



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**



Distr.: General

03 June 2025

Original: English

**Twenty-Fourth Global Meeting of Regional Seas
Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs)**
France, Nice, 11 June 2025

RSCAP Vision and Roadmap towards KM-GBF 30x30 MPA-OECM Target

Introduction

1. Marine ecosystems are the lifeblood of planetary health and human well-being. Yet despite global commitments, the world remains far from achieving the protection levels needed to reverse ocean decline. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's Target 3—conserving 30% of the ocean by 2030—offers a clear benchmark. As of October 2024, 8.4% of marine and coastal areas were protected or conserved ([Protected Planet Report 2024](#)). Achieving Target 3 demands a shift from fragmented efforts to coordinated, science-based, and equity-driven action.
2. The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) are uniquely positioned to catalyse this transformation. With 146 participating countries spanning 18 marine regions, RSCAPs provide a tested model of multilateral cooperation, bridging national action with regional governance and global ambition. Their long-standing mandate to tackle transboundary environmental challenges makes them essential partners in delivering 30x30, particularly in exclusive economic zones (EEZs), where nearly 40% of the ocean lies—and where progress can be accelerated through regional frameworks.
3. The mandate of the RSCAPs on matters related to the MPA establishment and effectiveness is broad and includes inter alia the following aspects:
 - Mapping of MPAs including what would be needed to achieve the 30x30 – Enhancing data and information management systems
 - Capacity building to improve MPA effectiveness
 - Integration with activities focusing on pollution prevention
 - Collaboration with private sector interest – tourism/ecotourism
 - Collaboration with Fisheries Interests and ensuring co-management arrangements (relevant to SOI under CBD)
 - Facilitating cooperation among various MPA Networks
 - Encouraging Marine Spatial Planning and Integrated Land Use Planning for improving management of MPAs and OECMs – In Caribbean SIDS, also being referred to as Island Systems Management approach.
 - Sustainable Financing of MPAs once established
 - Linking of MPAs to sustainable and/or alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities
 - Linking with Maritime Interests/IMO – small Recreational Marinas and Anchorages
4. This Roadmap sets out a unified path to position the Regional Seas Programme as a driver of impactful marine conservation. It proposes concrete actions and milestones to scale up Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective Area-Based

Conservation Measures (OECMs), enhance governance, improve data quality, and mobilize resources. By aligning efforts with the GBF, BBNJ Agreement, and other multilateral processes, it calls for bold, coordinated action—anchored in science, equity, and long-term resilience.

Purpose & Vision

5. To position the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) as central drivers of the 30x30 target under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), with a focus on areas within national jurisdiction and beyond, supporting Parties through science-based, equitable, and regionally coherent action.
6. A globally coordinated, regionally anchored marine conservation effort, where RSCAPs drive measurable progress on 30x30 through ecological connectivity, good governance, equitable effective management and long-term resilience. By 2030, RSCAPs will serve as accelerators and models of integrated, cross-jurisdictional ocean protection.

Key Strategic Outcomes

7. Clarify Commitments and Close Gaps
Conduct a comprehensive stocktake of existing MPAs, OECMs, and KBAs across Regional Seas regions. Align these findings with national commitments under CBD NBSAPs, as well as relevant mandates under RFMO, IMO, and BBNJ processes, to ensure a coherent and globally consistent approach to 30x30 implementation.
8. Enhance Governance and Policy Coherence
Undertake a comparative analysis of governance frameworks across RSCAPs. Promote legal alignment and mutual recognition of area-based measures across national and regional levels, strengthening the institutional foundations for achieving 30x30.
9. Prioritize Spatial Planning for Conservation Impact
Identify high-value conservation areas and ecological corridors for MPA and OECM expansion. Use science-based tools and spatial prioritization methods to guide strategic action in vulnerable or underrepresented marine ecosystems.
10. Create Enabling Conditions for Implementation
Support the development or revision of legal and regulatory frameworks to facilitate MPA expansion and management. Invest in capacity-building, management planning, and enforcement mechanisms to ensure effective and inclusive governance.
11. Mobilize Sustainable and Diversified Financing
Design and implement a robust resource mobilization strategy that leverages public, private, and innovative finance mechanisms. Explore partnerships with GEF, GBFF, Blue Bonds, PES, and blended finance instruments to sustain long-term conservation efforts.

