# WIO-COMPAS

Western Indian Ocean • Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals

# PROGRAMME HANDBOOK
## Overview, Policies, Procedures and Rules

Version 1.9
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*Certified by:*

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association &

The Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island

Endorsed by IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas

WIMSA    Coastal Resources Center

# Table of Contents

# 1. Introduction

This handbook provides a detailed description of the Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) Programme elements, processes, rules and policies. It is a resource to help marine protected area (MPA) professionals, donors and potential applicants understand how the Programme is structured and how to engage in this unique offering.

Section one provides a brief overview of the WIO-COMPAS Programme and its history. Section two provides further details on the levels of certification, competences and fee structure. Section three highlights the organizational structure. Section four explains the policies and rules regarding appeals and renewals. Sections five, six and seven outline the three levels of certification that are offered. The Programme's supporting documents—the Code of Ethics and detailed competences—are included as appendices. Copies of the handbook and other resources are available at www.wio-compas.org.

## 1.1 Overview of the WIO-COMPAS Programme

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

This first-in-the-world certification Programme 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.

The main objective of WIO-COMPAS is to recognize those individuals working in MPAs whose knowledge and skills meet a level of professional standard and to further enhance those 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. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) have provided initial funding for the Programme. The European Union-funded ReCoMap project (Regional Coastal Management Programme) managed by the Indian Ocean Commission, has also provided additional financial support.

The WIO-COMPAS Programme is structured around four "E" components of **E**xperience, **E**xamination, **E**ducation, and **E**thics. While the Programme is NOT a training course, it does provide candidates with professional development sessions on emerging issues. Candidates are assessed on their proven performance in the work place prior to applying for certification. Then multiple assessment instruments are used to score candidate's 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 Programme and the profession of MPA management.

**Three Levels of Certification are offered:**
- *Level 1- Marine Field Operations*: professionals similar in daily duties of an MPA ranger, field researcher or marine field operator engaging communities and enforcing laws
- *Level 2- Site Management*: professionals at a site with supervisory responsibilities, similar to MPA manager, warden or section leaders
- *Level 3- Policy and Planning*: professionals involved in higher-level management, strategy, planning and policy development

**Core Competence Areas of the Programme**
The Programme has identified seven core areas of competences needed by a range of individuals working at different levels within an MPA. Each of the first six core areas has detailed competences and standards (levels of understanding and ability). See appendices for the specific competences and standards for each level of certification. The seventh competence area is Leadership and Ethics. 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 10% of the overall assessment score.

*Seven Core Competence Areas*
- Policy, Legislation and Compliance
- MPA Concepts and Establishment
- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement
- Financial Management and Fundraising
- Management Operations
- Biophysical and Social Environment Context
- Leadership and Ethics

Details of the Programme, schedule of certification offerings, resources and WIO-COMPAS Programme members (MPA PROs) and their case studies are available at www.wio-compas.org

## 1.2 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 nevertheless underway as communities and government recognize the value of coastal resources in providing food, livelihood, 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 (e.g., global warming), including that of 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.

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. 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 within each competence area 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 professional agree to abide. The WIO-COMPAS Programme represents this "next" step and offers the first-of-its-kind certification of MPA professionals.

**Involving Regional Experts in the Development**
Development of the WIO-COMPAS Programme began in 2006, lead 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 enrollees in the Programme and those who would fund/support their participation
- Holding regional experts workshops to solicit input, ideas, and vet the WIO-COMPAS model ( Kenya 2007 and Tanzania 2008) and revisions to the Programme based on evaluations (Tanzania 2008)
- Hiring as part of the team, regional experts with both marine/coastal field experience and credentials in education (including certification programs), curriculum design, professional development, and learning assessments
- Developing the Programme Framework, Operational Structure, and Business/Marketing Plan to include a strategy for long-term funding of the Programme
- Establishing the WIO-COMPAS Advisory Committee and its roles and responsibilities
- Securing endorsement by the IUCN (World Conservation Union) World Commission on Protected Areas

## 1.3    How Does Certification Differ from Training Certificates?

There is a clear distinction between certification programmes and certificate programmes. The latter term is used to describe a programme of training and/or education that awards a certificate of completion when an individual successfully finishes a course of study. In contrast, successful completion of a certification programme signals that an individual has reached certain standards of performance and has 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. "Certification involves a comparison to established criteria (a predetermined measure), usually by passing a test. (In contrast), a certificate shows a completion of learning experience... The quality of and minimum standards required by these certificate programmes can very greatly from institution to institution (Boos, Diane. SoundOff. June Chapter Meeting. "Certification, yea/nay?")." Similarly, the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Certification Institute defines the differences between certificate and certification programmes as: "Certificates: an award given to an individual recognizing completion of an academic or training programme" and "Certification: A process, often voluntary, by which individuals who have demonstrated a level of expertise in the profession are identified to the public and other stakeholders by a third party (GIS Certification Institute. GIS Certification Frequently Asked Questions. www.Gisci.org/certification)."  WIO-COMPAS may refer individuals who are interested in but who lack the requisite skills to be accepted into the Programme to other training courses. Such training courses/certificate programs can often help individuals strengthen their skill sets to meet the performance standards necessary to gain enrollment into the Programme.

## 1.4    How Do You Benefit from WIO-COMPAS?

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 he/she possesses the necessary skills and experience, and commits to the professional code of ethics. MPA PRO identifies them not simply as an MPA practitioner, but as an MPA professional.

- **Focused on WIO Region** – the programme 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!

- **Skills for the Future** – in addition to assessments, candidates receive professional development and networking during the assessment process. Assessments focus on what you have done in the past. Professional development sessions provide you with the latest tools and experience for acting in the future. WIO region doesn't have a strong formal network for MPA professionals – WIO-COMPAS is focused on providing MPA PROs with networking services after they are certified!

# 2. The Programme

The overall goal of the Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) Programme is to provide a framework that promotes competence, professionalism, and ethical conduct in Marine Protected Area (MPA) management through a process that:

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

More specifically, the Programme:

- Defines for the first time the full spectrum of core competences required to perform a range of functions—at a professional level—within an MPA
- 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 East Africa, or East Asia, or elsewhere)
- Supports (not necessarily eliminates) needed on-the-job training
- Provides employers with a valuable staff 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

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.

## 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 in 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 responsibilities for the day-to-day management of an MPA, and who has basic administrative responsibilities.

