# Site-level methodology for identifying other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)

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IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS

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**WCPA OECM Specialist Group**: This publication has been developed under the auspices of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Specialist Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures Specialist Group. **Kathy MacKinnon** (UK) and **Harry Jonas** (UK/Malaysia) co-chair the Specialist Group, which has over 120 members, and can be contacted at: oecm@wcpa.iucn.org
More information about the Specialist Group is available online:
https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/our-work/oecms

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# ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| COP | Conference of the Parties to the CBD |
| EBSA | Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area |
| ICCA | Territories and Areas Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources |
| KBA | Key Biodiversity Area |
| LMMA | Locally Managed Marine Area |
| OECM | Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure |
| SDGs | UN Sustainable Development Goals |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNEP-WCMC | UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre |
| WCPA | IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas |
| WD-OECM | World Database on OECMs |
| WDPA | World Database on Protected Areas |

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CBD definitions are used (CBD, 1992, 2018) unless not available, in which case IUCN definitions and terminology is used, including from *Recognising and Reporting OECMs* (IUCN-WCPA, 2019).

Biodiversity: The variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (CBD, Article 2).

Candidate OECMs: Geographically defined space that has been identified as a "potential OECM" and the governance authority has consented to it being assessed against the CBD criteria.

Conserved areas: In this context, "conserved areas" include but are not limited to areas that may satisfy the criteria for "other effective area-based conservation measures".

Cultural and spiritual values: These include recreational, religious, aesthetic, historic and social values related to tangible and intangible benefits that nature and natural features have for people of different cultures and societies, with a particular focus on those that contribute to conservation outcomes (e.g. traditional management practices on which key species, biodiversity or whole ecosystems have become reliant or the societal support for conservation of landscapes for the maintenance of their quality in artistic expression or beauty) and intangible heritage, including cultural and spiritual practices.

Ecologically and biologically significant marine areas: EBSAs are special areas in the ocean that serve important purposes, in one way or another, to support the healthy functioning of oceans and the many services that it provides. (https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/)

Ecosystem: A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. (CBD, Article 2).

Ecosystem approach: The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Application of the ecosystem approach will help to reach a balance of the three objectives of the Convention. It is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization which encompass the essential processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems. (https://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/).

Equitable: The governance of OECMs should be equitable and reflect human rights norms recognised in international and regional human rights instruments and in national legislation, including relating to gender equality. (IUCN, 2019)

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Free, prior and informed consent: Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is a specific right that pertains to Indigenous peoples and is recognised in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It allows them to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or their territories. Once they have given their consent, they can withdraw it at any stage. Furthermore, FPIC enables them to negotiate the conditions under which the project will be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. This is also embedded within the universal right to self-determination. (UN, 2007).

Geodiversity: The natural range (diversity) of geological (rocks, fossils, minerals), geomorphological (land form, physical processes) and soil features, and includes their assemblages, relationships, properties, relationships and systems. (Gray, 2004).

Geographically defined area: Geographically defined area implies a spatially delineated area with agreed and demarcated boundaries, which can include land, inland waters, marine and coastal areas or any combination of these. In exceptional circumstances, boundaries may be defined by physical features that move over time, such as river banks, the high water mark or extent of sea ice.

Governance authority: The institution, individual, Indigenous peoples or communal group or other body acknowledged as having authority and responsibility for decision-making and management of an area.

Habitat: The place or type of site where an organism or population naturally occurs. (CBD Article 2).

Indigenous peoples and local communities: This report follows the Convention on Biological Diversity's use of the terms "Indigenous peoples" and "local communities".

*In-situ* conservation: The conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats and the maintenance and recovery of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings and, in the case of domesticated or cultivated species, in the surroundings where they have developed their distinctive properties. (CBD Article 2).

Key Biodiversity Area: Sites contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity, in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Locally managed marine area: A locally managed marine area (LMMA) is an area of nearshore waters and its associated coastal and marine resources that is largely or wholly managed at a local level by the coastal communities, land-owning groups, partner organizations, and/or collaborative government representatives who reside or are based in the immediate area. (http://lmmanetwork.org/).

Management authority: The organisation or entity responsible for the ongoing management of a site. The management authority may or may not be the same as the governance authority (defined above).

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Other effective area-based conservation measure: 'Other effective area-based conservation measure' (OECM) is defined by the CBD in Decision 14/8 as: A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio–economic, and other locally relevant values (CBD, 2018).

OECM assessment tool: The OECM assessment tool enables a rigorous application of the CBD criteria (CBD, 2018) to individual candidate OECMs.

OECM screening tool: The OECM screening tool enables the identification of 'potential OECMs'.

Potential OECM: A geographically defined space that has been identified as having OECM-like characteristics by applying the screening tool but where the governance authority has yet to consent to it becoming a "candidate OECM".

Protected area: The CBD defines a protected area as: "A geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives" (CBD Article 2). IUCN has a more detailed definition: "A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values" (Dudley, 2008). The CBD and IUCN recognise the two as being equivalent in practice (Lopoukhine and Dias, 2012) as in both cases these areas are intended to achieve *in-situ* conservation.

Sustainable use: The use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations. (CBD Article 2).

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# INTRODUCTION

'Other effective area-based conservation measures' (OECMs) is a conservation designation for areas that are achieving the effective *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity outside of protected areas. This methodology is a companion publication to the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas guidelines for *Recognising and Reporting OECMs* (IUCN-WCPA, 2019). It offers a practical means by which to implement CBD Decision 14/8, enabling the assessment of individual sites against the criteria to determine whether they are OECMs, and thereby promotes the appropriate recognition, support and reporting of those sites.

## 1. OECMs and the Convention on Biological Diversity

In 2018, Parties to the CBD agreed guiding principles, common characteristics and criteria for the identification of OECMs (CBD Decision 14/8). An 'other effective area-based conservation measure' is defined by the CBD as:

> *A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio–economic, and other locally relevant values (CBD, 2018).*

Governments, relevant organizations, Indigenous peoples and local communities are invited to apply the voluntary guidance on governance and equity of protected areas and OECMs (Annex I and II, Decision 14/8), identify OECMs, and submit data on OECMs to the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) (paragraph 2 and Annex III of Decision 14/8).

## 2. Protected areas and OECMs in wider landscapes and seascapes

Under the right conditions, protected areas can effectively and equitably conserve biodiversity. As a result of a clear definition and technical guidance on OECMs, the opportunity now exists to further strengthen the collective estate of protected and conserved areas by designing and recognising interconnected and sustainable networks of protected areas and OECMs across landscapes and seascapes. Additionally, OECMs allow for the engagement of a diverse range of rights-holders and stakeholders who are contributing to area-based conservation outside of the formal protected area estate. They also provide a framework to transform sectoral practices and promote links to biodiversity financing and nature-based economies, as well as address climate change by contributing to net-zero climate targets and building resilience to the physical impacts of climate change through nature-based solutions.

## 3. Identifying OECMs

This methodology enables governance authorities, with or without external assistance, to assess their sites against the CBD criteria of an OECM. The appropriate identification of OECMs, on the basis of the governance authority's consent, deepens appreciation of the site's values,

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may lead to appropriate recognition and support, and contributes to reporting against national and international biodiversity targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## 4. Recognising OECMs

OECMs are intrinsically important as local social-ecological systems. They form integral parts of national biodiversity strategies, underpin sustainable economies and contribute to global biodiversity targets and the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet many (potential) OECMs are under threat from a range of anthropogenic activities and the effects of climate change. They often require appropriate recognition and support at the (sub-)national level in order to ensure their ecological integrity.

OECMs can be recognised through a wide range of legal, policy or programmatic means. CBD Decision 14/8 underscores that, while (sub-)national circumstances will differ, any related legislation should provide greater support and recognition to existing governance systems and not seek to supplant or unnecessarily alter those local arrangements that are effective. Ideally, any related measures will be developed with the full and effective involvement of the relevant right-holders and stakeholders. Rights holders, stakeholders and sector experts are encouraged to work collaboratively and according to a rights-based approach to integrate OECMs into any existing national frameworks. A thorough technical review should provide comprehensive understanding of the synergistic relationships between this global and the national frameworks, i.e. OECMs should ideally support and strengthen the existing frameworks and the community of practice. The application of forms of 'recognition' should also be dependent on the consent of the legitimate governance authority. As stated by the IUCN Technical Report (2019): "Assuming an area meets the OECM criteria, the governance authority has the right to withhold or give its consent to the area being recognised as an OECM."

The IUCN Green List on Protected and Conserved Areas provides a means by which to recognise OECMs that demonstrate excellence in the areas of good governance, sound design and planning, effective management and positive conservation outcomes. More information is available online:
https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/iucn-green-list-protected-and-conserved-areas

## 5. Supporting OECMs

CBD Decision 14/8 and the IUCN Technical Report both underscore the point that OECMs should be supported with measures to enhance the governance capacity of their legitimate authorities and secure their positive and sustained outcomes for biodiversity. This puts a positive obligation of states and other actors to fully understand the local relationships between governance, management and conservation outcomes and to work directly with the legitimate governance authority to develop local-appropriate strategies. This is particularly important for areas governed by private actors, Indigenous peoples and/or local communities (Jonas et al., 2017). OECMs also offer the possibility of creating a framework for landscape finance opportunities.

