaging in management planning and review, supervising practical management/conservation activities, monitoring and evaluation, negotiating with partners and contractors etc., fundraising from local/national sources, developing and managing budgets
- Directly interacting/communicating with local community and resource user groups, researchers/institutions, local partner and co-management organizations (including local and national non-governmental organizations/NGOs, local municipalities and government departments), staff, volunteers, contractors, and local/national media
- Training/mentoring staff
- Producing plans, reports, media articles, funding proposals

#### *Level 3~ Strategy, Policy and Planning*

Level 3 is designed for the professional performing high-level management, planning, strategy and policy development, and administrative functions and responsibilities.

**Ideal candidate:** Involved at a senior level in the management of a suite or network of MPAs or marine coastal zones including MPAs, Conservation Director, Head of Division/Department or Director.

### Examples of responsibilities include:

- Developing and/or reviewing organizational strategies and policies and supporting development of management plans consistent with these
- Providing input to national (and international) policy development
- Being actively involved in policy development and review; supervising development of management plans and policy; negotiating with national and international partners; fundraising from national/international sources; developing and managing organizational level budgets
- Directly interacting/communicating with national and international partners including government departments, UN agencies, international NGOs, and national and international media
- Involvement in broad-scale marine and coastal management Programs such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Large Marine Ecosystem initiatives.
- Producing media articles/academic papers, reports for partners and funding agencies, and media articles

*Table 2. Summary of the seven competence areas with sample competences from each certification level (L1, L2, L3).*

Competence Area	Sample Competences
<b>1. MPA Governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Strategy</li> <li>• Legislation</li> <li>• Compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sound understanding of regulations and bylaws related the MPA (L1)</li> <li>- Thorough understanding of a range of compliance approaches (L2)</li> <li>- Ability to develop and implement organizational strategies and policies consistent with national legislative framework (L3)</li> </ul>
<b>2. Marine Conservation: MPAs and other approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sound understanding of their organization's structure, mandate and function, and own roles and responsibilities within the MPA (L1)</li> <li>- Ability to engage/influence decision-making bodies towards fulfilling MPA goals (L2)</li> <li>- Thorough understanding of the purposes, values, principles, critiques, and benefits of MPAs, and criteria for selection/proclamation of MPAs (L3)</li> </ul>
<b>3. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sound understanding of different means of communication within the MPA(L1)</li> <li>- Ability to contribute to development of effective written communication materials (L2)</li> <li>- Ability to communicate effectively with various audiences (L3)</li> </ul>
<b>4. Human and Financial Resources Mobilization and Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sound understanding of the MPA's operating costs and financial system for their area of operations</li> <li>- Ability to develop and manage budgets associated with MPA management operations (L2)</li> </ul>
<b>5. Management Implementation and Effectiveness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Reporting</li> <li>• Monitoring, Evaluation&amp; Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to define and strategize for resource requirements through the development and implementation of strategic and business plans (L3)</li> <li>- Ability to implement one's workplan (L1)</li> <li>- Thorough understanding of logistical and infrastructural requirements for management of own MPA (L2)</li> <li>- Ability to develop or contribute significantly towards the development of MPA management plans, and broader scale marine conservation plans (L3)</li> </ul>
<b>6. Biophysical and Social Environment Context</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine and Coastal Ecology</li> <li>• Fisheries</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Socio-economic and Cultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic understanding of the local fishing sector in and around one's MPA (L1)</li> <li>- Thorough understanding of the key threats to the ecological processes and species in their area and the implications for management (L2)</li> <li>- Sound understanding of emerging issues, including climate change, and potential adaptations to these in their area of jurisdiction (L3)</li> </ul>
<b>7. Leadership, Ethics and Innovation</b>	Demonstrates (All Levels): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leading by example</li> <li>- Self-motivation</li> <li>- Ethical approach</li> <li>- Motivation</li> </ul>



## 2.2 Competences of MPA Professionals

The WIO-COMPAS Program used input from regional MPA leaders and international experts to establish the set of competences (levels of understanding and abilities) required for a professional standard of performance in management of MPAs. There are seven competence areas and within each, the professional must demonstrate a level of technical and management understanding and ability in order to become certified. For each competence there are detailed standards which identify the level that a candidate must achieve to receive certification. The number and degree of competences vary between the three levels of certification offered. The WIO-COMPAS competences complement other international assessment Programs such as the WIO MPA Management Effectiveness and World Bank MPA Scorecard. Detailed lists, by Level, of the competences and their associated standards are included in Appendices C through E.

Each of the first six core areas has detailed competences and standards (levels of understanding and ability). The seventh competence area is Leadership, Ethics and Innovation. It serves to integrate across all the competences and to assess the intangible skills and performance of a professional. This competence is scored differently and contributes up to 15% of the overall assessment score.

## 2.3 Entry Requirements to the Program

Entry requirements for the WIO-COMPAS Program are unique for each level of certification. All levels are based on years of experience working in MPAs, language ability and academic achievement. Certification at a lower level can substitute for academic achievement if necessary.

*Table 3. Entry requirements for each certification level.*

Level of Certification	Focus of Competences	Entry Requirements
<b>Level 1 – Marine Field Operations</b>	Practical functions and responsibilities with basic administrative responsibilities  Examples include MPA Ranger, Officer, or Marine Field Operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 2 years of experience in practical MPA operations;</li> <li>Written proficiency in language of certification assessment (country specific); and</li> <li>Completed secondary level education or 10 years of experience in a protected area</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 – Site Management</b>	Management, supervisory and administrative functions and responsibilities  Examples include MPA Manager, Site Manager, Warden, Deputy Warden, Section Ranger or Division Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 3 years of experience performed at a level equivalent to a Level 2 MPA management professional;</li> <li>Written proficiency in language of certification assessment; and</li> <li>Graduated from secondary level education and/or Level 1 certified</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 – Strategy, Policy and Planning</b>	Principally high-level management, strategy and policy development, and administrative functions and responsibilities  Examples include involved at a senior level in the management of a suite or network of MPAs, or marine and coastal zone including MPAs, Conservation Director, Head of Divisions or Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 5 years of experience performed at a level equivalent to a Level 3 MPA management professional;</li> <li>Written proficiency in official language; and</li> <li>Graduated with at least a Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree and/or Level 2 certified</li> </ul>

## 2.4 Certification Process

The certification process starts with the application phase and ends with a multi-day assessment event where assessors formally evaluate candidates’ competences. Candidates must complete several activities prior to attending the assessment event. The specifics of these activities, their timeline and the assessment instruments used vary between the Levels (Figure 2). For example, Levels 2 and 3 must attend an assessment event that is either national or regional, while Level 1 assessment events are national or sub-national, and are held at an MPA site when possible.