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

**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.

**Ideal candidate**: an MPA Manager, Assistant Manger, Site Manager, 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 – Policy and Planning*

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

**Ideal candidate**: MPA Manager, Conservation Director, Head of Division 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
- Producing media articles/academic papers, reports for partners and funding agencies, and media articles

## 2.2 Entry Requirements to the Programme

Entry requirements for the WIO-COMPAS Programme 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 1. Entry requirements for each certification level**

| Level of Certification | Focus of Competences | Entry Requirements |
|---|---|---|
| **Level 1 – Marine Field Operations** | Practical functions and responsibilities with basic administrative responsibilities<br><br>Examples include MPA Ranger, Officer, or Marine Field Operator | ▪ At least 2 years experience in practical MPA operations;<br>▪ Written proficiency in language of certification assessment (country specific); and<br>▪ Completed secondary level education or 10 years of experience in a protected area |
| **Level 2 – Site Management** | Management, supervisory and administrative functions and responsibilities<br><br>Examples include MPA Manager, Site Manager, Warden, Deputy Warden, Section Ranger or Division Head | ▪ At least 3 years experience as a level 2 MPA management professional;<br>▪ Written proficiency in language of certification assessment; and<br>▪ Graduated from secondary level education and/or Level 1 certified |
| **Level 3 – Policy and Planning** | Principally high-level management, strategy and policy development, and administrative functions and responsibilities<br><br>Examples include MPA Manager, Conservation Director, Head of Divisions or Director | ▪ At least 5 years experience as a level 3 MPA management professional;<br>▪ Written proficiency in official language; and<br>▪ Graduated with at least a Bachelor's or Masters Degree and/or Level 2 certified |

## 2.3 Competences of MPA Professionals

The WIO-COMPAS Programme 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. The WIO-COMPAS competences complement other international assessment programmes 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 and D.

**Table 2. Summary of the seven competence areas and their objectives**

| Competence Area | Objectives |
|---|---|
| **Policy, Legislation and Compliance** | Should demonstrate strong understanding of how MPAs; own work is shaped by relevant legislation and the organization's mandate and structure<br><br>Should demonstrate how this understanding is used in determining the best institutional and management arrangements for the MPA |
| **MPA Concepts and Establishment** | Should demonstrate understanding of the types of MPA management arrangements used internationally and how they link to larger coastal conservation programmes<br><br>Should show ability to support institutional strategies for MPA management |
| **Communication and Stakeholder Engagement** | Should demonstrate clear understanding of the importance of and techniques for working with a wide range of stakeholders at local, regional and national levels<br><br>Should show strong abilities to work with diverse stakeholders particularly at local and regional levels in support of the MPA management |
| **Financial Management and Fundraising** | Should understand range of alternative funding mechanisms for MPAs; ability to fundraise, manage budgets |
| **Management Operations**<br>▪ Planning and Reporting<br>▪ Monitoring and Evaluation<br>▪ Human Resources | Should demonstrate strong understanding of the role of MPAs in the broader marine conservation arena, and the particular contribution of own MPA to this broader conservation agenda<br><br>Should demonstrate how MPA conservation is reflected in the detailed operational functioning of own MPA<br><br>Should show how the operational functioning is geared towards sustainability of the management of the MPA |
| **Biophysical and Social Environment Context**<br>▪ Marine and Coastal Ecology<br>▪ Fisheries<br>▪ Tourism<br>▪ Socio-economic and Cultural | Should demonstrate detailed understanding of principles of ecology and ecology of their MPA and surrounding area, including the marine and adjoining terrestrial components<br><br>Should demonstrate ability to use this understanding to develop and implement management strategies to protect the ecology of the MPA, and support protection of the surrounding area ecology |
| **Leadership and Ethics** | Ability to identify real issues and opportunities - then to select and apply appropriate approaches, tools and interventions to achieve positive results through exhibiting personal leadership qualities of self-motivation, pro-activeness, innovation and adaptability underpinned by ethical principles |

## 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. For example, Levels 2 and 3 must produce a workplace case study and attend an assessment event that is either national or regional, while Level 1 assessment events are national or sub-national, are held at an MPA site, and are conducted in the local language.

### Figure 1. Comparison of the Process for Certification Between Levels
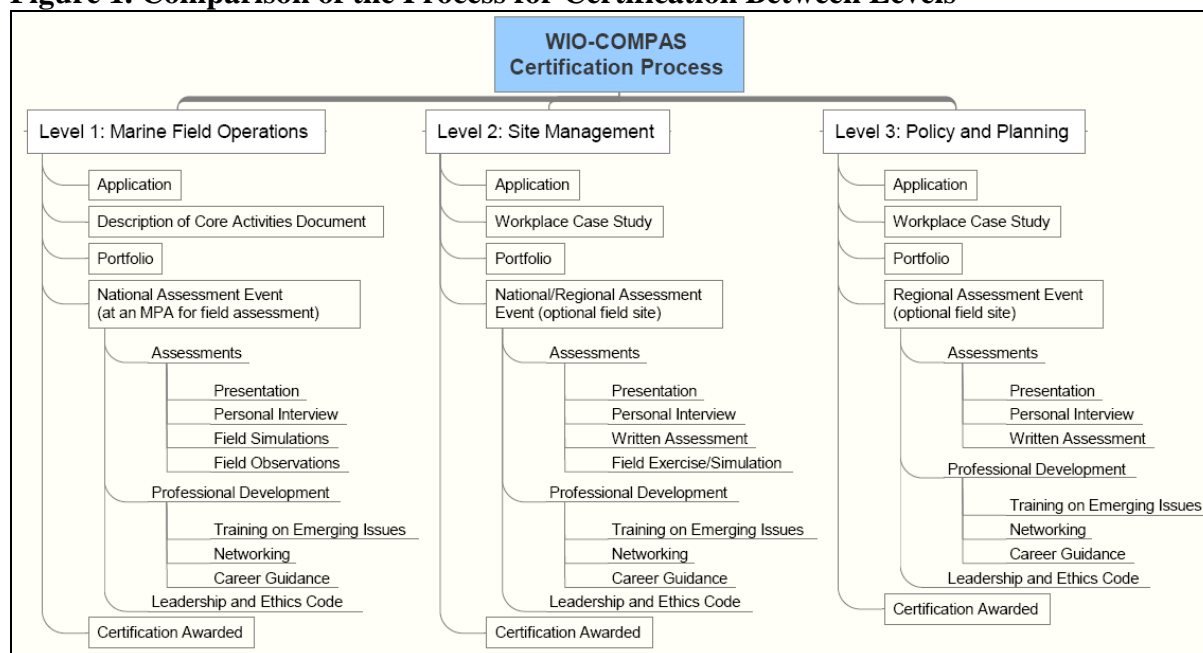


## 2.5 Assessment Instruments

A set of six assessment instruments are available for assessors to use 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. Not every assessment instrument is used to "score" a candidate's competences. Some assessment instruments simply provide the candidate with the opportunity to provide further evidence of their experience and abilities. Each certification level uses a different combination of assessment instrument to accurately and fairly assess candidate's competences. Sections 5, 6 and 7 of this Handbook provide detailed overviews of the assessment instruments for each Level.