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## 6. Reporting OECMs internationally

Once an OECM has been identified, it can be reported to UNEP-WCMC for inclusion in the World Database on OECMs (WD-OECM). An OECM should only be reported if its governance authority(ies) has consented to the information being shared. The WD-OECM is linked to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). Alongside the WDPA, the WD-OECM is used to track progress towards global goals such as Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and future targets. It is also used by multiple sectors for decision-making. The WD-OECM can be viewed and downloaded at www.protectedplanet.net. The IUCN guidelines for *Recognising and Reporting OECMs* provides an overview of how to report OECMs to the WD-OECMs, and further details are set out in the WDPA and WD-OECM Manual: www.wcmc.io/WDPA_Manual.

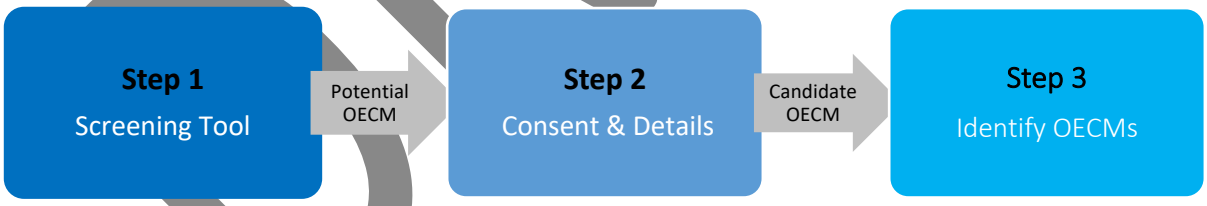
# HOW TO USE THIS METHODOLOGY

### Overview

This OECM methodology enables potential OECMs to be identified and **individual sites to be assessed on a case-by-case basis**. For those sites that do not yet meet all criteria, the methodology also helps to identify the characteristics of the site which would need to be strengthened in order for an area to qualify as an OECM.

### Site-level, step-by-step methodology for identifying OECMs

The methodology for identifying OECMs consists of three steps, which should be followed sequentially. It is essential not to bypass any steps. For example, a full assessment of a site (Step 3) cannot be undertaken until the governance authority has given consent to an assessment (Step 2).




Step 1 contains the **screening tool** that enables a determination of whether a site is a '**potential OECM**' and therefore could be assessed against the criteria of an OECM, subject to consent from the legitimate governance authority (Step 2).

Step 2 provides for the legitimate governance authority to clearly state whether **consent** to an assessment has been given; the standard for Indigenous peoples and local communities being *free, prior and informed consent*. Without consent from the legitimate governance authority, the site cannot be assessed. In cases where consent is given, the area becomes a '**candidate OECM'**. Step 2 also provides for the details of the candidate OECM and its assessee/s and assessor/s to be captured.

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Step 3 contains an **assessment tool** that enables a rigorous application of the CBD criteria of an OECM (CBD, 2018) to individual '**candidate OECMs**'. The assessment tool allows for each 'candidate OECM' to be assessed on its own merits in order to determine whether it qualifies as an OECM. The assessment tool contains criteria-based questions and a grading rating scale which is intended to accommodate variability across country contexts and the uniqueness of OECMs.

## Pre-reading

Before using this Methodology, please first consult CBD Decision 14/8 and the IUCN guidelines for *Recognising and Reporting OECMs (IUCN-WCPA, 2019)* (**Box 1**).

**Box 1: Essential Reading**

Users of this Methodology should first read the following:

1. **CBD Decision on protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures**: CBD Decision 14/8 is the primary reference for this OECM Methodology (2018). Please see in particular paragraph 2 and Annex III. Download
2. **Recognising and Reporting OECMs**: The IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas has produced a publication that provides easily accessible guidance on CBD Decision 14/8 (2019). Download

Further reading includes a Special Issue of PARKS on OECMs. Download. Other materials and case studies are available on the IUCN WCPA Specialist Group on OECMs website: https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/our-work/oecms

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# STEP 1

# USING THE SCREENING TOOL TO IDENTIFY A POTENTIAL OECM

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# STEP 1
# SCREENING FOR A POTENTIAL OECM

## A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the screening tool is to determine whether a site is a 'potential OECM' that merits being fully assessed (**Steps 2 and 3**). The screening tool is intended to be applied to **an individual site**. The screening tool should be used to assess whether the site has the following qualities of a potential OECM:

1. Has geographically delineated boundaries and is not a protected area;
2. Has a sustained governance authority and management regime;
3. Has important biodiversity values; and
4. Delivers the effective and long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity.

For additional guidance, **Annex I** provides context, generic examples of potential OECMs and examples of types of sites that will likely not meet the criteria of a potential OECM.

## B. SCREENING TOOL

The screening tool can be used by the governance authority or other actors, either located at the site or remotely, and based on available data. If there is insufficient data to answer the questions with confidence, then further research or engagement with the governance authority is required.

Apply the following four tests to the site. For further reading about the criteria addressed below, please see 'Core Reading' in **Box 1**.

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| TESTS | QUESTIONS | RESPONSES |
|---|---|---|
| **Test 1:** The site has **geographically defined boundaries** and is **not a protected area**.<br><br>*Protected areas and OECMs are mutually exclusive. Sites within a protected area cannot be recognised as an OECM.* | **1.1** Is the site **geographically delineated**, with agreed and demarcated boundaries? | ☐ No (Not potential OECM)<br>☐ Yes (See below) |
| | **1.2** Is the whole site, or the part being assessed as an OECM, **outside** of a protected area? | ☐ No (Not potential OECM)<br>☐ Yes (See below) |
| **Test 2:** There is **sustained governance and management** of the site.<br><br>*'Governed' implies that the area is under the authority of a specified entity, or an agreed upon combination of entities. 'Managed' implies the area is actively managed, but may include a decision to leave the area untouched. The governance and management should be 'sustained', i.e. expected to continue for the foreseeable future.* | **2.1** Is the site under the **governance authority** of a specified entity or an agreed upon combination of entities? | ☐ No (Not a potential OECM)<br>☐ Yes (See below) |
| | **2.2** Is the site subject to a **management** regime which contributes to the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity? | ☐ No (Not a potential OECM)<br>☐ Yes (See below) |
| | **2.3** Is the governance and management '**sustained**', i.e. expected to continue for the foreseeable future? | ☐ No (Not a potential OECM)<br>☐ Yes (See below) |
| **Test 3:** The site has **biodiversity values** for which the area is considered important.<br><br>*OECMs include the identification of the range of biodiversity values for which the site is considered important, e.g. communities of threatened and/or range restricted species, representative natural ecosystems, species, Key Biodiversity Areas, areas providing critical ecosystem functions and services,* | **3.** Is there a strong likelihood that the area contains important **biodiversity values**? | ☐ No (Not a potential OECM)<br>☐ Yes (See below) |

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|---|---|---|
| *areas for ecological connectivity. OECMs are expected to achieve the in-situ conservation of nature as a whole, rather than only selected elements of biodiversity.* | | |
| **Test 4:** The sustained governance and management of the site delivers the **effective and long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity**.<br><br>*OECMs should achieve effective and long term contributions to in-situ conservation of biodiversity. This is achieved through several elements, i.e. achieving positive conservation outcomes, viable size of site, and ability to manage and mitigate threats.* | **4.1** Is there a strong likelihood that the sustained governance and management of the site is expected to deliver the **effective *in-situ* conservation** of biodiversity through legal or other effective means? | No (Not a potential OECM)<br>Yes (See below) |
| | **4.2** Is there a strong likelihood that the sustained governance and management of the site is expected to deliver the **long-term *in-situ* conservation** of biodiversity through legal or other effective means? | No (Not a potential OECM)<br>Yes (See below) |

## C. RESULT

| | |
|---|---|
| One or more 'No' | ***If the answer to one or more of the questions is 'No', the site is not a potential OECM***. This result could be discussed with the governance authority to consider the issue(s) identified. This may lead to a process towards the site attempting to meet the criteria of a potential OECM in the future. |
| All 'Yes' | ***If all the answers to the questions are 'Yes', the area is a potential OECM***. Consent from the legitimate governance authority is required (**Step 2**) for the site to be recognised as a candidate OECM and move ahead to a full assessment of the site (**Step 3**). |

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## STEP 2

# OBTAINING CONSENT TO ASSESS A CANDIDATE OECM & RECORDING DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND AREA

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# STEP 2
# CONSENT AND DETAILS

## A. INTRODUCTION

If all answers to the questions in the screening tool (Step 1) are 'yes', the area is a **potential OECM**. To move ahead with a full assessment (Step 3), consent must first be obtained from the legitimate governance authority. CBD Decision 14/8 (2018) and the IUCN-WCPA guidelines for *Recognising and Reporting OECMs* (2019) are clear that the recognition of OECMs should follow appropriate consultation with relevant governance authorities, landowners and rights owners, stakeholders and the public. Any recognition or reporting of OECMs governed by Indigenous peoples and/or local communities should be based on self-identification and requires the free, prior and informed consent of the traditional governance authority(ies) (United Nations, 2007; CBD, 2018). Governance authorities have the right to object to the external nomination or recognition of their site as an OECM in cases where their consent has not been given.