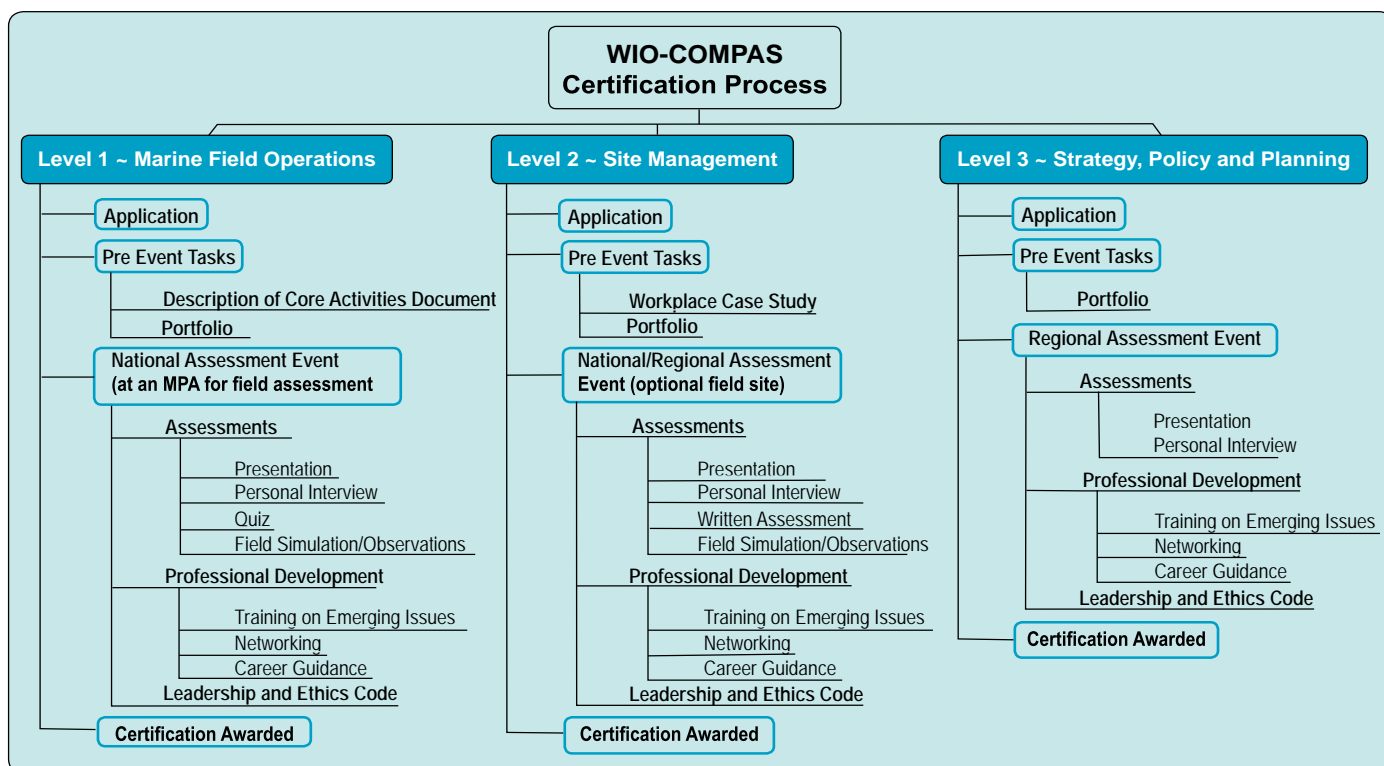


Figure 2. Comparison of the Process for Certification between Levels

## 2.5 Overview of the Assessment Process

A suite of assessment instruments are used by assessors to assess a candidate's competences. Competences are **WHAT** a candidate must be able to do. The assessment instruments are **HOW** a candidate demonstrates their skills and knowledge. Candidates are scored on the evidence they present as part of the assessment process. Assessment instruments provide the candidate with different opportunities to provide evidence of their experience and abilities. Each certification level uses a different combination of assessment instruments to accurately and fairly assess candidates' competences. Sections 4, 5 and 6 of this Handbook provide detailed overviews of the assessment instruments for each Level.

- **Application**—provides a broad view of the applicant's background and experience for initial assessment as to suitability for the acceptance into the offered Certification. Gives indications of areas of experience/inexperience in relation to competence areas. May highlight areas of potential weakness, linked to gaps in experience. Does not provide evidence of actual competence or quality of work/outputs.

It is only after the application review that a decision is made to accept or decline the applicant into the Program to which they have applied. Once accepted, an applicant is referred to as a 'candidate' for WIO-COMPAS Certification and the actual scoring process begins. Applicants not accepted onto the Program are given the reasons for this and offered professional development guidance to strengthen apparently weak areas in order to support them in reapplying at a later stage.

- **Workplace Case-study or Core Activities Document** — These instruments provide candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate a number of work-related competences, especially in areas for which there may otherwise be limited evidence available. Level 1 candidates produce a Core Activities Document that highlights their daily work routine. Level 2 candidates produce a Workplace Case-Study which describes a recent management issue with analysis and lessons. Candidates produce a short written report and a presentation that is delivered during the Assessment Event. Level 3 candidates develop a presentation on their key activities over the previous 3 years, which they present to their peers and the assessors at the assessment event.
- **Portfolio** — provides documentary proof of work-related activities and outputs, and includes documents produced (written) by the candidate independently or with others; evidence of activities and interactions in which they have been involved; and testimonials from supervisors, colleagues, professional partners and others. Level 1 and Level 2 candidates bring to the Assessment Event a single large binder containing their organized portfolio. Level 3 candidates submit their portfolio electronically two weeks prior to the event. Detailed guidance is provided as to the contents of each portfolio.

- **Quiz or Written Assessment** —Level 1 candidates undertake a simple quiz, based on images of critical marine species. Level 2 candidates undertake a 2 hour written test which provides evidence in those areas difficult to assess by other means, for example when trying to assess technical understanding or knowledge (e.g., of legislation or ecology). It also helps validate evidence from other sources.
- **Patrols and Possible Simulations** —The Assessment Event may require candidates to demonstrate particular competences—e.g., conducting patrols. Level 1 candidates conduct short beach and/or boat patrols on which they report their observations and any interactions they have with fishers or tourists. In some events they may be required to conduct activities simulating real-life interactions with stakeholders in the MPA.
- **Face-to-face Interview** — probes more deeply into those areas of evidence that appear less certain, and provides validation of evidence from other sources, such as the portfolio. The interview can provide both firm evidence of a range of competences; particularly those concerned with ‘understanding’ and ‘knowledge’, and corroborate other evidence. A two-person interview panel conducts each interview at Levels 1 and 2 to ensure consistency and transparency.
- **Panel Interviews** – these are solely for Level 3, and candidates are questioned in depth by a panel of marine and MPA specialists, and an assessment expert.

## 2.6 Scoring System for Certification

Candidates for certification are assessed based on their cumulative experience across the seven competence areas. Candidates must provide some evidence that they have already performed the majority of competences to the standards required, though they don’t need to have experience in every individual competence – only enough within each competence area overall.

Table 4. Potential Scoring Outcomes.

Status	Scores	Outcome
<b>Certification Awarded</b>	minimum of 70% overall and at least 60% within all seven competence areas.	Awarded MPA PRO Certification for their Level assessed. Certification is valid for 5 years before renewal is required.
<b>Pending Candidate</b>	between 60 - 69% overall or below 60% in only one competence area	Option to undertake additional professional development focused on the competence area(s) in which they are weakest, and submit further evidence of their increased competence for certification <u>within one year</u> of the assessment event (they are not required to attend another assessment event). Similarly candidates who achieve at least 70% overall, but below 60% in any of the seven competence areas, are required to submit further evidence in relation to their weaker competences within one year. Candidates are provided with very detailed guidance on the types of evidence they will need to submit.
<b>Ineligible for certification</b>	below 60% overall	Ineligible to be certified at the level in which they enrolled. These candidates should seek certification at a lower level more appropriate to their experience or may reapply for the same level of certification after two years and increased experience and professional development in the competence areas in which they achieved low scores. Such candidates are provided with detailed guidance on the competences they need to strengthen, and how this can be achieved.

Candidates must attend the entire Assessment Event as well as participate in all of the assessment instruments – such as portfolios, written assessments and interviews as required by each Certification Level. Candidates do not receive scores for these **instruments**, only the individual **competences** receive scores, according to the evidence revealed by the use of each instrument. In other words, it doesn't matter if you prove your competence through the portfolio or the interview. The scoring is on evidence provided for the competences through all the instruments.

Each competence is usually allocated a weighting of either 2 or 4 points to reflect overall importance in the full assessment scheme. The exception is for the four main competences under CA7 (Leadership, Ethics and Innovation), which at Levels 2 and 3 are weighted at 8 each to reflect the particular importance of these at these levels. Competences assigned a weight of 4, can be scored from 0-4(including ½ points) while those assigned a weight of 2, can be scored from 0-2. The competences given a weighting of 8 can be scored from 0-8. Again, candidates do not need experience in every competence. The candidate's overall score is based on the tally of all competence scores.

To receive certification, candidates must score a minimum of 70% overall and at least 60% within each of the seven competence areas.



L 101 Candidates in Group Photo, Tsitsikamma Marine Park, South Africa, 2010.

# 3. Policies and Procedures

## 3.1 Governance Structure

Five groups share in different governance aspects of the WIO-COMPAS Program.

**Certification Bodies.** The WIOMSA Board serves as the legal entity to the WIO-COMPAS Program. The WIOMSA Board and the Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island (CRC/URI) serve as the co-certification bodies. The Board also provides technical oversight, guidance, credibility, promotion and fundraising for the Program as a whole.

**Advisors** — Partner organisations provide guidance and feedback to the certifying bodies on how to maintain rigor, decentralize the Program and identify opportunities for certification offerings. The committee is comprised of regional and international capacity-building institutions.

**Program Secretariat** — WIOMSA has dedicated staff who serve as the Secretariat for WIO-COMPAS. Their role is to provide coordination and day-to-day operations and act as a hub for assessors. The Secretariat (and local partners) manages all logistics and marketing of the certification offerings. CRC/URI assists the Secretariat in developing their capacity and procedures through back office support, Program development and delivery, as well as providing technical support to the Program as a whole.

