

REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP OF

UNDERSTANDING AND ACCELERATING ACTIONS ON OECSs IN THE MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS OF EAST ASIAN SEAS

14 -16 AUGUST 2025

ILOILO CITY, THE PHILIPPINES



The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. The UNEP Marine and Freshwater Branch ensures the integration of marine and freshwater priorities in the global environmental agenda including addressing the triple-planetary crises in the ocean space. www.unep.org

The **Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)** is a regional intergovernmental mechanism and the sole decision-making body for the Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Region, bringing together nine countries – Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. As a UNEP Regional Seas Programme, COBSEA promotes integrated marine and coastal management. The COBSEA Secretariat is based in Bangkok, Thailand, and administered by UNEP. www.cobsea.org

The **ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB)**, established in 2005, is ASEAN's response to the challenge of biodiversity loss. It is an intergovernmental organisation that facilitates cooperation and coordination among the ten ASEAN Member States (AMS) and with regional and international organisations on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such natural treasures. <https://www.aseanbiodiversity.org/>

The **UNEP/GEF/UNOPS South China Seas Strategic Action Programme (SCS-SAP)** Project aims to assist countries in meeting the targets of the approved Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the marine and coastal environment of the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand through implementation of the National Action Plans in support of the SAP, and strengthening regional co-ordination for South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand SAP implementation. <https://scssap.org/>

Acknowledgements

The OECM guidance document and learning exchange in the East Asian Seas is funded by the UNEP Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Unit (MCEU) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). MCEU is providing global support towards the achievement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly in reaching the 30% target of all land and sea areas under protection and conservation measures by 2030. The MCEU is also actively supporting the achievement of the Global 30x30 Roadmap launched with the World Economic Forum. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides the financial support and oversees compliance with its policies and criteria to ensure the project meets its objectives under the Umbrella Programme for NBSAP updates and national reporting.

Suggested Citation:

Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia and ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (2025) Understanding and Accelerating Actions on Marine and Coastal OECMs in the East Asian Seas. Bangkok: United Nations Environment Programme.

Contact Information

Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
United Nations Environment Programme
UN Building, Rajadamnern Nok Av., Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Email: unep-cobsea@un.org

ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB)
Domingo M. Lantican Avenue, Forestry Campus, University of the Philippines Los Baños
Los Baños, Laguna 4031, Philippines
Email: contact.us@aseanbiodiversity.org

Cover photo: Karimunjawa by Kuma Bear (Canva)

Preface background: Posidonia Seagrass Meadow by Arnaud Abadie (Canva/Getty Images)

Designed by: Patria Vidre

TABLE OF CONTENTS



04
BACKGROUND

06
OPENING PROGRAMME

07 SESSION 1
PRESENTATION ON
OECS IN MARINE AND
COASTAL AREAS

35 SESSION 2
UNDERSTANDING OUR
ACTIONS FOR OECS

41 SESSION 3
ACCELERATING OUR
ACTIONS FOR OECS IN
MARINE AND COASTAL
AREAS OF THE EAST ASIAN
SEAS

56 SESSION 4
ROADMAPPING AND
CLOSING

BACKGROUND

The East Asian Seas region consists of one of the most biologically diverse marine areas in the world, and its ecosystem services constitute a critically important blue economy asset to the region. However, pressures from human activities and climate change pose significant challenges to the coastal and marine environment, dependent people, and economic activities. Policy and management responses that address current pressures while anticipating future change are critical to meet global, regional, and national ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation targets

The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) is a regional intergovernmental policy forum and the sole decision-making body for the Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Region (the East Asian Seas Action Plan). The East Asian Seas Action Plan envisages the implementation of integrated marine and coastal management in order to conserve biodiversity and maintain productivity. With this goal, while much has been done in advancing protected areas in the marine and coastal environment around the world, other effective area-based conservation measures need to be accelerated, especially in the region.

Meanwhile, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) plays a pivotal role in promoting and coordinating biodiversity conservation across Southeast Asia. Through policy development, scientific research, and capacity building, ACB fosters regional collaboration and supports the implementation of area-based conservation measures. The ACB is one of the Sub-regional Technical and Scientific (TSC) Support Centres in Asia under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD) with an important role in promoting and facilitating technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer among Parties and to enable Parties and relevant organizations to effectively utilize science, technology and innovation to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).



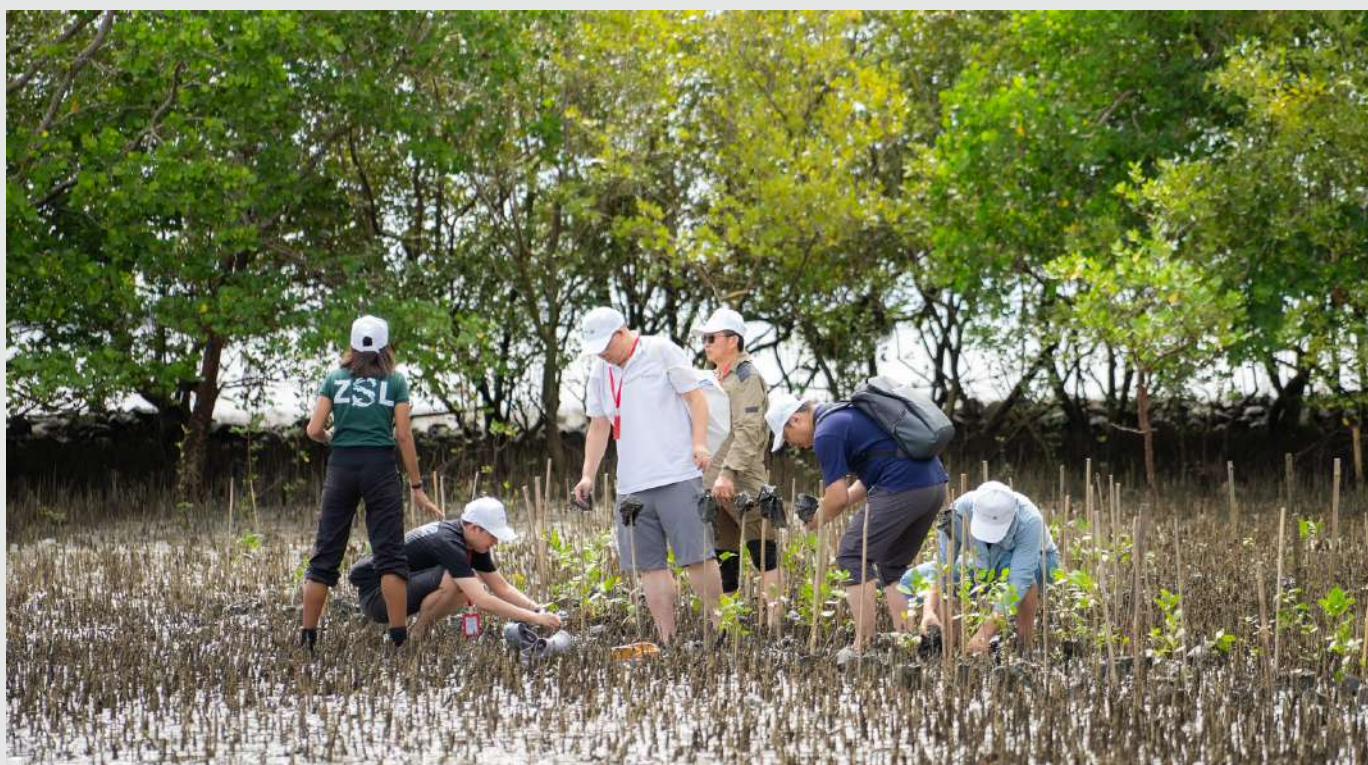
The collaboration between ACB and COBSEA builds from the outcome of the East Asian Seas Congress held in Xiamen, China in 2024. Regional Organizations in the East Asian Seas (EAS) that include, among others, ACB, COBSEA, Partnership in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Global Environment Facility - South China Sea Strategic Action Programme, rallied together to determine concrete actions for collaboration in the region. The recommended areas of collaboration were further discussed in a workshop at the sides of the 10th Our Ocean Conference 2025 in Busan, Republic of Korea. The regional organisations showed a united front to elevate the EAS profile globally and decided on concrete steps for joint capacity building. The EAS Regional Collaborative Network of MPAs was later launched during the Third UN Ocean Conference 2025 in Nice, France. Among the identified joint capacity building initiative is the learning exchange on marine OECMs, as most partners, especially the ACB, expressed the same gaps and needs that will need to be addressed in a more collaborative way. This also takes into account the same countries being supported by the organizations and oftentimes through same focal persons.

To support these efforts, COBSEA and ACB organized a regional knowledge sharing and learning exchange on 14 – 16 August 2025, in Iloilo City, Philippines.

The regional knowledge sharing and learning exchange commenced with a field trip on 14 August to Pedada Integrated Mangrove Ecopark Ajuy and to Leganes Integrated Katunggan Ecopark in Iloilo Province, organized in partnership with the Zoological Society of London. The field trip provided an opportunity for workshop participants to learn about community-based mangrove ecosystems initiatives.

The event served as a forum for the participating East Asian Sea countries to present the progress of their marine OECM initiatives and collaboratively explore ideas with fellow member states and subject matter experts, refining them to better suit the region's unique conditions. It also showcased best practices, offering a flexible set of strategies for countries to adapt and implement according to their contexts. The Agenda is presented in **Annex 1**.

The learning exchange gathered more than 40 participants representing government and non-government organizations, academic and research institutions, and regional and intergovernmental organizations. The List of in-person participants is presented in **Annex 2**.



SESSION 1

PRESENTATION ON OECMS IN MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS

STATE OF AFFAIRS

Diniwid Beach, Boracay, The Philippines (Javarman3/Getty Images)



OPENING PROGRAMME



In his opening message, Mr. Mahesh Pradhan, COBSEA Coordinator, warmly welcomed participants to the knowledge-sharing and learning exchange workshop emphasizing its significance as one of the first joint activities following regional discussions on marine protected areas. He highlighted the pioneering role of Southeast Asia in advancing marine and coastal OECMs, while acknowledging challenges such as definitions, recognition, resource mobilization, equity, safeguards, and data monitoring. The workshop was framed as a candid and collaborative platform to address these issues, drawing on diverse expertise from partners including UNEP, ACB, IUCN, SwAM, UNEP-WCMC, and other regional organizations. With strong support from partners and the host country, participants were encouraged to engage openly, ask tough questions, and build on the local energy seen at recent site visits to scale efforts from local to national and regional levels.