Accordingly, for cases in which an actor, other than the governing authority, is managing the assessment process, including potential OECMs governed by Indigenous peoples and local communities, the consent of the legitimate governance authority must first be provided. Obtaining such consent qualifies the site as a **candidate OECM**, after which it can then be assessed against the CBD criteria of an OECM (CBD, 2018).

This section records:

- Consent by the legitimate governance authority for assessing the site as a candidate OECM (**2.1**);
- The details of the assessee (site's duly authorised representative/s providing the assessment information) and assessor (person/s documenting the information) (**2.2**). Recording these details provides continuity for future monitoring and follow-up assessments; and
- Details of the site (**2.3**).

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## B. INSTRUCTIONS

In order to obtain (free, prior and informed) consent, the governance authority should first understand the definition and characteristics of an OECM, and the roles, responsibilities and obligations on the governance authorities of OECMs. Governance authorities must also understand that being assessed as a candidate OECM does not necessarily guarantee the site being identified, recognised or reported as an OECM.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION: FAIR DISPUTE OR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In situations requiring fair dispute or conflict resolution regarding the recognition and reporting of OECMs, **CBD Decision 14/8** provides the following points of guidance:

- Recognising that diversity broadens ownership, potentially promoting collaboration and reducing conflict as well as facilitating resilience in the face of change;
- Recognising that elements of effective and equitable governance models for protected and conserved areas may include appropriate procedures and mechanisms for fair dispute or conflict resolution; and
- Noting further considerations for management approaches in accordance with national legislation and circumstances, and consistent with national policy and regulation, management approaches should consider any conflict of overlap between OECMs and already existing territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities, including their governance systems, with due account being taken of free, prior and informed consent.

The concept of equity is referred to in the CBD Decision 14/8 as one element of good governance. Equity can be broken down into three dimensions: recognition, procedure and distribution.

- **Recognition** is the acknowledgement of and respect for the rights and the diversity of identities, values, knowledge systems and institutions of rights holders and stakeholders;
- **Procedure** refers to inclusiveness of rule- and decision-making; and
- **Distribution** implies that costs and benefits resulting from the management of OECMs must be equitably shared among different actors.

## 2.1 CANDIDATE OECM ASSESSMENT CONSENT FORM

I/We, [**insert: name**] represent the legitimate and primary Governance Authority of [**insert: name of the area**]. I/we acknowledge that I/we understand what an OECM is, and the intent of this assessment. I/we agree and consent to undertake or take part in this assessment. The information I/we, provide herein is true, and to the best of my/our knowledge and abilities, accurate and complete. **Please add as many 'governance authority details' as required by copy and pasting the below boxes.**

| GOVERNANCE AUTHORITY DETAILS #1 | |
|---|---|
| Full name | |
| Organisation | |
| Designation | |
| Relationship to site | |
| Email | |
| Tel No. | |
| If required: has the authority to speak on behalf of: | |
| Signed | |
| Date | |
| Location | |

| GOVERNANCE AUTHORITY DETAILS #2 | |
|---|---|
| Full name | |
| Organisation | |
| Designation | |
| Relationship to site | |
| Email | |
| Tel No. | |
| If required: has the authority to speak on behalf of: | |
| Signed | |
| Date | |
| Location | |

| GOVERNANCE AUTHORITY DETAILS #3 | |
|---|---|
| Full name | |
| Organisation | |
| Designation | |
| Relationship to site | |
| Email | |
| Tel No. | |

| GOVERNANCE AUTHORITY DETAILS #4 | |
|---|---|
| Full name | |
| Organisation | |
| Designation | |
| Relationship to site | |
| Email | |
| Tel No. | |

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| | |
|---|---|
| If required: has the authority to speak on behalf of: | |
| Signed | |
| Date | |
| Location | |

| | |
|---|---|
| If required: has the authority to speak on behalf of: | |
| Signed | |
| Date | |
| Location | |

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## 2.2 PARTICIPANT DETAILS

Provide the details of the persons undertaking the assessment, i.e. members of the governance and / or management authority if it is a self-assessment, and/or the details of the external assessor(s) assisting with or conducting the assessment. **Please add as many 'governance authority' or 'assessor' details as required by copy/pasting the below boxes.**

| MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNANCE / MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY | |
|---|---|
| **PERSON #1** | |
| Name of participant | |
| Organisation | |
| Designation | |
| Relationship to site | |
| Email | |
| Tel No. *(if available)* | |
| If required: has the authority to speak on behalf of: | |
| **PERSON #2** | |
| Name of participant | |
| Organisation | |
| Designation | |
| Relationship to site | |
| Email | |
| Tel No. *(if available)* | |
| If required: has the authority to speak on behalf of: | |

| EXTERNAL ASSESSOR/S | |
|---|---|
| **PERSON #1** | |
| Name of participant | |
| Organisation | |
| Designation | |
| Relationship to site | |
| Email | |
| Tel No. *(if available)* | |
| If required: has the authority to speak on behalf of: | |
| **PERSON #2** | |
| Name of participant | |
| Organisation | |
| Designation | |
| Relationship to site | |
| Email | |
| Tel No. *(if available)* | |
| If required: has the authority to speak on behalf of: | |

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## 2.3 SITE DETAILS

Provide as many details of the site as possible. Not knowing specific information does not disqualify you from proceeding with an assessment, but all efforts should be made to complete the fields, especially for sites that are considered to meet the criteria of an OECM. If the site forms part of a larger area, focus on the site related to the candidate OECM.

| REQUESTED INFORMATION | DESCRIPTION | NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| **Site name** | | |
| **Location** (country, state/province etc.) including an ISO3 code if known (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradekb/knowledgebase/country-code). | | |
| **GIS location** (where available)<br>Provide coordinates in WGS84; Decimal degrees. The mid-point of the site can be used. Should the site ultimately qualify for reporting to UNEP-WCMC, a polygon should be provided. | | |
| **Property description**<br>Provide brief details of the site, including whether it is terrestrial, freshwater, coastal or marine. | | |
| **Area** *(square meters or kilometres,* where available*)*<br>*Provide total area measured in* $m^2$ *or* $km^2$ of the Candidate OECM portion only. Differentiate between areas within the site, if relevant, such as between terrestrial and marine etc. | | |
| **Governance type**<br>I.e.: government, private, Indigenous people or local community, shared. | | |

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| **Governance authority(ies)**<br>Provide the name of the institution, individual, Indigenous peoples or communal group or other body acknowledged as having authority and responsibility for decision-making and management of a site. NOTE: this may be shared governance with more than one entity/ institution/ organisation/ individual involved in decision-making for the site. | | |
| **Further details of the governance authority**<br>Provide a description of the legitimate governance authority e.g.: its legal basis for having decision-making authority, its structure, etc. | | |
| **Management authority**<br>Provide details of the organisation or entity responsible for the ongoing management of a site. The management authority can be the same as or different to the governance authority. | | |
| **Management plan or other planning tool** (where available)<br>Provide links/references to the management plan, if one exists and is available. | | |
| **Management objectives**<br>Set out the management objectives for the site - i.e. explain what the sites is designed or used for, including: a) whether there are any conservation objectives, b) the relative priority to each other if there is more than one objective. | | |
| **Associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values**<br>Provide a description of the associated ecosystem functions and services, as well as any cultural, spiritual, socio-economic or other relevant values. | | |
| **Designation**<br>Note whether the site has any formal and/or informal designation e.g.: sacred natural site, watershed management area, military zone. | | |

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# STEP 3

# ASSESSING A CANDIDATE OECM

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# STEP 3
# IDENTIFYING AN OECM: THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

## A. INTRODUCTION

Once the governance authority has provided its consent to a site being assessed **(Part 2),** the site is a '**candidate OECM**' and can be assessed against the key indicators under the OECM characteristics, as described in CBD Decision 14/8 (see **Table 1**). This assessment tool contains seven sections and enables a detailed assessment of a candidate OECM. **The assessment concludes with a final result for whether the site does or does not meet the OECM criteria**.