**Assessors** — Assessors acting as independent experts, are responsible for evaluating each candidate’s competences through a process that includes application interviews, mentoring candidates through their portfolio and reports, conducting the assessment event and providing recommendations to the Board for certification of successful candidates. Assessors conduct the assessment activities only.

**MPA management organizations** — The MPA management organizations, both government and non-governmental, play a key role in promoting the Program, encouraging staff to apply, endorsing the application of individual candidates, confirming validity of application materials, facilitating the case study process, verifying portfolios and most importantly supporting MPA PROs upon their return to work. Representatives are invited as members of the Advisory Committee.

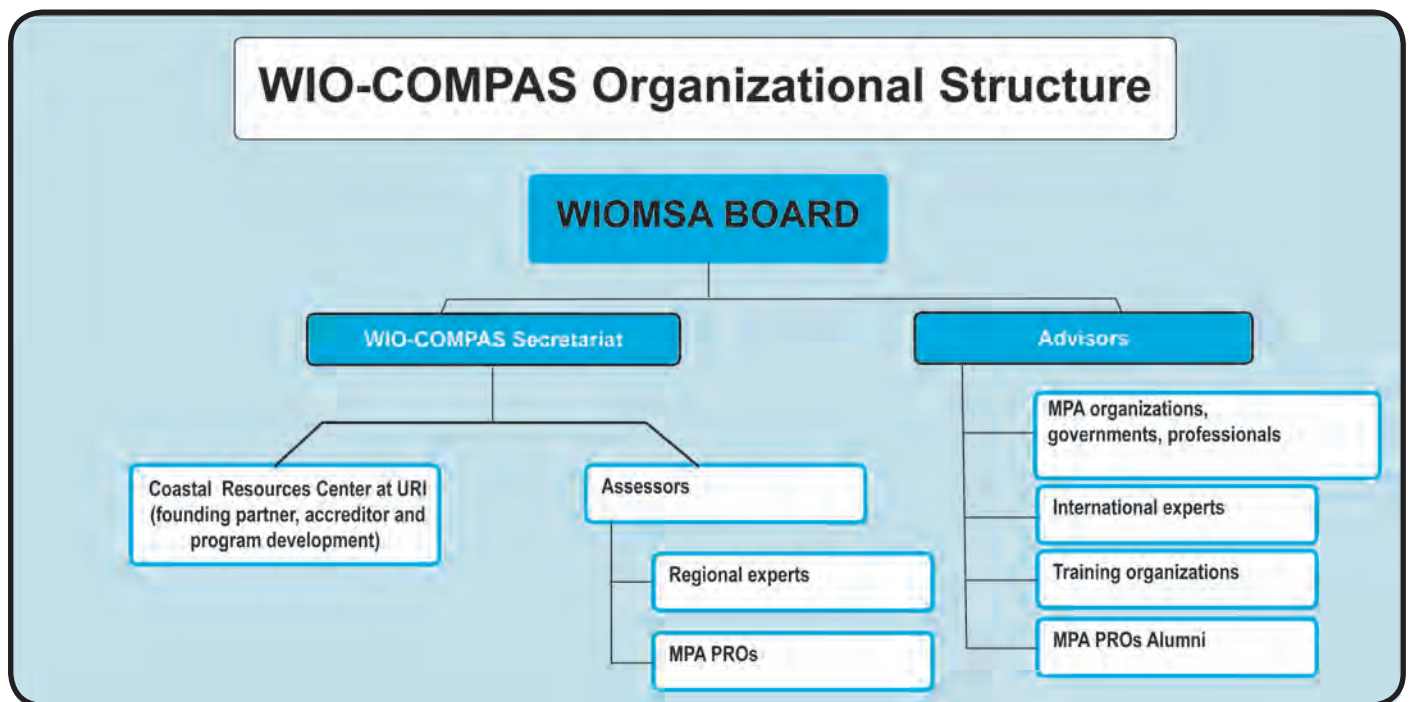


Figure 3. WIO-COMPAS organizational structure

## 3.2 Fees and Scholarships

There are no application fees for the WIO-COMPAS Program. Only after an applicant is accepted into a certification offering and becomes an official candidate is a fee due. Payment of the certification fee reserves a space in a specific certification offering. A limited number of scholarships are sometimes available.

### Certification

- *Certification Fee* – amount will depend on the extent the core costs have been covered by funds raised. Mode of payment will be communicated by the Secretariat upon admitted into the Program.
- *Renewal Fee* – USD \$25

### The certification fee covers:

- Administrative costs associated with reviewing applications and enrolment
- Assessment costs including resource materials, professional development programs and a personal assessor for Levels 1 and 2, and the assessment panel for Level 3
- Accommodation and board for the Assessment Event
- Certification awards and transcripts

Fees do **NOT** include costs associated with:

- Communicating with the Secretariat and/or assessors (via phone, internet or postal carrier)
- Personal time and resources to conduct the assessment activities
- Candidate's travel to and from the assessment event
- Personal expenses or daily subsistence allowance
- Visa costs and other travel related costs to the Assessment Event venue

### Scholarships

A limited number of partial scholarships are sometimes available for a select number of candidates and are based on financial need. Contact the WIO-COMPAS Secretariat for details and scholarship application forms. The amount of scholarship funding available and the rules related to awarding that funding will vary based on the donors that have provided the funding.

## 3.3 Application Process

The application process is thorough and extensive for two reasons. One is to accurately confirm an applicant's education, employment and professional experience related to the level of certification requested. The other is to achieve efficiency in guiding MPA professionals to the appropriate level of certification before entering the Program.

The Secretariat serves as gatekeeper to the Program. They send out applications, and they provide WIO-COMPAS information to MPA institutions and professionals to assist them in understanding the Program levels, competences and process. The application review process is as follows:

1. Secretariat screens applications for completeness and entry requirements
2. If approved, a personal assessor is assigned to the applicant to confirm the appropriate type and level of experience related to the competences
3. Assessors may contact the individual to conduct a telephone conversation to clarify issues arising from the application
4. Assessors submit their acceptance recommendations onto the Program to the Secretariat
5. If the number of qualified applications exceeds the number of spaces available for the certification offering to which they have applied, the Secretariat follows the WIO-COMPAS selection policy, which ranks applicants by the following factors:

- a. Completeness of application (Secretariat screens for entry requirements) and all supporting documentation/evidence
  - b. Appropriateness of professional experience
  - c. Number of years of work experience in MPAs
  - d. Level of active involvement in management of the MPA
  - e. Equitable country representative (i.e. seeking regional balance)
  - f. Likelihood of applicant to stay employed at MPA/commitment to future career in MPAs (must commit/plan to staying at least two years after being certified)
  - g. Gender balance (when possible)
  - h. Ability to pay certification fees or only require minimal scholarship assistance
  - i. Secretariat provides the Board with the list of recommended candidates. The WIO-COMPAS Board reserves the authority to deny an applicant if they have specific information that counters the applicant's evidence
6. Board approves candidates and acceptance letters are forwarded to candidates for enrolment.

### ***Guidance for Applicants Not Accepted***

For those applicants who do not meet the entry requirements for the level of certification to which they have applied, or whose array of competences are short of the competence standards, WIO-COMPAS provides a detailed summary of their performance “gaps” as they relate to the Program’s competence areas. The review also advises the applicant of training courses that might increase the applicant’s competence and their chances of being accepted into the Program at a later date. The review may also recommend that the applicant applies for a lower level of certification than the one for which they originally applied.

*For details of the Certification Processes and Events at all 3 levels see sections 4, 5 and 6.*

## **3.4 Appealing Decision and Re-Entering the Program**

Applicants not accepted to the Program and candidates not awarded certification may appeal the Secretariat’s decisions and re-enter the certification process at a level appropriate to their skills and experience.

### ***Appealing the Entry Decision***

- Applicants who wish to appeal the decision on their application should write to the Secretariat requesting an explanation of how their qualifications did not meet the entry requirements
- The primary assessor for the applicant can also write a defense of their recommendation for rejecting the application
- Other assessors will review the evidence materials, appeal and defense statement to offer their opinion on the decision given. In cases of a split vote, the decision goes to the WIOMSA Board, which makes the final determination; all communications regarding an appeal are made through email or telephone only
- Applicants are offered recommendations for how to improve their competences or apply for entry to another level of the WIO-COMPAS Program.

### ***Appealing the Certification Scores***

- Candidates can appeal their competences scores in a written statement
- Other assessors will review the materials and statement to offer their judgment of the decision (with the option to raise this to the Board sub-committee if necessary)
- If a candidate did not complete the case study, they are given another 30 days to resubmit
- If a candidate scored poorly in multiple competences, they are given guidance on how to improve those competences and/or are encouraged to apply for another level of certification.

