

A Spatial assessment for the BCLME region.

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BCC project BEH/09/01 synthesises key aspects of marine and coastal biodiversity in the BCLME, especially ecosystem threat status, ecosystem protection levels and priority areas for protection, with the goal of delivering products useful to policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners in a range of sectors. Data and outputs of a number of unfinished BCLME biodiversity projects were consolidated along with recent spatial assessments conducted in South Africa, namely the Offshore Marine Protected Areas Assessment and the 2004 and 2011 National Biodiversity Assessments – Marine Components, to provide a starting point for the project. The goal was to replicate the South African assessments as far as possible for Namibia and Angola. Relevant data on Angolan and Namibian marine biodiversity and pressures were obtained following national workshops in these countries. The workshops also served to introduce fisheries and other specialists to systematic conservation planning methodology. Spatial data of pressures on marine biodiversity that were collated and analysed, provided a significant building block for the overall project, because comprehensive pressure or ecosystem condition data are a key requirement for systematic planning. These data covered all major anthropogenic pressures on the marine system including mining, oil and gas, coastal development and each of the major fisheries. Data for Namibia and Angola were prepared and analysed consistently with the approach followed during the South Africa assessments. Habitat and species diversity features in the shoreline and offshore environments, and both fixed and spatially variable processes affecting them, have been mapped and integrated in order to assess the current biodiversity status within geographically distinct bioregions, and to visualise the spatial extent of pressures on all patterns and processes within the region. A major new dataset developed for Angola and Namibia is the shoreline spatial mapping dataset that indicates the distribution and type of coastal habitats, and provides an important input for identifying units associated with particular pressures on biodiversity and ecological processes. Conservation planning analysis is being undertaken and will produce the following initial outputs: finalized data archive and metadata, conservation targets, and the initial conservation planning outputs and analyses (which identify spatial options for protection). These initial outputs will be taken to Conservation Planning product demonstration/revision workshops to be conducted in Namibia and Angola, which will allow national specialists to interrogate the data, review outcomes and confirm accuracy. Based on the feedback from the workshops, final conservation planning products will be prepared and will be compiled into an integrated report. Outputs from the process will be developed into user-friendly data products.