Table 1: Overview of the assessment tool

| CONTENTS | PURPOSE | GUIDANCE |
|---|---|---|
| **3.1** Geographically defined, not a protected area | Assess whether the site is geographically defined.<br><br>Double check that the site is not in a protected area. | '**Geographically defined**' implies a spatially delineated site with agreed and demarcated boundaries, which can include land, inland waters, marine and coastal areas or any combination of these. Boundaries may be defined by physical features that move over time, such as river banks, the high water mark or extent of sea ice.<br><br>'**Not a protected area**' implies that the whole site, or the part being assessed as an OECM, is not a protected area. |
| **3.2** Governed | Assess whether the site is appropriately governed. | '**Governed**' requires that the site is under the authority of a specified entity, or an agreed upon combination of entities, and that the governance is sustained. |
| **3.3** Managed | Assess whether the site is appropriately managed. | '**Managed**' requires that there is sustained management that achieves the long-term conservation of biodiversity. Relevant authorities, rights-holders and stakeholder should be identified and involved in management. |
| **3.4** Biodiversity value | Assess whether the site has biodiversity values. | OECMs include the identification of the range of **biodiversity values** for which the site is considered important (e.g. communities of threatened and/or range restricted species, |

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| | | representative natural ecosystems, species, Key Biodiversity Areas, areas providing critical ecosystem functions and services, areas for ecological connectivity). |
| **3.5** Effective | Assess whether the site produces the required long-term *in-situ* biodiversity conservation outcomes. | OECMs should be **effective at delivering long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity**. Specifically, there should be a clear association between the management and biodiversity outcomes, with mechanisms in place to address existing or anticipated threats. |
| **3.6** Associated values | Assess whether the management for associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values support the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity . | OECMs include sites where the protection of key species and habitats may be achieved as part of management for ecosystem functions and services and/or **cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values** and practices. In these cases, the management of the site for ecosystem functions, and services and/or cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally-relevant values should not undermine the site's biodiversity values. |
| **3.7** Results | Generate the assessment results. | Draw from the results of sections 3.1-3.6 to determine whether the site is an OECM. If the site is not an OECM, the result table helps identify the specific reasons for not meeting the criteria, enabling them to be addressed. |

## B. INSTRUCTIONS

**Approach to the assessment**: Work methodically through each section of the assessment (**3.1-3.6**). Answer the questions and rate the site against their ability to meet the indicators.

**Grading system**: Each question is graded as one of three potential outcomes (See Figure xxx):

- **Yes (green)**: The site meets the CBD criteria.
- **Partially (orange)**: The site meets most of the OECM definition elements, but requires specific interventions or changes to qualify as an OECM.
- **No (red)**: The site does not meet the OECM definition and will not in the foreseeable future.

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The grading system is intended to accommodate the variability across country contexts as well as the complexity and uniqueness of OECMs where answers are often not straightforward or explicit. The intermediate option ('partially') allows sites to either make the necessary changes to qualifying as an OECM. This tool provides a structured framework with flexible indicators in order to accommodate variability across regional, national and local contexts. The combined outcome of these questions also uses the same grading system (**Yes**, **Partially**, **No**) to determine whether the site meets the OECM characteristics.

**Assessment tables**: The assessment tables set out the criteria, a criteria based question, provide a check box for the answer, and space for the evidence-based rationale. They are set out as per the following example.

| CRITERIA | QUESTION | ASSESSMENT RESULT | EVIDENCED-BASED RATIONALE |
|---|---|---|---|
| The 'Criteria' column describes the intended criteria and sets out the ideal situation for a particular OECM characteristic. This is strongly informed by CBD Decision 14/8 (2018). | The questions are based on the criteria and help the assessor(s) focus on the key considerations. | Options are provided under the following three categories:<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ Partially<br>☐ No | The assessor is required to provide supporting evidence to substantiate or verify the answer. This can be in the form of legal or formal documentation or other relevant documentation or other forms of evidence that support the rationale. Examples are provided in the tables. |

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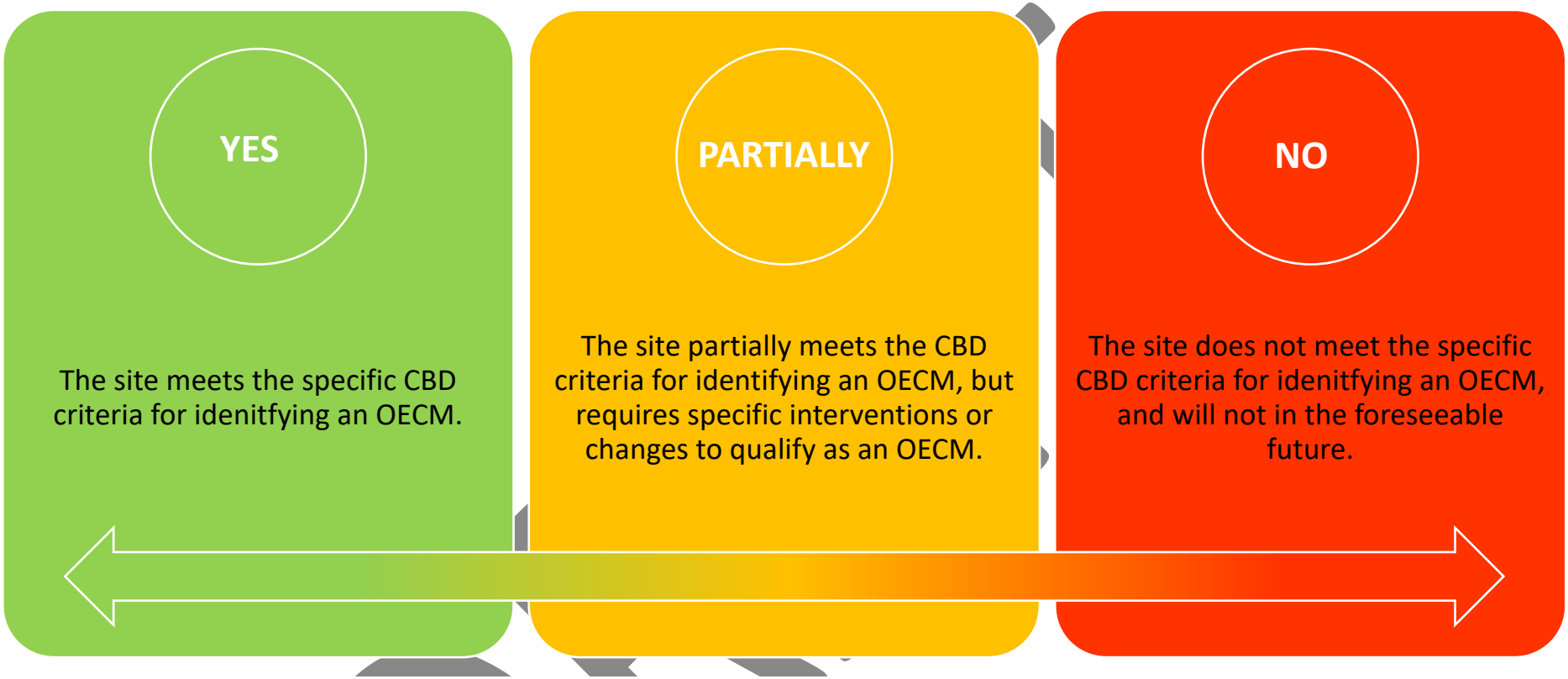


**Figure xxx**: Illustrates the grading scale (yes, partially, no) for the assessment of the area against the key indicators under the criteria for identifying an OECM, set out in Sections 3.1-3.6.

## C. FINAL RESULT

The final result is achieved by drawing on Sections 3.1-3.6 to fill in **Section 3.7**. The table helps the reviewer(s) to determine whether the site is an OECM, is not an OECM, or requires further assessment and deliberation to make a final decision.

**The assessment begins with the next section (3.1).**

# 3.1
# GEOGRAPHICALLY DEFINED BOUNDARY, NOT A PROTECTED AREA

## A. INTRODUCTION

An OECM should have a clearly defined boundary and not be a protected area or part of a protected area. **Geographically defined**' implies a spatially delineated site with agreed and demarcated boundaries, which can include land, inland waters, marine and coastal areas or any combination of these. In exceptional circumstances, boundaries may be defined by physical features that move over time, such as riverbanks, the highwater mark or extent of sea ice.

Geographical space has three dimensions; this requires any governance or management regime for a two-dimensional site also to account for the third (vertical) dimension if all the biodiversity of the site is to be effectively conserved *in-situ*. Designations of protected areas or OECMs will often have limits in the third dimension (e.g. only apply to a certain depth underground or below the water surface, or have an altitude limit to allow passage of commercial aircraft). This has become particularly controversial in marine protected areas, where vertical zoning for commercial purposes undermines conservation outcomes, disrupts ecological connectivity, and creates monitoring and enforcement challenges. For both protected areas and OECMs, the height and depth dimensions need to be consistent with effective conservation management to protect the full range of native biodiversity. In consequence, IUCN has a strong presumption against vertical zoning of OECMs.

