



Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)

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CBD Target 3

Target 3 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) – also called the 30x30 target – is the world’s most ambitious conservation target to date.



[Recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable]



Act30

FACT SHEET
Explainer

Our collective future depends on achieving harmony with nature. Without a flourishing, biodiverse planet, humanity cannot thrive.

Yet global wildlife populations have plummeted by 83% since 1970 and in the last 30 years, we have lost 430 million hectares of forest and 50% of the world's coral reefs.

To turn the tide on our relationship with nature, in 2022, governments set the landmark target of conserving 30% of our planet by 2030.

Achieving our target with long-lasting impact requires a paradigm shift in our conservation efforts, away from historical practices that overlooked and displaced the most effective stewards of nature – Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

Now is the time to chart a new path forward that champions impactful, effective, and long-lasting conservation and recognises Indigenous Peoples' territories, rights, and knowledge as essential to conserving global biodiversity.

Now is the time to Act30.

WHAT IS ACT30?

Act30 is a global initiative bringing together governments, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities to map diverse and effective pathways to conserve 30% of our planet for future generations.

Co-designed and co-delivered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) and the initiative scales up conservation approaches based on scientific evidence and traditional knowledge and practices, backed by advanced geospatial technology.

Act30 will partner with countries to build and implement road maps for biodiversity conservation that are:

PARTICIPATORY

- IUCN and IIFB's global network of connections in every region provides wide-reaching power to work directly with governments and ensure the full participation of Indigenous Peoples in the governance process.

EQUITABLE

- With IIPs expertise, Act30 strives for equitable conservation by ensuring recognition of the rights, lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples.
- Act30 recognises that protecting biodiversity is not a one-size-fits all approach; there must be space for countries to approach conservation efforts in a way that best works for their local laws, heritage, culture and ecosystems.

EFFECTIVE

- Through IUCN's institutional expertise and IIPs' traditional knowledge, Act30 is underpinned by the best knowledge of how to protect 30% of our planet and safeguard biodiversity for generations to come.
- The IUCN Green List standard – the global benchmark for whether a protected area is achieving its conservation objectives – will be scaled up and made available to all Act30 countries.
- IIPs proven and globally utilised geospatial technology empowers all Act30 stakeholders to better collect, integrate, analyse, and visualise relevant data on where species and habitats need protection and trends to enrich dialogue and decision making. This will be overlaid with data from IUCN tools such as the Red List of Species, Key Biodiversity Areas database and further enriched with context from IIPs Living Atlas of the world to pinpoint where increased protection will benefit nature.

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Act30 is an initiative of

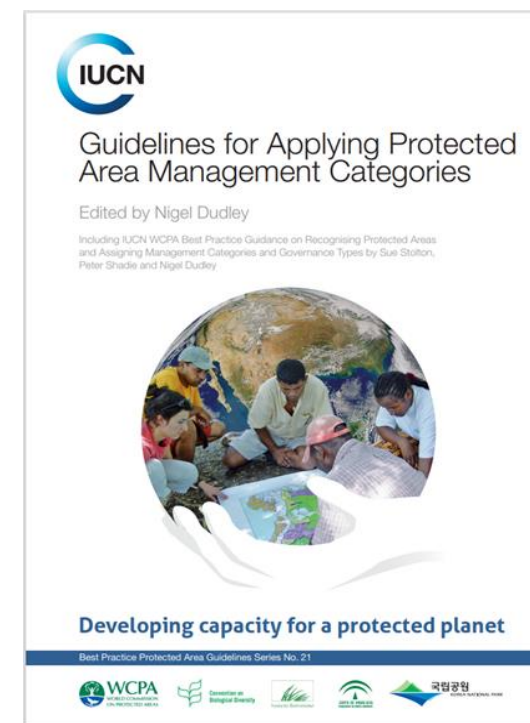






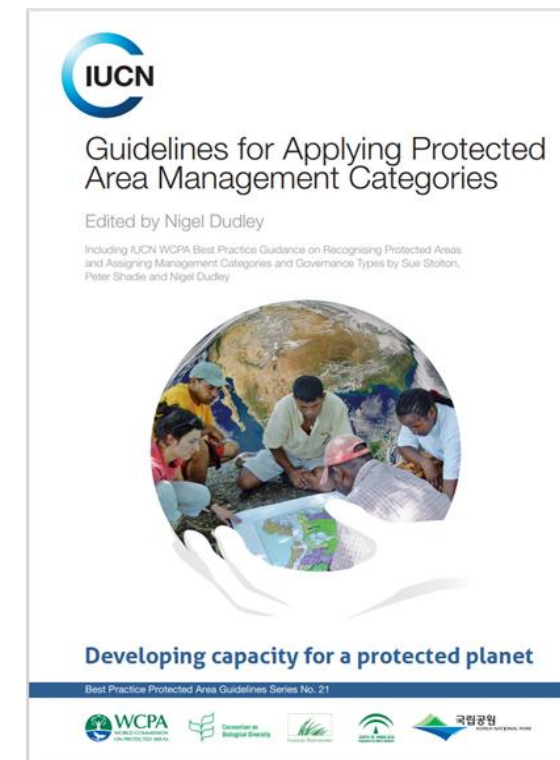
What Are Protected Areas?