ACB's Executive Director, Dr. Jerome L. Montemayor, emphasized the critical importance of conserving the shared sea of Southeast Asia, one of the world's most biodiverse marine regions under increasing threats from human activities and climate change. He highlighted the role of OECMs as an innovative and inclusive approach to help achieve Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of protecting 30% of lands and seas by 2030, recognising conservation efforts beyond traditional protected areas, which include OECMs, and valuing indigenous and local governance systems. He reaffirmed ACB's commitment, as one of the technical and scientific cooperation support centres in Asia, to support the ASEAN Member States and partners in strengthening capacities, policies, and reporting on OECMs, and encouraged participants to use the workshop as a platform for learning, collaboration, and building partnerships. The message also expressed gratitude to COBSEA for co-organizing the event and for their continued partnership in advancing regional marine and coastal biodiversity conservation.

Kayangyan Lake, Coron Island, The Philippines (Andrey/Canva)



1.1. BROADENING OUR APPROACH TO AREA-BASED CONSERVATION

Joe Appiott, CBD Secretariat

The presentation from the CBD Secretariat underscored the importance of the KM-GBF as the most ambitious global agreement to date on biodiversity conservation. Central to this is the 30X30 goal under Target 3, which calls for conserving 30% of terrestrial, inland water, marine, and coastal areas by 2030 through a combination of protected areas and OECMs.

The OECMs were highlighted as a critical complement to protected areas, recognizing that many areas outside formal protected area systems can deliver meaningful biodiversity outcomes. Unlike protected areas, OECMs acknowledge diverse governance models, including those led by indigenous peoples and local communities, and can help shift practices from unsustainable use toward long-term conservation. The CBD criteria for OECMs, adopted in 2018 after extensive global deliberation, require that areas be clearly defined, legitimately governed, effectively managed, monitored, and able to demonstrate sustained biodiversity benefits alongside ecological, cultural, and socio-economic values.



Mr. Joe Appiott (CBD Secretariat) delivering presentation online at the workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).

Specific considerations for marine and coastal OECMs were also discussed, given the unique complexity of ocean ecosystems. It was stressed that an OECM cannot be claimed by a single sector working in isolation; rather, all relevant pressures and threats must be addressed to ensure genuine conservation outcomes. Monitoring and case-specific evaluation are essential, with recognition that the three-dimensional nature of marine ecosystems adds challenges. While guidance for implementation continues to evolve, the CBD's official criteria remain the authoritative standard.

Finally, the presentation acknowledged both risks and opportunities associated with OECMs. Risks include greenwashing, overcounting areas without real conservation outcomes, and marginalizing local communities. Conversely, OECMs offer opportunities to broaden biodiversity stewardship, mobilize new actors and resources, and strengthen conservation outcomes beyond protected areas. By recognizing diverse approaches and catalyzing international support, OECMs can play a pivotal role in meeting the KM-GBF's 2030 targets. The CBD Secretariat reaffirmed its commitment to supporting parties in advancing this work and encouraged participants to engage deeply in the workshop discussions.



1.2. COMMUNITIES, BIODIVERSITY, AND OECMS

Olivier Chassot, IUCN Asia Regional Office



Mr. Olivier Chassot representing IUCN Asia Regional Office at the OECM workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).

The presentation highlighted the evolving recognition of OECMs, noting that while the concept is relatively new in CBD language, communities and practitioners have been applying its principles for decades. OECMs are distinct from protected areas, but they complement each other by enhancing connectivity, serving as buffer zones, and supporting diverse governance arrangements. The presentation emphasized that quality and community involvement are critical and OECMs must deliver long-term, in-situ conservation outcomes, not just add to numerical targets.



Different types of OECMs were discussed, including those primarily managed for conservation, those focused on ecosystem services, and those providing incidental biodiversity benefits, such as military or archaeological sites. While the IUCN has proposed typologies, the presentation suggested refining these definitions to reflect real-world applications. Importantly, OECMs must be recognized and implemented through inclusive governance, strong management mechanisms, and effective monitoring systems, with legal frameworks developed gradually to avoid rigidity.

The benefits of OECM recognition extend to both communities and governments. For local groups, recognition affirms their long-standing conservation contributions, improves site protection, and opens access to funding and technical support. For governments, OECMs strengthen accountability toward global biodiversity targets, improve legal recognition of conservation areas, and can serve as models that inspire replication. However, challenges remain, including low awareness, land tenure complexities, and the risk of misclassification or greenwashing.

Examples from Asia and beyond demonstrate the potential of OECMs to safeguard biodiversity in productive landscapes like forests and fisheries, as well as in marine ecosystems. Lessons from recent regional dialogues and summits underscore the importance of indigenous leadership, community trust, and bottom-up approaches to implementation. Ultimately, the presentation called for piloting, learning, and refining OECM approaches while ensuring inclusivity, long-term conservation outcomes, and alignment with national biodiversity strategies.

1.3 PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES



Cambodia (Weerasaksaeku/Getty Images)

CAMBODIA

In Cambodia, the General Directorate of Natural Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment (MoE) serves as the executive management body for the country's protected areas. While Cambodia has not yet officially identified OECMs, it remains committed to the CBD and adheres to its definitions and guidance. The recognition of OECMs is expected to follow a structured process adapted to the national context, including site screening, assessment, stakeholder consultations, preparation of information sheets, provincial-level approval, and eventual submission and reporting

One of the most promising potential OECM sites is the rice fields surrounding Antung Pring (AP) Protected Landscape in the Lower Mekong Delta. AP, already recognized as part of the ASEAN Flyway Network (AFN) and designated as a protected area, provides critical habitat for migratory birds, including the globally important Sarus crane. Through the "Sarus Crane-friendly Rice" initiative, Cambodia is working to integrate conservation with community livelihoods, demonstrating how OECMs can complement protected area management while supporting sustainable local practices.

CAMBODIA

CONSIDERED AS POTENTIAL OECMs

Site description:

- Anlung Pring Protected Landscape located in Boeung Sala Khang Tboung commune, Kampong Trach district of Kampot province in southern Cambodia. Anlung Pring (AP) is located in the Lower Mekong Delta
- Total Area of 219 Ha and It is one of the 40 IBAs in Cambodia namely Kampong Trach Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
- Support about 30% of Sarus Crane population in Cambodia during the non-breeding season
- AP has nominated as Cambodia first Flyway Network Site in 2019 based on its supporting various of migratory birds including Spotted Greenshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Garganey, and of course the Sarus Crane

Considered as Potential OECMs

- To better conserve the Sarus Crane, the Ministry of Environment, and Department of Environment in Kampot Province in collaboration with NatureLife Cambodia has established Sarus Crane-friendly rice initiative.
- Involve local communities who own rice fields AP and aims to provide supplemental feeding to Sarus crane during the non-breeding period, while promoting wildlife-friendly agricultural practices and enhancing local livelihood.
- Surrounding rice field
- Not PA, owned by local communities
- Comprise 18.41 ha of land which leased by NLC and 37.6 ha owned by the farmers
- Support Sarus Crane and other biodiversity






Beyond Antung Pring, Cambodia has identified several other potential OECM sites. These include Peam Krasop Community Fishery, Prek Thnout Community Fishery, Trapeang Sangkae Community Fishery, and the Preak Kampong Smach Marine Fisheries Management Area/Chompo Khmao Community Fishery. Each of these areas holds ecological and community value, but their formal recognition as OECMs will require careful consultation with stakeholders to ensure consensus, local ownership, and long-term sustainability.

Looking ahead, Cambodia plans to mainstream OECMs into national biodiversity strategies and action plans, strengthen capacity-building initiatives, and re-assess Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and protected areas to align with global conservation targets. By combining policy development with community-led action, Cambodia seeks to build a robust and inclusive framework for OECMs that enhances both conservation outcomes and local resilience.

CONSIDERED AS POTENTIAL OECMs			
Site	Location	Ecosystem Type	Key Biodiversity
Peam Krasop Community Fishery	Koh Kong	Seagrass Meadows	Dugong, Dolphins
Prek Thnout Community Fishery	Kampot	Coral Patches, estuary, mangrove	Groupers, snappers, mangrove, migratory birds
Trapeang Sangkae Community Fishery	Kampot	Intertidal muddy and sand flats, Mangroves, Seagrass	Migratory shorebirds such as Red-necked Stint, Long-toed Stint, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Lesser and Greater Sand-plovers, Kentish Plovers, Nordmann's Greenshank
Preak Kampong Smach Marine Fisheries Management Area/Chompo Khmao Community Fishery	Preah Sihanouk	Mangrove, estuary, peatland	Fishing Cat, Migratory birds

The potential OECMs sites will need to consult with relevant Ministries, Institutions, Fisheries Administration, local authorities and local communities

1.3 PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES



Guiyang, China (SeanPavonePhoto/Getty Images Pro)

CHINA

China has established 352 marine protected areas (MPAs) covering 9.33 million hectares, alongside Ecological Conservation Red Lines (ECRLs) that safeguard 150,000 square kilometers of marine ecosystems. To strengthen biodiversity conservation both within and outside protected areas, China issued the Opinions on Further Strengthening Biodiversity Conservation in 2021, followed by the China Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2023–2030) in 2024.

These policies emphasize the conservation of OECMs and set a framework for standardizing recognition and management. A multidisciplinary approach is employed, with roles shared among government agencies, including the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, supported by academia and NGOs through research and pilot projects.

CHINA

Following the release of IUCN guidelines, China created a working group to review and shortlist OECMs, conduct policy dialogues, and develop its own typology and recognition procedures. Out of 12 identified potential OECMs, only one was marine. The country adapted the IUCN typologies by designating primary conservation areas (marine ECRLs), secondary conservation areas (e.g., aquatic genetic resource conservation areas, fishing closure areas), and ancillary conservation areas (e.g., marine ranches, tourism areas, aquaculture zones). With support from partners, China launched specific criteria for marine OECMs, requiring that sites not already be legally protected, be effectively managed, contribute to biodiversity conservation, and provide ecological functions and services.



Initial assessments indicate that only marine ECRLs currently meet the criteria for recognition as OECMs, while other sites such as seagrass beds, wetlands, ecological restoration areas, and aquaculture zones require further study. However, China lacks an authorized national procedure for formal identification, highlighting the need for clear guidelines, financial and technical support, and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess effectiveness. Looking ahead, China seeks to strengthen national implementation of OECMs while engaging in international dialogue to share experiences and learn from global practices.

1.3. PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES



Sweetlips in Raja Ampat, Indonesia (cdelacy/Getty Images Pro)

INDONESIA

Indonesia adopts the CBD definition of OECMs and sees their establishment as vital to expanding protected areas and achieving its marine conservation targets that is protecting 10% of marine waters by 2030 and 35% by 2045. While no OECMs have yet been formally designated, Indonesia has developed localized criteria for identification, focusing on spatial aspects, governance and management, biodiversity impact and value, and socio-economic and cultural impacts. These criteria have already been integrated into key policy documents, including the 2025–2029 Medium-Term Development Plan and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) under Target 3.

