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Call for applications

Training Course in Coral and Sponge Taxonomy

Venue and dates

Location: Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS), Zanzibar

Dates: 5-11 August 2018

Course organisers: Christopher A. Muhando (IMS) and Said Ahamada (Biodiversity Programme)

Introduction

There is increasing pressure on the environment and resources of marine and coastal areas in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (ESA-IO) due to the rapidly increasing population. Consequently, the marine bio- and genetic diversity is threatened by over exploitation, habitat loss, invasive species, pollutants, diseases and climate change. As a follow-up, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) Biodiversity Programme has stressed on the need for building the capacity to address issues relating to the sustainable use of biodiversity resources, enhancing biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of coastal, marine and island specific biological resources. Furthermore, gathering of scientific and biodiversity information for sustainable use can be achieved through a more thorough monitoring of marine habitats and organisms therein.

WIO Countries have initiated various actions to collect and document marine taxonomic data. However, the lack of taxonomic expertise in some marine taxa is a constraint. It is in that context that the Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS) with support from IOC Biodiversity Programme has organised a regional training course on Coral and Sponges Taxonomy to build more capacity in monitoring coral reef biodiversity – by including more taxa groups (genera and species) in the existing coral reef monitoring programs.

Eventually, the training will contribute to promoting social and economic policies and associated mechanisms towards sustainable development and poverty alleviation; and strengthen national and regional institutional capacities for sustainable management of biological resources in line with priorities set in the existing and future regional strategies and policies. The Biodiversity Programme aims at strengthening existing exchange mechanisms in support of international conventions related to biodiversity.

Course objectives

The overall objective of the Coral and Sponge Taxonomy Training Course is to contribute to sustainable management of marine biodiversity through improvement of corals reefs and associated biodiversity knowledge. The training will strengthen capacities of members of the WIO national coral reef monitoring teams in sponges and hard coral taxonomy, hence contributing more to marine biodiversity monitoring and management.

Course format

The training will be delivered through lectures and hands-on practical sessions. Lecture sessions will cover topics such as: introduction to coral and sponge structures; coral and sponge taxonomy; identification keys; coral reef biodiversity monitoring. Practical sessions will cover topics such as: photographic record taking techniques, coral and sponge specimen collection and preparations (for identification); using identification keys and reporting. The coral and sponge training course will be supplemented by lectures on selected marine biodiversity databases such as OBIS, TanBIF, and Coral Reef Monitoring Database.

Who should apply

This course is open to marine biologists from the Western Indian Ocean National Coral Reef Monitoring teams, Universities, research institutions and National Marine Protected Areas managers with coral reef monitoring programs.

Costs and financial support

The course is free and includes lunch and refreshments during the working hours, 8:30-17:00 hrs. Successful applicants will be issued travel and living expenses by the IOC Biodiversity Program.

How to apply

Please apply by filling in the [course application form](#) and send to the Director, Institute of Marine Sciences, <director@ims.udsm.ac.tz>, copy to IOC Biodiversity Programme management unit <said.ahamada@coi-ioc.com>. Please attach a copy of your CV. Deadline for application is **30 June 2018**.