The first assessment instrument is part of the application phase. It is used to assess an applicant's experience to date and form the basis for accepting or declining their entry into the Programme. This instrument does not use scoring. It simply vets whether an applicant does/does not meet the entry requirements and have the appropriate level of experience on the job.

1. *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.

*Telephone Interview* — as part of the application review process, interviews provide further opportunity to probe the applicant's background and experience put forth in the application and begins to establish a relationship between the applicant and his/her assigned assessor. Provides further indications of areas of experience, with more depth on applicant's involvement with different activities linked to the competence areas—i.e., may expose applicant's applied experience and actual achievements. May indicate areas where particular focus should be placed during assessment. Telephone interviews are unlikely to be used in Level 1 certification.

It is only after the application review that a decision is made to accept or decline the applicant into the Programme 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.

2. *Workplace Case-study* — provides candidate with the opportunity to demonstrate a number of work-related competences, especially in areas for which there may otherwise be limited evidence available. The focus of the case-study is agreed upon between the applicant and the assessor. It should focus on a topic that will allow the candidate to demonstrate additional evidence of their professional competence in a certain area. Outputs from the applicant's case-study—a written report and presentation delivered during the Assessment Event—should help provide this evidence. Case-studies should also demonstrate competence in areas such as communication (presentations and reporting) as well as in specific technical competence areas related to the particular study being undertaken. All competences that are to be 'tested' through the case-study are made explicit and agreed upon with the applicant at the outset.

   Towards the end of the Assessment Event, candidates are required to update the lessons and recommendations sections of their case study report based on new ideas gained from discussions and presentations. This provides evidence of the candidate's thorough understanding of issues and their ability to apply this understanding in the workplace. Candidates present an outline of their revisions to the assessors in a face-to-face interview. Candidates submit their final case study reports within two weeks of the end of the Event. Case studies are posted on the WIO-COMPAS website's document library.

3. *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. Candidates bring to the Assessment Event a single large binder containing their organized portfolio. Additional details on what portfolios should include are part of the portfolio guidelines document provided to candidates. Wherever possible, a supervisor or other senior manager should verify/certify that the work is the product of the candidate. Individual documents (preferred) can be verified, or the portfolio overall can be verified. The portfolio is essential in providing firm evidence of a wide range of competences. Contents of the portfolio should provide much of the basis for the face-to-face interview. Because the validity of portfolios is difficult to ensure, other assessment tools, used throughout the process will help to substantiate or bring into question the validity of the portfolio. How the portfolio is organized and presented will provide evidence also of competences related to information management and communication.

4. *Written Assessment* — 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. Outcomes of the written assessment also inform the focus of the face-to-face interview.

5. *Observation and Simulations* — observations of the manner in which candidates engage in debates and activities during the Assessment Event can highlight a candidate's general level of understanding, confidence, and professionalism. The Assessment Event may require candidates to demonstrate particular competences—e.g., conducting a guided tour or enforcing regulations. Candidates may be required to participate in role-plays that simulate events such as meetings between MPA staff and local communities and their performance in these can provide evidence of specific competences—especially those that involve communication and understanding of the subject matter. While observations are most useful in assessing overall competence, confidence and professionalism, they can also provide insights into the candidate's ethical stance in terms of how they deal with others.

6. *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. Final assessment of many of the competences should be achieved through the interview.


## 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 each competence to the standards required. Though they don't need to have experience in every individual competence – only enough within each competence area overall.

Candidates must participate in all of the assessment instruments – from presenting a work portfolio, to attending the event, to producing a workplace case study, to completing a written assessment. Candidates do not receive scores for these instruments, only the individual competences receive scores.

Each competence is allocated a weighting of either 2 or 4 points to reflect overall importance in the full assessment scheme. For example, competences assigned a weight of 4, can be scored from 0-4 while those assigned a weight of 2, can be scored from 0-2. 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 first six competence areas. The Leadership competence area requires a minimum score of 25%.

Candidates who score **between 60 - 69%** can 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 within one year of the assessment event (they are not required to attend another assessment event). If the evidence indicates sufficient improvement has been made, the individual may be certified. Costs related to this professional development are the sole responsibility of the candidate.

Candidates scoring **below 60%** overall are ineligible to be certified at the level in which they enroled. 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 in the competence areas in which they scored low.

At the close of the Assessment Event, assessors will produce a short report on each candidate they assessed. The report includes the assessor's judgment of the candidate's overall performance and the candidate's assessment scores in each competence area. Assessors also provide candidates with

individualized guidance on professional development to further the candidate's career. The WIO-COMPAS Secretariat forwards the assessors' recommendations for certification to the Board for their review and approval. Once approved, the Secretariat mails a formal letter of acknowledgement to the candidate's supervisor and agency director. The supervisor is encouraged to formally acknowledge the candidate's achievement in a public forum of colleagues. The certified professional (now called an MPA-PRO) will be mailed a set of signed certification documents, including the signed certification award, code of ethics, transcript and professional development guidance.

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**Example of the Scoring Process**

Scoring is based on the competences, not on the assessment instruments. This means that the instruments (case study, portfolio, presentation, interview and written assessment) do not carry particular scores. Rather, they are used as methods to provide evidence for scoring an individual's competence/performance in a specific area. For example, candidates are not scored on their case study report. What they are scored on is their mastery of the competences used to develop the case study and the topics covered. While low scores on the report would not subtract points from the candidate's overall assessment score, it would translate into one less opportunity for the candidate to provide evidence of his/her competence and experience. Improved performance demonstrated through results from another assessment instrument can still lead the candidate to attain their maximum score.

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## 2.7 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 programmes
- Guidelines for MPA management
- Management of people and leadership
- Conflict management
- Proposal writing and fundraising strategies

## 2.8 MPA PRO Networking

There is more to the WIO-COMPAS Programme after the assessments are conducted. MPA PROs—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) highlights the achievements and knowledge 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—recognizing their achievements and experience. Making these profiles available also helps in the goal of networking MPA PROs with each other and with other MPA professionals throughout the region. That said, many MPA PROs have limited time and/or access to the internet with which to take advantage of peer-to-peer learning and sharing of experience. For this reason, WIO-COMPAS has established a private blog for MPA PROs to use in communicating, sharing lessons, and initiating joint articles that summarize practices for priority management issues in the region.

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

## 2.9 Code of Ethics

Equally important to setting the technical and management standards by which an MPA professional is judged, the Programme 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 with their fellow candidates at the closing ceremony. See Appendix B for the Code of Ethics and Section 4.6 for the rules related to ethical violations of MPA PROs.