## B. ASSESSMENT

| CRITERIA | QUESTION | ASSESSMENT RESULT | EVIDENCED-BASED RATIONALE |
|---|---|---|---|
| The size and area of the OECM are described, including in three dimensions where necessary, and the boundaries are geographically delineated and preferably spatially mapped, and | Does the site have a clearly delineated, described, and mapped boundary that is agreed by the governance authority? | ☐ Yes - The site's boundary is clearly delineated, described, and mapped, and is agreed by the governance authority. | |

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| which is agreed by the governance authority. | | ☐ Partially - The site is intended to be clearly delineated but may not be mapped or recognizable.<br><br>☐ No - The site is not clearly delineated and/or is not agreed upon. | ***E.g.**: The boundaries are set out on a map [link] or a GIS shapefile is available.* |
| The site is not currently recognized or reported as a protected area or part of a protected area. | Is the whole site, or the part being assessed as an OECM, is **not** a protected area? | ☐ Yes - The site is not a protected area.<br><br>☐ Partially - Part of the site is within a protected area, or there is a lack of clarity about whether the site or part of it is in a protected area.<br><br>☐ No - The site is within a protected area. | |

## C. RESULT FOR 'GEOGRAPHICALLY DEFINED BOUNDARY', 'NOT A PROTECTED AREA'

Drawing on the above assessment, tick one box that corresponds with the above outcome.

| **RESULT** (TICK BOX FOR OVERALL RESULT)<br>*Tick the box that describes the overall result* | **EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE**<br>*For this criteria, you can paste the answer from above* |
|---|---|
| ☐ **Yes**: The site has clearly delineated and agreed upon boundaries and is not a protected area. | |
| ☐ **Partially**: The site partially meets the requirement that the site is geographically delineated and is outside of a protected area. | |

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| ☐ **No**: The site is not clearly delineated and/or is not agreed upon or is in a protected area. | |

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# 3.2 GOVERNED

## A. INTRODUCTION

'Governed' requires that the site is under the sustained authority of a specified entity, or an agreed upon combination of entities. OECMs can be governed under the same range of governance types as protected areas, namely:

1. Governance by governments (at various levels);
2. Governance by private individuals, organisations or companies;
3. Governance by Indigenous peoples and/or local communities; and
4. Shared governance (i.e., governance by various rights holders and stakeholders together) (Dudley, 2008; Borrini-Feyerabend, et al., 2013).

As with protected areas, the governance of OECMs should be equitable and reflect human rights principles recognised in international and regional human rights instruments and in national legislation, including relating to gender equity and Indigenous peoples. Governance mechanisms should be effective in maintaining biodiversity. Any recognition or reporting of OECMs governed by Indigenous peoples and/or local communities should be based on self-identification and requires the free, prior and informed consent of those traditional governance authority(ies) (United Nations, 2007). Processes should be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of governance, including with respect to conservation outcomes and equity.

There will be instances where a site's governance authority and management authority are the same entity, however the expected outcomes of these two characteristics are distinguishable and they are therefore assessed separately.

| | |
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| **IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS** | Equitable governance is referred to in the CBD Decision 14/8 as one element of good governance. Equity can be broken down into three dimensions: recognition, procedure and distribution:<br>• Recognition is the acknowledgement of and respect for the rights and the diversity of identities, values, knowledge systems and institutions of rights holders and stakeholders.<br>• Procedure refers to inclusiveness of rule and decision-making.<br>• Distribution implies that costs and benefits resulting from the management of OECMs must be equitably shared among different actors. |

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| | **Rights holders** are actors/parties with legal or customary rights to natural resources and land, in accordance with national legislation and/or applicable international obligations. **Stakeholders** are actors/parties with interest and concerns over natural resources and land. |

The following two papers are relevant to (potential) OECMs governed by Indigenous peoples, local communities and private entities:

- Jonas et al., 2017. Will OECMs increase recognition and support for ICCAs? (Link)
- Mitchell et al., 2018. PPA or OECM? Differentiating between privately protected areas and OECMs on private land. (Link)

An additional two documents provide further information on governance, including guidance on choosing the correct governance authority sub-type. They focus on *protected areas*, but are also applicable to OECMs:

- Borrini-Feyerabend, et al., 2013. Governance of Protected Areas: From understanding to action. (Link)
- Schreckenberg, K., et.al., 2016: Unpacking Equity for Protected Area Conservation. (Link)

## B. ASSESSMENT

| CRITERIA | QUESTIONS | ASSESSMENT RESULT | EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Governance authority(ies) are self-identified and have all necessary legal standing or recognition. | **Is/are the governance authority(ies) the legitimate authority(ies)?** | ☐ Yes - The governance authority is the legitimate authority that has been self-identified.<br><br>☐ Partially - There is currently a dispute about the legitimacy of the governance authority.<br><br>☐ No - The governance authority is not the legitimate authority. | |
| The governance authority's structure is intended and designed to be sustained. | **Does the governance authority have the legal measures or other effective means to** | ☐ Yes - The legitimate governing authority has the legal measures or other effective means to ensure that it will be sustained into the indefinite future. | |

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| | ensure that it is sustained into the indefinite future? | ☐ Partially - The legitimate governing authority intends for it to be sustained into the indefinite future, but this is not stipulated in the legal measures or other effective means of the site's governance.<br><br>☐ No - The legitimate governing authority does not has the legal measures or other effective means to ensure that it will be sustained into the indefinite future, and has not intention to ensure it is sustained into the future. | |
| The governance of the site is such that it fulfils all three dimensions of equity: recognition, procedure and distribution (refer to above extract of CBD Decision 14/8). | Is the site equitably governed? | ☐ Yes - The legitimate governance authority can meet all three dimensions of equity in its governance of the site.<br><br>☐ Partially - The legitimate governance authority has some provisions, procedures and mechanisms in place that meet some part, but not all, of the three dimensions of equity in its governance of the site.<br><br>☐ No - The legitimate governance authority does not have the appropriate provisions, procedures and mechanisms in place and does not meet any of the dimensions of equity in its governance of the site. | |

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| All relevant governing authorities are committed to maintain the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | **Is there commitment to maintain the *in-situ* conservation outcomes?** | ☐ Yes - All relevant and legitimate governing authority(ies) support the ongoing *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity in the site.<br><br>☐ Partially - While not all relevant and legitimate governing authorities support the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, no governing authorities act in ways that undermine *in-situ* conservation.<br><br>☐ No - One or more relevant and legitimate governing authorities does not support the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity in the area and *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity is likely to be undermined, or the commitment does not exist. | |

## C. OVERALL RESULT FOR 'GOVERNED'

Drawing on the above assessment, tick one box that corresponds with the above outcome.

| **RESULT**<br>*Tick the box that describes the overall result* | **EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE**<br>*Review the evidence-based rationale presented in the above table and provide a summary here* |
|---|---|
| ☐ **All 'yes'**: The site has sustained and equitable governance, committed to the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | |
| ☐ **One or more 'partially'**: The site partially meets the governance requirements. | |

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| ☐ **One or more 'no'**: The site does not adequately meet all the governance requirements. | |

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# 3.3 MANAGED

## A. INTRODUCTION

'**Managed**' specifies that there is a sustained management system that delivers effective and long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. Relevant authorities, rights holders and stakeholders should be identified and involved in management. Unlike protected areas, OECMs do not require a primary objective of conservation, but there must be a clear association between the site's overall objective and management and the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity over the long-term. Management decisions can include a deliberate action to leave the site untouched.

Management of OECMs should be consistent with the ecosystem approach, with the ability to adapt to achieve expected long-term biodiversity conservation outcomes and to manage emerging new threats (https://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/). Accordingly, the management of OECMs should include "effective means" of control of activities that could impact biodiversity, whether through legal measures or other effective means (such as customary laws or binding agreements with the landowners). To the extent relevant and possible, management should be integrated across OECMs and integrated with surrounding areas.

A site is not an OECM where the management regime is not implemented or where no management regime is in place, even though its biodiversity may remain intact. For example, areas of the high seas and other areas currently in a natural or near-natural state should not be considered as OECMs in the absence of a management regime that results in effective and enduring *in-situ* biodiversity conservation.

## B. ASSESSMENT

| CRITERIA | QUESTIONS | ASSESSMENT RESULT | **Evidenced-based Rationale** |
|---|---|---|---|
| The site has a management system. | **Is the site managed?** | ☐ Yes - The site is being actively managed according to clear objectives, and regularly monitored and evaluated.<br><br>☐ Partially - There is some form of management system, but the implementation of activities is not | |

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| | | comprehensive and there is only sporadic monitoring and evaluation.<br><br>☐ No - The site is not being managed. | |
| The management of the site is intended and designed to be sustained. | **Are the site's management practices designed to be sustained into the indefinite future?** | ☐ Yes - The site has a management plan that is authorised by the governance authority, and its implementation is intended to be sustained into the indefinite future.<br><br>☐ Partially - The site has a management plan that is authorised by the governance authority, but that is not intended to be sustained into the indefinite future.<br><br>☐ No - The site has no management plan, or this plan is not authorised by the governance authority, and / or is not implemented, resourced, monitored, and reviewed, and there is no intention to achieve this. | |
| Management objectives for the site (including conservation objectives, if any) , align and/or result in the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | **Is there compatibility between the site's management and conservation outcomes?** | ☐ Yes - Primary management objectives are clearly aligned and/or result in the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity.<br><br>☐ Partially - Primary and overriding objectives are not currently clearly aligned and or proven to result in the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, however, based on evident intent (e.g. management intent, stated or implied objectives, allowable and prohibited activities), primary and overriding objectives are not expected to result in adverse | |

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| | | negative impacts on the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity.<br><br>☐ No - Based on evident intent there is no link between management objectives and the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, and conversely is likely to be compromised by conflicting objectives, or objectives do not exist. | |
| Activities incompatible with the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity do not occur and compatible activities are effectively managed. | **Is there adherence to the management system?** | ☐ Yes - All relevant management authorities (or where there is no management authority, governing authority) acknowledge and abide by a management system that results in the in-situ conservation of biodiversity.<br><br>☐ Partially - Most key, but not all, relevant management authorities (or where there is no management authority, governing authority) acknowledge and abide by a management system that results in the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity.<br><br>☐ No - Few or no relevant management authorities (or where there is no management authority, governing authority) acknowledge and abide by the biodiversity conservation objectives (if any) of the area, or by any management system likely to result in the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | |

