

OCEAN GOVERNANCE

TRAINING PROGRAMME



REPORT

1-26 SEPTEMBER 2025
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA



International Ocean Institute
Southern Africa



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A note from the Course Director, Judy Beaumont

The 2025 Ocean Governance Training Programme (OGTP) commenced on Monday, 1 September, and concluded on Friday, 26 September 2025. Taking into account feedback from earlier cohorts on the challenges of being away from home for four consecutive weeks, the 2025 course was redesigned as a blended learning experience. The first week was held online and the remaining three weeks took place in person at the Research Centre of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), located within the beautiful Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens in Cape Town.



It was a privilege to welcome 23 participants- from Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Seychelles, Madagascar, Nigeria, Cameroon, Tunisia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Throughout the course, participants engaged with leading international and regional experts across a range of ocean governance thematic areas. The curriculum combined lectures with interactive sessions, group discussions, and collaborative exercises, providing participants with a platform to exchange ideas and share experiences. Field trips formed an integral part of the programme, linking theory to practice and allowing participants to explore the Cape Town coastline through the lens of ocean governance.

We extend sincere appreciation to our partners, SANBI and the International Ocean Institute, for their continued support and collaboration. Heartfelt thanks also go to the many experts and facilitators who generously shared their time, knowledge, and experience—without whom this programme would not be possible.

A special note of gratitude goes to Kirshia Govender, IOI-SA Programme Manager, for her dedication and energy in bringing the course to life, and to the members of the IOI-SA Management Committee, for ensuring that the high standards of the IOI were upheld throughout.

Finally, warm congratulations to all our participants for their active engagement and commitment during this intensive four-week learning journey. We trust that the experience has equipped you with new tools, insights, and skills to strengthen your leadership in ocean governance across Africa.



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Introduction

The International Ocean Institute (IOI) is dedicated to advancing ocean governance through training and capacity development across its global network of centres and affiliated programmes. The Ocean Governance Training Programme, delivered by IOI–Southern Africa (IOI-SA), addresses the continent’s unique ocean governance challenges and opportunities.

Since hosting its first course in 2013, IOI-SA has successfully run the programme annually since 2015, thanks to the partnership with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the financial support of the Ocean Science Research Foundation (OSRF) through IOI Headquarters (IOI-HQ). The continued success of the course also owes much to the dedicated network of experts who return year after year to share their insights, experience, and enthusiasm with each new cohort.

This year’s four-week programme started with a week online, followed by 3-weeks in-person at the Research Centre of the South African National Biodiversity Institute. The programme brought together 23 participants- from Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Seychelles, Madagascar, Nigeria, Cameroon, Tunisia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.