12. Support to RSCAP member states for enabling conditions for creating MPAs, including the update of NBSAPs including consideration of the GBF/30x30 and the RSCAPs mandate on MPAs and OECMS
13. Foster Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement and Regional Ownership
Empower Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and regional actors to co-lead conservation initiatives. Facilitate participatory governance, regional knowledge exchange, and community-driven approaches to ensure social equity and lasting stewardship of marine ecosystems.
14. MPA Establishment and Management Plan Implementation
Assist in legally designating MPAs, planning, implement management strategies, and establish monitoring frameworks for adaptive management.

ANNEXES				
No	Milestone	Key Actions	Timeline	Stakeholders
1.	Level of commitment for achieving 30X30 MPA target per each RSCAP	Organize consultations with RSCAP secretariats and Member States to assess current MPA/OECM related commitment levels and identify gaps. Identification of synergies in commitments and legal obligations between RSCAPs and CBD/GBF, IMO and RFMO –whether NBSAPs under CBD integrate activities towards MPA related targets with RSCAP and vice versa to ensure a cohesive and global approach.	Q3 2025	RSCAP Secretariats, UNEP, Member States, CBD, IMO, RFMO
2.	Status/Stocktake of existing MPAs, OECMs, and KBAs within RSCAP regions	<u>Update in collaboration with RSCAP and based on existing reports,</u> a) the extent of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) within the geographic coverage of the Regional Seas. b) Areas of critical habitats (e.g., coral reefs, seagrasses), ecosystems, and species in danger that require potential area-based protection/management measures. c) Highlight regions where establishing or expanding MPAs and OECMs can significantly contribute to achieving the 30x30 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) target. d) Conduct a comparative analysis of RSCAPs' approaches to MPAs and OECMs; define	Q3/Q4 2025	UNEP-WCMC, RSCAP Secretariats, CBD, FAO, IMO

		RSCAPs' role in OECM designation; support regulatory alignment and cross-regional knowledge-sharing.		
4.	Identification of areas for new MPAs or expanding current ones using information from initiatives that work on identifying priority conservation sites, (such as TNC Caribbean Protection Dashboard or Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). KBA global map, Dashboard with statistics on a regional and national level, Global manual for KBA identification)	a) Use tools such as the MPA Guide, PrioritizR, and IBAT for effective area-based planning and conservation strategies. b) Develop targeted recommendations for scaling up MPAs and OECMs at the regional seas basin, sub-regional, and national levels. ➔ Prioritize actions in RSCAP regions to guide new or enhanced <u>area-based management measures</u>. ➔ Use stocktake results to develop a <u>spatial analysis</u> of potential sites and prioritize areas for expansion.	Q4 2025	RSCAPs, National Governments, Research Institutions, FAO/RFMO
5.	Preparation of Resource Mobilization Strategy to support MPA RSCAP Vision implementation	a. Explore diversified funding sources (GEF, GBFF, Blue Bonds, PPPs, PES); establish a resource mobilization task force; conduct capacity-building on financial mechanisms. b. Develop RMS	Q1 2026	UNEP, Development Banks, Donors, Private Sector
6.	Support to RSCAP member states for enabling conditions for creating MPAs , including the update of NBSAPs including consideration of the GBF/30x30 and the RSCAPs mandate on MPAs and OECMS	a) Evaluate general governance structures, management frameworks, and the effectiveness of existing MPAs and OECMs; identify best practices. b) Identify gaps and recommend governance improvements across the regions. c) Conduct regional capacity-building programs and governance assessments to address regulatory and technical gaps.	Q1 2026	RSCAPs, National Governments, UNEP

7.	Preparation of regulatory frameworks for MPA expansion	Assist in drafting legal instruments to support MPA expansion, ensuring alignment with international agreements and national legislation.	Q2 2026	UNEP, National Governments, Legal Experts
8.	Stakeholder Engagement & Capacity Building	- Organize regional workshops to engage RSCAP Member States, scientific bodies, and other stakeholders. - Develop a Regional Stakeholder Engagement Framework. - Integrate community-led conservation efforts and capacity building to enhance training on improving MPA governance, climate resilience, and monitoring.	Q2 2025 - Q3 2026	RSCAPs, UNEP, Local Communities, Indigenous Groups, NGOs
9.	Management Plan Preparation	Develop site-specific management plans based on ecological and socio-economic considerations, incorporating stakeholder input.	Q3 - Q4 2026	UNEP, RSCAPs, National Governments
10.	MPA establishment and implementation of the management plan	Assist in legally designating MPAs, planning, implementing management strategies, and establishing monitoring frameworks for adaptive management.	2027 onwards	UNEP, RSCAPs, National Governments, Research Institutions

Timeline Strategic Roadmap for Advancing the MPA 30x30 target