- Protected areas are fundamental building blocks for nature conservation strategies.
- ***“A protected area is 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”*** IUCN Definition, 2008
- They have a wide range of management aims and governance mechanisms.
- The ‘*IUCN Protected Area Management Categories*’ is a global framework, recognised by the CBD, for categorising the variety of protected area management types.
- The intent of the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories system is to create a common understanding of protected areas, both within and between countries.
- The categories are recognised by many national governments as the global standard for defining and recording protected areas and as such are increasingly being incorporated into government legislation.



IUCN Protected Areas Management Categories

- Category Ia - **Strict Nature Reserve**: Areas managed for science
- Category Ib - **Wilderness Area**: Area managed for wilderness protection
- Category II - **National Park**: Area managed mainly for ecosystem protection / recreation
- Category III - **Natural Monument**: Area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features
- Category IV – **Habitat / Species Management Area**: Area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention
- Category V - **Protected Landscape/Seascape**: Areas managed mainly for landscape/ seascape conservation and recreation
- Category VI - **Protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources**: Areas managed for sustainable use of natural ecosystems, e.g. multiple-use areas



What are OECMs?

- **“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, socioeconomic, and other locally relevant values” (CBD)**
- Like PAs, OECMs can have a range of **governance types**: *government, *private, *Indigenous peoples and local communities, and *shared
- OECMs are meant to work as part of conservation networks with protected areas
- **OECM Criteria** – from CBD COP Decision 14/8
 - Not a protected area
 - In-situ conservation (*whole ecosystem, not a single species measure*)
 - In an area of importance for biodiversity – i.e. species and ecosystems at risk, high integrity ecosystems such as Key Biodiversity Areas)
 - Long term – expected to be ongoing
 - Effective in conservation
 - Management results in effective conservation (the mechanism)

Distinguishing Protected Areas from OECMs

- **Good practice:** OECMs and protected areas do not overlap. Sites with important biodiversity values are identified and reported as either protected areas or OECMs, recognising Indigenous and traditional territories, considering the characteristics of the site, national regulations, and the wishes of rightsholders and stakeholders. (IUCN)
- OECMs complement protected areas by encouraging conservation of biodiversity in sites which are not protected areas. OECMs and protected areas will often work together to achieve biodiversity conservation as a network, within a landscape or seascape.
- PAs and OECMs have some common characteristics:
 - Clearly defined geographic space
 - Governed and managed in ways that respect rights
 - Contribute to long-term, in situ conservation of biodiversity
 - Depending on the site's context, integrate the conservation of ecosystem services as well as cultural, spiritual and other local values in their management

Spectrum of OECMs



Primary Conservation

A site where the conservation of biodiversity is the primary management objective. Example: privately governed area where the rightsholders do not want the site classified as a protected area.