Ocean Governance Training for Africa

4 Weeks

23 Participants

11 Countries

49 Experts



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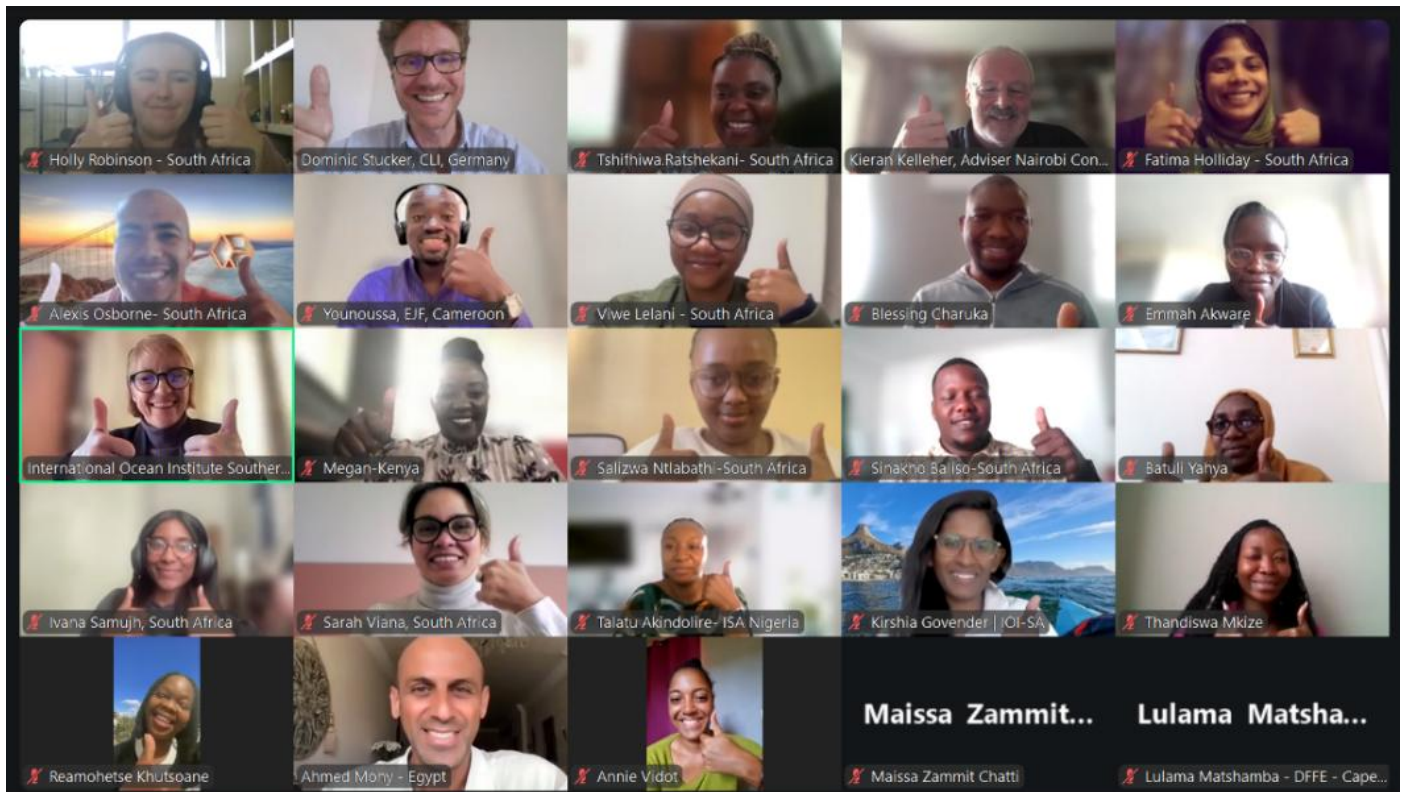


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Participants engaged with regional and international experts across a range of ocean governance themes through interactive sessions, group discussions, and field visits designed to promote peer learning and practical application.

Now in its thirteenth edition, the IOI-SA Ocean Governance Training Programme continues to strengthen its reputation across the region. The 2025 course attracted nearly 100 applications, demonstrating the growing interest in ocean governance training in Africa. Selection remains highly competitive, with a strong focus on professional diversity, gender balance, and regional representation. We take pride in ensuring that participants come from a wide range of disciplines and that the knowledge gained through the programme is meaningfully applied within their home institutions and countries.





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The Training Program

Course Overview

The Ocean Governance Training Programme aims to address the ongoing need across Africa for enhanced awareness, knowledge, and skills in the various disciplines that underpin effective ocean governance. The course also seeks to build and strengthen a network of practitioners committed to advancing responsible, knowledge-based ocean governance throughout the continent.



While the programme highlights the importance of the global ocean governance framework, it maintains a strong regional focus, highlighting the value of harmonised ocean policies that foster a shared, integrated, and cooperative approach to managing Africa's ocean and coastal resources.

Course content covers the legal, institutional, and technical dimensions of ocean governance, with particular emphasis on implementation, with a focus on sharing insights and skills needed for resolving complex ocean and coastal sustainability challenges. Participants are introduced to a wide range of interconnected topics, including the blue economy, maritime sector, marine

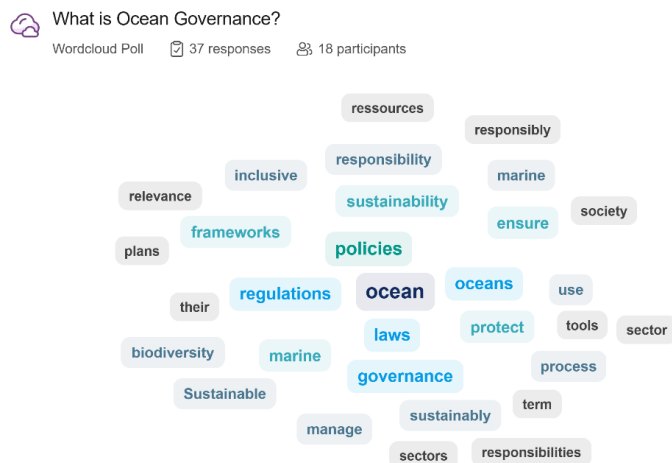
The training is structured around five core themes:

