

GlobalSeaweedSTAR Capacity Building Fund Completion Report

Awardee Details

Grant reference ID	GSS/CBF/021
Full name/title	Dr Fiona Wanjiku Moejes
Position held	Acting CEO and Director of Programmes
Organisation	The Mawazo Institute



Details of Capacity-Building Activity

Name of activity	Online Event - The 7th International Society of Applied Phycology conference
Date held	14 May to 13 August 2021
Organiser/provider	International Society of Applied Phycology

Biography

Fiona is the Acting CEO and Director of Programmes at the [Mawazo Institute](#) – a Kenyan-based organisation supporting African women in science, scholars and thought leaders in the region, as well as get policymakers and the public engaged with their work. Her background is in developing and implementing multi- and transdisciplinary projects focused on marine

biotechnology and sustainable aquaculture with a strong focus on micro- and macroalgae as well as science-based community-led marine conservation initiatives in the Comoros and Kenya.

Fiona is passionate about providing a platform for women to have their voices heard – whether they are scientists and thought leaders or members of coastal communities supporting their families. Fiona’s particular affinity for microalgae and seaweed research lives on through her role as a member of the Executive Committee of the International Society of Applied Phycology. One of her life goals is to be a driving force behind an “algal revolution” in East Africa and the wider Western Indian Ocean.

She completed an industry-based PhD looking at the dynamics of bacterial communities associated with *Phaeodactylum tricornutum* cultures as a novel approach to scaling up microalgal cultures from [Bantry Marine Research Station](#) (Ireland) and Heinrich-Heine Universität Düsseldorf (Germany).

Report on Capacity-Building Activity

The capacity building activity I participated in is attending the 7th International Society of Applied Phycology Congress (ISAP2021). The ISAP conference is a four-yearly conference that brings together experts in the field of applied phycology to further develop the use of micro- and macroalgae in commercial, remedial, and regulatory contexts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ISAP2020 was postponed to 2021 and was held virtually.

I was a participant as well as involved in the planning of the opening and closing ceremonies, and the International Society of Phycology General Assembly.

Significant outcomes were the involvement in the organisational aspects of the congress. I led the communications regarding the congress proceedings with the ISAP subscribers and was involved in the opening and closing ceremonies as well as the ISAP General Assembly. I have also been re-elected as an Executive Committee member of ISAP for the 2020-2024 term. My involvement and attendance of ISAP2021 has allowed me to reconnect with old and new colleagues in the world of micro- and macroalgae research and industries. I am now in communications with other people interested in developing the algal industry in Africa (with a focus on East Africa).

Having the congress be held virtually allowed for a lot flexibility – which was so nice! It was also a great chance to get up to speed with the latest in algae research after being somewhat on the sidelines.