Concrete steps toward OECM implementation are underway. Between July and September 2024, focus group discussions and assessments of potential sites were conducted, engaging national partners, NGOs, academic institutions, and local and traditional communities. At the site level, nearly half of potential OECM authorities are traditional communities, followed by local communities, government entities, private actors, and customary groups, reflecting Indonesia's commitment to inclusive governance. National agencies such as the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and the Ministry of National Development Planning are also leading efforts, supported by collaborations with NGOs and research institutions.

INDONESIA

HIGHLIGHTED CASE STUDIES *from* Indonesia

Coral Reefs Restoration and Rehabilitation

- Indonesia created **Coral Reef Health Monitoring Guidelines** in 2014 to make sure coral reef monitoring uses the same methods across the country—especially in the **Coral Triangle area**, **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**, and other selected sites.
- Since 2015, the **Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF)** has been running a **coral reef restoration program** in **71 locations**.
- Total restored area (2015–2023):** 75,471.12 square meters
- Restoration methods:** Artificial reef structures like **spider frames** and **concrete tables**
- The program involves **universities** and **local communities** to help raise awareness, support education, and bring **social and economic benefits**, such as promoting **eco-tourism**.

Misool, Raja Ampat, West Papua (Jeffrey S.S./Pexels)



Emerging frameworks show promise, including the drafting of national guidelines, discussions on marine OECMs, and integration of OECMs into marine spatial plans. Indonesia is also aligning its enabling environmental laws to support formal recognition. Thematic priorities for OECMs include biodiversity protection, sustainable fisheries, and blue carbon, with a timeline set for identification and reporting.

Looking ahead, Indonesia plans to strengthen recognition and documentation of OECMs, establish a national registry linked to marine spatial planning, and ensure multi-stakeholder participation in the process. Capacity building and sustainable financing mechanisms will also be key to ensuring the long-term management and effectiveness of OECMs, thereby complementing protected areas and contributing to global biodiversity targets.

PROCESSES FOR ASSESSING, RECOGNIZING, SUPPORTING, MONITORING AND REPORTING OECMs

Indicative/Identified OECM from Spatial Management aspect, formulated and standardized data into three thematic OECM (April 2025)

Area OECM (289) Delta Mahakam tematik karbon biru

Zone	Area's size of identified OECM into three thematic (Ha)		
	Biodiversity	Sustainable Fisheries	Blue Carbon
OECM Candidates (Short-term Assessment) 2025-2030	620.657,31	3.723.651,41	17.245,65
Potential OECM (Mid and Long Term Assessment) 2031-2045	2.278.653,67	4.647.223,49	1.158.095,90
Total (Ha)	2.899.310,98	8.370.874,90	1.175.341,55

<https://allencoralatlas.org/atlas>Map of Potential
BIODIVERSITY Theme OECMMap of Potential
SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES theme OECMMap of Potential
BLUE CARBON Theme OECM<https://geoportal.menlhk.go.id/>



During the discussions, Mahesh Pradhan shared an important reflection on the complexities of implementing OECMs. He observed that OECM work inevitably involves multiple ministries and institutions, each with its own mandates, priorities, and areas of authority. This institutional diversity, while necessary, often leads to complicated arrangements that make coordination and decision-making challenging. He raised a critical question: Could the national CBD focal points play a stronger and more central role in coordinating OECM implementation within their countries?

This question set the stage for country representatives to share their own experiences and perspectives on the matter. Their responses highlighted both the opportunities and the constraints faced by focal points in playing a central role. What emerged was a picture of varied governance systems, reflecting each country's political and institutional context, but also a shared recognition of the importance of inclusive and well-coordinated processes in advancing OECM recognition

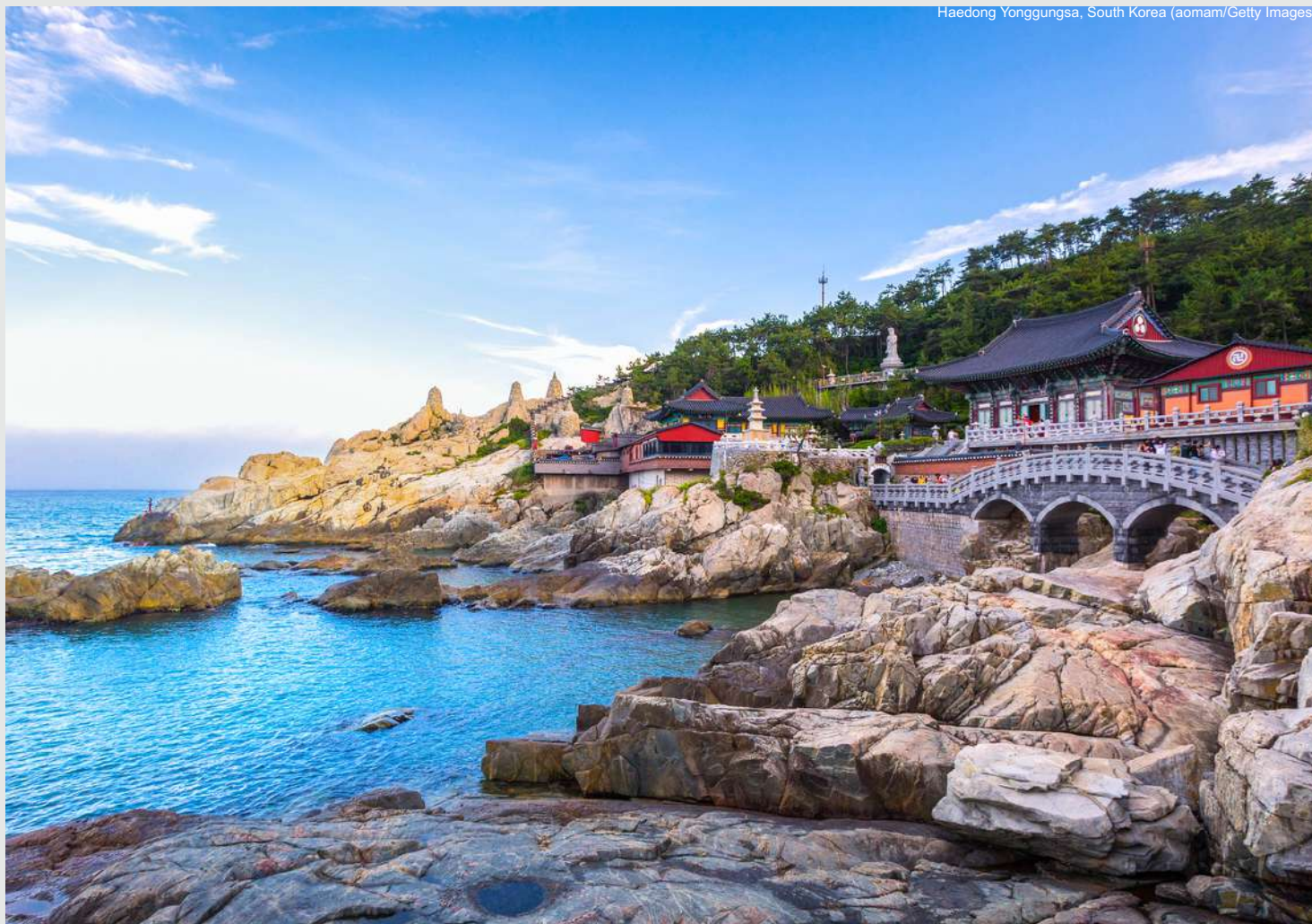
OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION I



Participants further discussed the challenges and opportunities in advancing OECM recognition. A recurring theme was the difficulty of ensuring coordination across multiple agencies, each with its own responsibilities and priorities. While such diversity reflects the complexity of conservation governance, it also underscores the need for mechanisms that bring these actors together in a coherent and efficient way.

Equally important was the emphasis on meaningful stakeholder participation. Communities, local authorities, and rights-holders were highlighted as critical partners in ensuring that OECM recognition is not only legitimate but also sustainable. Their involvement anchors conservation efforts in local realities and helps secure the long-term stewardship of these areas

1.3 PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES



Haedong Yonggungsa, South Korea (aomam/Getty Images)

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

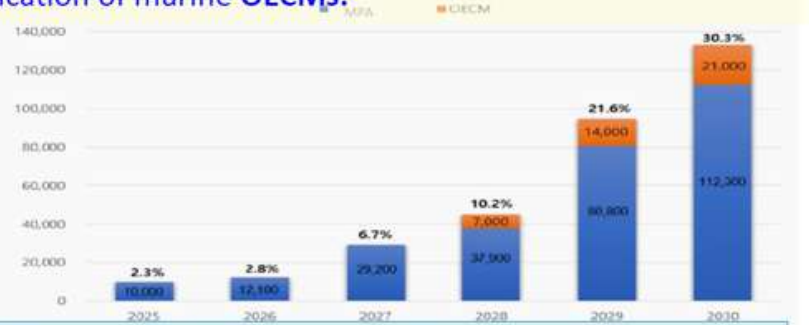
The Republic of Korea is laying the groundwork for the recognition and adoption of marine OECMs through new guidelines, legal frameworks, and interagency coordination. Anchored on the KM-GBF 30x30 Target, Korea is drafting OECM Verification Guidelines, establishing a registry, and creating support mechanisms to advance identification and management. The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF), together with other ministries and institutions, is reviewing both national and international policies to ensure alignment. In Korea's 5th National Biodiversity Strategy, OECMs are framed as "areas of coexistence with nature," a definition that will also be reflected in the Biodiversity Act and adapted for marine contexts.

To move this agenda forward, Korea's National Protected Areas Forum, comprising seven government ministries, eleven research institutions, and fourteen expert members, plays a central role in coordination and technical support. Potential OECM sites under consideration include waters around uninhabited islands, buffer zones of World Natural Heritage tidal flats, and tidal flat restoration areas. These sites are being assessed not only for their ecological value but also for their role in supporting coexistence between people and nature.

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

National strategy for marine OECMs

► The **MOF** has developed a strategy to meet the 30 by 30 target for marine protected and is moving forward with the identification of marine OECMs.



[Key components of the marine OECM strategy]

Guidelines

Develop **Marine OECM guidelines** by the end of 2025, drawing on IUCN guidance (2021) and other sectoral examples to establish evaluation indicators and standards.

– Ongoing research since June 2025 is focused on drafting these guidelines and preparing the necessary legal framework.

Using the finalized guidelines, begin **identifying potential OECM sites** starting in 2025, including specific island zones and buffer areas around tidal flats designated as World Natural Heritage sites.

Candidate site identification

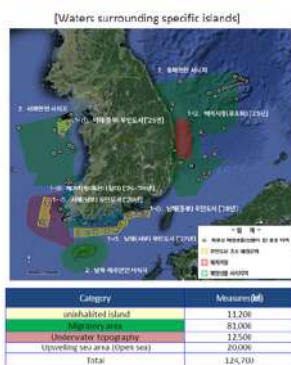
OECM registration

Pilot the registration of marine OECMs through 2027 in line with the guidelines.
– From 2028 onward, aim to register more than 7,000km² of OECMs each year.