- Module 1: *Oceans and Coasts - Opportunities and Threats*
- Module 2: *The Governance Framework*
- Module 3: *Governance Tools*
- Module 4: *Governance in Action*
- Module 5: *Creating a Supportive Environment for the Management of Oceans and Coasts*



The course schedule (see Annex I) combines formal lectures, interactive discussions, group exercises, and weekly feedback sessions. Each participant is also required to deliver a short presentation on their area of expertise during the first three weeks. An opportunity to share

professional insights, build confidence, and strengthen connections within the group. Word cloud exercises and informal daily icebreaker activities allowed for recap of key concepts covered and added a lighter element to the otherwise intensive learning experience, encouraging teamwork and engagement throughout the programme.





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Learning Activities and Practical Engagement

The training weeks were marked by active participation and thoughtful contributions from all participants. A strong emphasis was placed on peer-to-peer learning, with numerous group exercises and collaborative projects integrated throughout the programme.

Practical sessions included a risk assessment exercise, group work on multilateral environmental agreements, and a simulated marine spatial planning (MSP) process using the interactive board game generously donated by IOC-UNESCO. One of the core group activities ran across the four week period, tasking participants with developing a policy brief on a topical ocean governance issue.



To complement the technical aspects of the course, participants also engaged in sessions focused on stakeholder engagement, conflict resolution, strategic planning, communication, and leadership development, skills essential for effective ocean governance professionals. Illustrative examples of sessions delivered during the programme are summarized below.





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A session on conflict resolution and effective communication was facilitated by activist and strategists, Liz McDaid. Her presentation highlighted the different ways in which people learn, reminding participants of the value of diverse learning approaches. The training incorporated multiple learning strategies, including videos, interactive discussions, peer-to-peer engagement, and simulation exercises, enabling participants to “learn by doing” and to apply communication and conflict resolution principles in practice.

Leticia Greyling from Rhodes Business School introduced participants to the concepts of stakeholder mapping and the principles of effective stakeholder engagement. The session encouraged participants to explore practical approaches through a case study focused on the African Penguin colony at Boulders Beach in Simon’s Town, an area where wildlife conservation intersects with urban activity.



Prior to this session, a field visit to Boulders Beach provided valuable context and a first hand understanding of the challenges and dynamics discussed in the case study. During the group discussions, participants identified key stakeholders and analysed their perspectives, roles, and relevance to the conservation programme.



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Lauren Williams from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment facilitated an interactive session on South Africa's Ocean and Coastal Information Management System (OCIMS), that supports data-driven decision-making in ocean governance. Participants learned how OCIMS integrates real-time ocean data, satellite imagery, and analytical tools to support marine spatial planning, environmental monitoring, and maritime safety. Discussions highlighted the importance of data accessibility and inter-agency collaboration, and how similar systems could strengthen ocean governance and policy implementation across Africa.

Participants engaged in an interactive session with T.R.A.F.F.I.C, a leading non-governmental organisation working globally to combat illegal wildlife trade and promote the sustainable use of biodiversity. The session provided insight into the scale and impact of wildlife trafficking across Africa's marine and coastal environments.



Through a hands-on learning experience, participants examined real-world examples of illegally traded marine species, including shark fins, seahorses, abalone, and fish swim bladders. This practical component deepened understanding of the drivers, methods, and consequences of illegal trade, as well as the importance of cross-sector collaboration, enforcement, and awareness in tackling this global challenge. Notable additions to this year's programme was a Masterclass Writing Workshop led by Renée Bonorchis, designed to support participants in developing their policy briefs and to strengthen their science communication and writing skills.



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Pam Yako from Zenande Leadership facilitated a coaching session on leadership in ocean governance. Participants shared valuable insights on the challenges faced by emerging leaders, enriching the discussion with her personal and professional perspective.

