

**PhD Dissertation**  
**Department of Environmental Science and Policy**  
**George Mason University**

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Defense Date and Time: March 5, 2018 at 12:00 PM

Defense Location: David King Hall 3006

Title: Establishing Marine Spatial Planning in Madagascar, drawing lessons from experience in the US and Europe

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**ABSTRACT**

Marine spatial planning is a public process that aims at pursuing socioeconomic and environmental objectives through the proper use of marine space. The adoption of this process at the national level facilitates its implementation at the different levels of authority. The development of a marine policy framework in line with the concept of marine spatial planning and the establishment of a relevant governmental structure illustrate the adoption of this process in one particular country. The study of the development of the existing marine policy frameworks highlights a common approach that was adopted by the US and some European countries. The “Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities, and Threats” analysis enabled the identification of the various issues that could be translated into critical factors that guided the development of the existing marine policy frameworks. The application of this mechanism to the development of a marine policy framework in Madagascar helps to identify and analyze the most important internal and external factors that support or impede the achievement of marine spatial planning objectives via a survey conducted on government representatives working in marine-related affairs. Moreover, the same survey helped to identify the most important vision and key principles of the proposed marine policy in Madagascar. A study of the governmental structure for the implementation of marine spatial planning was conducted by analyzing the effectiveness of inter-sectoral collaboration in three different structures while pursuing marine spatial planning objectives. The study identified that a governmental structure with a separate ministry in charge of the management of all sectors related to the use of the marine environment exhibited high level of inter-sectoral collaboration indicated by its efficacy and efficiency in pursuing MSP objectives in Madagascar. The implementation of marine spatial planning at the local level was studied in the bay of Diego Suarez located in the Northern tip of Madagascar. The study highlighted that the development of a marine spatial plan was critical to addressing existing and potential issues in the bay. All marine issues should be given equal importance in the process of developing the plan. Conflicts “between sectors” are prevalent in most sectors involved in the bay while there is more “within sector” conflicts within the fisheries sector. Furthermore, it demonstrated that most stakeholders exhibited high level of readiness for the development of the plan. While all stakeholders want to bring their own contribution to the plan, most fishermen only prefer to attend meetings in the process of developing it. There is, however, some reluctance on the part of fishermen in financially contributing to the development of the plan. Although the bay has a national importance, the vision of the proposed plan only reflects the integration of all local interests in the bay.