Secondary Conservation

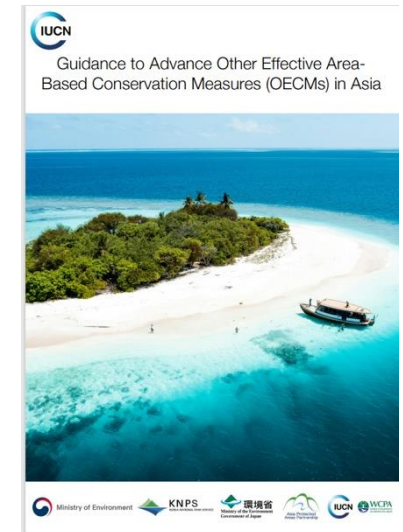
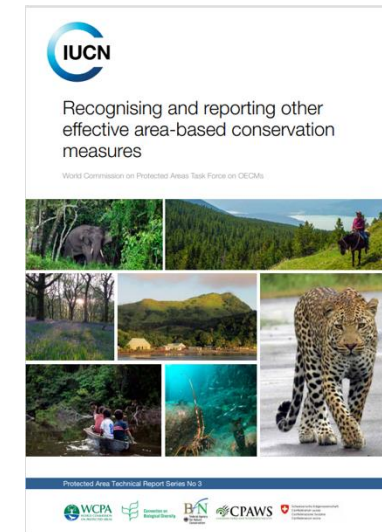
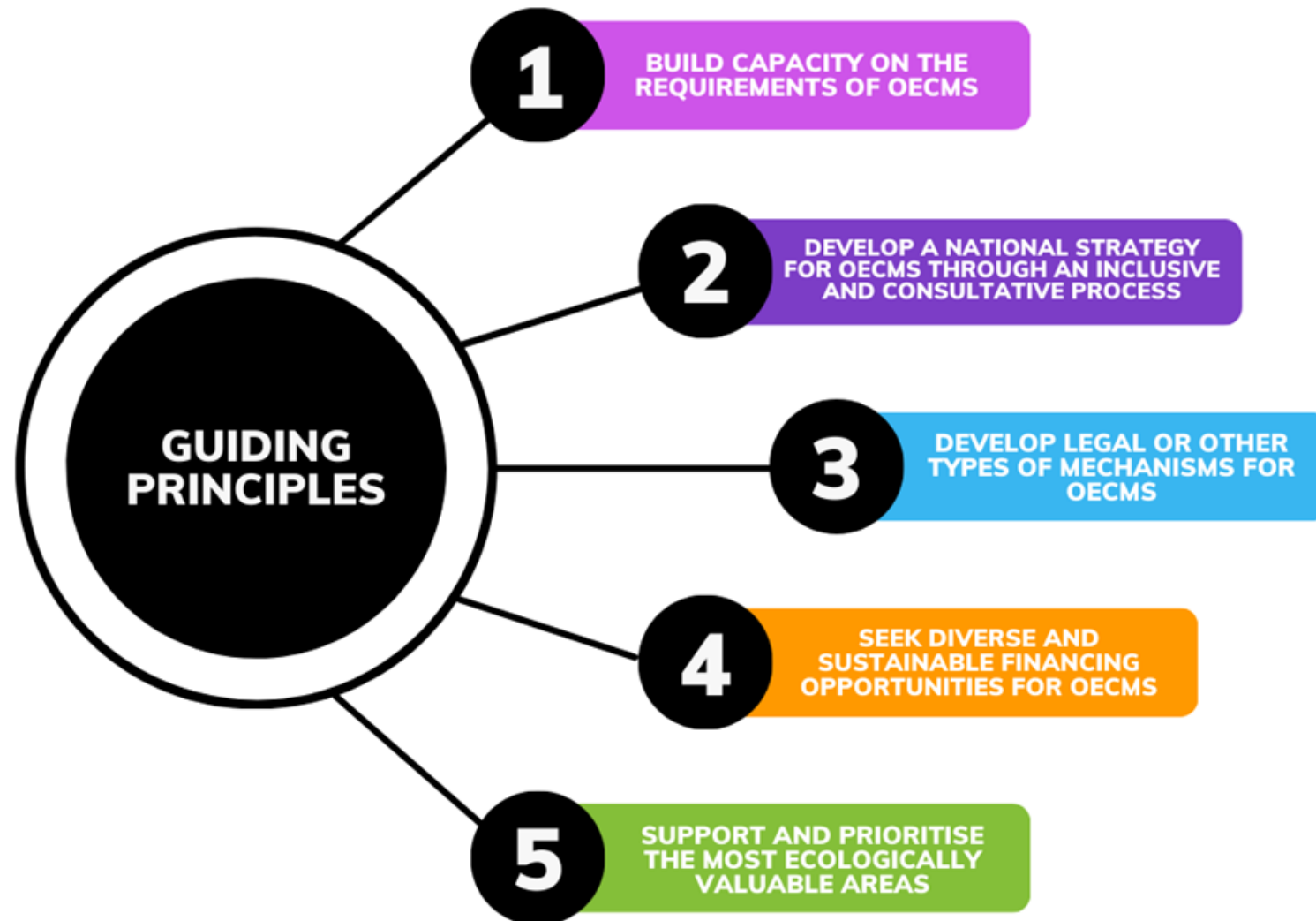
A site where the conservation of biodiversity is the secondary management objective. Example: watershed protection area.



Ancillary Conservation

A site that delivers in situ biodiversity conservation as a by-product of management activities, even though this is not a management objective. Example: archeological site.

Guiding principles to advance OECMs (IUCN)



Protected areas must have a **primary conservation objective**.

OECMs should **deliver** the effective and enduring *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, **regardless** of their objectives.

Creating pathways: Asia's experience with OECMs

- The recognition of OECMs **offers opportunities to channel resources** to hundreds thousands of existing areas managed by local communities for other objectives (e.g., sustainable use, cultural practice, livelihoods) in ways that strengthen local rights.
- OECMs contribute to spatial planning and ecological connectivity in both rural and urban settings.
- OECMs should deliver the **effective in-situ conservation** of biodiversity, regardless of their objectives.
- Qualifying as OECMs:
 - Production landscapes can qualify as OECMs.
 - Geoparks and KBAs, connectivity areas can be OECMs
 - LMMAs (community fishery areas) and Community Conserved Areas
- Aligning high conservation values (HCV) approach with OECMs can help maintain or improve the management of biodiversity in production landscapes.



