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TITLE: Working together for our oceans: A marine spatial plan for Algoa Bay, South Africa

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ABSTRACT:

Southern Africa occupies a critical position within the southern hemisphere for the study of broadscale global change and the three oceans around South Africa (the Atlantic, Indian and Southern Oceans) play a vital role in determining local and regional climate and weather patterns. Oceans and coasts also provide various resources and services (e.g. food and carbon sequestration), but these services are threatened by human activities. Uncertainty of the impact and consequences of these anthropogenic activities makes it problematic to manage marine resources. Given the recent global emphasis on the development of 'ocean economies', the exploitation of living (fisheries, aquaculture and tourism) and non-living (oil and gas, minerals, energy) marine resources should be on a scale that is socially and economically justifiable and ecologically sustainable. In 2014, 'Operation Phakisa' was launched in South Africa as an initiative to accelerate execution of the National Development Plan. 1 The primary focus of Phakisa is to unlock the economic potential of South Africa's oceans. 2 This will be achieved through the 'implementation of an overarching, integrated ocean governance framework for sustainable growth of the ocean economy that will maximise socio-economic benefits while ensuring adequate ocean environmental protection' by 2019. Marine spatial planning (MSP) is a key component of this integrated governance framework, and the development of MSP legislation during 2016 was prioritised as 'critical' to achieving the Operation Phakisa objectives. Accordingly, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) published the Marine Spatial Planning Bill (2017) 3 'to provide a framework for marine spatial planning in South Africa's waters; to provide for the development of the marine spatial plan; to provide for institutional arrangements for the implementation of the marine spatial plan and governance of the use of the ocean by multiple sectors; and to provide for matters connected therewith'.

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