## 3.5 Certification Renewal

MPA PROs must renew their certification every five years by:

- Showing evidence of continued employment related to MPAs for most of the past five years
- Successfully completing at least one continuing education course and/or training activity linked to improving their professional performance at MPAs. These are “refresher” courses meant to keep professionals current on the coastal management and marine protected area management profession and its practice, with topics shaped by myriad influences such as the state of global warming, international conventions, new tools and techniques being used in the practice, and new experiences learned from the ongoing practice of integrated coastal management (ICM) in coastal countries around the world
- Submitting an updated CV highlighting employment changes and job responsibilities, training, awards, contact information
- Re-signing of the Code of Ethics and Leadership
- Participating in at least one online discussion forum with fellow MPA PROs.

By renewing their certification, the individual earns the right to continue using the MPA PRO title, logos and website resources. This identifies the individual as a professional who has stayed current in the knowledge, skills, and practice required of an effective MPA professional.

## 3.6 Forgery and Cheating

If assessors suspect a candidate is cheating by submitting forged documents or documents authored by others, or lying about their experience, the assessor must report this in writing to the Secretariat/Board for their follow-up. The candidate may be asked by the lead assessor to suspend their participation in the Assessment Event. Should the charges be verified, a candidate may drop out of the Program and avoid further action. However, the charges will be noted in the candidate’s records.

## 3.7 Code of Ethics and Leadership Violations

Candidates must sign their agreement to abide by the WIO-COMPAS Program Code of Code of Ethics and Leadership. The WIO-COMPAS Board is authorized to revoke certification if presented with evidence of wrong-doing by the individual holding the certification. All accusations of wrong doing must be submitted in writing to the WIO-COMPAS Board. The MPA PRO is given a copy of the accusation and offered an opportunity to submit their defense or explanation of the issue. If certification is revoked, an individual can no longer use the MPA-PRO designation or WIO-COMPAS logo. MPA PROs found guilty of violating the Code of Ethics will not be eligible for certification renewal. They also must wait at least eight years before reapplying for certification (starting the process from the beginning) and must submit a written statement explaining why they should be given another opportunity.

## 3.8 Qualifications for Assessors

WIO-COMPAS has an open selection process for assessors. As a decentralized region-based certification Program, assessors from each of the WIO region countries are recruited and trained. Qualifications for assessors vary by Program Levels (see Table 5 below). Assessors participate in a comprehensive training and apprenticeship regimen before they are approved to conduct candidate assessments. This ensures that assessors maintain the WIO-COMPAS focus on assessment credibility and that they commit to upholding the principles of good assessment—fairness, validity, reliability and practicability.



Table 5. Qualifications for Assessors.

Level 1 Assessors	Level 2 Assessors	Level 3 Assessment Panel
5 years field experience in protected area management, particularly MPAs. Certification as a MPA PRO a distinct advantage	10 years field experience in protected area management, particularly MPAs Certification as a MPA PRO a distinct advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprises 4 individuals combining the following experience/expertise:</li> <li>At least 10 years field experience in marine protected area establishment and management, including with suites or networks of MPAs</li> <li>Post-graduate qualification in marine sciences (i.e. ecology, fisheries, oceanography etc.)</li> <li>At least 4 years of experience of regional and international marine policy and legislation</li> </ul>
4 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation in a related field	5 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation in a related field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation in a related field</li> </ul>
2 years of experience in assessment processes an advantage (all assessors receive in-depth training in the WIO-COMPAS Level 1 assessment processes)	3 years of experience in assessment procedures an advantage (all assessors receive in-depth training in the WIO-COMPAS Level 2 assessment process)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 years of experience in high-level workplace skills assessment processes. One member of the panel must have such experience and the other members are trained in conducting the WIO-COMPAS Level 3 assessment process</li> </ul>
Fluency in local languages/dialects (not required, but an advantage)	Fluency in official language(s) of the countries concerned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluency in English</li> </ul>
Experience in relevant training an advantage		
Good knowledge of sites in relevant countries an advantage		
Excellent personal organizational skills		
Strong team working skills		



Our initial WIO-COMPAS Assessors in Training, Nairobi, 2009.

# 4. Level 1 ~ Marine Field Operations Certification

Level 1 Certification focuses on the practical tasks of everyday MPA field operations. This is usually associated with the work of rangers and community officers. A detailed description of the type of MPA professionals eligible for Level 1 certification is summarized in Section 1. Level 1 Certifications are offered on a national or sub-national basis to reflect language and travel cost issues.

## 4.1 Process

The process of being certified at Level 1 should take less than six months from application to certification. Those enrolled in a certification offering will invest approximately two-three weeks of dedicated time overall. Figure 4 outlines the steps in the Level 1 certification process.

- 1. Application** - Significant attention and time is dedicated to the application phase. This is to ensure that the applicant has the depth of experience related to the competences. Applicants must get their supervisors to sign the application to confirm the accuracy of the applicants experience and the support of the MPA for the applicant to participate in the Assessment Event and be granted time off from work.
- 2. Pre Event Tasks** - Candidates must produce their Core Activities Document, a related presentation and portfolio before attending the four-day Assessment Event.
- 3. Assessment Event (4 days)** - Most of the assessment scoring is done at the Assessment Event. In addition to assessing candidates, the WIO-COMPAS mission is to provide professional development, opportunities for networking and a commitment to ethical standards. These sessions are not part of the scoring process. Local guest speakers are invited to the Assessment Event to discuss emerging issues related to MPAs or improved practices related to specific competences.

## 4.2 Competences

Level 1 Certification has 41 competences and standards across the seven core competence areas. This number of competences reflects the broad skills necessary to be an MPA professional. The competence focus is on practical field operations. There is some overlap with Level 2 competences though the standards for Level 1 are often at a more basic level of understanding or ability.

Candidates are expected to have competence across all seven core competence areas, though not necessarily every competence and standard. Refer to the scoring method in Section 2 for details. The full list of competences and standards are in appendix C.

## 4.3 Assessment Instruments

A set of seven assessment instruments are used in Level 1:

1. Application
2. Description of Core Activities Document
3. Presentation of one Core Activity
4. Portfolio
5. Quiz
6. Beach and (where possible) boat patrols. Possibly simulations
7. Face-to-Face Interview

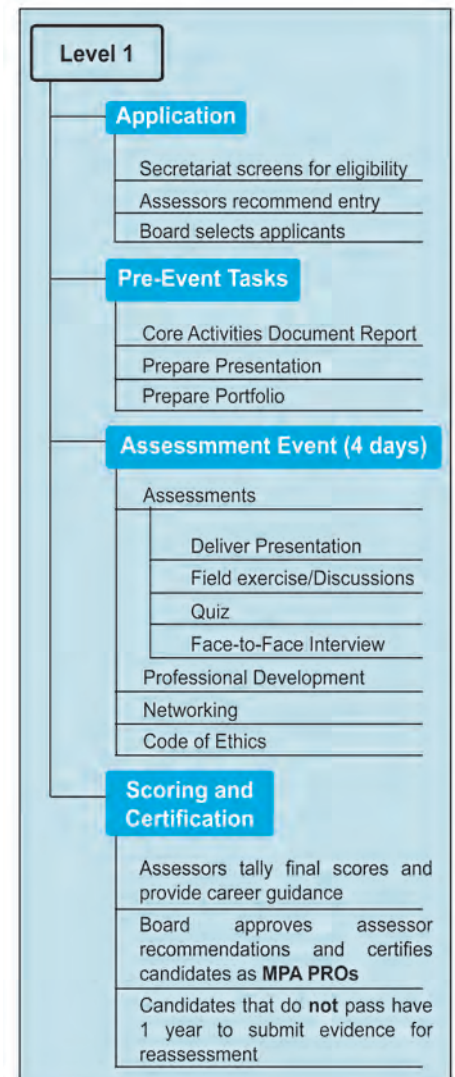


Figure 4. Process for Level 1 Certification.



L 102 candidates complete their written exercise.

# 5. Level 2 ~ Site Management Certification

A description of the type of MPA professional eligible for Level 2 certification is summarized in Section 1. Level 2 is focused on site management and supervisory skills.

## 5.1 Process

The process of being certified at Level 2 should take less than six months from application to certification. Those enrolled in a certification offering will invest approximately three weeks of time overall. Figure 5 outlines the steps in the Level 2 certification process.