Potential benefits from recognizing / reporting OECMs

For non-governmental groups

- Wider [recognition of the group's role as the governing authority](#), and through this recognition of its presence and right to manage the site.
- Confirmation of the importance of the biodiversity of the site.
- Confirmation that the local management institutions and their practices have maintained the biodiversity of the site.
- Higher global profile for the site and the group managing it.
- Inclusion in official lists of nationally/internationally important sites for biodiversity conservation in the country.
- Stronger [legal protection for the site](#).
- Greater [public awareness of and support](#) for the site.
- Secure assistance and political support, [address pressures and future threats](#), and resolve management issues, such as boundary disputes.
- Access to [funding and technical assistance](#).
- Share learning and form partnerships with similar groups at other sites.
- Promote the site and its natural values as a basis for a sustainable business, or to attract ecotourism investment.

Potential benefits from recognizing / reporting OECMs

For government agencies mandated to achieve conservation targets

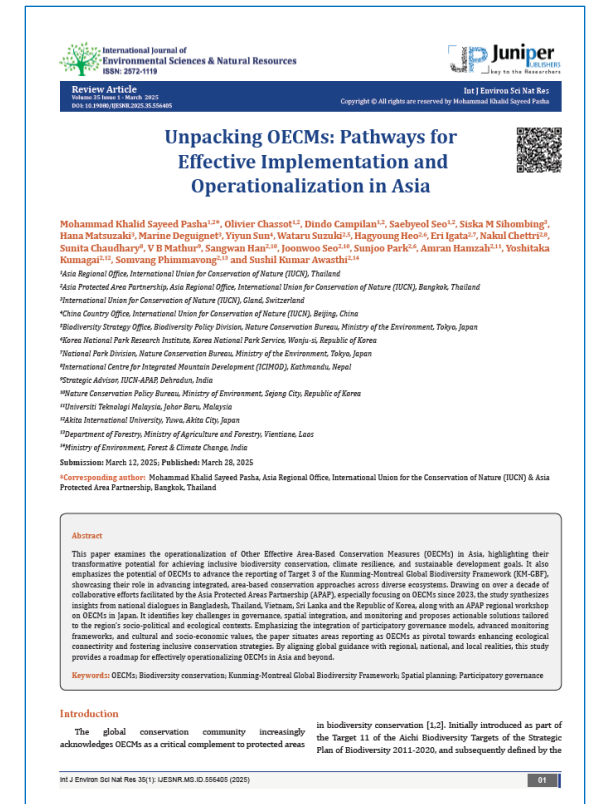
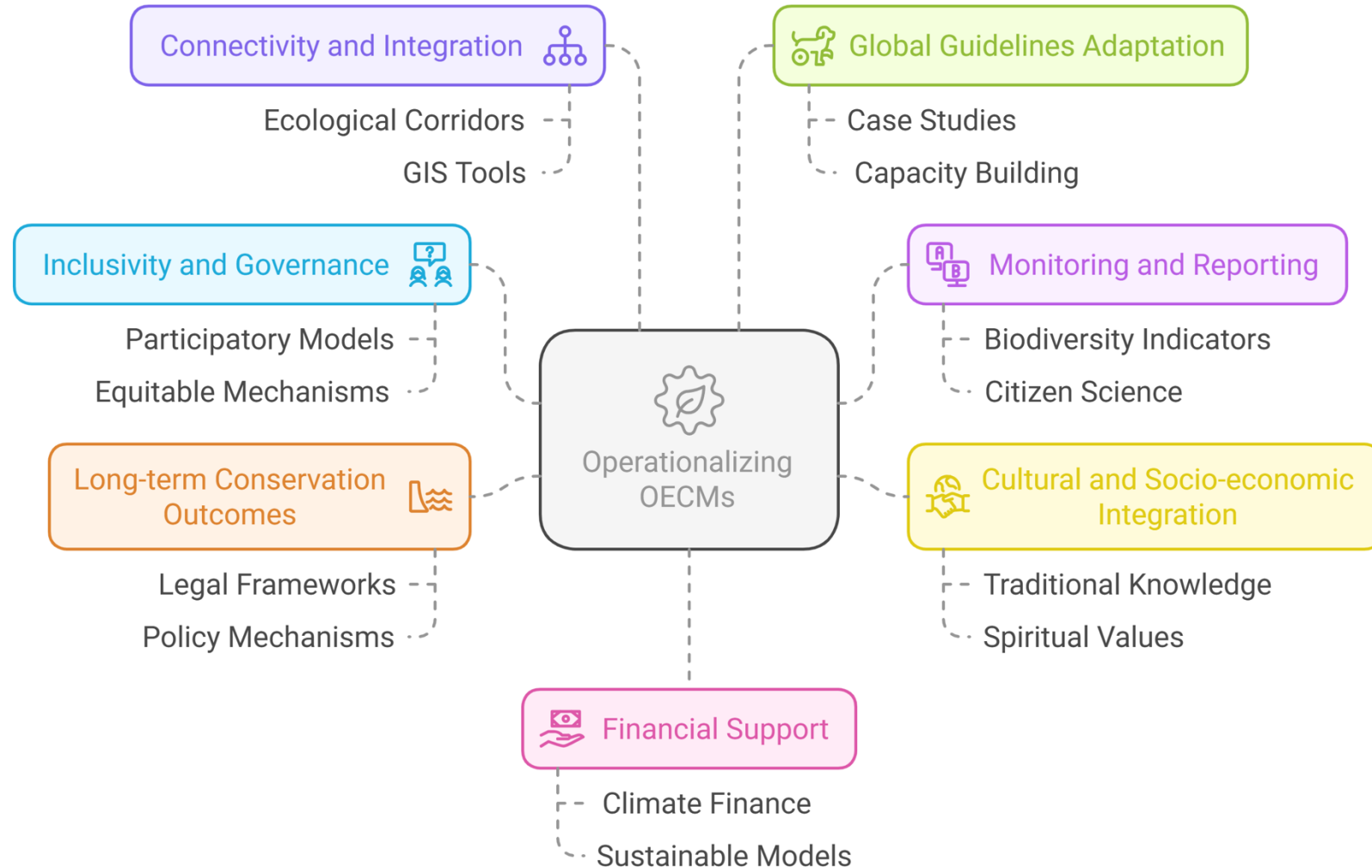
- The area of **ecosystems and number of species** recognised as being effectively conserved is likely to increase.
- The number and scale of conservation efforts taking place in the country is more accurately documented and recognised.
- **National targets and objectives for biodiversity** conservation are more readily met.
- The country's commitment to **CBD Target 3**, as well as other targets under the GBF, and to other international targets, including the SDGs, is boosted.
- Additional stakeholders and, potentially, additional resources are recognised as being part of national conservation efforts, especially where there is resistance (e.g. from private owners or Indigenous groups) to areas being officially recognised as protected areas.
- Stronger **legal protection and political recognition** is achieved, assisting with mitigating pressures and future threats.
- The importance of biodiversity at sites that are not protected areas is highlighted to the sites' owners and managers and may **lead to new conservation efforts**.
- Increased international profile for sites creates **opportunities for access to funding and technical support** for their conservation and management.