# 3. Organizational Structure

## 3.1 Governance

**Figure 2. WIO-COMPAS organizational structure**
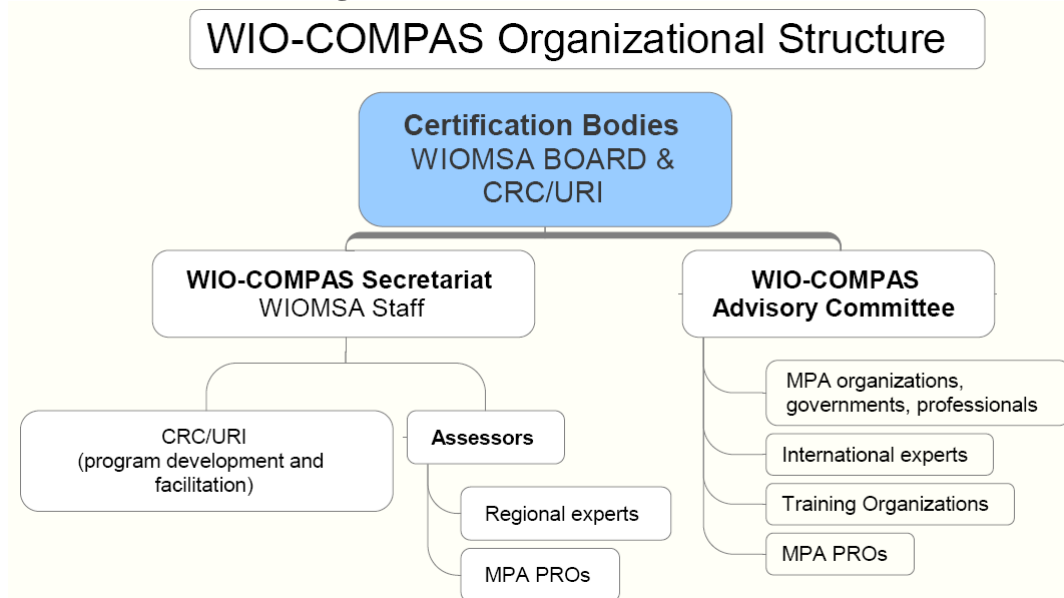


Five groups share in different governance aspects of the WIO-COMPAS Programme.

*Certification Bodies*. The WIOMSA Board serves as the legal entity to the WIO-COMPAS Programme. 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 Programme as a whole.

*Advisory Committee*. An advisory committee provides guidance and feedback to WIOMSA and the Secretariat on how to maintain rigor, decentralize the Programme and identify opportunities for certification offerings. The committee is comprised of regional and international representatives including the CRC/URI and capacity-building institutions.

*Programme Secretariat*. WIOMSA has dedicated staff that serves as the Secretariat for WIO-COMPAS. Their role is to provide coordination and day-to-day operations and act as a hub for assessors. CRC/URI assists the Secretariat in developing their capacity and procedures through back office support, Programme development and delivery, as well as providing technical support to the Programme as a whole. CRC/URI is a co-certifier and will conduct quality control evaluations annually to ensure high standards of operation and integrity of the Programme.

*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 case study, conducting the assessment event and providing recommendations to the Board for certification of successful candidates. Assessors conduct the assessment activities only. The Secretariat (and local partners) manages all logistics and marketing of the certification offerings.

*MPA organizations.* The MPA organizations, both government and non-governmental, play a key role in promoting the Programme, 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.

## 3.2 Venues for Assessment Events

WIO-COMPAS is a decentralized Programme that partners with established MPAs and training institutions to deliver certifications. Venues for the Assessment Events are often in or near MPA sites. Additional venues include national and regional training institutions. While not always possible, the advantage to holding an Assessment Event at/near an MPA site is that it provides for ease and efficiency in conducting field exercises and increasing the networking that can take place between MPA professionals The venue of each certification event is identified during the application period, including on the WIO-COMPAS website.

## 3.3 Qualifications for Assessors

Assessors are selected based on qualifications in the area of language skills, MPA expertise, and in understanding the theory behind *and* with experience in applying professional assessments. Additional requirements are knowledge of the MPA sites in their own countries, and written and oral skills in the main languages of their country (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Qualifications for Assessors**

| Level 1 Assessors | Level 2 Assessors |
|---|---|
| 5 years field experience in protected area management, particularly MPAs | 10 years field experience in protected area management, particularly MPAs |
| 4 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation in a related field | 5 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation in a related field |
| 2 years experience in assessment procedures | 3 years experience in assessment procedures |
| Experience in relevant training an advantage | |
| Good knowledge of sites in relevant country | |
| Excellent personal organizational skills | |
| Strong team working skills | |
| Fluency in local languages/dialects (not required, but an advantage) | |

# 4. Operations and Rules

## 4.1 Fees and Scholarships

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

**Level 1 and 2 Certification\***

- Certification Fee – USD $2,000
- Renewal Fee – USD $100

        * Fees for Level 3 will be finalized soon.

**The certification fee covers:**
- Administrative costs associated with reviewing applications and enrolment
- Assessment costs including resource materials, professional development programs and a personal assessor
- 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 case study
- 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

A **deposit** (USD$200) is due within two weeks of acceptance into the Programme. Formal letters of support from donors are accepted instead of a financial deposit. Full payment is due three weeks before the Assessment Event.

**Scholarships**

A limited number of partial scholarships are 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.

## 4.2 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 Programme.

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

1. Secretariat reviews 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 interview
4. Assessors submit their recommendations 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:
   - Completeness of application (Secretariat screens for entry requirements) and all supporting documentation/evidence
   - Appropriateness of professional experience
   - Number of years of work experience in MPAs
   - Level of active involvement in management of the MPA
   - Equitable country representative (i.e., seeking regional balance)
   - 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)
   - Gender balance (when possible)
   - Ability to pay certification fees or only require minimal scholarship assistance
6. 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
7. Board approves candidate roster 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 Programme's competence areas. The review also advises the applicant of training courses that might increase the applicant's competence and their chances of being accepting into the Programme at a later date.

## 4.3 Appealing Decision and Re-Entering the Programme

Applicants not accepted to the Programme 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 (or the WIO-COMPAS sub-committee), 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 Programme

*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

## 4.4 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 activity at one of the accredited training institutions in the region (check the WIO-COMPAS website for details). 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
- Participating in at least one online discussion forum with fellow certified MPA professionals (available on the WIO-COMPAS website in 2010)
- Participating in telephone interview with an assessor to discuss job-related performance *

*This may also include, for those interested in enrolling in another level of certification, a discussion of eligibility and/or additional professional development necessary to prepare for eligibility.