1. **Application** - Significant attention and time is dedicated to the application phase. This is to ensure that the applicant has the depth of experience related to the competences. Most of the assessment scoring is done at the Assessment Event.
2. **Pre-event Tasks** - Candidates must produce a case study report and portfolio before attending the Assessment Event.
3. **Assessment Event (4 days)** - A full four days of Program time is necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Event. The Assessment Event provides a valuable means for:
  - assessing candidate’s competences and provide career guidance exploring new areas of knowledge on topics of current global interest related to MPAs through guest speakers
  - enabling regional networking of professionals
  - providing a venue for reflection of the practice of MPA management in its current state and the future challenges it must address.
  - committing to the WIO-COMPAS Code of Ethics and Leadership
  - In addition to assessing candidates, the WIO-COMPAS mission is to provide professional development, opportunities for networking and a commitment to ethical standards. These sessions are not part of the scoring process. Local guest speakers are invited to the Assessment Event to discuss emerging issues related to MPAs or improved practices related to specific competences.

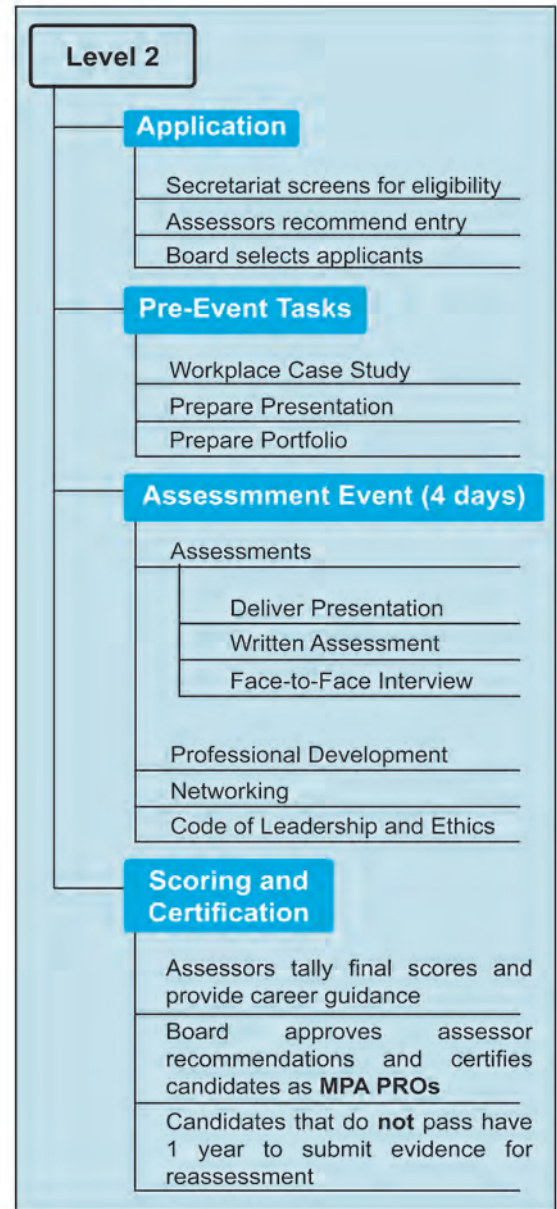


Figure 5. Process for Level 2 Certification.

## 5.2 Competences

Level 2 Certification has 69 competences and standards across the seven core competence areas. This number of competences reflects the broad skills necessary to be an MPA professional. The competence focus is on supervisory skills.

Candidates are expected to have competence across all seven core competence areas, though not necessarily every competence and standard. Refer to the scoring method in Section 2 for details. The full list of competences and standards are in appendix D.

## 5.3 Assessment Instruments

A set of five assessment instruments are used in Level 2:

1. Application (with telephone conversation)
2. Workplace Case Study Report & Presentation
3. Portfolio
4. Written Assessment
5. Face-to-Face Interview



The first MPA PROs and Assessment Team, Malindi, Kenya 2008.

# 6. Level 3 ~ Strategy, Policy and Planning Certification

A description of the type of MPA professional eligible for Level 3 certification is summarized in Section 1. Level 3 is focused on strategy, policy and planning skills. Since there are relatively few professionals performing at this level in the region, certification offerings will be regionally based. Professionals operating at this level often work internationally and must learn from experiences in other countries, thus the language of assessment will be English.

## 6.1 Process

The process of being certified should take less than three months from application to certification. Those enrolled in a certification offering will invest approximately two weeks of time overall. Figure 6 outlines the steps in the Level 3 certification process.

1. Application - Significant attention and time is dedicated to the application phase. This is to ensure that the applicant has the depth of experience related to the competences. Most of the assessment scoring is done at the Assessment Event.
2. Pre-event Tasks - Candidates must produce a presentation and portfolio before attending the Assessment Event.
3. Assessment Event (4 days) – A full four days of Program time is necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Event. The Assessment Event provides a valuable means for:
  - assessing candidate’s competences, provide career guidance and if interested in Level 3 certification
  - exploring new areas of knowledge on topics of current global interest related to MPAs through guest speakers
  - enabling regional networking of professionals
  - providing a venue for reflection of the practice of MPA management in its current state and the future challenges it must address.
  - committing to the WIO-COMPAS Code of Ethics and Leadership

In addition to assessing candidates, the WIO-COMPAS mission is to provide professional development, opportunities for networking and a commitment to ethical standards. These sessions are not part of the scoring process. Local guest speakers are invited to the Assessment Event to discuss emerging issues related to MPAs or improved practices related to specific competences.

## 6.2 Competences

Level 3 Certification has 56 competences and standards across the seven core competence areas. This number of competences reflects the broad skills necessary to be an MPA professional. The competence focus is on strategy, policy and planning skills.

Candidates are expected to have competence across all seven core competence areas, though not necessarily every competence and standard. Refer to the scoring method in Section 2 for details. The full list of competences and standards are in appendix E.

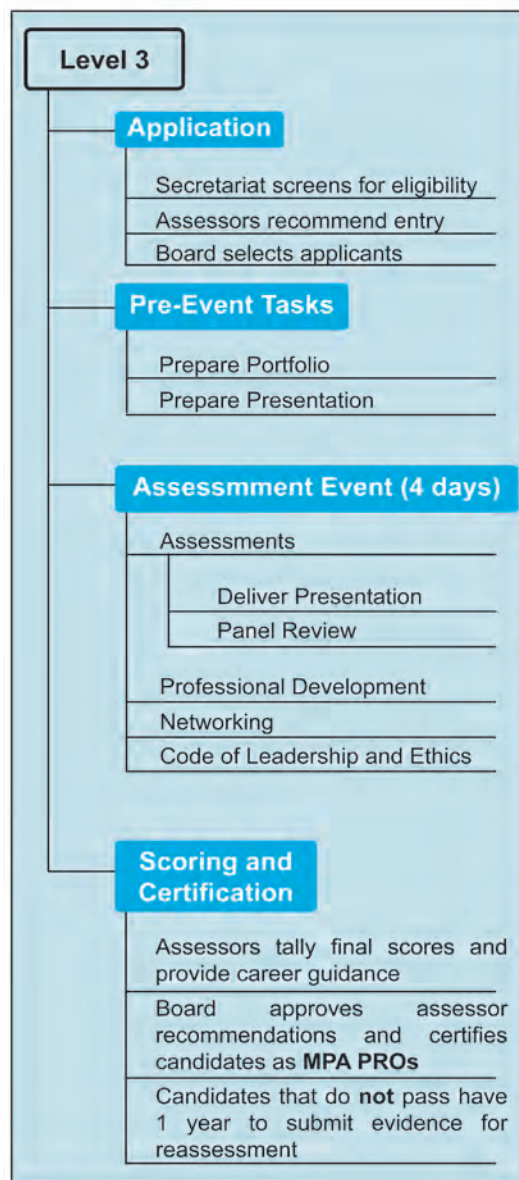


Figure 6. Process for Level 3 Certification.

## 6.3 Assessment Instruments

A set of four assessment instruments are used in Level 3:

1. Application (with telephone conversation)
2. Portfolio
3. Presentation
4. Panel Interview



© P. Chadwick

Our Heroes -MPA PROS Level 2 and Assessors speak to future potential WIO-COMPAS Candidates from Kuruwitu Conservation & Welfare Association, Kikambala Kenya, 2011.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A. Bibliography

WIO-COMPAS has produced numerous documents to capture the experience and share the model for others to replicate. Below are the key documents available.