CBD criteria for identifying OECMs

- A: Area is not currently recognised as a protected area
 - Not a protected area
- B: Area is governed and managed
 - Geographically defined space
 - Legitimate governance authorities
- C: Achieves sustained and effective contribution to *in situ* conservation of biodiversity
 - Effective
 - Long-term
 - *In situ* conservation of biological diversity
 - Information and monitoring
- D: Associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values
 - Ecosystem functions and services
 - Cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values

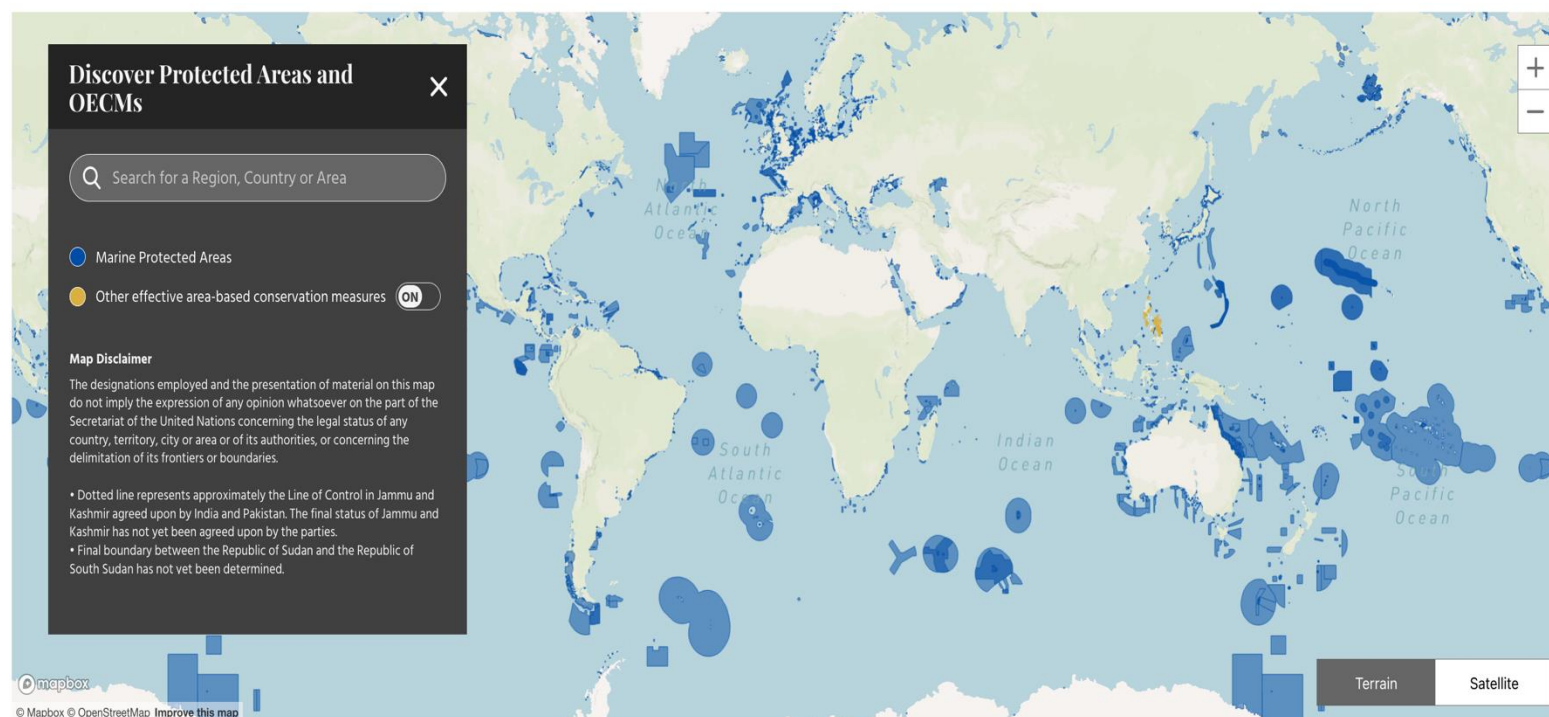


Operationalizing OECMs for biodiversity conservation



OECMs - Numbers

- Global: 6,480 OECMs from 15 countries registered in the WD-OECM (May 2025) covering 1.9 million km².
- Asia-Pacific region: 353 OECMs registered in the WD-OECM (May 2025).
- 40.9% of OECMs have shared governance mechanisms vs 2.5% of PAs.
- Almost 30% of OECMs overlap with KBAs.



OECMs – Study cases

Case Study	Location	Approach	Outcomes Highlights
Velondriake LMMA	Madagascar	Community closures, sustainable aquaculture, mangrove & carbon projects	700% octopus catch increase; livelihood gains
Nimpal Channel MCA	Yap, Micronesia	Reef + mangrove protection	Recovered ecosystem resilience
Bay of Islands (Atlantic salmon closure)	Canada	Migration corridor protection via OECM	Habitat gains; slowed stock declines
Scotian Shelf Fishery Closures	Atlantic Canada	Fishing closures evaluated as OECMs	Limited biodiversity recovery

Tiaki Moana Marine OECM Summit – Reflections

Resources

- 1-day summit
- 3-day workshop
- 2 field trips (whenua & moana)
- 2-day Ra'iātea cultural site visit Taputapuātea
- 200 participants, 35 countries represented
