

[CHINA]

OECMs IN MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS

Understanding and Accelerating Actions on OECMs in the Marine and Coastal Areas of East Asian Seas

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CURRENT SITUATION OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND OECMS IN CHINA

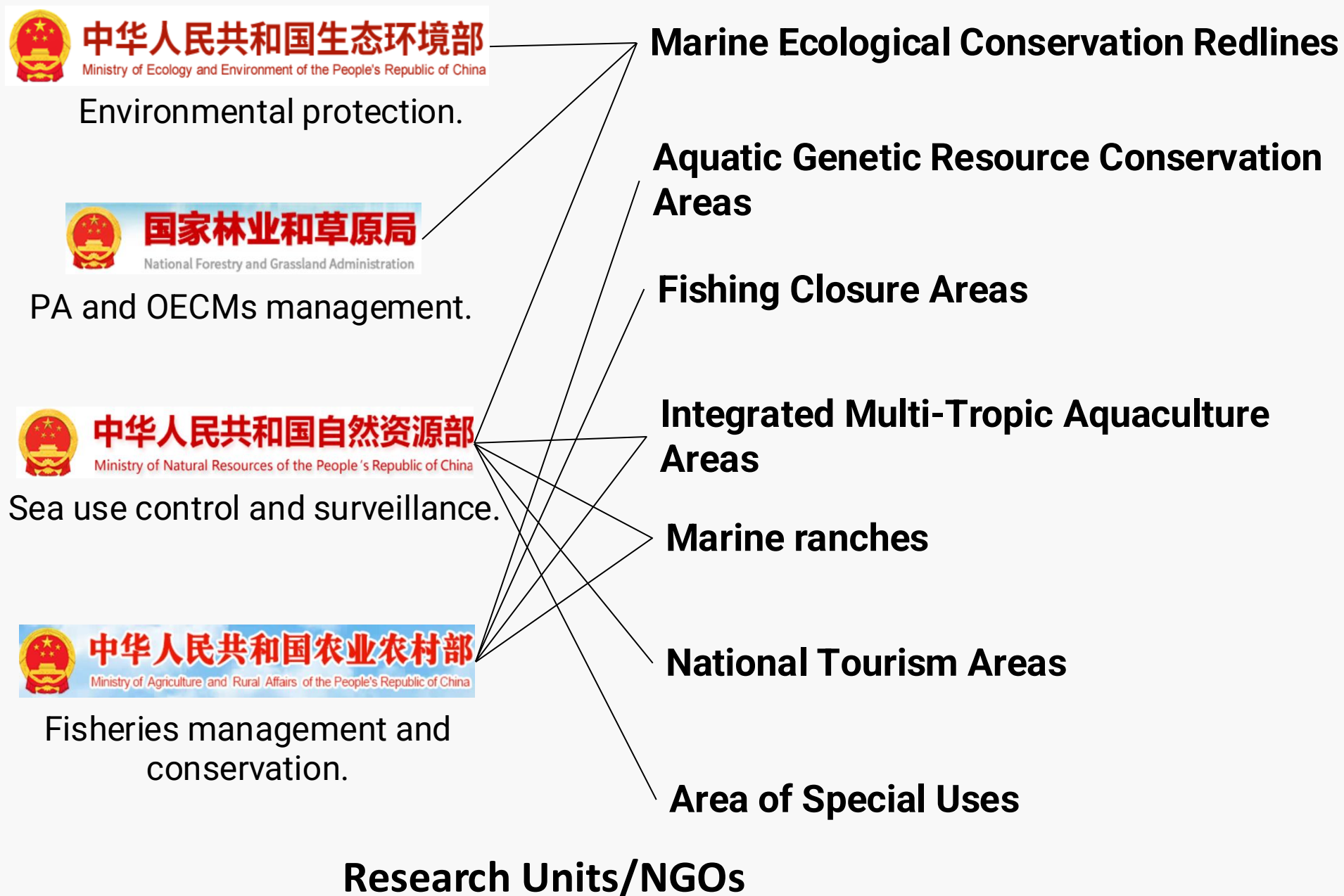
According to the "**2023 Bulletin on the State of China's Marine Ecological Environment**", which was jointly compiled and released by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) of China and other ministries, there were 352 Marine Protected Areas in China by 2023, covering an area of 9.33 million hectares. China has built a PA system with national parks as the mainstay, supported by nature reserves and supplemented by nature parks (including forest parks, geoparks, marine parks, wetland parks, etc.) (Tang, X.P. et al. 2024)