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# CODE OF ETHICS AND LEADERSHIP

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### Preamble

Professionals working in marine protected area (MPA) management are engaged in a professional situation that is uniquely varied and complex. They are involved with their discipline, their colleagues, their local communities, especially those immediately abutting the protected area, their sponsors. They also engage other vested organizations ranging from their own governments, to funding agencies, to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their projects that are working in the area, to the private sector. They are addressing the goal of protecting an area's rich marine resources, while recognizing that these resources may also be of significant importance—both historically and today—in providing food and income to the communities that surround the protected area. Working in the field of such complex involvements and sometimes competing interests—as usually is the case in marine protected areas—there may be frequent misunderstandings, conflicts, and the need to make choices among conflicting values. These generate ethical dilemmas and demand practical leadership. It is a prime responsibility of professionals working in MPAs to anticipate these and to resolve them in a way that respects both the rights of the individuals and group stakeholders as well as the mandate of the protected area.

### The Program

The Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) Program is structured around four “E” components of Education, Experience, Examination and Ethics. Most importantly, it sets standards of performance and the levels of knowledge and applied skills and experience against which a “certified” individual is measured. WIO-COMPAS assesses the ability of individuals to apply critical thinking and decision-making to addressing the issues facing those working in MPAs—including such emerging issues as global climate change and linkages to a broader integrated coastal management context. The Program's use of standards implies a performance expectation—i.e., it is not enough to simply complete coursework. Rather, it is necessary to be able to apply the knowledge and skills at a certain level (standard) of proficiency, and to provide firm evidence of this. The Program has identified seven core areas of competence needed by individuals working at different levels within an MPA:

- MPA Governance
- Marine Conservation: MPAs and other approaches
- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement
- Human and Financial Resources Mobilization and Management
- Management Implementation and Effectiveness
- Biophysical and Social Environment Context
- Leadership, Ethics and Innovation

Equally important to setting the technical and management standards by which an MPA professional is judged, the Program has established ethical rules, a call for leadership, and good practices that underpin effective MPA management. Signing a statement to commit to these rules and good practices is the final requirement to receiving certification. The following principles are deemed fundamental to such responsible, ethical pursuit.



# Principles

## COMMITMENT TO MPAS

### Core Principle

As an MPA Professional, I recognize that:

- MPAs are an important management strategy for biodiversity conservation (including protection of endemic, rare and threatened species, restoration of natural ecosystem functioning, conservation of habitats for vulnerable life stages) and sustainable use (fisheries, recreation, tourism, education, research and aesthetic reasons).
- MPAs are one of many effective strategies for protection of coastal and marine biodiversity as well as contributing to the sustainable use of the coastal and marine resources.
- There is a diversity of MPAs based on their objectives and context.
- All MPAs must be established by law or other recognized means.
- Management of MPAs is complex as it involves working with different stakeholders with competing interests and influences; therefore observance of the ideals and principles as specified in this Code of Ethics is essential.

## PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Core Principle

As an MPA professional, I am responsible for adding value to the organizations I serve and the work I perform. I accept professional responsibility for my individual decisions and actions and serve as an advocate for the profession of MPA management by engaging in activities that enhance its credibility and value as a profession. I shall:

- Build respect, credibility and recognition for my profession within my organization, the communities in which I work, my government, and the private sector.
- Assist the organizations I serve in achieving their objectives and goals.
- Inform and educate current and future practitioners, the organizations I serve, and the general public about principles and practices that help the profession.
- Positively influence workplace and staff.
- Encourage professional decision-making and responsibility.
- Encourage social responsibility.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Core Principle

As an MPA professional, I must strive to meet the highest standards of competence and commit to strengthen our competencies on a continuous basis. I shall:

- Expand my knowledge of marine protected area management (MPA) and its relationship to the broader area of coastal ecosystem governance.
- Contribute to the body of knowledge, the evolution of the profession and the growth of individuals through on-the-job training, research and dissemination of knowledge.
- Keep current on the latest information, tools and techniques related to my profession through completion of continuing education courses, reading of professional journals and attendance at key conferences on marine protected area management and its related issues such as global climate change, etc.
- Ensure the use of both the physical and social sciences in shaping and implementing my work.
- Encourage others working in marine protected area management to become certified MPA professionals.

## **ETHICAL LEADERSHIP**

### **Core Principle**

Marine protected area professionals are expected to exhibit individual leadership as a role model for maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct. I shall:

- Set the standard and serve as an example for others.
- Earn individual respect and increase my credibility with those I serve.
- Question individual and group actions when necessary to ensure that decisions are ethical and are implemented in an ethical manner.
- Seek expert guidance if in doubt about the ethical propriety of a situation.
- Through teaching and mentoring, champion the development of others as ethical leaders in the profession and in organizations.

## **FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE**

### **Core Principle**

As a marine protected area professional, I am ethically responsible for promoting and fostering fairness and justice for the organizations for which I work and the clients which I serve. I shall:

- Create and sustain an environment that encourages all individuals to reach their fullest potential and the organization to reach its goals.
- Treat people with dignity, respect and compassion to foster a trusting work environment.
- Ensure everyone has the opportunity to develop their skills and new competences.
- Develop, administer and advocate policies and procedures that foster fair, consistent and equitable treatment for all.
- Regardless of personal interests, support decisions made by our organizations that are both ethical and legal and foster achievement of the goals of the organization.
- Act in a responsible manner and practice sound management in our work.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

### **Core Principle**

As a marine protected area professional, I must maintain a high level of trust with my stakeholders. I must protect the interests of my stakeholders as well as my professional integrity and should not engage in activities that create actual, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest. I shall:

- Adhere to and advocate the use of published policies of my organization.
- Refrain from using my position for personal, material or financial gain or the appearance of such.
- Refrain from giving or seeking preferential treatment in the human resources processes.

## **USE OF INFORMATION**

### **Core Principle**

Marine protected area professionals consider and protect the rights of individuals, especially in the acquisition and dissemination of information while ensuring truthful communications and facilitating informed decision-making. I shall:

- Build trust among constituents by the open exchange of information.
- Investigate the accuracy and source of information before using it.
- Safeguard restricted or confidential information.

My signature below signifies commitment to abide by this ethical code of conduct

---

**Name**

---

**Date**

## Appendix C. Level 1 – Marine Field Operations Competences

See the document *Assessment Requirements for Level 1* for a detailed list of competences and their associated range statements and other guidance materials.

<b>LEVEL 1 COMPETENCES and their STANDARDS</b> (points available for each)	
<b>1. MPA Governance</b> (including Policy, Strategy, Legislation and Compliance)	
<b>Sound understanding</b>	1.1.1 Of regulations and bylaws related the MPA (4)
<b>Basic Understanding</b>	1.1.2 Of the key species or habitat protected by international conventions (2) 1.1.3 Of national legislation for sectors related to marine areas (2)
<b>Ability</b>	1.1.4 To follow correct legal processes associated with enforcement activities (4) 1.1.5 To introduce ideas for improving compliance and enforcement (2) 1.1.6 To conduct surveillance patrols and record detailed observations (4)
<b>2. Marine Conservation: MPAs and other Approaches</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	2.1.1 Of their organisation’s structure, mandate and function, and own roles and responsibilities within the MPA (4) 2.1.2 Of the MPAs history, objectives and current priority issues (4)
<b>Basic Understanding</b>	2.1.3 Of the benefits and challenges of MPAs as a management tool (4) 2.1.4 Of different institutional models for MPA management (2)
<b>3. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement</b> (including networking, liaison, advocacy, negotiation)	
<b>3.1 Communication</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	3.1.1 Of different means of communicating within the context of MPAs (2)
<b>Ability</b>	3.1.2 To communicate effectively with various audiences (4) 3.1.3 To use electronic communication media and information technology (2)
<b>3.2 Engaging Stakeholders</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	3.2.1 Of how local stakeholders use and perceive resources (4)
<b>Ability</b>	3.2.2 To engage stakeholders in a socially and culturally appropriate manner (4) 3.2.3 To engage stakeholders to address minor conflicts in an effective manner (4)
<b>4. Human and Financial Resources Mobilisation and Management</b>	
<b>Sound understanding</b>	4.1.1 Of the MPA’s operating costs and financial system for their area of operations (4)
<b>Ability</b>	4.1.2 To follow the MPA’s financial management processes within their area of operations (4) 4.1.3 To develop a simple budget for their own activities (2) 4.1.4 To identify and recommend potential sources of revenue generation (2)
<b>5. Management Implementation and Effectiveness</b>	
<b>5.1 Planning and Reporting</b>	
<b>Basic Understanding</b>	5.1.1 Of logistical, infrastructure and Human resources requirements for management of the MPA (4) 5.1.2 Of how their role/position contributes to meeting the MPA’s objectives (4)