- 43 young Pacific leaders

Guiding Stars and Lighthouses

Navigating Marine Conservation in the Pacific



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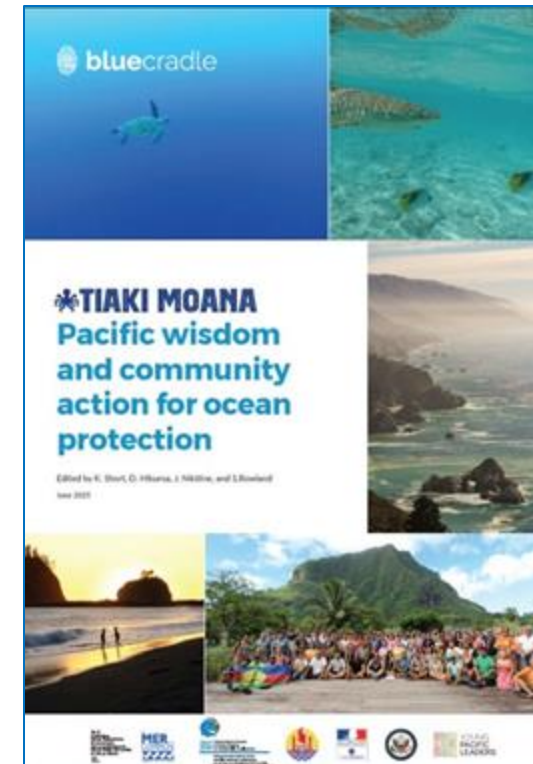
Tiaki Moana Marine OECM Summit – Reflections

Thematic

1. Defining and Implementing marine OECMs
2. Indigenous and Local Knowledge
3. Existing Marine Management Tools
4. Innovative and Sustainable Approaches
5. Governance and Future Generations

Implementation (if)

1. Centring Indigenous leadership & knowledge
2. Prioritizing community empowerment
3. Adaptability and cultural relevance
4. Inclusive governance for future generations



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The site level tool for identifying OECMs

- **Purpose:** The site-level assessment tool enables users to determine whether an individual site qualifies as an OECM by assessing it against the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) definition and criteria (CBD decision 14/8) and IUCN guidance.
- **Structure:** The tool consists of 3 steps:
 1. Screening uses basic information on a site to determine whether it is a **potential OECM**.
 2. Consent confirms that the governing authority, Indigenous peoples and local communities, and (as appropriate) other rights-holders have agreed to proceeding with the full assessment. Once these entities have given their approval for the process, the site is considered a **candidate OECM**.
 3. Full assessment uses the defined criteria to **confirm** that the site meets the definition of an **OECM**. The full assessment contains six criteria, with a guiding question for each. The response to each guiding question can be 'yes', 'uncertain/ partial', or 'no'.