To better prioritise the biodiversity conservation, China has delineated **Ecological Conservation Red Lines (ECRLs)**, which refers to the areas where ecological functions are extremely important and fragile, with significant ecological value. Biodiversity was identified as a key factor in determining whether an area should be included. Once delineated, these areas must be strictly protected (China Land Surveying and Planning Institute, 2023). **Currently, the area of marine ECRLs in China is approximately 150,000 square kilometers.**

In 2021, China issued ***Opinions on Further Strengthening Biodiversity Conservation***, which set specific requirements for biodiversity conservation outside PAs. Furthermore, in 2024, MEE issued the '***China Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2023–2030)***'. The action plan proposes establishing standards for and demonstrations of OECMs, and strengthening protection of important habitats for animals and plants outside protected areas, in support of the '30X30' target.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS & GOVERNANCE CONCERNS: WHICH AGENCIES ARE WORKING ON OECMS? ARE THE ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY, AND FISHERIES OFFICES WORKING TOGETHER? AT THE SITE LEVEL, WHAT KIND OF MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS ARE IN PLACE?

Institutional arrangements



Site-level management arrangements in place

- **Zoning and access control**
Core zone: No take; General control zone: Construction prohibited.
- **Legal and policy framework**
Legally-binding.
- **Multi-agency coordination**
Managed by multiple government departments. Local governments are responsible for on-site supervision and enforcement.
- **Linkage with marine spatial planning**
Coordinated with broader marine spatial planning, ensuring that development and conservation are aligned across the seascape.
- **Monitoring and evaluation**
Regular ecological surveys, remote sensing, and marine monitoring systems are in place to track changes in ecosystem health.
- **Public Participation and Community Engagement**
In some areas, local communities and traditional users are engaged in stewardship, aligning with conservation goals.

IDENTIFICATION OF MARINE OECMS IN CHINA

2022

Chinese version of IUCN Guidelines for Recognising and Reporting OECMs released by China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation.

Sep, 2024

First national OECM Stocktaking Report released by IUCN and SEE foundation.

Oct, 2024

Chinese and international partners from NGOs and private entrepreneurs held OECM policy dialogue at COP16, emphasizing the role of non-state actors in implementing voluntary OECM practices.

China OECM Expert Working Group established by IUCN China

May, 2023

12 "Typical Cases of China's Potential OECMs" and 34 "Shortlisted Cases of China's Potential OECMs" were released.