<p><b>Ability</b></p> <p>5.1.3 To develop one's own workplan (4)</p> <p>5.1.4 To implement one's work plans (4)</p> <p>5.1.5 To ensure proper maintenance of the MPA's infrastructure and equipment (4)</p> <p>5.1.6 To follow general health and safety procedures (4)</p> <p>5.1.7 To physically perform on the water (4)</p>
<p><b>5.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Research</b></p>
<p><b>Basic Understanding</b></p> <p>5.2.1 Of the purpose and outputs of monitoring, evaluation and research (2)</p>
<p><b>Ability</b></p> <p>5.2.2 To conduct basic monitoring protocols in the field (bio and social) (4)</p>
<p><b>5.3 Human Resources</b></p>
<p><b>Ability</b></p> <p>5.3.1 To supervise volunteers, researchers and contractors, and mentor junior personnel (4)</p>
<p><b>6. Biophysical and Socio-Economic Context</b></p>
<p><b>6.1 Marine and Coastal Ecology</b></p>
<p><b>Basic Understanding</b></p> <p>6.1.1 Of the ecosystems and species within the MPA and the interactions between them (4)</p> <p>6.1.2 Of the key threats to the ecological processes and species in the MPA's area and the implications for management (4)</p> <p>6.1.3 Of the oceanography influencing the MPA (2)</p>
<p><b>6.2 Fisheries</b></p>
<p><b>Basic Understanding</b></p> <p>6.2.1 Of the local fishing sector in and around the MPA (4)</p>
<p><b>6.3 Tourism</b></p>
<p><b>Basic Understanding</b></p> <p>6.3.1 Of the local Tourism sector (2)</p>
<p><b>6.4 Socio-economic and Cultural context</b></p>
<p><b>Sound understanding</b></p> <p>6.4.1 Of the role and contribution of the MPA to the livelihoods of local communities (4)</p>
<p><b>Basic understanding</b></p> <p>6.4.2 Of the historical, cultural and spiritual values of the MPA (where relevant) (2)</p>
<p><b>7. Leadership, Ethics and Innovation</b></p>
<p><b>Demonstrates</b></p> <p>7.1.1 Leading by example (4)</p> <p>7.1.2 Self-motivation (4)</p> <p>7.1.3 Ethical approach (4)</p> <p>7.1.4 Innovation (4)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 1 TOTAL POINTS = 140</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>70% OVERALL TO PASS, 60% in Each Competence Area</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Guidance in use of Understanding Standards</b></p> <p><b>THOROUGH</b> – comprehensive understanding and how it can be applied in diverse contexts</p> <p><b>SOUND</b> – detailed understanding and how to apply to their place, context</p> <p><b>BASIC</b> – general recognition (cite examples)</p>

# Appendix D. Level 2 – Site Management Competences

See the document *Assessment Requirements for Level 2* for a detailed list of competences and their associated range statements and other guidance materials.

<b>LEVEL 2 COMPETENCES and their STANDARDS</b> (points available for each)	
<b>1. MPA Governance</b> (including Policy, Strategy, Legislation and Compliance)	
<b>Thorough Understanding</b>	1.1.1 Of a range of compliance approaches (4 points) 1.1.2 Of legal enforcement requirements and processes (4)
<b>Sound understanding</b>	1.1.3 Of relevant national legislation and policies pertaining to MPAs (4) 1.1.4 Of the implications for MPA management of weaknesses in policy and legislation (2)
<b>Basic Understanding</b>	1.1.5 Of international legal and policy context for MPAs (2)
<b>Ability</b>	1.1.6 To contribute to legal and policy development for their MPA (2) 1.1.7 To pursue correct legal processes associated with enforcement activities (4) 1.1.8 To introduce ideas for improving compliance and enforcement (2)
<b>2. Marine Conservation: MPAs and other Approaches</b>	
<b>Thorough Understanding</b>	2.1.1 Of own organisation's structure, mandate and function. (4)
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	2.1.2 Of different institutional models for MPA management (4) 2.1.3 Of criteria for selection, establishment and delineation of MPAs (2) 2.1.4 Of different categories of MPAs in the region and nationally (2) 2.1.5 Challenges to establishment and management of MPAs (4)
<b>Basic Understanding</b>	2.1.6 Of large scale approaches to marine conservation and how their MPA fits into this (2)
<b>Ability</b>	2.1.7 To support the establishment and enhancement of decision-making bodies affecting their MPA (2) 2.1.8 To engage/influence decision-making bodies towards fulfilling MPA goals (4)
<b>3. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement</b> (including networking, liaison, advocacy, negotiation)	
<b>3.1 Communication</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	3.1.1 Of a range of communication approaches appropriate to the MPA (4)
<b>Ability</b>	3.1.2 To communicate effectively (4) 3.1.3 To contribute to development of effective written communication materials (4) 3.1.4 To use electronic communication media and information technology (4)
<b>3.2 Engaging Stakeholders</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	3.2.1 Of importance of effective and positive engagement with stakeholders to build a support base (4) 3.2.2 Of diverse techniques for ensuring participation of stakeholders (2)
<b>Ability</b>	3.2.3 To profile and describe stakeholder perceptions and interests (4) 3.2.4 To engage stakeholders use in a socially and culturally appropriate manner (2) 3.2.5 To engage stakeholders to address conflicts (4) 3.2.6 To contribute to the building of partnerships and a broad support base for the MPA (4)

<b>4. Human and Financial Resources Mobilisation and Management</b>
<b>Sound understanding</b> <b>4.1.1 Of financial processes as operated by the MPA organization (4)</b> <b>4.1.2 Of a range of appropriate alternative financing mechanisms for the MPA (4)Ability</b>
<b>Ability</b> 4.1.3 To write funding proposals for the MPA (4) 4.1.4 To develop and manage budgets associated with MPA management operations (4) 4.1.5 To assess the viability of alternative financing mechanisms for their MPA (2)
<b>5. Management Implementation and Effectiveness</b>
<b>5.1 Planning and Reporting</b>
<b>Thorough Understanding</b> 5.1.1 Of logistical and infrastructural requirements for management of own MPA (4)
<b>Sound Understanding</b> 5.1.2 Of the principles and practice of management planning (4) 5.1.3 Of safety and security issues associated with the MPA (4)
<b>Ability</b> 5.1.4 To make substantial contribution to the development of their MPA management and business plans (4) 5.1.5 To develop and implement monthly and annual work plans (4) 5.1.6 To produce coherent progress reports (4) 5.1.7 To identify appropriate infrastructure, equipment and materials for effective management of the MPA (4) 5.1.8 To ensure proper maintenance of the MPA's infrastructure and equipment (4) 5.1.9 To develop and implement contingency planning processes (4)
<b>5.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Research</b>
<b>Sound Understanding</b> 5.2.1 Of information needs for MPA management (4)
<b>Ability</b> 5.2.2 To contribute to the development of monitoring, evaluation and research Programs drawing on appropriate principles and practices (4) 5.2.3 To contribute to the analysis and interpretation of monitoring, evaluation and research outputs (4) 5.2.4 To apply monitoring, evaluation and research outputs towards adapting implementation actions/strategies (4)
<b>5.3 Human Resources</b>
<b>Sound Understanding</b> 5.3.1 Of human resource and skills requirements for effective management of the MPA (4) 5.3.2 Of appropriate techniques for measuring and assessing staff performance (4) 5.3.3 Of the recruitment and retention processes applicable to their organisation(2)
<b>Ability</b> 5.3.4 To undertake staff appraisals using agreed performance indicators (4) 5.3.5 To manage effective recruitment and retention processes for MPA staff, where required (2) 5.3.6 To supervise, mentor and provide leadership for MPA personnel and volunteers (4) 5.3.7 To identify training needs and coordinate implementation of training activities for MPA (4) 5.3.8 To write terms of reference and oversee the work of external service providers (2)
<b>6. Biophysical and Socio-Economic Context</b>
<b>6.1 Marine and Coastal Ecology</b>
<b>Thorough understanding</b> 6.1.1 Of the principal ecosystems and species within their MPA and the interactions between them (4) 6.1.2 Of the key threats to the ecological processes and species in their area and the implications for management (4)
<b>Sound understanding</b> 6.1.3 Of the interactions between marine and terrestrial ecosystems and species impacting on their MPA (4) 6.1.4 Of the oceanography influencing the MPA (2) 6.1.5 Of the potential impacts of climate change on the MPA (2)
<b>6.2 Fisheries</b>
<b>Sound understanding</b> 6.2.1 Of target fisheries species and their life histories (4) 6.2.2 Of local fishing sector in and around the MPA (4) 6.2.3 Of the principles of sustainable fisheries (2)