Starting in 2026, pursue amendments to the Marine Ecosystem Act to establish a legal basis for OECM definitions, registration procedures, management systems, and support mechanisms.

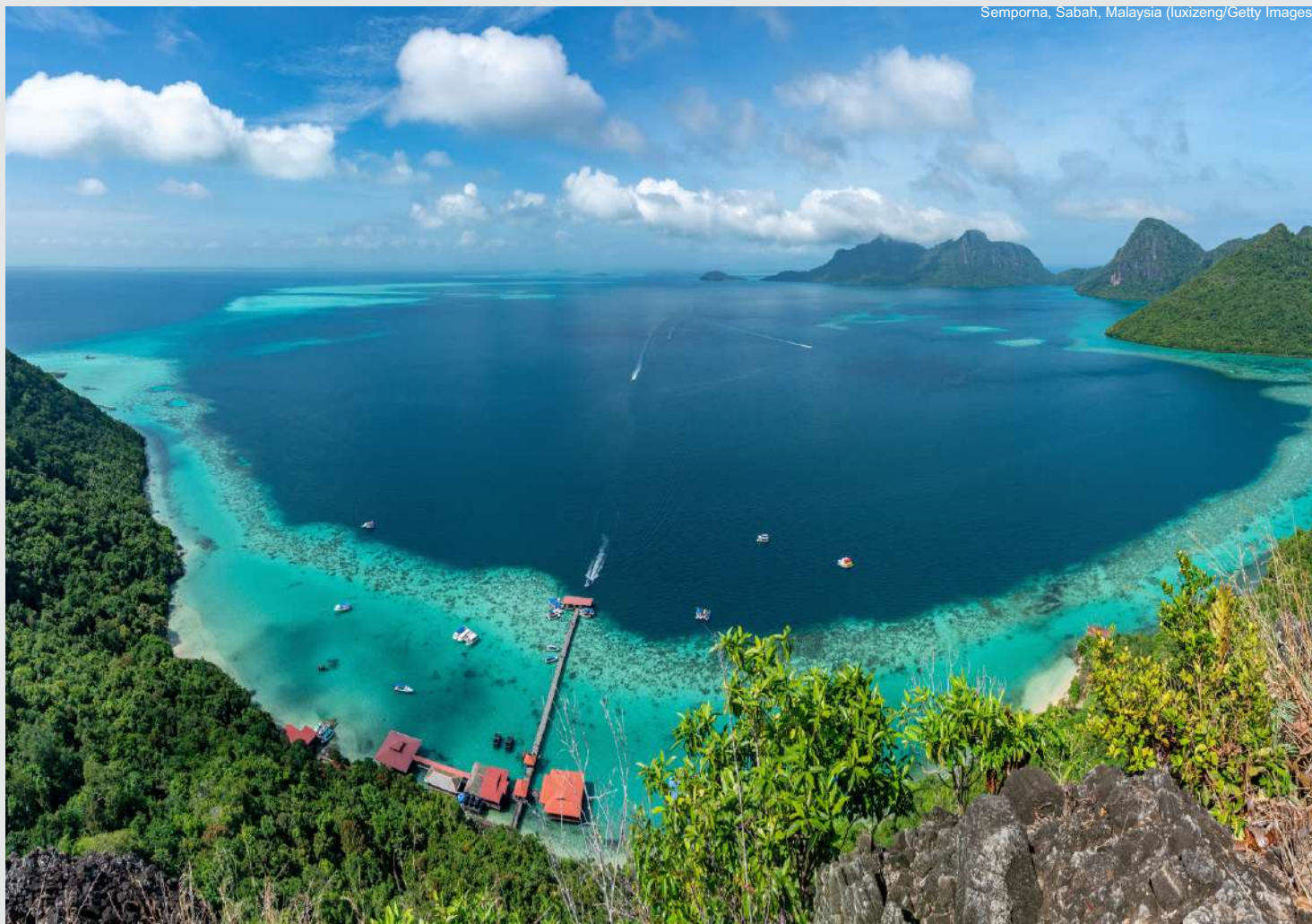
Institutional framework

Proposed OECM candidate sites in Korea



Korea's National OECM Strategy outlines a clear timeline: completing marine OECM guidelines by 2025, identifying candidate sites the same year, and amending the Marine Ecosystem Act in 2026 to institutionalize the framework. From 2028 onward, Korea plans to register over 7,000 km² of marine OECMs annually. The certification process will follow four steps: screening, building consensus, site identification and registration, and finalization of the OECM report, ensuring a systematic and inclusive approach to recognition. This stepwise strategy highlights Korea's commitment to scaling up marine conservation while fostering interagency and community collaboration.

1.3. PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES



MALAYSIA

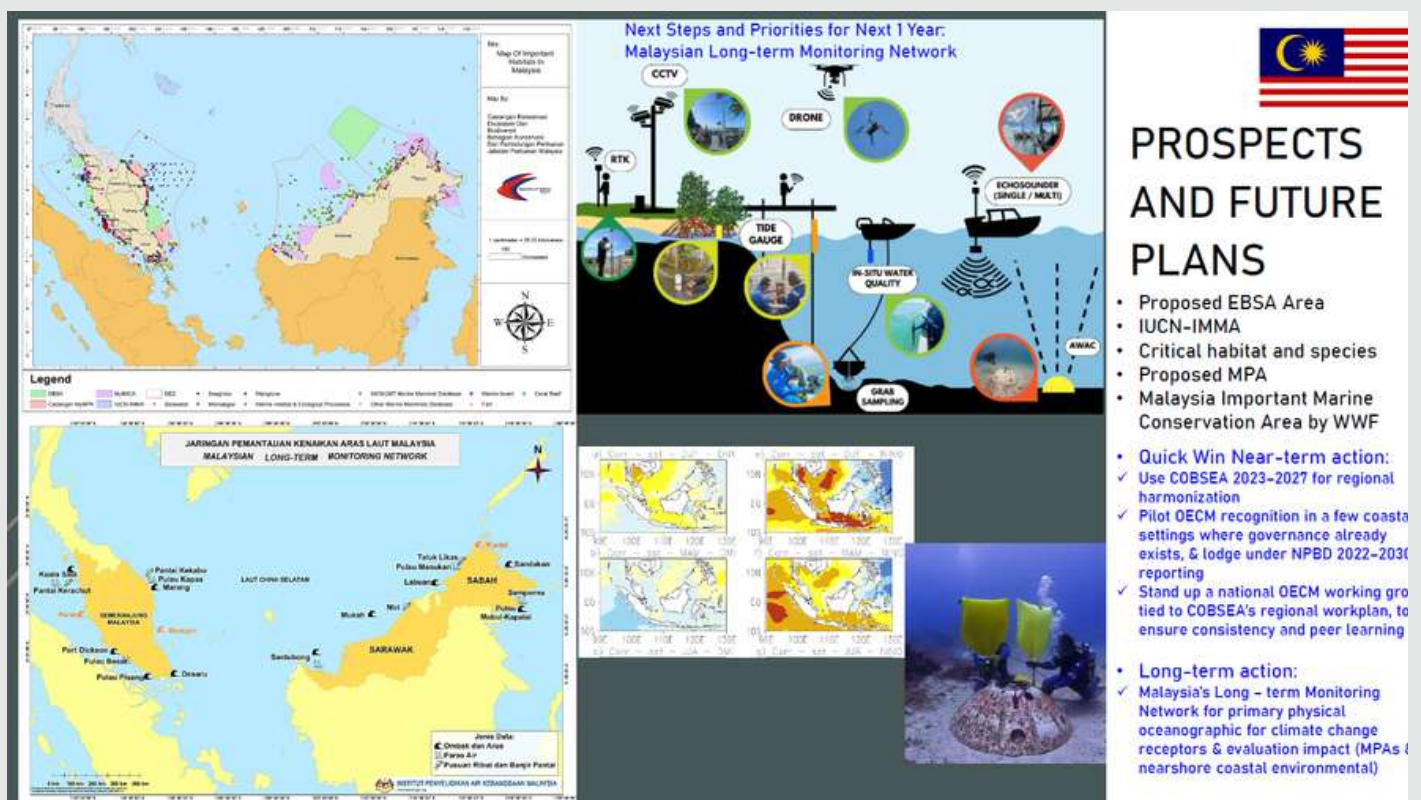
Malaysia emphasized that its legal and policy frameworks provide a strong foundation for the recognition of OECMs, linking agriculture, food security, and MPA management. Through the National Agrofood Policy 2.0, the country aims to designate 10% of its national waters as MPAs, aligning with the global biodiversity targets under the KM-GBF. To further advance this agenda, Malaysia is developing a National Framework for OECMs, which is expected to be launched by the end of 2025. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) acts as the main federal agency for matters related to OECMs in Malaysia. Sabah Biodiversity Centre (SaBC) and Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) serve as the focal points in the states of Sabah and Sarawak, respectively, due to variations in the governance structures and systems of these two states.

The national framework outlines a four-stage process for OECM recognition: (1) initial screening and verification, (2) obtaining consent for full assessment, (3) site review and evaluation, and (4) final approval and recognition. At the screening stage, exclusivity from existing protected areas and potential to support biodiversity are key considerations. The full assessment stage applies eight criteria, including biodiversity significance, institutional mechanisms, governance structures, in-situ conservation potential, and long-term sustainability, with equity in management also taken into account. This systematic process ensures that OECMs are rigorously assessed before being officially recognized.