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| Processes should be in place to evaluate the management effectiveness. | **Is the implementation and effectiveness of the management being monitored and evaluated?** | ☐ Yes -There are ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes, with necessary capacity and resources, that evaluate and inform the effectiveness of management.<br><br>☐ Partially - There is a proposed monitoring and evaluation process that would evaluate and inform the effectiveness of governance an management, but the process is not being implemented.<br><br>☐ No - There is no active or proposed framework or process to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of governance and management. | |

## C. OVERALL RESULT FOR 'MANAGED'

Drawing on the above assessment, tick one box that corresponds with the above outcome.

| **RESULT**<br>*Tick the box that describes the overall result* | **EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE**<br>*Review the evidence-based rationale presented in the above table and provide a summary here* |
|---|---|
| ☐ **All 'yes'**: The site has sustained management, and there is compatibility between the management objectives and conservation outcomes. | |
| ☐ **One or more 'partially'**: The site partially meets the 'management' requirements. | |
| ☐ **One or more 'no'**: The site does not meet all the 'management' requirements. | |

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# 3.4 BIODIVERSITY VALUES

## A. INTRODUCTION

**Biodiversity value**: Recognition of an OECM should include the identification of the range of biodiversity values for which the site is considered important and be based upon the best available knowledge. While approaches for identifying the important biodiversity elements of such sites vary according to national, subnational, and local circumstances, global guidance now exists for identifying Key Biodiversity Areas and for describing areas such as Ramsar sites and Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Areas. The biodiversity conserved by an OECM can occur in sites within and beyond national jurisdiction.

***In-situ* conservation**: OECMs are expected to achieve **the *in-situ* conservation** of nature as a whole, rather than only selected elements of biodiversity.

| | |
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| IMPORTANT CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS | The area does need to demonstrate some significant degree of biological value and, noting the CBD focus on the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, should not be single-species focused unless the conservation of the species is achieved by also conserving *in-situ* the broader ecosystem, species, habitats, and processes in/with which it naturally occurs. |

## B. ASSESSMENT

**TIP:** To facilitate the discussion about the biological value of the site, the governance authority or the external assessor can conduct a desktop assessment of the biological value in the area (where these have been mapped) before undertaking the assessment, which is then confirmed and expanded upon during the assessment.

| CRITERIA | QUESTION<br>Does the site support one or more of the below biodiversity values (1-11)? | ASSESSMENT RESULT | EVIDENCED-BASED RATIONALE<br>Describe the biodiversity feature and include references and web links |
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| An OECM has a significant biodiversity value, or has objectives to achieve this. | 1. Rare, threatened or endangered species and habitats, and the ecosystems that support them, including species and areas identified on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, Red List of Ecosystems, or national equivalents. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | **E.g.**: Endangered Bengal Tiger, (Chundawat, R.S., Khan, J.A. & Mallon, D.P. . 2011. Panthera tigris ssp. tigris. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2011: e.T136899A4348945) |
| | 2. Representative natural ecosystems. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| | 3. High level of ecological integrity or ecological intactness, which are characterised by the occurrence of the full range of native species and supporting ecological processes. These sites will be intact or be capable of being restored under the proposed management regime. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| | 4. Range-restricted species and ecosystems in natural settings. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| | 5. Important species aggregations, including during migration or spawning. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| | 6. Ecosystems especially important for species life stages, feeding, resting, moulting and breeding. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | e.g. Estuaries |
| | 7. Sites of importance for ecological connectivity or that are important to complete a conservation network within a landscape or seascape. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| | 8. Sites that provide critical ecosystem services, such as clean water and carbon storage, in addition to *in-situ* biodiversity conservation. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | e.g. Strategic Water Source Area |
| | 9. Species and habitats that are important for traditional human uses, such as native medicinal plants, in addition to *in-situ* biodiversity conservation. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| | 10. Other biodiversity features recognized through biodiversity planning. | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | e.g. Critical Biodiversity Areas |

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| | 11. Is the biodiversity value of the site formally recognised? If Yes, please describe the nature of this recognition: National, Subnational, and/or Local designations or recognition status (e.g.: South African Critical Biodiversity Area) Global guidance (e.g.: Key Biodiversity Area, etc.). | ☐ Yes<br>☐ No | e.g. Falls within the global Ebo Forest KBA (KBA no., web reference to World Database on KBAs). |

## C. OVERALL RESULT FOR 'BIODIVERSITY VALUES'

Drawing on the above assessment, tick one box that corresponds with the above outcome.

| **RESULT**<br>*Tick the box that describes the overall result* | **EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE**<br>*Review the evidence-based rationale presented in the above table and provide a summary here* |
|---|---|
| ☐ **One or more 'yes'**: The site supports one or more biodiversity value/s. | |
| ☐ **Partially**: The site potentially supports one or more biodiversity value/s, however there is not yet any evidence to demonstrate this suggestion. | |
| ☐ **All 'no'**: The site does not have any biodiversity value/s, as per the CBD criteria. | |

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# 3.5 EFFECTIVE AND LONG-TERM IN-SITU CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

## A. INTRODUCTION

OECMs deliver the effective and long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, including by being a viable size to support the biodiversity values for which the site is important.

**Effective and long-term:** The site should deliver the effective and long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. Short-term or temporary management strategies do not constitute an OECM. Mechanisms that can be easily overturned, despite being constituted as long-term mechanisms, do not constitute an OECM.

**Positive outcomes:** For biodiversity conservation (termed "effective" in the criteria of CBD decision 14/8), OECMs should be effective at delivering the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity in the long-term. Specifically, there should be a clear association between the management and biodiversity outcomes, with mechanisms in place to address existing or anticipated threats. Effective biodiversity conservation outcomes may include strict protection or certain forms of sustainable management that are consistent with the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. Additionally, practical steps must be in place for monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of OECMs.

**Viable size:** While the size of OECMs may vary, they should be of sufficient size, and/or form part of a landscape/seascape conservation effort, to achieve the long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, including all ecosystems, habitats and species communities for which the site is important. "Sufficient size" is highly contextual and is dependent on the ecological requirements for the persistence of the relevant species and ecosystems.

| | |
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| IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS | **Internal threats:** Threats occurring or potentially occurring within the OECM that have the potential to negatively impact the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity within the area.<br><br>**External threats:** Threats those occurring or potentially occurring outside the OECM that have the potential to negatively impact the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity within the area. External threats may become internal threats, for example, when pollution in an upstream river flow into the area. While sites can not necessarily control external threats, they should identify these threats and prepare to mitigate them. Mitigation could also include |

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| | landscape citizenship approach where the site participates in the affairs of the landscape around it (as per the legislation and regulations of the land) in a biodiversity positive way |

## B. ASSESSMENT

| CRITERIA | QUESTIONS | ASSESSMENT RESULT | EVIDENCED-BASED RATIONALE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Biodiversity (as a whole) is conserved *in-situ*.* | **Are the site's biodiversity values being conserved *in-situ*?** | ☐ Yes - Based on clear evidence, the site achieves the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity.<br><br>☐ Partially - Based on at least some evidence of biodiversity conservation outcomes and allowable and prohibited activities, the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity is likely being achieved.<br><br>☐ No - Based on deficiencies in biodiversity conservation outcomes and/or allowable/prohibited activities, the area is unlikely to achieve *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | |
| The site continues to deliver its biodiversity conservation outcomes over the long term. | **Will the conservation outcome occur over the long-term?** | ☐ Yes - The *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity is intended and expected to be sustained in order to deliver the long-term (on-going and without any end point) conservation outcomes.<br><br>☐ Partially - There is uncertainty about whether the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity will be delivered over the long-term (on-going and without any end point). | |

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| | | ☐ No – The *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity is not intended or expected to be sustained. | |
| The site is large enough on its own, or as part of an established and integrated conservation network, to conserve biodiversity *in-situ* over the long term and in line with the ecosystem approach. | **Is the size of the site large enough to deliver the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity?** | ☐ Yes – The site on its own, or collectively with neighbouring protected or conserved sites with similar management objectives, is of viable size to achieve the outcomes for *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity over the long term.<br>☐ Partially - The site on its own is too small to achieve the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, but would be of a viable size if managed collectively or aligned with neighbouring protected or conserved areas.<br>☐ No - The site is too small and/or isolated to achieve the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity over the long term. | |
| Biodiversity (as a whole) is conserved year-round. | **Is the site's management implemented in such a way that the biodiversity is actively conserved year round?** | ☐ Yes - The factors that govern and manage the site such that biodiversity is conserved *in-situ* are in effect year-round.<br>☐ Partially - There is uncertainty about whether the management of the site delivers year-round conservation outcomes.<br>☐ No - The factors that govern and manage the area are seasonal, short-term or temporary during the year and do not result in a long-term overall management system that results in the year-round *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | |