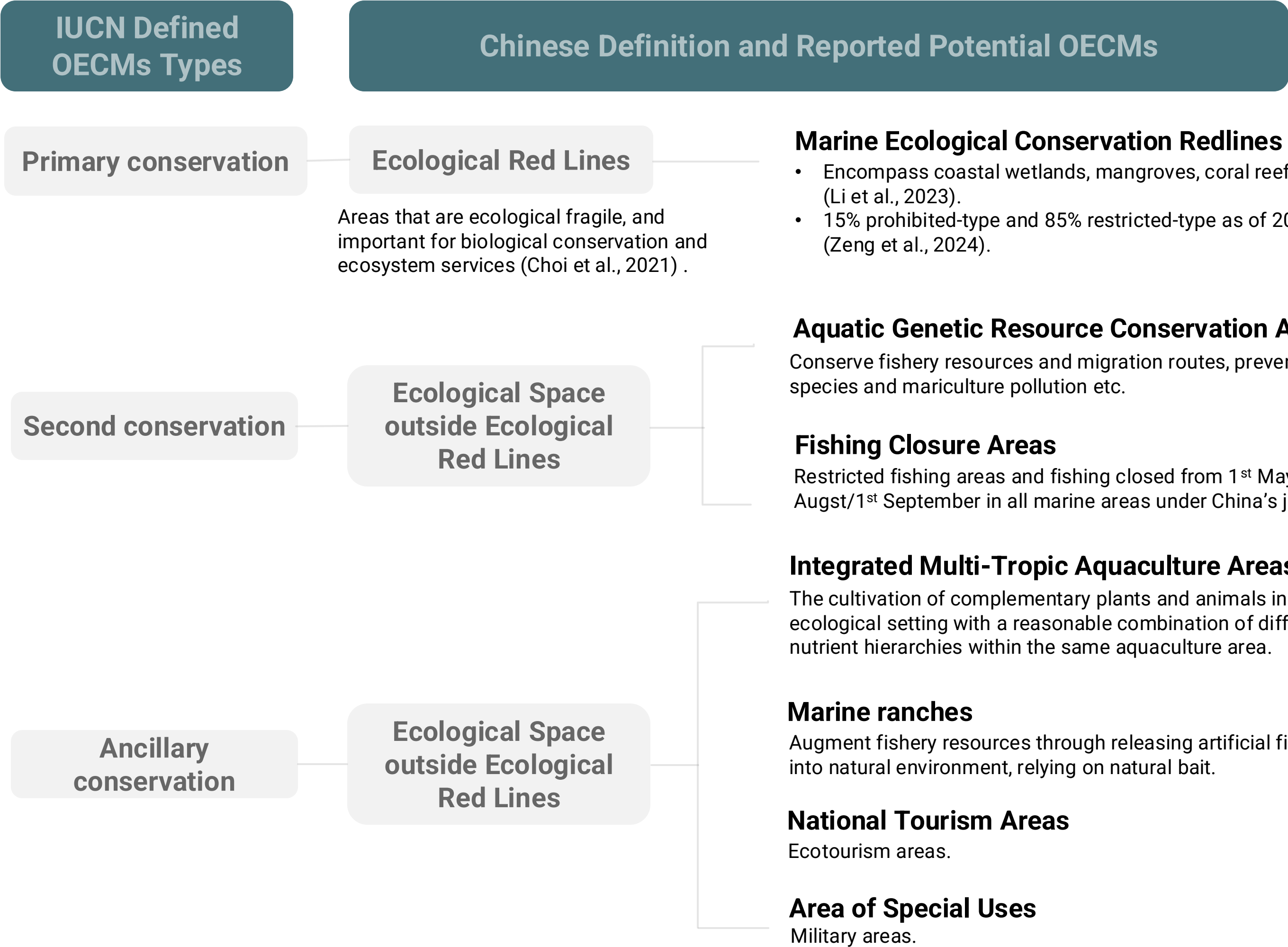
Oct, 2024

The NRDC and First Institute of Oceanography launched adaptive identification criteria for marine OECMs in China.

Dec, 2024

Policy-Research-Pilot

NATIONAL/LOCALIZED
DEFINITION &
CRITERIA AND
EXISTING/
INITIALLY
IDENTIFIED/REPORTED
OECMS IN THE
M&C AREAS



IDENTIFICATION OF MARINE OECMS IN CHINA

Building on the *Recognizing and Reporting OECMs (2019)* (IUCN-WCPA), the *Applicability Study of Marine OECMs in China*, launched jointly by NRDC and FIO, MNR introduced a possible set of criteria to identify potential marine OECMs in China by integrating China's marine utilization and management policies and current marine protection status.

Focusing on marine areas within 12 nautical miles with governing bodies, it trys to conduct preliminary screening of marine OECMs in China, and proposes four criteria with eight elements applicable to identifying China's marine OECMs.