MALAYSIA

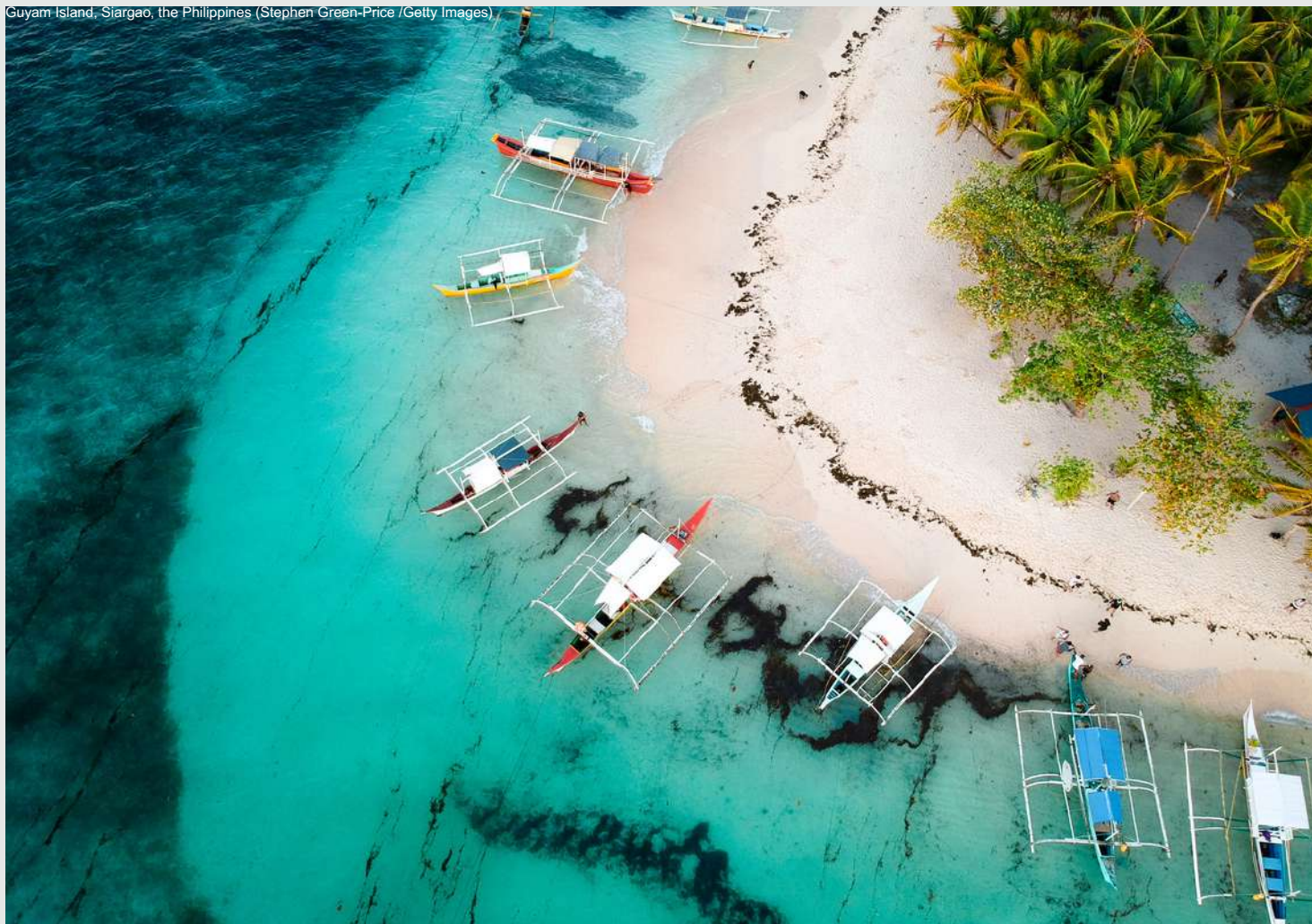
Malaysia has also set short-term and long-term priorities for establishing OECMs. In the short-term, the country intends to align with COBSEA's 2023–2027 guidance for regional harmonization, pilot a few OECMs under the National Policy on Biological Diversity (NPBD) 2022–2030, and establish a national working group aligned with COBSEA's regional workplan. For the long term, Malaysia envisions the establishment of a national monitoring network to support ongoing ecological and oceanographic assessments. Current activities supporting OECM readiness include lobbying for nature-based solutions at the policy level, applying unified methodologies for risk assessment in coastal and marine areas, capacity building, and raising public awareness.

Despite these advances, Malaysia identified challenges that must be addressed to ensure success. These include limited knowledge of OECM planning, insufficient awareness of their importance, financial constraints, land tenure issues, and the need for robust monitoring criteria and indicators. Moving forward, Malaysia aims to secure endorsement of the National OECM Framework, strengthen governance while recognizing regional variations, build partnerships with implementing stakeholders, establish sustainable financing mechanisms, and invest in capacity building. These steps are seen as critical to advancing OECM recognition and contributing to biodiversity conservation at both national and regional scales.



1.3. PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES

Guyam Island, Siargao, the Philippines (Stephen Green-Price /Getty Images)



THE PHILIPPINES

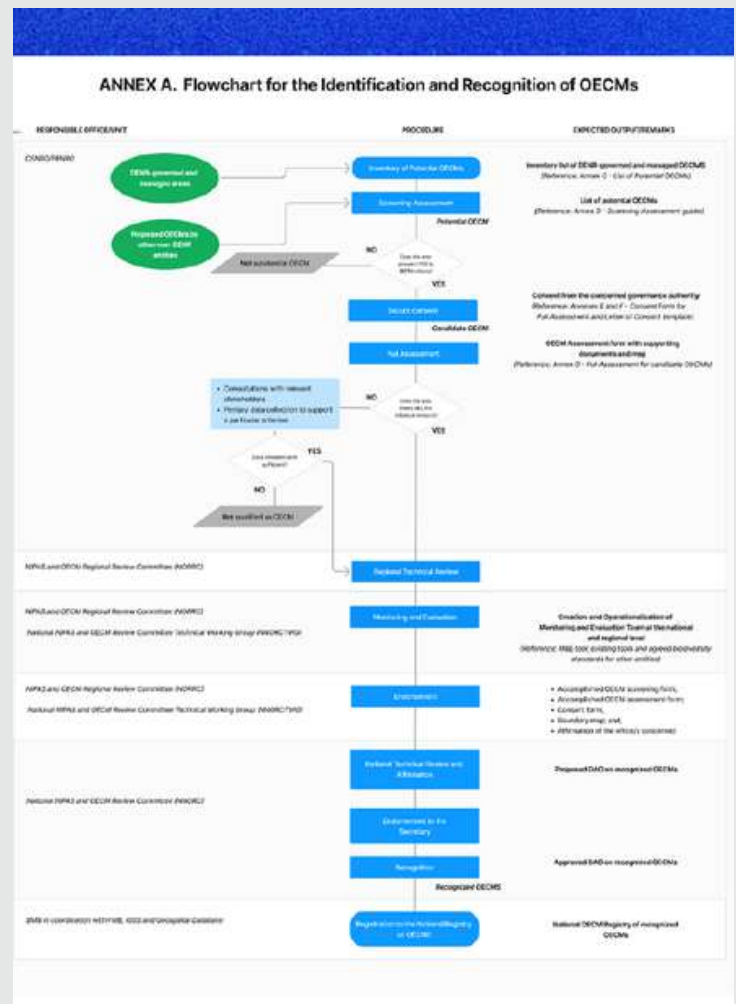
The Philippines integrates OECM recognition into its Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) 2024–2040, where conservation of land and waters falls under Target 3 on ecosystem conservation. Several national laws provide a legal basis for OECMs, including the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992 and its amendment, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, the amended Philippine Fisheries Code, the Local Government Code, the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, and the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan Act. To support implementation, a National and Regional OECM Technical Working Group has been established to oversee monitoring and coordination.

Through spatial planning, the Philippines identified 15.9% of its waters, representing 178 sites, as potential OECMs. This evidence-based selection process emphasizes ecosystem services, ecological representation, inclusiveness in management, and equity. The country also proposed a four-step recognition process: (1) identification and assessment of potential sites, (2) endorsement, (3) formal recognition, and (4) incentivization. The process is designed to ensure that OECMs are not only scientifically validated but also socially inclusive and supported by functioning governance structures.

THE PHILLIPINES

A decision tree has been developed to guide the recognition process in detail, including steps such as inventory, assessments, securing stakeholder consents, full evaluations, reviews at the national and regional levels, monitoring, endorsement, registration, and reporting to the global OECM database. This decision tree also outlines the responsibilities of relevant government bureaus at each stage, ensuring accountability and clarity in implementation. Since June 2023, stakeholder consultations have been conducted to refine and validate the process with local authorities, communities, and other partners.

Looking ahead, the Philippines plans to pilot test the recognition process, operationalize the OECM registry by next year, and invest in capacity-building initiatives. These steps are intended to strengthen institutional readiness, support inclusive participation, and ensure the sustainability of OECMs as part of the country's broader biodiversity conservation strategy. Through this systematic approach, the Philippines demonstrates its commitment to achieving global biodiversity targets while addressing national conservation priorities.



OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION II

Discussions highlighted how some security-restricted areas, such as exclusion zones around certain facilities, unintentionally function as conservation sites. These areas, where entry and fishing are prohibited for safety reasons, provide refuge for fish and coral habitats and are now being considered as potential OECMs. To avoid legal and jurisdictional conflicts, countries emphasized the importance of conducting legal screening in advance. Only candidate sites that comply with existing marine and environmental laws are taken forward for OECM designation.

The forum also underscored the challenges of translation and localization of international guidelines. Korea's experience showed the difficulty of adapting CBD definitions and criteria into its national legal and cultural context. Efforts are ongoing to ensure that OECM-related terms are clearly defined and usable within domestic policy frameworks, highlighting the broader need for countries to reconcile global standards with local realities.



Institutional coordination emerged as another key theme, with participants noting that OECM implementation often requires alignment across multiple agencies. In the Philippines, the Biodiversity Management Bureau leads efforts through a National OECM Technical Working Group, though gaps remain in mapping stakeholder roles and raising awareness among less-engaged agencies. In Korea, the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries leads marine OECM work, while the Ministry of Environment convenes the National Forum on OECMs, which involves several ministries. Both cases underscored the importance of cross-ministerial collaboration, shared leadership, and stronger communication to ensure coherent implementation.



1.3. PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES



SINGAPORE

Singapore emphasized the challenges of balancing biodiversity conservation with competing land-use demands in a small and densely populated country. Currently, the country has four legally protected nature reserves, complemented by 20 administratively protected nature areas and a network of surrounding nature parks that extend conservation benefits. The National Parks Board leads biodiversity conservation efforts, supported by agencies such as the Ministry of National Development (MND), Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), and the Maritime and Port Authority.

While specific legislation for OECMs is not being considered at this stage, Singapore relies on a robust set of existing laws and policies to safeguard biodiversity.

These include the National Parks Board Act, Parks and Trees Act, Wildlife Act, the Singapore Green Plan 2030, the City in Nature vision, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the Nature Conservation Masterplan. Marine conservation is also a growing priority, with plans for a new marine park at Lazarus-Kusu Reefs, guided by ecological assessments. Singapore's only marine park, Sisters' Island, reopened in 2024, and is complemented by initiatives such as the OCBC Seagrass Restoration Project and the 100k Coral Initiative, which integrate scientific research, restoration, and community involvement.