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SITE DATA/RESPONSES
Site name:	
• Site name (English) [Latin characters only: WD-OECM field = NAME]	
• Site name in national or local language (if applicable) [WD-OECM field = ORIG_NAME, any language supported by UTF8]	
• Temporary site name or site code (if final name unavailable)	
Site location:	
• Country (countries) where site is located	
• Sub-national administrative division(s)	
• Other description of location (e.g., name of a river, mountain, area)	
Site designation (if applicable):	
• National or local designation of the site, national or local language [WD-OECM field = DESIG, any language supported by UTF8]	
• National or local designation of the site, English [WD-OECM field = DESIG_ENG, Latin characters only]	
• Regional or International designation linked to the site's biodiversity value, e.g., Key Biodiversity Area, Ramsar site	
Organisations/groups or individuals carrying out the screening process:	
• Name, address and contact details	
Date of the screening	
Main biodiversity value(s):	
• List the main important biodiversity values of the site (see criterion 2 for categories of biodiversity value and criterion 4 for further information)	

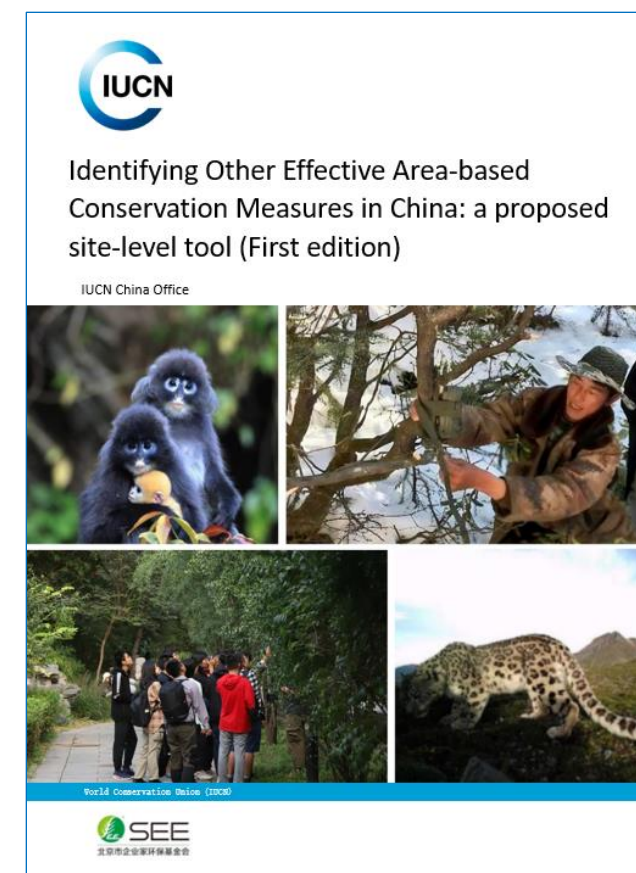
OECMs in Asia – Progress and mechanisms (IUCN)

Regional progress

- Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam: National dialogue and strategy development – IUCN and APAP.
- India, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Malaysia: Further engagement for national-level dialogues and national strategy guidance.
- Japan: Organised Asia Regional OECM workshop and Roadmap - 2024

Regional mechanisms

- Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP): A peer-learning platform integrating OECM governance.
- IUCN-ARO CBD Subregional Technical Scientific Cooperation (TSC) Support Centre + ACB CBD TSC: Mainstream OECMs using KM-GBF pathways
- Collaborative Engagement: IUCN in collaboration with WCPA and other Commissions, UNDP, UNEP, GIZ, FAO and other relevant UN entities, NGOs and national stakeholders



IUCN regional focus on OECMs

1. National dialogue with relevant government agencies and sectors including the participation of local communities' representation
2. Formation of national OECM expert groups with IUCN support as needed
3. Spatial-governance assessment approach: designing a methodology
4. Focus on recognition and support of OECMs within systems of PAs and integrated landscapes and seascapes
5. Capacity development approach with identification / recognition and classification of OECMs
6. Strategy validation meeting / workshop(s)
7. Roadmap towards GBF 30x30 with a focus on OECMs, and support countries to implement the strategy

National Dialogue Series

Bangladesh – 2023

Thailand – 2023

Vietnam – June 2023

China – 2024 – in progress

Nepal – 2024 - in progress

Sri Lanka – 2024 - in progress

Lao PDR – 2025 – in progress

Pakistan – in discussion

OECMs – Progress and lessons learned (IUCN in Asia)