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| Management is consistent with the ecosystem approach with the ability to adapt to achieve expected biodiversity conservation outcomes, including long-term outcomes, and including the ability to manage a new threat. | **Are internal threats addressed?** | ☐ Yes - The governance and/or management authorities have identified existing and anticipated internal threats and have measures in place to effectively eliminate or prevent them.<br><br>☐ Partially - The governance and/or management authorities have identified existing and anticipated internal threats and have measures in place to significantly reduce them and subsequently remediate/restore any negative impacts to the value/s of the site.<br><br>☐ No - The site is experiencing current or imminent effects of internal threats that negatively impact on the value/s of the site, and cannot be mitigated against, or the governance and/or management authorities have not identified all relevant existing and/or internal threats, and/or do not have measures in place to effectively eliminate, prevent, reduce, and/or remediate them such that *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity can be achieved. | |
| Activities occurring outside the site do not compromise the achievement of *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity within the site. | **Are external threats addressed?** | ☐ Yes - The governance and/or management authorities have identified existing and anticipated external threats and measures are in place to mitigate them.<br><br>☐ Partially - The governance and/or management authorities have identified existing and anticipated external threats, and where measures in place are inadequate/unable to eliminate, prevent or significantly reduce them, there are measures in place to subsequently | |

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| | | remediate/restore any negative impacts to the value/s of the site.<br><br>☐ No - The site is experiencing current or imminent effects of external threats that negatively impact on the value/s of the site, and cannot be mitigated against, or the governance and/or management authorities have not identified all relevant existing and/or external threats, and/or measures are not in place and/or sufficient to effectively eliminate, prevent, reduce, and/or remediate/restore any negative impacts to the value/s of the area such that *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity can be achieved. | |
| The biodiversity value/s for which the area is recognised are monitored (e.g. keystone species, ecosystem health, etc.). | **Are the sites biodiversity attributes regularly monitored and documented?** | ☐ Yes - A monitoring mechanism/s is in place which focuses on the biodiversity value for which the site is recognised (e.g. keystone species, ecosystem health, etc.).<br><br>☐ Partially - A monitoring mechanism/s is in place but does not consider the key biodiversity values for which the site is recognised.<br><br>☐ No - There is no monitoring mechanism/s in place. | |

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| ***Explanatory Note on Biodiversity Conservation outcomes** | Answering 'partially' requires some evidence that *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity is likely being achieved. Sites should have direct evidence of biodiversity conservation outcomes, including the condition of habitats and ecological processes, species abundances, impacts of invasive species, and effects of ecological isolation. Without robust monitoring data, other information should be used in the screening process. Biodiversity conservation outcomes may be able to be inferred from species abundance information (e.g. surveys or harvesting reports), or discussions with site managers and knowledge holders, or management effectiveness assessments. |

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| | In some cases, biodiversity conservation outcomes may also be inferred from current uses and their expected impacts, or, in the absence of current-use knowledge, from an understanding of allowed and prohibited uses. In some cases, such as for larger remote areas with little human use, remotely sensed information (e.g., satellite imagery) may help inform whether biodiversity conservation outcomes are likely being achieved.<br><br>Understanding whether biodiversity conservation outcomes are being or likely to be achieved implies that reference or desired conditions can be defined, or at least that, going forward, baselines can be established against which future conditions can be compared. |

## C. OVERALL RESULT FOR 'EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY'

Drawing on the above assessment, tick one box that corresponds with the above outcome.

| RESULT<br>*Tick the box that describes the overall result* | EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE<br>*Review the evidence-based rationale presented in the above table and provide a summary here* |
|---|---|
| ☐ **All 'yes'**: The site achieves the effective and long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | |
| ☐ **One or more 'partially'**: The site partially meets the 'effective and in-situ' conservation of biodiversity' requirements. | |
| ☐ **One or more 'no'**: The site does not meets the 'effective and in-situ' conservation of biodiversity' requirements. | |

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# 3.6 ASSOCIATED ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES AND OTHER LOCALLY RELEVANT VALUES

## A. INTRODUCTION

Healthy and functioning ecosystems provide a range of services. **Ecosystem functions** are an integral part of biodiversity, and are defined as the biological, geochemical and physical processes that take place or occur within an ecosystem. **Ecosystem services** include provisioning services such as food and water; regulating services such as regulation of floods, drought, land degradation and disease; and supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient recycling. Protection of these ecosystem functions and services may be a frequent rationale for the recognition of OECMs. However, management to enhance one particular ecosystem service should not impact negatively on the site's overall biodiversity conservation values.

OECMs include sites where the protection of key species and habitats and management of biodiversity may be achieved as part of ***cultural, spiritual socio-economic and other locally relevant values*** and practices. In such cases, it will be essential to ensure the recognition and protection of the linkages between biological and cultural diversity and associated governance and management practices that lead to positive biodiversity outcomes, such as customary sustainable uses of biodiversity (CBD Article 10(c)). Conversely, management for cultural, spiritual socio-economic or other locally relevant values within an OECM should not impact negatively on biodiversity conservation values.

**Note**: A site does not need to have these associated values present in order to qualify as an OECM. The purpose of recording these associated values, where they exists, is to assess whether they are adequately considered in the governance and management of the site.

## B. ASSESSMENT

| CRITERIA | QUESTIONS | ASSESSMENT RESULT | EVIDENCED-BASED RATIONALE |
|---|---|---|---|
| The management of a site for ecosystem functions and | **Do the governance and management measures for the** | ☐ Yes – They align and are mutually supportive. | |

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| services should align with the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | **associated ecosystem functions and services align with biodiversity conservation outcomes?** | ☐ Partially - They are not fully aligned and there may be some marginal negative impacts.<br><br>☐ No - There are negative impacts on biodiversity outcomes. | |
| The management of a site for cultural, spiritual, socio-economic or other locally relevant values should align with the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | **Do the governance and management measures for the associated cultural, spiritual, socio-economic or other locally relevant values align with biodiversity conservation outcomes?** | ☐ Yes - They align and are mutually supportive.<br><br>☐ Partially - They are not fully aligned and there may be some marginal negative impacts.<br><br>☐ No - There are negative impacts on biodiversity outcomes. | |

## C. OVERALL RESULT FOR 'ASSOCIATED FUNCTIONS, SERVICES AND OTHER LOCALLY RELEVANT VALUES

Tick the box if the site does have any associated ecosystem functions, services and other locally relevant values.

| RESULT<br>*Tick the box that describes the overall result* | EVIDENCE-BASED RATIONALE<br>*Review the evidence-based rationale presented in the above table and provide a summary here* |
|---|---|
| ☐ **All 'yes'**: The management of the site for ecosystem functions and services as well as for cultural, spiritual, socio-economic or other | |

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| locally relevant values aligns with the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. | |
| ☐ **One or more 'partially'**: The site partially meets the 'ecosystem functions and other locally relevant values' criteria. | |
| ☐ **One or more 'no'**: The site does not meet the 'ecosystem functions and other locally relevant values' criteria. | |

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# 3.7 REPORT SUMMARY

## A. GENERATING A FINAL RESULT

This section supports a determination of whether the site is an OECM, is not an OECM or requires further assessment and deliberation to make a final decision. To fill in the table, review your 'overall' answers for each of the above six section (3.1-3.6) and tick the corresponding box.

| | RESULTS<br>*Review the 'overall results' for each section (3.1-3.6) and tick the corresponding boxes* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CRITERIA** | **Yes** | **Partially** | **No** |
| 3.1 Geographically defined boundaries and not a protected area | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3.2 Biodiversity values | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3.3 Governed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3.4 Managed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3.5 Effective and long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3.6 Ecosystem functions, ecosystem services and other locally relevant values are detailed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

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## B. INTERPRETING THE RESULT

| | |
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| All 'Yes' | ***If all the characteristics are graded as 'Yes', the area is an OECM***. Consent from the legitimate governance authority is required for the site to be recognised and reported as a OECM. Please refer to *Recognising and Reporting OECMs* (IUCN, 2019) for further guidance. |
| One or more 'Partially' | ***If one or more characteristic is graded as a 'Partially', this does not disqualify the site as an OECM.*** A 'partially' result means that the site is close to meeting the criteria of an OECM but does not yet fully qualify as an OECM. The above tables (3.1-3.7) help identify areas requiring improvement. During this process, the site remains a candidate OECM until it meets all the requisite requirements. |
| One or more 'No' | ***If one or more characteristics is graded as 'No', then the area is not an OECM***. This result could be discussed with the governance authority should they be willing to begin a process of engagement on that issue with the objective to improve that aspect towards the site meeting all the criteria of an OECM and thereby qualifying as an OECM in future. |

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# ANNEX I

## FURTHER GUIDANCE ON POTENTIAL OECMs (edited excerpts from IUCN-WCPA, 2019)

### 1. Examples of potential other effective area-based conservation measures

The following situations **can be considered as potential OECMs.** These examples cover the range of governance types for purposes of illustrating their applicability. A number of examples in which the citation has been marked with an asterisk (*) can be found in a Special Issue of *PARKS* journal on OECMs (IUCN/WCPA, 2018). https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2018.PARKS-24-SI.en.