SINGAPORE

Marine Conservation in Singapore



Reopening of Sisters' Islands Marine Park

- Platform for outreach, educational, conservation and research
- Turtle hatchery to support Hawksbill turtle conservation
- re-opened in Oct 2024 after extensive enhancement works
- first floating boardwalk that also serves as a coral habitat and research site
- New outdoor classroom in an enhanced lagoon tidal pool to expand outreach efforts
- Net-zero energy park with solar farm and desalination plant



New Marine Park at South Lazarus-Kusu Reefs

- Identified through NParks' Ecological Profiling Exercise as an ecologically significant habitat with high biodiversity and habitat connectivity
- Kusu reefs have good coral diversity and habitat quality with 141 species, acts as sources for other local reefs
- Features one of Singapore's last natural rocky shores and a mature coastal forest with rare native plants
- Important site for coastal and marine research locally



OCBC Seagrass Restoration Project

- Singapore's first seagrass restoration initiative to enhance conservation and carbon sequestration efforts
- Pilot project will focus on transplantation, benefits of seagrass restoration, seagrass reproductive biology, engaging and involving the community in the conservation and restoration efforts
- Fully funded by OCBC, with opportunities for public and staff volunteers to support research and transplantation



100K Corals Initiative

- plant 100,000 corals over the next decade and beyond
- Coral nubbins cultivated at a new facility before transplantation to restore degraded reefs or establish new coral communities
- Smart technology optimises large-scale coral cultivation, integrating real-time monitoring for environmental stability
- Trialling CoralAID Mineral Accretion (CAMA) technology to accelerate coral growth using low-voltage electricity

The institutionalization of OECMs in Singapore is being approached through mainstreaming, dialogue among agencies, and integration into existing frameworks. Key considerations include the novelty of the OECM concept, policy constraints, and the need to identify potential sites for recognition. Monitoring and reporting are primarily handled by the National Parks Board. Unlike in many neighboring countries, Indigenous Peoples and local communities are not present in Singapore, making the state-led and agency-driven model central to advancing OECM-related initiatives

Processes

Presently working with agencies on designation of OECMs in Sg

- Mainstreaming of OECM concept
- Addressing concerns of agencies
 - New concept, adding to numerous existing schemes
 - e.g. KBAs, EBSAs
 - Constraints to policy space, and Singapore's limited land/sea area
- No IPLCs or subnational authorities
- Identifying potential sites
 - Managing authority
 - Current usage
 - Future plans
- Monitoring and reporting - NParks



1.3. PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES



THAILAND

Thailand reaffirmed its global and national commitments to biodiversity conservation, joining the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People in 2020 and developing its Long-Term Biodiversity Strategy and Roadmap (2024–2050). The country has drafted a roadmap to achieve the 30x30 target and initiated projects on OECMs. To qualify as OECMs, sites must lie outside protected conservation zones, demonstrate biodiversity value, have clearly defined geographic boundaries, and be equitably managed with active stakeholder involvement for long-term conservation.

Thailand has identified a diverse set of potential OECMs, spanning terrestrial, inland, marine, and coastal areas. These include military zones, underwater cultural and heritage areas, safety zones around oil and gas platforms, fisheries closure areas, and locally managed marine areas (LMMAs). LMMAs, established through the Marine and Coastal Resources Management Act, are particularly significant, as they are driven by local communities and stakeholders who conserve biodiversity, ensure sustainable resource use, and strengthen local capacities. The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources supports recognition and promotion of these areas.

THAILAND



The country highlighted its community resource management approach, which empowers local communities not only to manage resources but also to monitor them. This approach ensures equitable access to provisioning services, which in turn provides income opportunities. Thailand emphasized the importance of partnerships, citing collaborations with GIZ, WWF Thailand, IUCN, UNDP, PTTEP, Raks Thai Foundation, Thailand Mangrove Alliance, and Save Andaman Network. Moving forward, Thailand plans to conduct training workshops and engage local organizations and academic institutions more actively in OECM initiatives, reinforcing its commitment to both community-based conservation and the 30x30 global target.



1.3. PRESENTATION BY COUNTRIES



VIET NAM

Viet Nam recognizes OECMs as conservation measures outside formal protected areas, with potential sites identified mainly in coastal and marine zones. These include community-managed areas, fishery resource protection zones, seasonal no-take zones, artificial reef zones, and sustainable aquaculture areas. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment oversees general biodiversity management, while the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development leads marine conservation and, together with its local agencies, manages protected areas and biodiversity.

Coordination across agencies, previously limited, has improved as biodiversity, fisheries, forestry, and marine management were consolidated under the ministry's administration, extending even to site-level management with engagement from local commune authorities

Although Viet Nam has not yet issued an official policy or legal document on OECMs, progress has been made in integrating the concept into national frameworks. OECMs are now reflected in the National Biodiversity Strategy to 2030, with a vision to 2050, and there are plans to incorporate provisions into the Biodiversity and Fisheries Laws. Draft strategies and guidance documents on OECM identification, management, and reporting have been prepared, laying the groundwork for future recognition and implementation.

VIET NAM

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

- Surveying and assessing fishery resources, biodiversity, and ecosystem to plan for the protection and exploitation of fishery resources, which includes identifying potential areas for effective conservation.
- Promoting co-management models for protecting fishery resources in various localities. Currently, there are 71 co-management organizations in 14 out of 34 provinces and cities. Some localities with effective co-management models include Hà Tĩnh, Quảng Trị, and Bình Thuận (Độc Lát).
- Organizing workshops to provide feedback on the National Strategy, discuss the potential for forming OECMs in Vietnam, and provide training on the criteria and recognition process for OECMs according to international guidelines.
- Developing a guiding document on how to identify, manage, and report on OECMs according to international standards (IUCN).
- The "Mekong Delta Coastal Ecosystems Protection" (MDEP) project (IUCN and DFID).



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

- Issuing the National Biodiversity Plan (2021-2030), which includes marine and coastal areas, specifically: 3 biodiversity corridors; 16 important ecological landscapes; 8 high biodiversity areas; 3 important ecological landscape areas; 2 nationally important wetlands. These areas all have great potential to be recognized as OECMs.
- Issuing the Plan for the Protection and Exploitation of Fishery Resources for the 2021-2030 period, which identifies 27 marine protected areas, 59 fishery resource protection zones in marine areas, 63 seasonal no-take zones in marine and coastal areas, and 27 artificial reef zones. These are all potential areas to be identified as OECMs.
- Issuing the Scheme to expand the area of marine protected areas to ensure they reach 0% of Vietnam's marine area (Decision 1539/QĐ-TTg dated 10/12/2024), which includes the goal of "Establishing OECM areas to reach about 1.534% of Vietnam's national marine area."



Ongoing and planned activities include site surveys and assessments, promotion of co-management in fisheries protection, stakeholder workshops, and the development of technical guidance. Viet Nam is also advancing project-based conservation, such as through the Mekong Delta Coastal Ecosystems Protection Project. In addition, its NBSAP (2021–2030) highlights potential OECMs and is complemented by schemes expanding marine and OECM coverage, alongside a fisheries protection and exploitation plan to 2030. These efforts reflect Viet Nam's aim to fulfill international biodiversity commitments, strengthen community involvement, and broaden the national conservation network.





The discussion highlighted that the integration of OECMs remains a work in progress across Southeast Asia, with countries facing distinct but overlapping challenges. In Singapore, mainstreaming OECM concepts into existing frameworks have faced challenges. Agencies voiced concerns with the operational aspects of OECMs. The Maritime and Port Authority emerged as a key actor, given its mandate over ports, shipping lanes, and maritime traffic. These are factors that heavily influence the feasibility of OECM recognition.

Viet Nam emphasized the absence of a specific legal or policy framework to support OECM implementation. Current conservation efforts remain centered on marine protected areas, and while OECMs have been referenced in biodiversity strategies, their practical integration remains uncertain. Looking ahead, Viet Nam expressed openness to developing OECM-related laws and policies to complement MPAs and expand the country's conservation coverage.

OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION III



Thailand provided clarifications on the treatment of LMMAs, which may be recognized as OECMs in certain contexts. However, defining remains a challenge, since OECMs are intended to operate outside protected areas. The country stressed the importance of strengthening collaboration with communities and incorporating local knowledge into management. At the same time, LMMAs offer strong opportunities for empowering local stakeholders and advancing Thailand's progress toward the 30x30 global biodiversity target.

Across the region, participants agreed that OECMs remain a relatively new and evolving conservation approach. Key barriers include the absence of enabling legal frameworks (Viet Nam), overlapping mandates (Singapore), and distinguishing OECMs from MPAs (Thailand, Philippines). Moving forward, stronger community partnerships, cross-agency coordination, and formal policy recognition were highlighted as essential steps to ensure that OECMs effectively contribute to biodiversity conservation in Southeast Asia.

1.4. OECMS IN SWEDEN AND A COMMON APPROACH IN THE BALTIC SEA

Jenny Hertzman, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM)

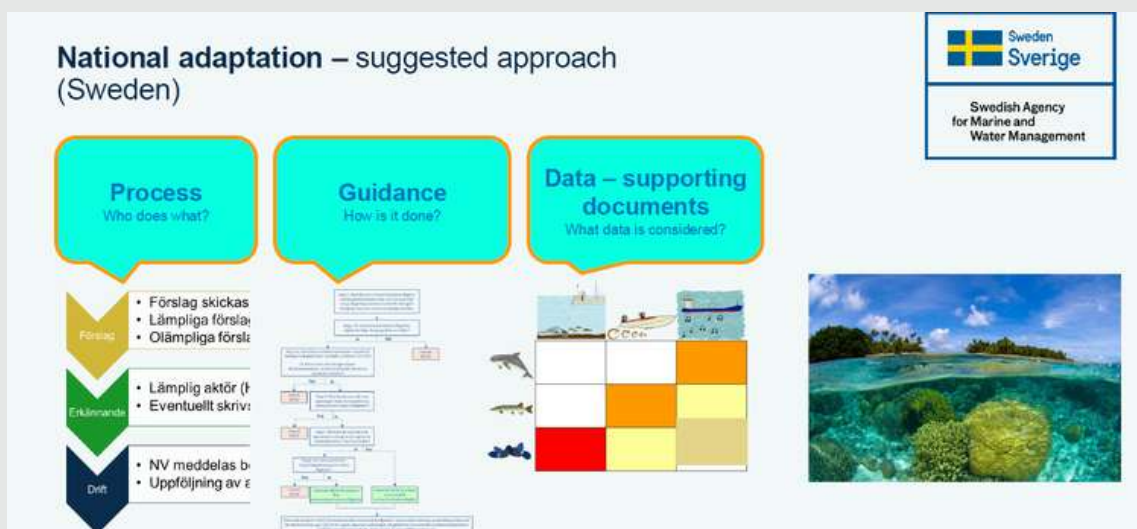


Ms. Jenny Hertzman representing Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) at the OECM workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).