<b>6.3 Tourism</b>	
	<b>Sound Understanding</b> 6.3.1 Of the local tourism sector (4) 6.3.2 Of visitor needs and expectations (2)
<b>6.4 Socio-economic and Cultural context</b>	
	<b>Sound understanding</b> 6.4.1 Of the role and contribution of the MPA to the livelihoods of local communities (4)
	<b>Basic understanding</b> 6.4.2 Of the ecosystem services provided by the MPA (2) 6.4.3 Of the historical, cultural and spiritual values of the MPA (where relevant) (2)
<b>7. Leadership, Ethics and Innovation</b>	
	<b>Demonstrates</b> 7.1.1 Leading by example (8) 7.1.2 Self-motivation (8) 7.1.3 Ethical approach (8) 7.1.4 Innovation (8)
<b>LEVEL 2 TOTAL POINTS = 254</b> <b>70% OVERALL TO PASS, 60% in Each Competence Area</b>	
<b>Guidance in use of Understanding Standards</b>  <b>THOROUGH</b> – comprehensive understanding and how it can be applied in diverse contexts <b>SOUND</b> – detailed understanding and how to apply to their place, context <b>BASIC</b> – general recognition (cite examples)	

## Appendix E. Level 3 – Strategy, Policy and Planning Competences

See the document *Assessment Requirements for Level 3* for a detailed list of competences and their associated range statements and other guidance materials.

<b>LEVEL 3 COMPETENCES and their STANDARDS</b> (points available for each)	
<b>1. MPA Governance</b> (including Policy, Strategy, Legislation and Compliance)	
<b>Thorough Understanding</b>	
1.1.1	Of the national legal requirements and processes as pertaining to the marine and coastal environment and resources, with a specific focus on MPAs. (4 - points)
1.1.2	Of appropriate institutional governance structures and processes for effective management of MPAs (4)
1.1.3	Of the range of compliance options available in their area of operation (4)
<b>Sound understanding</b>	
1.1.4	Of the regional and international legal and policy contexts for the marine and coastal environment, with a specific focus on MPAs (4)
<b>Ability</b>	
1.1.5	To influence and provide critical input into national legal requirements and processes pertaining to the marine and coastal environment with specific focus on MPAs. (4)
1.1.6	To engage in and deliberate international policy through international conventions/task teams and work groups (2)
1.1.7	To develop and implement organizational strategies and policies consistent with national legislative framework (4)
1.1.8	To influence and provide critical input into strategies to meet national and international conservation obligations (2)
1.1.9	To develop guidelines and sanctions for a compliance strategy (4)
<b>2. Marine Conservation: MPAs and other Approaches</b>	
<b>Thorough Understanding</b>	
2.1.1	Of large scale approaches to marine and coastal conservation (4)
2.1.2	Of the purposes, values, principles, critiques, and benefits of MPAs, and criteria for selection/proclamation of MPAs (4)
<b>Ability</b>	
2.1.3	To scale up the experiences and practices gained at local and national levels to regional and international levels. (2)
2.1.4	To contribute substantially towards large-scale marine and coastal conservation initiatives (4)
2.1.5	To contribute substantially towards identification of and motivations for proclamation of MPAs (4)
2.1.6	To influence and contribute to planning processes for terrestrial areas adjacent to MPAs (2)
<b>3. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement</b> (including networking, liaison, advocacy, negotiation)	
<b>3.1 Communication</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	
3.1.1	Of the role of effective communication with appropriate audiences in supporting marine and coastal conservation, with a particular focus on MPAs (4)
3.1.2	Of the role of advocacy in promoting marine and coastal conservation and the appropriate advocacy processes to be followed (4)
<b>Ability</b>	
3.1.3	To communicate and negotiate effectively with a wide range of different audiences at a decision-making level (4)
3.1.4	To maintain a high positive profile for marine and coastal conservation using appropriate methods (4)
3.1.5	To contribute to the development and engage in the dialogue of a strategic network for marine conservation at national and regional levels (2)
3.1.6	To contribute towards the development and implementation of a communication strategy for promotion of marine and coastal conservation at a national level (2)
<b>3.2 Engaging Stakeholders</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	
3.2.1	Of the key stakeholders in marine and coastal conservation at a national, regional and international level (4)
3.2.2	Of a range of methods for the engagement of key stakeholders (4)
<b>Ability</b>	
3.2.2	To develop and maintain effective and productive relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders (4)
3.2.3	To mediate conflicts between key stakeholders (2)



<b>4. Human and Financial Resources Mobilisation and Management</b>	
<b>Thorough Understanding</b>	4.1.1 Of the range of instruments available for accessing and mobilizing resources for MPA management (4) 4.1.2 Of the human capacity requirements at all levels for effective management of MPAs within their national context (4)
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	4.1.3 Of regulatory frameworks concerning financial regulations and processes from a national and institutional perspective (4)
<b>Ability</b>	4.1.4 To define and strategise for resource requirements through the development and implementation of strategic and business plans (4) 4.1.5 To effectively identify, access and allocate essential resources (4) 4.1.6 To provide effective support for MPA personnel at all levels (4) 4.1.7 To provide and define the TORs/KPAs/Training requirements for MPA personnel (2)
<b>5. Management Implementation and Effectiveness</b>	
<b>5.1 Planning and Reporting</b>	
<b>Thorough Understanding</b>	5.1.1 Of appropriate planning processes for MPA management and marine conservation (4) 5.1.2 Of reporting processes and protocols for key national and international stakeholders in MPA management and marine conservation (2)
<b>Ability</b>	5.1.3 To develop or contribute significantly towards the development of MPA management plans, and broader scale marine conservation plans (4) 5.1.4 To support the effective implementation of management plans by MPA personnel (4) 5.1.5 To produce accurate, informative and accessible reports for key stakeholders (4) 5.1.6 To support effective implementation of reporting processes within the organisation (2)
<b>5.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Research</b>	
<b>Thorough Understanding</b>	5.2.1 Of appropriate management effectiveness review and monitoring and evaluation processes for MPAs and marine conservation initiatives (4)
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	5.2.2 Of current research related to MPA management and marine conservation in their region and globally (2)
<b>Ability</b>	5.2.3 To facilitate management effectiveness reviews and evaluations (4) 5.2.4 To guide and support adequate response and adaptation in relation to review and evaluation outcomes (4) 5.2.5 To identify critical research needs for MPAs within their area of jurisdiction (2) 5.2.6 To ensure incorporation of research outcomes in planning and management processes (2)
<b>6. Biophysical and Socio-Economic Context</b>	
<b>6.1 Marine and Coastal Ecology</b>	
<b>Thorough Understanding</b>	6.1.1 Of the bioregions and ecosystems within their area of jurisdiction (4) 6.1.2 Of the key threats to ecosystem processes within their area of jurisdiction (4) 6.1.3 Of the oceanographic processes within their area of jurisdiction (4)
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	6.1.4 Of emerging issues, including climate change, and potential adaptations to these in their area of jurisdiction (4)
<b>6.2 Fisheries</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	6.2.1 Of fisheries activities within their areas of jurisdiction (4)
<b>6.3 Tourism</b>	
<b>Sound Understanding</b>	6.3.1 Of tourism activities within their area of jurisdiction (4)
<b>6.4 Socio-economic and Cultural context</b>	
<b>Thorough understanding</b>	6.4.1 Of the socio-economic and cultural context within their area of jurisdiction (4) 6.4.2 Of the socio-economic and cultural implications of marine and coastal conservation initiatives in their area of jurisdiction (4)

## 7. Leadership, Ethics and Innovation

### Demonstrates

- 7.1.1 Leading by example (8)
- 7.1.2 Self-motivation (8)
- 7.1.3 Ethical approach (8)
- 7.1.4 Innovation (8)

**LEVEL 3 TOTAL POINTS = 214**  
**70% OVERALL TO PASS, 60% in Each Competence Area**

### Guidance in use of Understanding Standards

**THOROUGH** – comprehensive understanding and how it can be applied in diverse contexts

**SOUND** – detailed understanding and how to apply to their place, context

**BASIC** – general recognition (cite examples)





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L 103 Candidates supervised by MPA PRO Level 1, Besta Msumange, on a field simulation exercise, Mafia Island Marine Park, Tanzania, 2011.

# WIO COMPAS

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