Criteria	Element
Criterion A: Area is not legally approved as a protected area	(1) other than a current Marine Protected Area
Criterion B: Area is effectively managed	(2) with clear geographical boundaries
	(3) with clear governing body
Criterion C: Achieves sustained and effective contribution to in situ conservation of biodiversity	(4) conform to the principles of in-situ conservation
	(5) management is benefit for biodiversity conservation
	(6) conservation is continuous and long-term
	(7) rich or important biodiversity of marine organisms
Criterion D: Associated ecosystem functions and services and other relevant values	(8) protect the marine ecological value in priority, taking into account social, economic and cultural values

IDENTIFICATION OF MARINE OECMS IN CHINA

Identification areas	Element								Result
type	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	Does it meet the criteria for ocean OECM identification?
the ecological protection red lines area	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Y
habitats of important wild flora and fauna	√	?	√	√	√	√	√	√	Confirm accordin to site situation
important/generic wetlands	√	?	√	√	√	√	√	√	Confirm according to the site situation
fishery aquaculture area	√	√	√	?	?	?	?	√	Confirm according to the site situation
national tourist resort	√	√	√	√	?	?	?	?	Confirm according to the site situation
ecological conservation and restoration areas	√	√	√	?	√	√	?	?	Confirm according to site situation
underwater heritage protection areas	√	√	√	√	√	√	?	?	Confirm according to the site situation
marine engineering use areas	√	√	√	?	?	?	?	?	Confirm according to the site situation
other areas (coastal recession areas, reserved areas)	√	?	√	√	?	?	?	?	Confirm according to the site situation

only the red line areas meet all eight identification elements, while the remaining areas need to be further identified .

POTENTIAL MARINE OECMS IN CHINA

Identification and
recognition of
potential marine
OECMs in China



Academic research
and pilot projects



A systematic
recognition procedure
and management
system to be
established.



EPRL area:
Seagrass bed in Hebei Province



Ecological restoration area:
Dongying eco-restoration area



Wetland area:
Intertidal Mudflat Fisheries and Migratory Bird Habitats
in Binhai Village, Rudong, Jiangsu Province



Fishery aquaculture area:
Salt pond shrimp aquaculture in Hebei

KEY ACTIVITIES RELATING TO OECMS IN THE MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS IN THE PAST 3-5 YEARS, IF ANY

In 2021, the State Council issued '***Opinions on Further Accelerating Biodiversity Conservation***'. In 2024, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) issued the '***China Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2023–2030)***'. *The action plan proposes establishing standards for and demonstrations of OECMs, and strengthening protection of important habitats for animals and plants outside protected areas, in support of the '30X30' target.*

In 2023, the **Ecological Conservation Red Lines (ECRLs)** across the country have been delineated and released. The ECRL system is an important institutional innovation in China's ecological and environmental protection. It offers a brand-new ecological protection model and proposes a Chinese solution for global biodiversity conservation.

In 2021, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) launched ***the Beautiful Bay Initiative***, which aims to provide clear seawater, clean beaches, and desirable habitats for fish and seabirds, and promote harmony between humans and seas. In addition to the MPAs and ECRLs included, other areas in those bays that meet the Beautiful Bay standard can be recognized as potential OECMs.

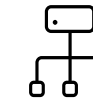
PROSPECTS AND FUTURE PLANS

Although OECMs are not yet widely adopted in China, several laws, regulations, and policies, as well as a wide range of empirical examples, provide a solid foundation for strengthening the biodiversity conservation of areas outside PA systems. China is encouraging public participation in conservation efforts and potential OECMs can generate enthusiasm among non-state actors through collaborative governance.



Tailored guideline

Applicable criteria for marine OECM assessment and recognition in China with clear procedures.



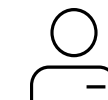
Multiple support

Support from central to local governments, as well as private sectors and NGOs, both technically and financially.