By renewing his/her 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.

## 4.5 Forgery and Cheating

If assessors suspect a candidate is cheating or lying about their experience, the assessor must report this in writing to the Secretariat/Board for their follow-up. Should the charges be verified, a candidate may drop out of the Programme and avoid further action. However, the charges will be noted in the candidate's records.

## 4.6 Code of Ethics Violations

Candidates must sign their agreement to abide by the WIO-COMPAS Programme Code of Ethics. 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.

## 4.7 Assessors

WIO-COMPAS has an open hiring process for assessors. Qualifications for assessors vary by Programme Levels. Assessors participate in a comprehensive training 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.

# 5. Level 1 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.

## 5.1 Process

The process for Level 1 certification is similar to Level 2 though with more time allocated to field simulations. The process of being certified can take less than six months from application to certification. Those enrolled in the Programme will invest approximately two-three weeks of dedicated time overall. Figure 1 in Section 2 outlined the steps in the Level 1 certification process. 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. Candidates must produce a case study presentation and portfolio before attending the six-day 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.

## 5.2 Competences

Level 1 Certification has 38 competences and standards across the seven core competence areas. This number of competences reflects the broad skills necessary to be an MPA professional. It's also required in order to maintain a rigorous and accurate assessment programme. The competence focus is on practical field operations.

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 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. Simulation
6. Observation
7. Face-to-Face Interview

Less time is allocated to the application phase. Instead assessors devote most of their time to conducting field exercises with candidates at an MPA to determine competence. Candidates must prepare a "core activities' document and presentation, as well as a portfolio before arriving at the Assessment Event. There are significant simulation and observation assessment instruments at the Assessment Event to allow candidates to provide further evidence in the field.

# 6. Level 2 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.

## 6.1 Process

The process of being certified can take less than six months from application to certification. Those enrolled in the Programme will invest approximately one month of time overall. Figure 3 outlines the steps in the Level 2 certification process. 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. Candidates must produce a case study report and portfolio before attending 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 (or the assessors) are invited to the Assessment Event to discuss emerging issues related to MPAs or improved practices related to specific competences.

*Level 2 Assessment Event*

A full six 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

**Figure 3. Process for Level 2 Certification**
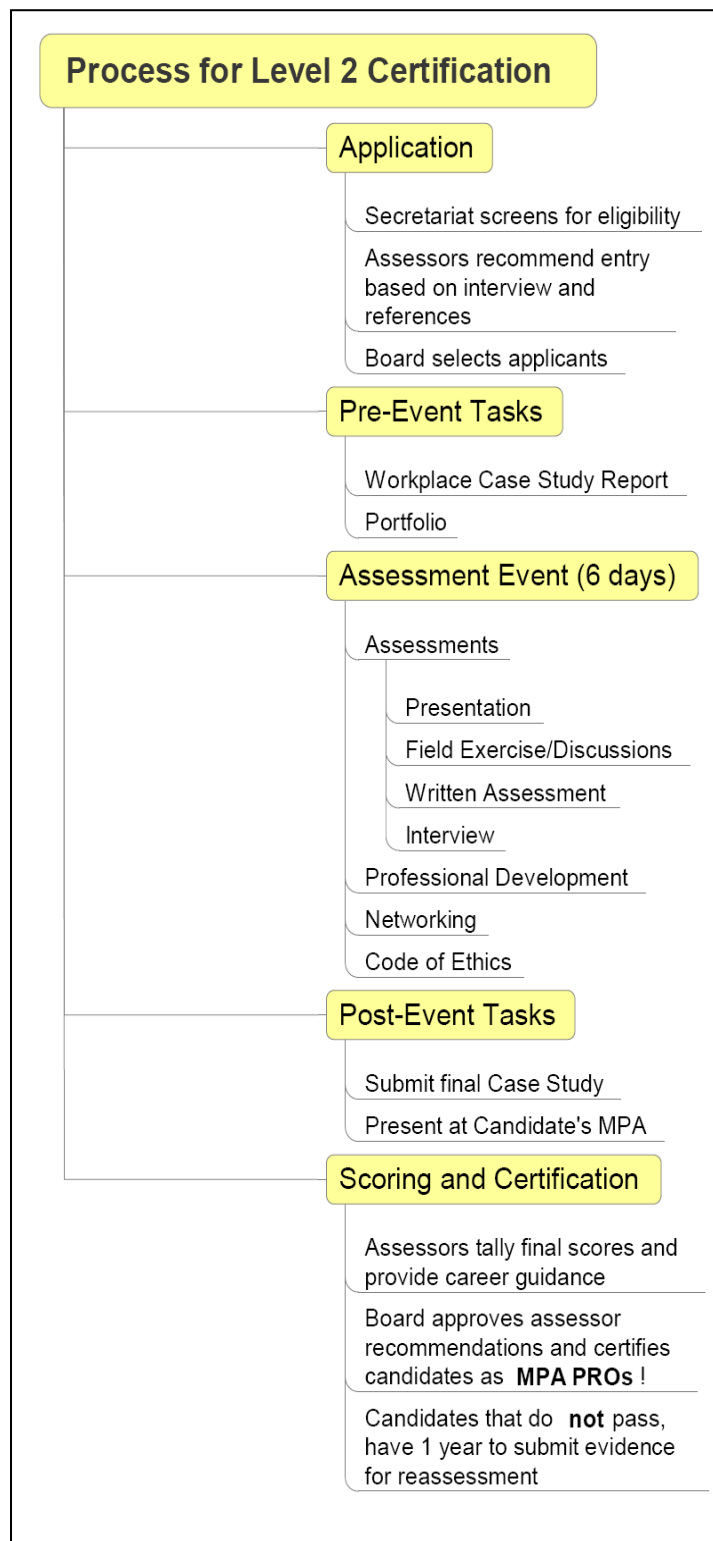
- providing a venue for reflection of the practice of MPA management in its current manifestation and the future challenges it must address.
- committing to the WIO-COMPAS Code of Ethics

## 6.2 Competences

Level 2 Certification has 66 competences and standards across the seven core competence areas. This number of competences reflects the broad skills necessary to be an MPA professional. It is also required in order to maintain a rigorous and accurate assessment programme. 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 C.

## 6.3 Assessment Instruments

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

1. Application (with telephone interview)
2. Workplace Case Study Report
3. Portfolio
4. Presentation
5. Written Assessment
6. Face-to-Face Interview
7. Observation/Demonstration

Significant time and energy is placed on conducting a thorough application review. Once accepted into the certification offering, candidates must write a workplace case study report, develop a presentation on that case study issue, and prepare a portfolio. The assessment event provides time for assessors to assess candidate's competences and assign scores based on the evidence presented.