Progress

- Scaling and strengthening Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam national strategies
- Multi-stakeholder scoping studies and workshops in India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Pakistan and Malaysia
- OECM elements to be integrated into **Target 3 roadmaps and NBSAPs**.
- IUCN co-leading awareness and application of OECM criteria across diverse governance types and aligning typology and unpacking pathways for effective implementation and operationalization in Asia

Lessons learned

- OECMs enhance **community trust** and advance conservation equity.
- They present a **non-regulatory pathway** to expand conservation without formal PA designation.
- **Government buy-in and community partnerships** drive success.
- Integration into **spatial planning**
- Enabling policies and longevity of OECMs
- Governance structures
- Reporting and monitoring OECMs

OECMs – Opportunities and challenges (IUCN in Asia)

Opportunities

- Supports **inclusive conservation metrics** under 30x30 goals.
- Opens doors to the **IUCN Green List**, sustainable finance, and equity-based governance.
- Legitimizes community-led (IPLCs) and faith-based conservation efforts.
- Encourages **cross-sectoral collaboration** (e.g. other sectors - agriculture, extractives etc.).

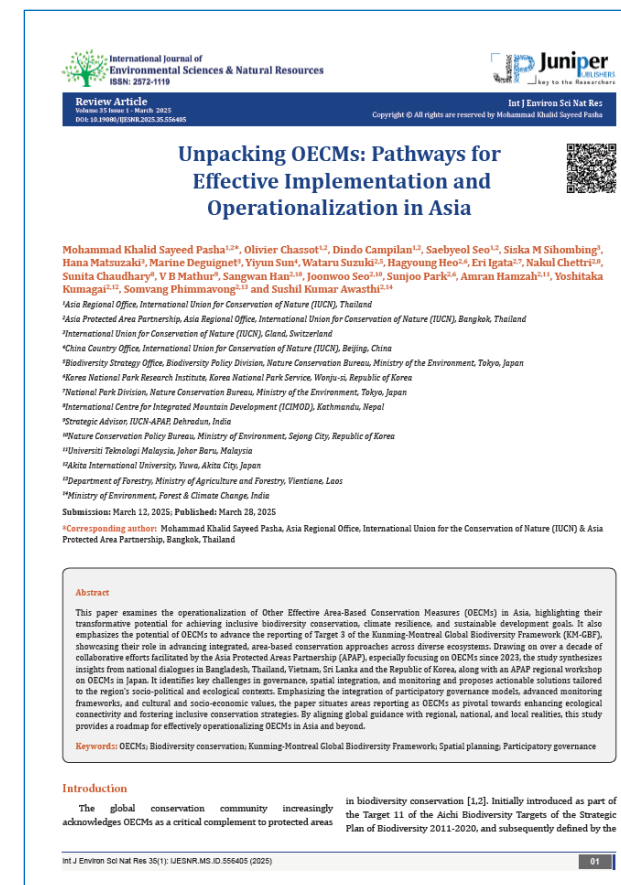
Challenges

- **Low awareness** beyond environment ministries.
- Finding **pathways through existing – enabling policies** for integrating OECMs into formal systems.
- Capacity issues in documentation, monitoring, and FPIC.
- Land tenure and **legal recognition** remain contentious.

IUCN addresses these through tailored national dialogues, regional OECMs dialogues, and capacity-building / knowledge support

OECMs – Conclusions (Asia)

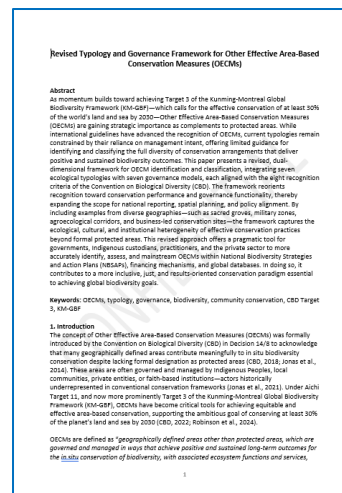
- OECMs are rapidly gaining traction across Asia as flexible and inclusive tools for achieving CBD Target 3.
- Diverse governance types—from sacred sites to corporate-managed areas—demonstrate the region's unique potential for scaling OECMs.
- National dialogues, tailored criteria, and regional toolkits (e.g., K-OECM) are accelerating recognition and reporting.
- Localized case studies show that **OECMs can deliver conservation outcomes in complex socio-ecological contexts**.
- Greater investment in mapping, legal integration, and community capacity is needed to secure enduring biodiversity gains.
- **OECMs should be carefully implemented** to avoid being used merely to boost coverage statistics without delivering real conservation results.
- OECMs are **not second-tier designations**—they are complementary to protected areas and essential for achieving a connected and effective conservation network.



OECMs – Resources

Resources

- IUCN-WCPA OECM Specialist Group.
 - Asia OECM Subregional SG
- Draft paper on OECM typology





Thank you