#### 1.1 Primary conservation

A site that has a primary conservation objective and delivers effective biodiversity conservation but is not reported as a protected area could be recognised as an OECM if the governance authority so wishes. Examples can include:

- Some territories or areas (marine, freshwater or terrestrial) governed by Indigenous Peoples, local communities or private entities that have a primary and explicit conservation objective and deliver the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, but where the governing body wishes the territories or areas to be recognised and reported as OECMs, rather than as protected areas.
- Privately conserved areas, which are managed with a specific conservation objective but which are not recognised as protected areas under national legislation (Mitchell et al., 2018), e.g. ecosystem restoration areas in Indonesia (Utomo & Walsh, 2018*).
- Areas that include Key Biodiversity Areas, managed in ways that deliver long-term *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity through, for example, regulation or other effective approaches.
- Some permanently set-aside areas of a managed forest, such as old-growth, primary, or other high-biodiversity value forests, which are protected from both forestry and non-forestry threats.
- Some natural areas managed by universities for biological research.

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### 1.2 Secondary conservation

Examples can include:

- Territories and areas managed by Indigenous Peoples and/or local communities (ICCAs, or sections of these areas) to maintain natural or near-natural ecosystems, with low levels of use of natural resources practised on a sustainable basis and in a way that does not degrade the area's biodiversity. This includes coastal and marine areas where local community-based harvesting and management practices result in *de facto* conservation of fish populations, habitats and other associated marine biodiversity such as some locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) (Jupiter et al., 2014).
- Traditional management systems that maintain high levels of associated biodiversity. These could include certain agricultural or forest management systems that maintain native species and their habitat (e.g. Eghenter, 2018; Mwamidi et al., 2018*).
- Urban or municipal parks managed primarily for public recreation but which are large enough and sufficiently natural to also effectively achieve the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity (e.g. wild grassland, wetlands) and which are managed to maintain these biodiversity values (e.g. Gray et al., 2018).
- Military lands and waters, or portions of military lands and waters that are primarily managed for the purpose of defence, but with specific secondary objectives focused on the conservation of biodiversity. Canadian Forces Base Shilo, located in the mixed-grass prairie ecosystem of south-central Manitoba (Canada), was proposed by Canada as an OECM in 2019.
- Watersheds or other areas managed primarily for water resource management that also result in the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. This can include, for example, water meadows, riverine forest, coastal forests, wetlands, streams, upland catchments, or other areas managed for long-term soil and slope stabilisation, flood mitigation, or other ecosystem services (e.g. Matallana-Tobón et al., 2018*).
- Permanent or long-term fisheries closure areas designed to protect complete ecosystems for stock recruitment, to protect specialised ecosystems in their entirety, or protect species at risk through the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity as a whole and are demonstrated to be effective against fishery and non-fishery threats alike.
- Hunting reserves that maintain natural habitats and other flora and fauna as well as viable populations of hunted and non-hunted native species.
- Areas successfully restored from degraded or threatened ecosystems, to provide important ecosystem services but which also contribute to effective biodiversity conservation, e.g. freshwater and coastal wetlands restored for flood protection.
- Areas that contribute to conservation because of their role in connecting protected areas and other areas of particular importance for the conservation of biodiversity, thereby contributing to the long-term viability of larger ecosystems (e.g. Waithaka & Warigia Njoroge, 2018*).

### 1.3 Ancillary conservation

Examples can include:

- Sacred natural sites with high biodiversity values that are conserved in the long-term for their associations with one or more faith groups (e.g. Matallana-Tobón et al., 2018*).

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- Coastal and marine areas protected for reasons other than conservation, but that nonetheless achieve the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity e.g. historic wrecks, war graves, etc. (e.g. see Box 3).
- Military lands and waters, or portions of military lands and waters that are managed for the purpose of defence, do not have a secondary objective of biodiversity conservation, but achieve the effective conservation of biodiversity in the long term.

## 2. Examples of areas unlikely to meet the criteria

The following areas and management regimes are **unlikely to qualify as OECMs**:

- Small, semi-natural areas within an intensively managed landscape with limited biodiversity conservation value, such as municipal parks, formal/domestic gardens, arboreta, field margins, roadside verges, hedgerows, narrow shoreline or watercourse setbacks, firebreaks, recreational beaches, marinas and golf courses.
- Forests that are managed commercially for timber supply and are intended for logging, even though they may have some conservation values and support some species of interest. Such areas should be considered as contributing to Aichi Target 7.
- Fishery closures, and other spatial fisheries management tools, including, but not limited to, fishing quotas or catch limits, temporary set asides or gear restriction areas with a single species, species group, or habitat focus, that may be subject to periodic exploitation and/or be defined for stock management purposes, and that do not deliver *in-situ* conservation of the associated ecosystems, habitats and species with which target species are associated. Such areas should be considered as contributing to Aichi Target 6.
- Agricultural lands which are managed in a manner that limits the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. This may include, for example, pastures that are grazed too intensively to support native grassland ecosystems or species, or grasslands replanted with monocultures or non-native species for the purposes of livestock production.
- Temporary agricultural set asides, summer fallow and grant-maintained changes to agricultural practice that may benefit biodiversity.
- Conservation measures that apply to a single species or group of species, over a wide geographical range such as hunting regulations or whale-watching rules; these are better considered as being part of wider species conservation measures (Targets 5, 6, 7 and/or 12).

The above examples are not meant to be exhaustive or without exception but are intended to indicate which kinds of areas may qualify as OECMs and which would not. When considering any area, the definitions and criteria applied during the application of the screening tool will be the appropriate route to ensure consistent identification of candidate OECMs. Given the diversity of situations where OECMs can occur, **it is essential that all areas being assessed should be screened carefully to evaluate each specific case.**

The concept of OECMs will generally be used to recognise existing examples of effective area-based conservation and the governance and management regimes that support them. The concept could, however, also be used to promote new and additional conservation efforts. During

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negotiation of Decision 14/8, qualifying terms like "have a significant biodiversity value, or have objectives to achieve this" and "achieve, or is expected to achieve, positive and sustained outcomes for the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity" were added to guiding text for identification of OECMs. Governments proposing these caveats stressed that they were added to address sites where restoration was taking place, to acknowledge deliberate attempts at ecosystem recovery. The intent to restore ecosystems and habitats is commendable, but **restoration areas should not be recognized as OECMs until they are delivering demonstrable and significant biodiversity outcomes (see Section 4, below)**.

## 3. A focus on sustainable use areas

The Convention on Biological Diversity calls for a comprehensive set of approaches to stem biodiversity loss, including raising awareness of biodiversity, eliminating perverse incentives for its degradation, implementing sustainable production plans, reducing habitat loss, preventing species extinction, reducing direct pressures on biodiversity to sustainable levels, and conserving biodiversity *in-situ*.

Area-based conservation measures can contribute to the achievement of several biodiversity targets, but not all area-based measures achieve their objectives through the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity consistent with the CBD definition of '*in situ* conservation of biodiversity'.

For example, many fisheries closures apply to specific geographic areas and therefore are area-based measures, but may only be closed to the fishing of specific depleted commercial fish species, the use of certain habitat-damaging or non-selective gear types, or at certain times of year when vulnerable species are present at a vulnerable life stage (e.g. spawning aggregations). They may continue to allow fishery and non-fishery activities (e.g. seismic testing, oil drilling), as long as such activities do not compromise the purposes for which they have been established. As such, they may be effective tools in helping to ensure that fisheries are managed sustainably, without achieving the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity (the test for protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures).

Similarly, forestry management plans are applied on an area basis and may vary in their degree of ecological impact. Lower-impact approaches may retain more species, habitat structures, and ecosystem functions than higher-impact approaches, and some may indeed achieve the CBD meaning of "sustainable use" – i.e. the use of components of biological diversity in a way, and at a rate, that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity. However, because of their extractive, ecosystem-altering impacts, they may not also achieve the *in-situ* conservation of all biodiversity.

The threshold between 'sustainable use' and 'in situ conservation of biodiversity' may be difficult to decide in cases of customary use of biological resources in largely natural settings by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In such cases, it may be useful to look at how well protected such areas are from forestry and non-forestry threats alike over the long-term to determine whether an area is an OECM.

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## 4. A focus on ecological restoration areas

Ecological restoration is the process of managing or assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed as a means of sustaining ecosystem resilience and conserving biodiversity. It is likely to become a more common and necessary conservation tool in the future. **Areas proposed for, or under active restoration efforts, should not be recognised as OECMs until they are delivering demonstrable and significant biodiversity outcomes**. IUCN's guidance is therefore that restoration areas proposed as OECMs should meet all the following conditions:

1. Restoration is taking place in an ecosystem of high biodiversity value (see Box 4) so that the area, once restored, will qualify as an OECM by virtue of its conservation value and contribution to strengthening existing protected area networks;
2. Any restoration efforts should (i) have reduced the threats that caused the original degradation and biodiversity loss, (ii) show successful ecosystem recovery based on the principles of ecological restoration and (iii) contribute to long-term maintenance of a resilient and evolving ecosystem; and

Demonstrate active ecological restoration or natural regeneration of a type and at a scale that is expected to regain and maintain ecological integrity and a full complement of species.

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