# 7. Level 3 Certification

Level 3 Certification focuses on the policy and planning aspects of MPA management. 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.

The final details associated with Level 3 Certification are currently under development, with more information available in early 2010. Visit the website for updates on this Level.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A. Members of WIOMSA Board and WIO-COMPAS Advisory Committee

The WIOMSA Board consists of one representative from the host country (Tanzania), two members from the mainland states (Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, and South Africa), two from the Island states (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles) and one from outside the region.

| Name | Country | Organization |
|---|---|---|
| Dr Nyawira Muthiga | Kenya | Wildlife Conservation Society |
| Prof Ron Johnstone | Australia | University of Queensland Centre for Marine Studies |
| Dr Mitrasen Bhikajee | Mauritius | Mauritius Oceanography Institute France Centre, Victoria Avenue |
| Dr Salomao Bandeira | Mozambique | Eduardo Mondlane University Department of Biological Sciences |
| Dr Nirmal Shah | Seychelles | Nature Seychelles |
| Dr Magnus Ngoile | Tanzania | National Environment Management Council |
| Dr Indu Hewawasam | United States of America | World Bank |

## WIO-COMPAS Advisory Committee: 2008-2009

| Name | Country | Organization |
|---|---|---|
| Cedric Coetzee | South Africa | Coast Ezemvelo Kwa Zulu Natal Wildlife, General Manager |
| Ali Kaka | Kenya | East African Wildlife Society, Executive Director |
| Helena Motta | Mozambique | WWF, Country Coordinator |
| Remi Ratsimbazafy | Madagascar | WWF MWIOPO, Eco-regional Leader |
| Nirmal Shah | Seychelles | Nature Seychelles, Chief Executive |
| Nyawira Muthiga | Kenya | Wildlife Conservation Society, Conservation Scientist |
| Brian Crawford | United States of America | Coastal Resources Center at URI, Assistant Director |

# CODE OF ETHICS

**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. 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 Programme**

The Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) Programme 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. It introduces the use of a workplace case study to "test" 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 Programme'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. The Programme has identified seven core areas of competence needed by a range of individuals working at different levels within an MPA:

- Policy, Legislation and Compliance
- MPA Concepts and Establishment
- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement
- Financial Management and Fundraising
- Management Operations
- Biophysical and Social Environment
- Leadership and Ethics

Equally important to setting the technical and management standards by which an MPA professional is judged, the Programme has established ethical rules 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**

| Competence Areas (and sub-groups) | Comp # | COMPETENCES and STANDARDS | RANGE STATEMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Policy, Legislation and Compliance** | | | |
| | | **Thorough Understanding** | |
| | 1.1.1 | Of a range of compliance approaches(4) | Demonstrates clear recognition of different approaches to ensuring compliance, and provides at least 4 examples. Also able to identify the varying effectiveness of these in different contexts. |
| | 1.1.2 | Of legal enforcement requirements and processes(4) | Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of all processes associated with enforcing relevant legislatio for protection of the marine resources, |
| | | **Sound understanding** | |
| | 1.1.3 | Of relevant national legislation and policies pertaining to MPAs(4) | Demonstrates strong understanding of key national legislation as it relates to operations within the MPA. This legislation to cover biodiversity and resource conservation, environmental protection and management, and employment. Can refer to and describe at least 4 pieces of national legislation |
| | 1.1.4 | Of the implications for MPA management of weaknesses in policy and legislation(2) | Demonstrates good understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses of current national legislation and policy, and their institutional policies, in relation to their effectiveness in supportin the work of the MPA. Able to give at least 2 examples of what is inappropriate in or missing from the current legislative and policy framework |
| | | **Basic Understanding** | |
| | 1.1.5 | Of international legal and policy context for MPAs (2) | Can name at least 2 key international conventions/agreements of direct relevance to the operation of their MPA, with an indication of the implications of these for marine conservation. |
| | | **Ability** | |
| | 1.1.6 | To contribute to legal and policy development for their MPA(2) | Provides at least 2 pieces of evidence of contribution to formulation and/or adaptation of institutional policy and/or regulations and bylaws relating to the MPA |
| | 1.1.7 | To pursue correct legal processes associated with enforcement activities(4) | Provides at least 4 pieces of evidence to show how they have followed correct procedures from patrolling, engagement with and apprehension of miscreants, collecting and storing evidence, to following prosecution processes and presenting evidence in court cases |
| | 1.1.8 | To introduce ideas for improving compliance and enforcement(2) | Provides at least 3 pieces of evidence to demonstrate activities they have introduced to strengthen compliance and enforcement activities on the MPA |
| **2. MPA Concept and Establishment** | | | |
| | | **Thorough Understanding** | |
| | 2.1.1 | Of own organisation's structure, mandate and function.(4) | Describes the organization's effectiveness in management of the MPA with emphasis on own roles and responsibilities in the MPA. Develops organogram relating to own functio within the organisation. |
| | | **Sound Understanding** | |
| | 2.1.2 | Of different institutional models for MPA management(4) | Demonstrates strong understanding of different institutional options for MPA management. Is able to describe at least 3 different models and give indications of the potential strengths and weaknesses of each |
| | 2.1.3 | Of criteria for selection, establishment and delineation of MPAs(2) | Demonstrates good understanding of the main criteria used for selection of areas as MPAs, and in their design. Can identify at least 8 of the main criteria used in the selection and design of their own MPA |
| | 2.1.4 | Of different categories of MPAs in the region and nationally(2) | Demonstrates strong recognition of the different fomal and informal categories of MPAs in their own countries, and the differences between them. Can provide examples of at least 3 different types. |
| | 2.1.5 | Challenges to establishment and management of MPAs(4) | Demonstrates good understanding of, in particular, legal, institutional, political and financial/economic constraints to the establishment and effective management of MPAs in their own country. Can provide examples of at least 4 main challenges |
| | | **Basic Understanding** | |
| | 2.1.6 | Of large scale approaches to marine conservation and how their MPA fits into this(2) | Demonstrates understanding of at least two large-scale approaches relevant to their country |
| | | **Ability** | |
| | 2.1.7 | To support the establishment and enhancement of decision-making bodies affecting their MPA (2) | Evidence of having contributed to the establishment of at least one such body |
| | 2.1.8 | To engage/influence decision-making bodies towards fullfilling MPA goals(4) | Provides evidence of engagement with at least 2 other partners to establish decision making bodies, plus description of the institutional arrangements entered into and how each helps fulfil MPA goals |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement** | | | |
| **3.1 Communication** | | **Sound Understanding** | |
| | 3.1.1 | Of a range of communication approaches appropriate to the MPA **(4)** | Demonstrates strong understanding of the use and roles of different tools and techniques for communication based on appropriateness for stakeholders and nature of issues at hand. Provides at least 4 examples of different tools and techniques for different contexts |
| | | **Ability** | |
| | 3.1.2 | To communicate effectively **(4)** | Provides direct evidence of effective communication in formal, semi-formal and informal contexts including ability to respond to complex questions concerning the MPA and its management |
| | 3.1.3 | To contribute to development of effective written communication material **(4)** | Provides at least 4 different pieces of evidence of written communication for different audiences in different contexts |
| | 3.1.4 | To use electronic communication media and information technology **(4)** | Provides at least 4 types of evidence of use of electronic communication media and information technology for communication with range of audiences |
| **3.2 Engaging Stakeholders** | | **Sound Understanding** | |
| | 3.2.1 | Of importance of effective and positive engagement with stakeholders to build a support base **(4)** | Demonstrates strong understanding of importance of positive engagement. Provides at least 4 distinct reasons for such engagement to address issues affecting their MPA |
| | 3.2.2 | Of diverse techniques for ensuring participation of stakeholders **(2)** | Demonstrates good understanding of a range of techniques for ensuring participation. Provides at least two examples of such techniques appropriate to different stakeholders |
| | | **Ability** | |
| | 3.2.3 | To profile and describe stakeholder perceptions and interests **(4)** | Able to identify range of interest groups/sectors with possible positive and negative ramifications for the MPA (due to their needs, power/interests, perspectives, socio-economic circumstances, potential contributions). Provides evidence of at least 4 different stakeholders' perceptions and interests and their implications for management. |
| | 3.2.4 | To engage stakeholdersuse in a socially and culturally appropriate manner **(2)** | Able to identify culturally appropriate approaches in their own MPA context. Provides clear evidence of at least two culturally appropriate approaches in their own work |
| | 3.2.5 | To engage stakeholders to address conflicts **(4)** | Able to work with others to identify, pre-empt, address and manage conflicts. Shows ability to identify potential conflicts, causes of conflicts and differentiate between root causes and symptoms of conflict. Provides evidence of involving stakeholders positively in addressing at least 2 conflicts around the MPA. |
| | 3.2.6 | To contribute to the building of partnerships and a broad support base for the MPA **(4)** | Able to develop constructive partnerships with others to strengthen MPA management. Provides evidence of constituency buliding through forming working partnerships with at least 4 different groups |
| **4. Financial Management and Fundraising** | | | |
| | | **Sound understanding** | |
| | 4.1.1 | Of financial processes as operated by the MPA organization **(4)** | Demonstrates strong understanding of the financial procedures operated by own organisation. Provides evidence of adherence to at least 4 aspects of these procedures |
| | 4.1.2 | Of a range of appropriate alternative financing mechanisms for the MPA **(4)** | Demonstrates strong understanding of diverse ways of funding MPA management, particularly in relation to own MPA. Provides evidence of at least 4 income sources avaiable to own MPAFundraising, volunteers, income-generating projects |
| | | **Ability** | |
| | 4.1.3 | To write funding proposals for the MPA **(4)** | Able to work with others to develop coherent funding proposals (for internal or external use) to raise funding for a range of MPA requirements. Provides examples of at least 4 substantial contributions to such funding proposals |
| | 4.1.4 | To develop and manage budgets associated with MPA management operations **(4)** | Able to develop and manage operating budgets fr day-to-day management of the MPA. Provides evidence of consistent budget management over period of at least 4 years |
| | 4.1.5 | To assess the viability of alternative financing mechanisms for their MPA **(2)** | Able to identify potential alternative income sources for their MPA. Provides at least 2 examples of new funding sources either secured or potentially viable for the MPA |

