Introduction: The African Register of Marine Species (AfReMaS) is recently launched taxonomic database of marine species found along the African coasts. The database was originally developed as the Marine Species Database for Eastern Africa (MASDEA). It was extended thereafter to include species from the entire African coast. Currently it has 24,016 accepted species. The African Register of Marine Species aims to compile and manage an authoritative list of species occurring along the African marine coasts. It is intended to be used as support for biodiversity research for conservation and sustainable management of marine environment. A data mining process was conducted under the Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa (ODINAFRICA) project on three identified taxonomic groups (Molluscs, Poriferans and Decapods) with information from books, publications, grey literature and other databases. Distribution records are filed under VLIMAR—a marine gazetteer. Authorised taxonomists confirmed the classification before the species lists were uploaded onto the database. Content from AfReMaS is shared with the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS), OBIS and AFDBIS.

African Register of Marine Species (AfReMaS) is a taxonomic database of marine species found along the African coastline. It is accepted species: 19,054 and includes 41,143 names of species, infraspecies and genera. The database was originally developed as the Marine Species Database for Eastern Africa (MASDEA), a collaborative effort between the Mauritius Oceanography Institute, France centre, Victoria Avenue, Quatre Bornes, MAURITIUS and the University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana, West Africa. The database is maintained by Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee (VLIZ), a prominent research institute for marine sciences in Belgium. The database is available online at www.afremas.org and is accessible to all scientists and researchers with an interest in marine biodiversity.

Conclusion: Data management is key in the preservation of biodiversity. All scientists are encouraged to submit their species lists and areas in which they sampled to update the database. This database is important for keeping a directory of marine taxonomists with knowledge on the flora and fauna in African marine regions. In addition comprehensive bibliographies will be compiled on the biogeography of the region, for selected groups.

The network of involved experts will be expanded and they will continue in checking all taxonomic groups along the African marine regions.