Sweden, through the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM), is aligning its OECM work with the broader Baltic Sea framework, coordinated under HELCOM and the Baltic Sea Action Plan. While no new criteria were introduced, Sweden clarified the CBD OECM criteria to establish a common understanding across the region. By 2025, identification of OECMs in the Baltic Sea may begin, with efforts focused on ensuring coherence with the existing MPA network. Key considerations include defining long-term governance requirements, evaluating the net impact of activities, and clarifying how formal governance arrangements should be established.

SwAM outlined a proposed national approach involving three steps: identification, recognition, and operationalization of OECMs. County administrative boards, SwAM or other authorities or actors/organisations might initiate an OECMs process in collaboration with relevant sectors. Proposals would undergo an evidence-based assessment and consultation under the suggested leadership of SwAM. Tools such as a decision tree and standardized templates are being developed to guide the process. Formalizing governance and management arrangements through long-term agreements will guarantee the sustainability aspects.

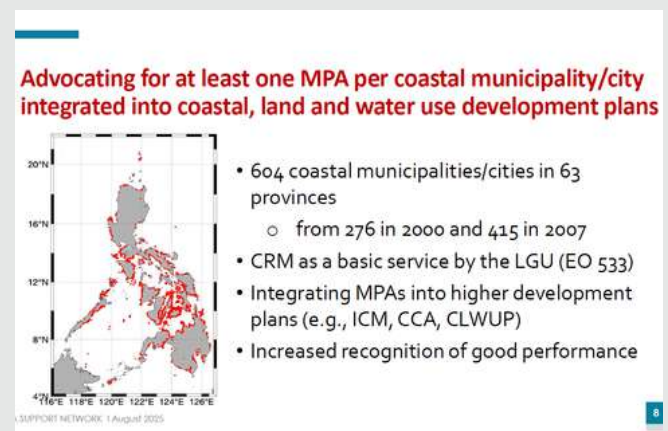
Sweden found it helpful to have the regional and common understanding of OECMs tailored to the Baltic Sea marine context as a guiding star for the national work. This multi-scale harmonized approach, combined with a developed methodology for assessing net-positive biodiversity outcomes and coherence with the MPA network, gives the OECMs high ecological relevance.



1.5. MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAs) IN THE PHILIPPINES CONTEXT

Hazel O. Arceo, University of the Philippines, Cebu

The Philippines has established more than 1,800 MPAs, commonly referred to as no-take zones, managed either by communities, local government units (LGUs), or through national legislation. These MPAs are classified in the national database as either nationally or locally managed and are supported by a strong legal framework, including the NIPAS Act, Fisheries Code, Local Government Code, and related executive orders. MPAs are also integrated into broader development plans such as coastal resource management (CRM), climate change adaptation (CCA), and land and water use planning, leading to improved management recognition and performance. The country recognizes OECMs as sites beyond protected areas, with laws consistent with the CBD definition, thereby aligning MPAs within the OECM framework.



Philippine MPAs and OECMs encompass a wide range of ecosystems, including national parks, sanctuaries, mangrove reserves, and fishery refuges. Management objectives center on protecting endangered species, conserving habitats and ecosystem services, and sustaining fisheries. LGUs, in partnership with Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils (FARMCs), play a central role in implementing policies and establishing sanctuaries. Community engagement is seen as vital, with recognition mechanisms such as the biennial Para el MAR awards incentivizing good practices and fostering replication. This highlights the country's strong community-based and multi-level governance approach in marine conservation.

1.6. CAPTURING PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 30X30 TARGET, RECOGNISING EXISTING SYSTEMS AND REPORTING OECMS

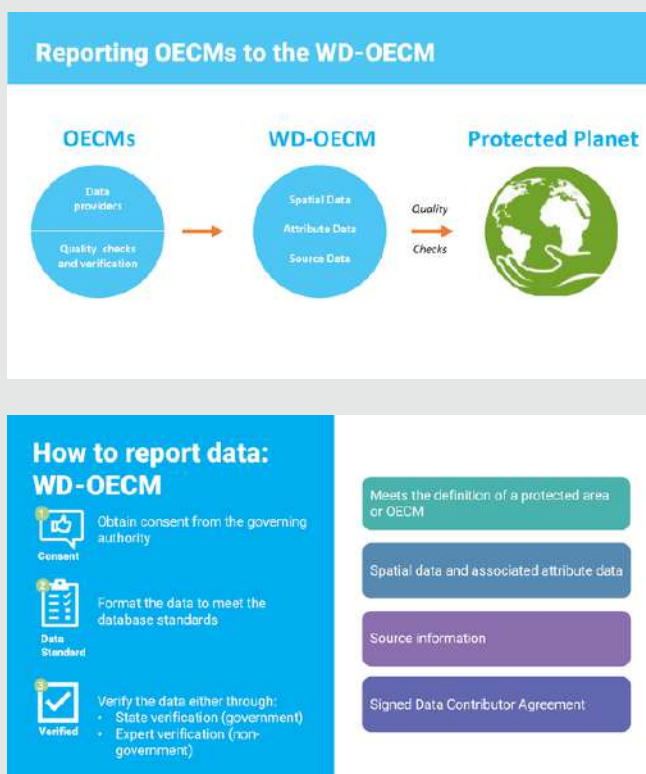
Jack Sutton, UNEP-WCMC

The presentation highlighted how the Protected Planet Initiative supports tracking progress toward the 30x30 Target by linking multiple global databases, including the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), World Database on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM), Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME), and the ICCA Registry. Data are received and reviewed from national governments, convention secretariats, Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and the private sector, with regional entities compiling and feeding inputs into the global databases in some cases. The platform is updated monthly and provides access to spatial datasets, ensuring transparency and accessibility.



Mr. Jack Sutton representing UNEP-WCMC at the OECM workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).

The WD-OECM remains an evolving database. Reporting should involve a careful process of securing the consent of the OECM governance authority, identifying that the OECM criteria are met, and formatting data to standards. As of September 2025, the Protected Planet Initiative reports that 9.85% of the global marine area is within protected areas and OECMs, highlighting that reaching 30% coverage will require accelerated implementation and support. The identification and recognition of OECMs will be a key component of this for many countries. UNEP-WCMC is supporting data providers to continuously improve the quality and coverage of the data reported to Protected Planet, in addition to advising partners on the development of a marine OECM guide. This guide is designed to support countries as well as Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in documenting and reporting OECMs.





The discussion opened with a question on the timeline for OECM data verification, drawing from the Philippines' experience. Participants noted that the duration between data submission and its upload to the WD-OECM database largely depends on verification at the ministry level. This verification step was identified as the main bottleneck, often causing delays. Once cleared, however, data is typically uploaded within a month, with updates synchronized on the first of each month.

Another key point raised concerned the regional harmonization of OECM criteria. Sweden shared insights from the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) process, emphasizing that the focus was not on creating new standards but on developing a shared understanding of existing CBD criteria. An agreement was reached after a year-long process that included multiple meetings, national-level consultations, and careful negotiation. The criteria were clarified to support the CBD definition to benefit biodiversity within the context of the Baltic Sea and to reach a more detailed consensus among contracting parties on how to interpret the meaning of terms like “long-term governance and management”, “positive biodiversity outcomes,” and “requirements for monitoring.”

OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION IV



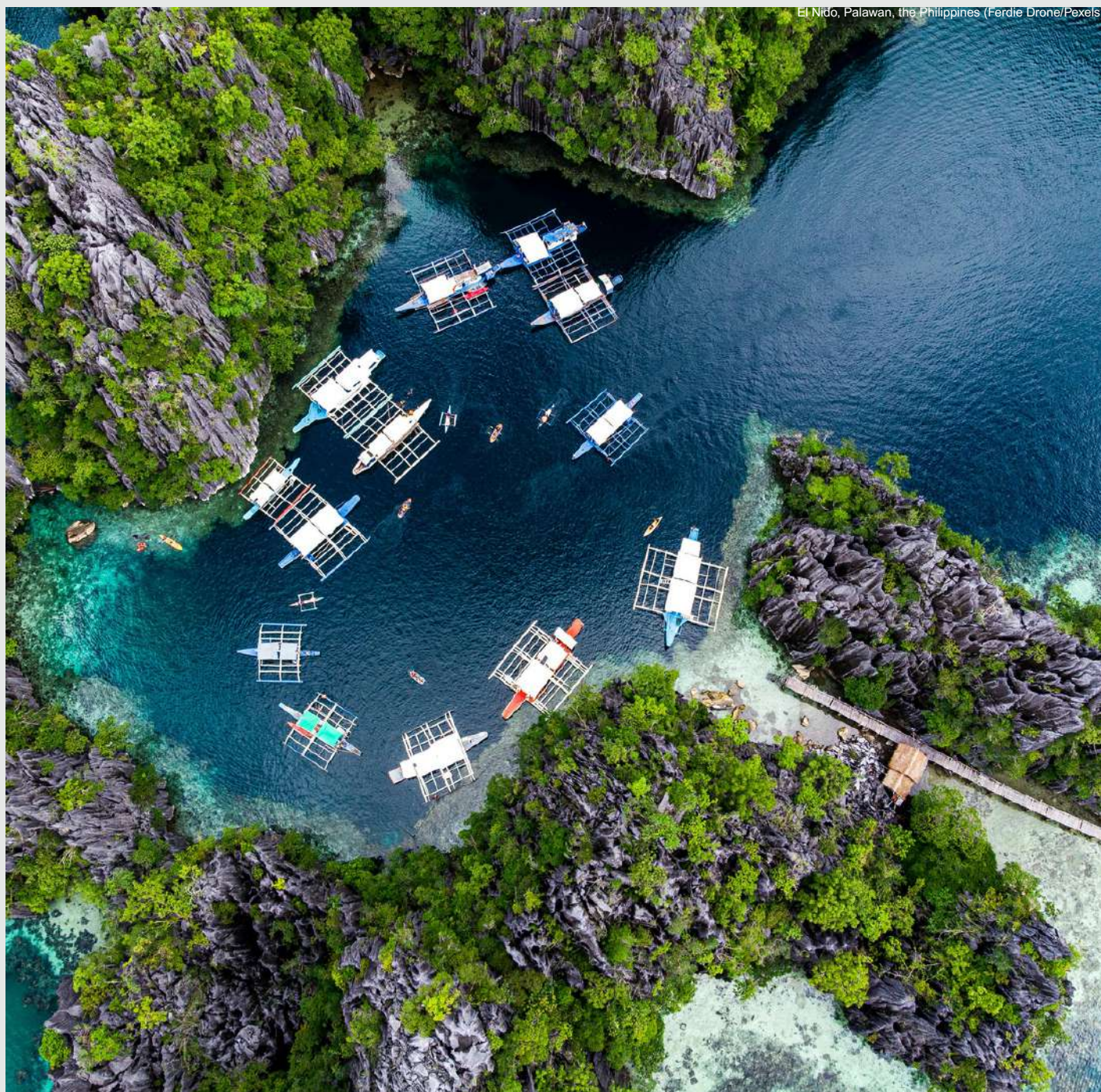
From Sweden's experience, participants drew lessons on the value of regional frameworks in supporting national implementation. Through HELCOM, Sweden and its neighbors were able to develop common guidance for marine OECMs, an approach that might not work as well for terrestrial systems given differing national contexts. The discussion underlined that collaboration across countries is essential, especially where the OECMs, together with MPAs, aims to fulfil the international target (KM-GBF) to establish a resilient and ecological coherent network of marine ecosystems in a shared marine region. A shared marine region needs a harmonised governance and management and can benefit from an exchange of experiences, expertise and resources to optimise the outcomes



SESSION 2

UNDERSTANDING OUR ACTIONS FOR OECMS

WORKSHOP ON IDENTIFYING, FACILITATING, AND HINDERING FACTORS AND OPTIMIZING
OPPORTUNITIES AND OVERCOMING BARRIERS



2.1. INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY OECM ASSESSMENT

During this session, country representatives completed an assessment worksheet to document and evaluate their national progress on marine and coastal OECMs within their contexts.