| 5. Management Operations | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **5.1 Planning and Reporting** | | **Thorough Understanding** | |
| | 5.1.1 | Of logistical and infrastructural requirements for management of own MPA(**4**) | Demonstrates comprehensive understanding of the requirements for own MPA. Provides examples of range of requirements including staffing, equipment and materials, infrastructure, external support |
| | | **Sound Understanding** | |
| | 5.1.2 | Of the principles and practice of management planning(**4**) | Demonstrates strong understanding of key principles underpinning management planning. Provides evidence of use of at least 4 principles in own planning activities. |
| | 5.1.3 | Of safety and security issues associated with the MPA(**4**) | Demonstrates strong understanding of all safety and security issues relevant to own MPA. Provides evidence of at least 4 main issues and how these have been addressed |
| | | **Ability** | |
| | 5.1.4 | To make substantial contribution to the development of their MPA management and business plans (**4**) | Able to contribute substantially to management and other plans related to the MPA. Provides evidence of at least 4 major contributions |
| | 5.1.5 | To develop and implement monthly and annual work plans(**4**) | Able to independently develop monthly and annual workplans for the MPA. Provides at least 4 examples of such plans. |
| | 5.1.6 | To produce coherent progress reports(**4**) | Able to consistently produce clear and coherent reports on MPA activities and management. Provides at least 4 examples of such reports |
| | 5.1.7 | To identify appropriate infrastructure, equipment and materials for effective management of the MPA (**4**) | Able to identify all requirements for effective functioning of the MPA. Provides examples of wide range of such requirements relating to equipment and materials, staffing, buildings, vehicles, communication etc. |
| | 5.1.8 | To ensure proper maintenance of the MPA's infrastructure and equipment(**4**) | Able to ensure effective maintenance of all MPA infrastructure and equipment. Provides example of at least 4 maintenace procedures regularly conducted on the MPA. |
| | 5.1.9 | To develop and implement contingency planning processes(**4**) | Able to develop and implement effective contingency plans. Provides examples of at least 4 specific contingency responses developed for MPA |
| **5.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Research** | | **Sound Understanding** | |
| | 5.2.1 | Of information needs for MPA management(**4**) | Shows good understanding of critical types of information to inform management; in particular related to indicators of management effectiveness (6 key indicators), aspects (at least 4 )to be monitored, information gaps and research needs. Also information concerning issues and activities external to the MPA which have real or potential impact on MPA management. |
| | | **Ability** | |
| | 5.2.2 | To contribute to the development of monitoring, evaluation and research programmes drawing on appropriate principles and practices(**4**) | Able to provide substantial contributions to M&E and management effectiveness programmes in the form of appropriate indicators and methodologies, based on recognised principles, and practices which are appropriate for the context and the resources available. Developed appropriate research programmes to generate critical information for more effective management. Either to have produced entire programmes themself, or providing discreet programme components. |
| | 5.2.3 | To contribute to the analysis and interpretation of monitoring, evaluation and research outputs (**4**) | Able to implement and manage methods for organising, categorising and analysing data and able to interprete data to identify trends and outputs. Managing data to ensure accessibility and usfulness. Able to provide input to and to interrogate databases. Provides evidence for at leat one example of each |
| | 5.2.4 | To apply monitoring, evalution and research outputs towards adapting implementation actions/strategies (**4**) | Able to apply the analysis of data to infom management. Recommendations made from data analysis, management mechanisms established to incorporate M&E and research recommendations (adaptive management). Provides at leat 3 examples on adaptations to management arising from assimilation of Monitoring or research data |