Policy Brief Exercise

One exercise ran throughout the four weeks with groups developing a policy brief on topical ocean governance issues focussed on African examples from the maritime sector, small scale fisheries, the blue economy and marine genetic resources.

The groups were tasked with presenting their final products to a panel of ocean governance experts, for assessment and to share insights from their own experience. The panel concluded that the Marine Genetic Resources group met all the criteria for an outstanding policy brief and delivered an exceptional presentation.



Policy brief exercise: Participant policy brief preparation and presentation assessed by experts in science and policy



Policy brief exercise: (right) Genetic marine resources group received a prize for an excellent policy brief and group presentation



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Marine Spatial Planning Exercise

The IOC-UNESCO Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Board Game served as an engaging, hands-on exercise that simulated the real-world challenges of marine spatial planning. In this interactive activity, participants take on the roles of diverse stakeholders, ranging from government representatives and industry leaders to environmental advocates, tasked with negotiating marine spatial plans, and designing sustainable ocean space management strategies.

The simulation required players to balance competing interests such as conservation, fisheries, maritime transport, and energy development, while considering limited resources and the need to maintain ecological protection. The activity offered valuable insight into the complexities of ocean governance, the importance of negotiation and collaboration, and the trade-offs inherent in marine management decisions.

Each year, the group dynamics differ, reflecting the diverse professional backgrounds and governance experiences of participants. Despite the time constraints and challenges of communication in relation to group work, teams effectively collaborated to resolve conflicts and develop practical solutions, illustrating the cooperative approach required for real-world MSP processes.



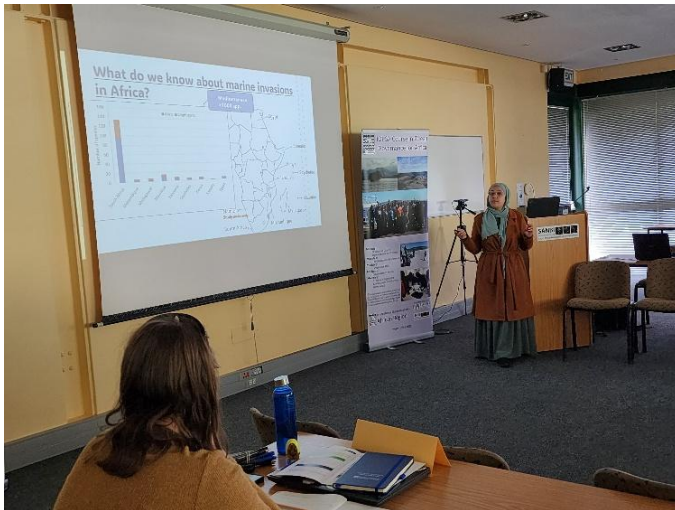
Marine Spatial planning Exercise: participants represented a sector for their simulated countries and were tasked to work with their counter representatives. They negotiated marine spatial plans to accommodate environmental and socio-economic concerns when allocating use of marine zones of various sectors.



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Risk assessment Exercise



Participants explored the concept and process of risk assessment, focusing on how it can be applied to evaluate the potential introduction and impact of marine alien species. Dr. Koebräa Peters, an IOI-SA alumna, from the University of Western Cape, shared insights on invasive species management within the African context, introducing biofouling prevention guidelines, while Dr. Lynn Jackson provided an informative overview of the Ballast Water Management Convention. She also guided participants through group exercises demonstrating how risk assessment functions as a crucial tool in environmental planning and regulation.

Using a simplified version of South Africa's Risk Analysis Framework, participants carried out a practical assessment of the risk of invasion by a particular species in selected coastal areas. Each group followed a structured framework to address two guiding questions:

1. How likely is the species to become invasive in the chosen location?
2. If an invasion were to occur, what would be the possible ecological and socio-economic impacts?

This interactive session allowed participants to apply theoretical knowledge in a realistic context, enhancing their understanding of risk evaluation, environmental decision-making, and the importance of proactive management in protecting marine ecosystems.