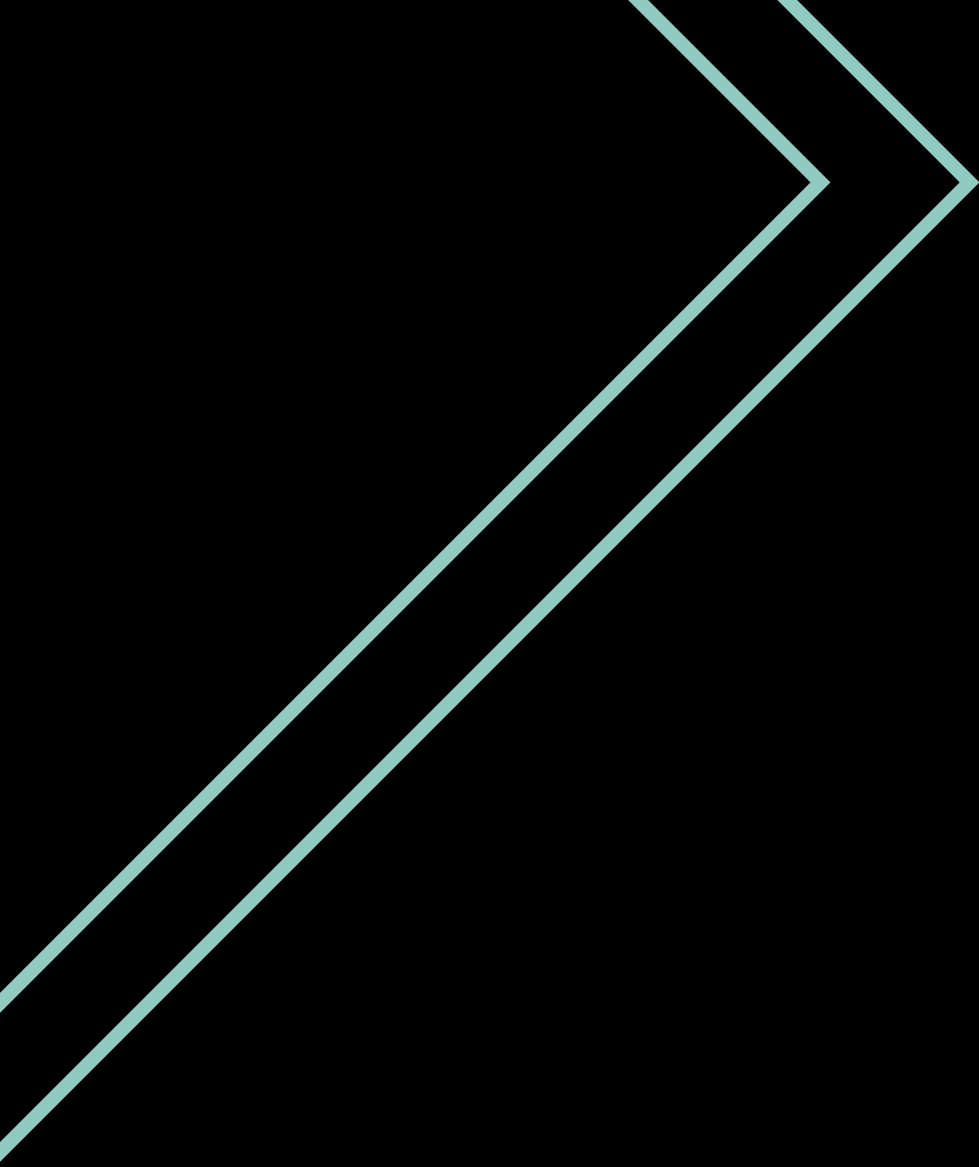
Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of OECMs in terms of performance and outcomes to demonstrate their effectiveness.



International exchange

The exchange of information between China and international stakeholders on OECMs, enabling the sharing of knowledge and experiences, and contributing to global OECMs.



THANK YOU

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