| 5.3 Human Resources | | **Sound Understanding** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 5.3.1 | Of human resource and skills requirements for effective management of the MPA **(4)** | Shows good understanding of the wide range of human resources and associated skills necessary for effective functioning of the MPA. Provides examples of at least 5 different kinds of human resource commonly contributing to MA management, and the key skills associated with each of these. |
| | 5.3.2 | Of appropriate techniques for measuring and assessing staff performance **(4)** | Shows good understanding of a range of appropriate ways in which to assess staff performance on the MPA. Can provide examples of at least 4 key ways to asess staff performance and relate these to the specific activities being assessed. |
| | 5.3.3 | Of the recruitment and retention processes applicable to their organisation **(2)** | Shows understanding of some of the main channels and processes used for staff and/or volunteer recruitment. Provides examples of at least 2 main channels and describes the main recruitment process used by the organisation. Shows understanding of some of the critical factors necessary for retention of staff. Can provide examples of at least 4 such factors. |
| | | | |
| | | **Ability** | |
| | 5.3.4 | To undertake staff appraisals using agreed performance indicators **(4)** | Provides evidence of involvement incollaboration with human resources specialists and senior management or individually of conducting appraisals of at least 2 staff members at different levels Can provide considerable detail on these processes. |
| | 5.3.5 | To manage effective recruitment and retention processes for MPA staff, where required **(2)** | Provides evidence of involvement in at least one recruiment process, giving details of the process and outcome. Provides evidence of at least 2 specific and conscious actions to encourage retention of staff and/or of implementing organisational policies for retention |
| | 5.3.6 | To supervise, mentor and provide leadership for MPA personnel and volunteers **(4)** | Provides evidence of specific actions related to supervision, mentorship and leadership. Describes in detail at least 4 such actions. |
| | 5.3.7 | To identify training needs and coordinate implementation of training activities for MPA **(4)** | Provides evidence of conducting at least 1 training needs assessment (formally or informally), and of at least 4 specific training activities developed and implemented for the MPA staff, and the outcomes of these |
| | 5.3.8 | To write terms of reference and oversee the work of external service providers **(2)** | Provides evidence of writing or contributing to the development of at least 2 terms of reference, and of the supervision of at least 2 external service providers such as contractors, consultants and researchers |
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| 6. Biophysical and Social Environment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6.1 Marine and Coastal Ecology | | **Thorough understanding** | |
| | 6.1.1 | Of the principal ecosystems and species within their MPA and the interactions between them (4) | Shows comprehensive understanding of all the ecosystems that make up their MPA, and at least 3 of the most important species associated with each. Can describe the nature of the interfaces between the ecosystems and the critical interactions between at least 4 key species within the MPA. |
| | 6.1.2 | Of the key threats to the ecological processes and species in their area and the implications for management (4) | Shows comprehensive understanding of the main threats, local, regional and global with the potential to impact the MPA. Describes in detail at least 6 key threats to the ecology of the MPA |
| | | **Sound understanding** | |
| | 6.1.3 | Of the interactions between marine and terrestrial ecosystems and species impacting on their MPA (4) | Shows good understanding of the influence of terrestrial and marine components on each other, in particular how land-based activities can impact on the marine environment, and on species influence on ecosystem processes. Describes at least 4 main influences. |
| | 6.1.4 | Of the oceanography influencing the MPA (2) | Shows good understanding of the physical ocean processes affecting the MPA and influencing the ecology. Describes at least 2 of the critical processes and their influence. |
| | 6.1.5 | Of the potential impacts of climate change on the MPA (2) | Shows good understanding of the potential effects of climate change as currently viewed on the MPA. Describes at least 2 major changes that are likely to take place and the probable impact on the ecology |
| 6.2 Fisheries | | **Sound understanding** | |
| | 6.2.1 | Of target fisheries species and their life histories (4) | Shows a good understanding of the key targetted fish (including shellfish) species in the MPA and surrounding area. Describes detailed life histories of at least 4 such species. |
| | 6.2.2 | Of local fishing sector in and around the MPA (4) | Shows a good understanding of the local fishing industry, including the types of vessels, gears, fishing methods, common bycatch, levels of pressure on the species etc. Describes in detail at least 2 main fishery operations. |
| | 6.2.3 | Of the principles of sustainable fisheries (2) | Shows a good understanding of the principles of sustainable fishery especially as applied to the local fisheries. Gives at least 2 examples of unsustainable and 2 examples of sustainable practices (these cannot just be the converse of each other) |
| 6.3 Tourism | | **Sound understanding** | |
| | 6.3.1 | Of the local tourism sector (4) | Shows a good understanding of the dynamics and impact of the local tourism industry. Describes at least 2 main tourism activities associated with the MPA and their current and potential impact (positive and negative). |
| | 6.3.2 | Of visitor needs and expectations (2) | Shows good understanding of the requirements for a good visitor experience. Describes at least 4 factors critical for such an experience |
| 6.4 Socio-economic and Cultural context | | **Sound understanding** | |
| | 6.4.1 | Of the role and contribution of the MPA to the livelihoods of local communities (4) | Shows a good understanding of the place of the MPAS in the lives of local communities. Can describe at least 4 ways in which the MPA can contribute to their livelihoods |
| | | **Basic understanding** | |
| | 6.4.2 | Of the ecosystem services provided by the MPA (2) | Shows an understnding of the fundamental concept of 'ecosystem services', and can provide details of at least 2 provided by the MPA |
| | 6.4.3 | Of the historical, cultural and spiritual values of the MPA (where relevant) (2) | Shows understanding of and sensitity towards the cultural values of the MPA. Can provide at leat 2 examples of cultural values/sites |
| | | | |
| **7. Leadership and Ethics** | 7 | Ability to identify real issues and opportunities - then to select and apply appropriate approaches, tools and interventions to achieve positive results through exhibiting personal leadership qualities of self-motivation, pro-activeness, innovation and adaptability underpinned by ethical principles (22) | |
| **GRAND TOTAL OF ALL COMPETENCES** | 66 | **Total Points 242** | |

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