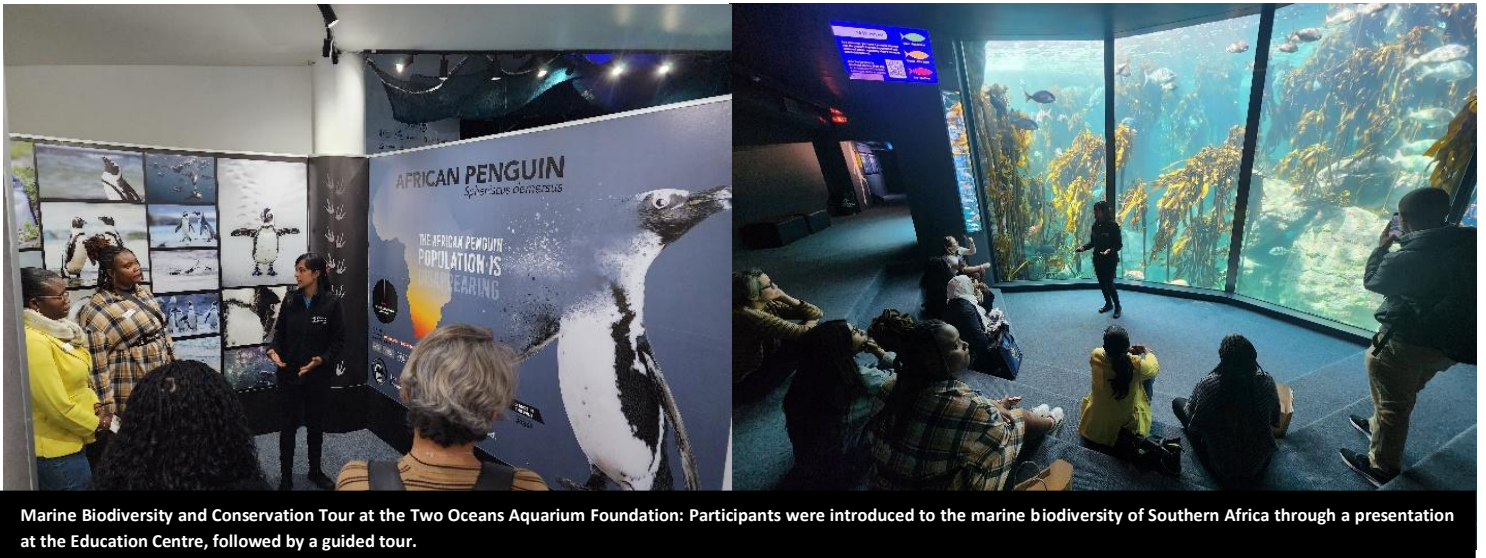
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Field Trips

The field trips were a key component of the technical course, linking theoretical content to real-world examples and allowing participants to experience Cape Town's coastal and marine environments through an ocean governance perspective. For many, it was a first opportunity to visit some of the iconic and globally renowned sites of the Western Cape.

On Monday 8th September, first day of the in-person training, participants took part in a field trip to the Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation, where they experienced an engaging guided tour highlighting South Africa's rich marine biodiversity and the importance of ocean conservation.



Marine Biodiversity and Conservation Tour at the Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation: Participants were introduced to the marine biodiversity of Southern Africa through a presentation at the Education Centre, followed by a guided tour.

The visit included an informative presentation on local marine ecosystems, threats to marine life, and ongoing initiatives at the Aquarium aimed at protecting and conserving marine life. Participants also explored how research, public education and awareness contribute to sustainable ocean governance.

The day concluded with a marine wildlife tour at the V&A Waterfront, offering close-up encounters with Cape fur seals and discussions on the role of urban coastlines in fostering conservation awareness. The session showcased incredible conservation efforts aimed at protecting marine wildlife in and around the V&A Waterfront and Cape Town Port.



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Two Oceans Aquarium, marine wildlife tour highlighting Cape fur seals

On Friday 12 September participants spent the day exploring the False Bay coastline to better understand the link between coastal ecosystems, community involvement, and effective ocean governance. Participants explored the management and conservation of endangered African penguins at Boulders Beach. The site serves as a successful conservation area and popular tourist attraction, yet poses complex management challenges, such as how to protect the penguins that are breeding outside the reserve on private and public properties. The field trip began at Boulders Beach, a tour led by Katta Ludynia where participants observed the African penguin colony and learned about the species' conservation status, threats from habitat loss and pollution, and ongoing efforts by conservation organisations to protect and restore their breeding habitats.



A visit to Boulders Beach penguin colony, led by Dr Katta Ludynia (left). Spring low tide conditions provided an opportunity to walk on the beach for a closer view of the penguins in their natural surroundings.



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The group then visited Shark Spotters in Muizenberg, where they stopped at the lookout point and Shark Information centre, Tshepo Mpanza and Brandon Beukes facilitated an in-depth tour and a presentation on the organisation's innovative shark safety and research programme. Discussions focused on the importance of integrating science, technology, and community engagement in coastal management, as well as how the initiative contributes to ocean awareness, sustainable tourism, and human-wildlife coexistence.



Field Trip: Shark Spotter scientists, Brandon Beukes (left) and Tshepo Mpanza (right) Bra introduced participants to the Shark Spotter programme and sharks inhabiting False Bay



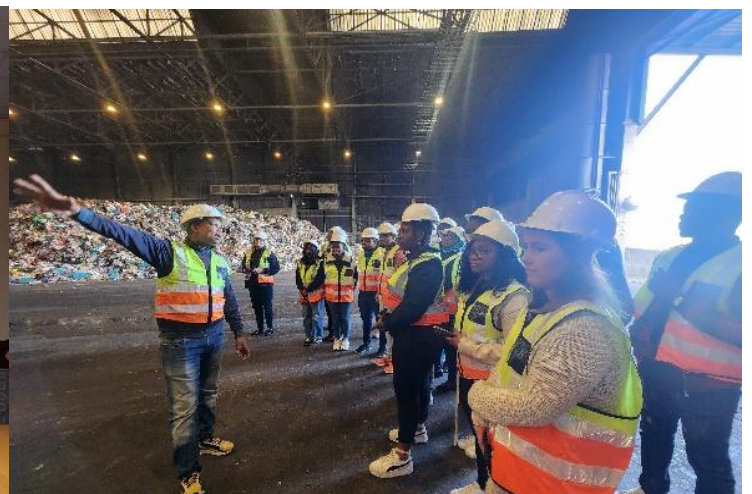
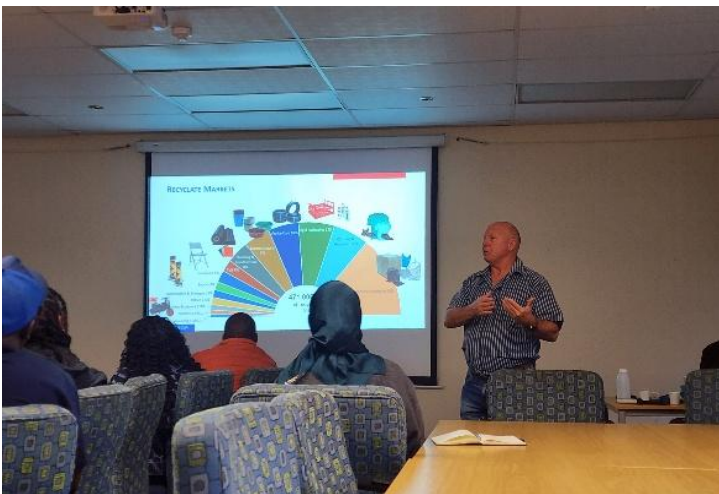
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(left) Shark spotter, discussed his role at a lookout point. (right) Zandvlei Nature Reserve manager, Kyran Wright introduced estuary management and walked participants through the wetland.

The visit concluded at Zandvlei Nature Reserve, an important estuarine system supporting diverse bird and fish species in the Western Cape. Here, Kyran Wright introduced participants to estuary management, water quality monitoring, and restoration projects aimed at improving ecological health. The session also highlighted the challenges of managing urban wildlife conflicts and maintaining ecosystem balance in a rapidly developing coastal area.

On day 15, Friday 19 September, participants visited the Kraaifontein Material Recovery Facility to gain insight into the waste management and recycling processes that help reduce pollution reaching the marine environment. Douw Steyn, Plastics SA, presented on the topic of marine debris and facilitated the guided tour of the facility. The visit highlighted the facility's role in diverting waste from landfills, promoting circular economy practices, and reducing the impact of land-based pollution on oceans and coasts. Participants observed how proper waste segregation and recycling contribute to broader sustainability and ocean governance goals.



Field Trip: Kraaifontein Material recovery facility tour led by Douw Steyn (Plastics SA)



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Port of Cape Town was the last stop for the day for a guided tour led by IOI-SA alumnus, Michael Melato from Transnet National Ports Authority. Ravi Naicker, IOI-SA Alumnus, from the South African Maritime Safety Authority, explained the MARPOL Convention to participants, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships. He also focused on South Africa's oil spill contingency planning process. The visit provided in-depth insight into the port's daily operations, infrastructure, and its critical role in supporting South Africa's maritime economy. Participants toured key operational areas, including the control room, dry dock, dredging zones, and container handling sites, gaining a practical understanding of how the port manages vessel traffic, cargo movement, and maintenance activities. The experience was complemented by a presentation on Port State Control, which outlined procedures for ensuring maritime safety, security, and environmental compliance. The field trip offered participants a comprehensive view of how efficient port management underpins both economic development and sustainable ocean governance.



Field Trip: Cape Town Harbour tour facilitated by Micheal Melato (Transnet)



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The 2025 Course Alumni



Ahmed Ibrahim

Arab Academy for
Science, Technology &
Maritime

EGYPT



Alexis Osborne

Department of Forestry,
Fisheries and the
Environment (DFFE)

SOUTH AFRICA



Annie Vidot

Seychelles Fisheries
Authority

KENYA



Antonio Barijaona

WWF Madagascar
Country Office

MADAGASCAR



Batuli Yahya

University of Dar es
Salaam

TANZANIA



Blessings Charuka

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Holly Robinson

Independent

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Ivana Samujh

Two Oceans Aquarium
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Sarah Viana

Early Career Ocean
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Ivaldo Fumo

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MOZAMBIQUE



Lulama Matshamba

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Megan Muthoni

Kenya Revenue
Authority

KENYA



Sinakho Baliso

Department of
Fisheries Forestry and
Environment

SOUTH AFRICA



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**Reamohetse
Khutsoane**

Cape Peninsula
University of
Technology

SOUTH AFRICA



Talatu Akindolire

International Seabed
Authority

NIGERIA



**Tshifhiwa
Ratshekani**

Jozini Local
Municipality

SOUTH AFRICA



**Younoussa
Abbosouka**

Environmental Justice
Foundation

CAMEROON



Salizwa Ntlabathi

The Seas of Good Hope
(SANBI)

SOUTH AFRICA



Thandiswa Mkize

Black Mermaid
Foundation

SOUTH AFRICA



Viwe Lelani

Department of Forestry,
Fisheries and the
Environment

SOUTH AFRICA



Course Partners

The IOI-SA is highly appreciative of our partner, SANBI, for their contributions towards the course.



The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) leads and coordinates research, and monitors and reports on the state of biodiversity in South Africa. The Institute provides knowledge and information, gives planning and policy advice and pilots best-practice management models in partnership with stakeholders. The course would not have been possible without the input of our regional and local experts from various institutions. We are very grateful for their time and contribution to Ocean Governance Training in Africa. Some of our experts have been involved in the training since 2013 and bring passion and experience to the training.





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Participant feedback:

"My academic background is environmental science and one of the principals of that discipline is to always aim to see multiple sides of what matters to the planet and people. This training supported my ability to understand ocean governance- this was a totally new concept and I learnt so much on how the different sectors are contributing to the growth of opportunities and the emerging blue economy in the African region and the relevant research that is currently on-going and exposure to possible new projects to pursue in the space as a scientist."

"The course was on an advanced learning level, transforming participants into professionals. In the beginning I felt like an amateur. Now, I am ready to enter the workspace and meaningfully contribute."

"I found the course to be extremely enriching, and it provided a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the field of marine conservation and environmental management. My personal experiences with the course highlighted the importance of working collaboratively and strategically to achieve sustainable practices. Interacting with colleagues from diverse backgrounds was a valuable opportunity to learn different perspectives and enhance my communication and problem-solving skills. I believe the lessons learned during the course will be crucial for my role as an environmental activist and for contributing effectively to ocean conservation."





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