The exercise enabled participants to reflect on the OECM definition, framework, governance, national leadership, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation. Specifically, they assessed their status with respect to opportunities and barriers regarding:

- Understanding and accepting OECMs.
- Identifying, securing consent for, fully assessing, and recognizing OECMs in marine and coastal areas.
- Data collection, vetting, verification, and reporting of recognized OECMs to the Protected Planet database.
- Monitoring and evaluation to ensure positive biodiversity outcomes and equity.
- Supporting and strengthening OECMs, including providing incentives.

Delegations analyzed these considerations and processes, focusing on factors supporting or impeding OECM work.

Finally, representatives considered opportunities and barriers to achieving the 30x30 Target through OECMs at both the national and East Asian Seas regional levels, identifying ways to optimize opportunities and overcome barriers. The country assessments served as a basis for comparing experiences, highlighting common challenges, and identifying areas for regional collaboration in subsequent sessions.



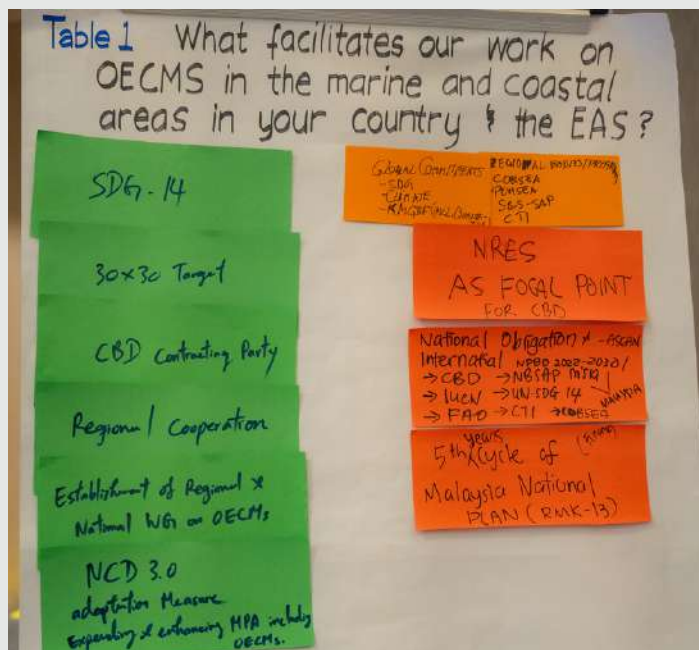
2.2. WORLD CAFE: SHARING OECM EXPERIENCE ACROSS COUNTRIES

A World Café session was conducted with four groups to exchange experiences and perspectives on OECMs in the marine and coastal areas across countries in the East Asian Seas region. Guided discussions focused on identifying both enabling and constraining factors, exploring opportunities and barriers to achieving the 30x30 targets, and drawing lessons for regional collaboration.



The discussions were structured around four key themes:

Table 1 examined what facilitates work on OECMs at national and regional levels.



Factors that facilitate OECM work are as follows: international commitment that spur national actions, including integration with the national biodiversity strategic action plans, regional cooperation and partnerships, national laws and policies, providing incentives in the future, engaging with other sectors to support and as well as to receive support, the country's institutional arrangements and processes such as for instance the focal point for CBD is also the same agency working on OECMs

The Republic of Korea indicates their national consensus around OECMs as a facilitating factor. Singapore's small size and flat government structure also facilitate a better understanding of the habitats and natural areas and enable ease of communication, respectively.



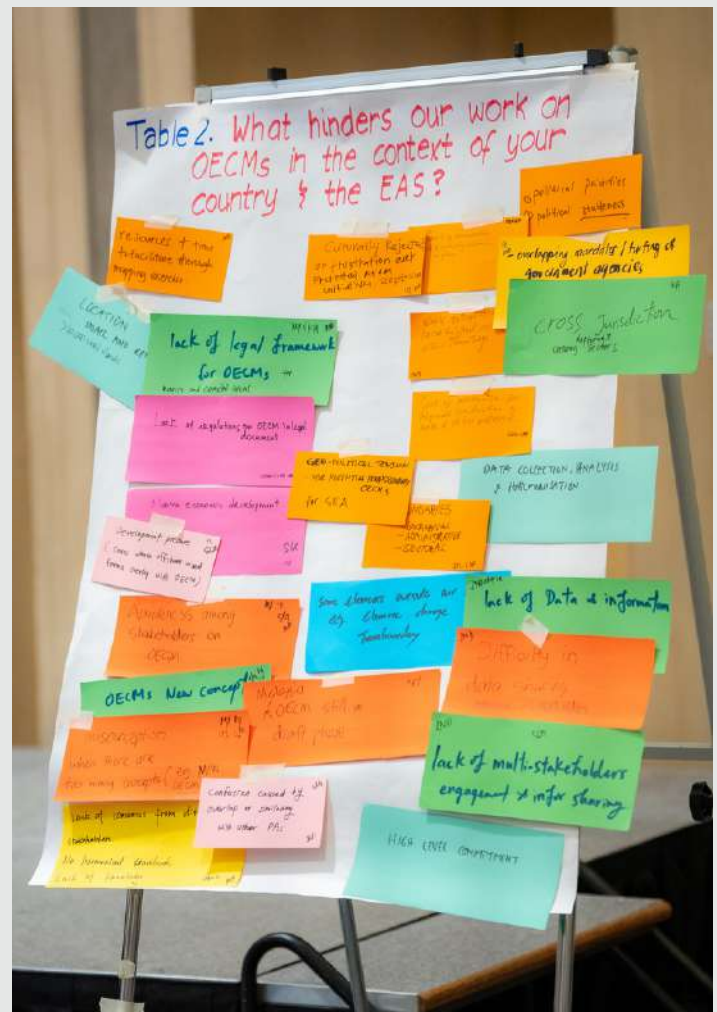


Table 2 focused on barriers and challenges that hinder OECM implementation. The biggest challenge encountered by countries is the low level of understanding and acceptance, even skepticism of OECMs. Participants also identified barriers relating to stakeholder engagement/buy-in, navigating through multiple layers of mandates and jurisdictions, the issue of data/information on OECMs and the resource-intensive mapping of OECMs, the low political commitment, policy concerns on OECMs and the need for specific guidelines, economic development pressures and geo-political tensions for potential transboundary OECMs.



Table 3 considered opportunities and constraints in meeting 30x30 commitments through OECMs, both nationally and regionally. Opportunities identified are strategic partnerships with the academe and researchers and regional cooperation, and integration with NBSAPs and other national programs. Some countries also acknowledge the broader areas for conservation while Singapore considers the manageability of the small size OECMs which also leads to a good understanding of biodiversity areas. Korea reports a growing national interest and momentum on OECMs that can help advance the work. A top constraint identified is the lack of acceptance of the OECM concept & the need for awareness raising among stakeholders and the general public. Countries also acknowledge that existing policies may be inadequate. Financial constraints including the lack of resources for professional services for assessment of extensive areas and the data needed to recognize OECMs were also identified as barriers in meeting the 30x30 targets.

Table 4 reflected on cross-country learning, emphasizing how individual country experiences could contribute to shared knowledge and collaboration within the region. All identified that bilateral or multilateral learning exchanges and dialogues establishing a regional knowledge management platform for data sharing are a good way to learn from the experience of other countries. One country also suggested a Regional or Global Clearing House Mechanism for OECMs. Through multilateral cooperation, countries may also benefit from capacity-building initiatives of regional organizations as well as the technical expertise they may provide. Engagement and integration with other sectors such as port authorities, tourism/cruise operators, public-private partnerships may also be a way forward. Participants also emphasized the importance of community involvement.

At the national level, countries may also learn from each other's domestic strategies and policies, which are needed to achieve OECM goals. Awareness-raising on OECMs was once again identified as a way to learn from each other's experiences, as well as through regional and national reports on the state of the coasts and on biodiversity.

These outputs, stemming from the individual country's assessments of their work on OECMs in the marine and coastal areas, provided a collective understanding of common issues while identifying entry points for strengthened cooperation on OECMs across the East Asian Seas. **(Annex 3)**





PLENARY REPORTING DISCUSSION

In the discussions, facilitating factors for OECM implementation were highlighted. Participants noted that the KM-GBF Targets serve as a strong driver, with shared cultural values and passion for biodiversity conservation reinforcing these efforts across countries.

On the other hand, several challenges were identified. These included weak coordination at the regional level, limited resources, and gaps in mandates, legal frameworks, and local authority interest. Insufficient data sharing and a lack of harmonized standards were also raised, alongside the need for stronger awareness and understanding of OECMs, which remain a novel concept in many contexts. Current OECM mandates also do not fully address climate change concerns.

Country experiences revealed a mix of opportunities and barriers. Indonesia is advancing OECMs through comprehensive spatial planning, while China has moved quickly to integrate OECMs nationally. Malaysia benefits from strategic partnerships, and Korea is seeing growing national interest despite limited funding.

In contrast, Viet Nam faces funding gaps, Singapore is working to build wider acceptance across agencies, and the Philippines is looking at Indigenous Peoples' partnerships as a way forward. Thailand, though spatially constrained, is exploring seasonal fishing areas as potential sites. Participants also stressed the importance of regional efforts, pointing to low MPA coverage as an indicator of the need for stronger collective action, with policy development and transboundary initiatives offering significant opportunities.

Finally, participants underscored the importance of shared learning and collaboration. Suggested mechanisms included regional clearing-house systems, knowledge exchange platforms, and learning sites that can foster peer-to-peer capacity building. Technical expertise sharing, public-private partnerships, and collaboration through regional organizations were seen as crucial steps forward. A regional working group was also proposed to harmonize efforts, support data sharing, and strengthen collective progress toward the 30x30 targets.

SESSION 3

ACCELERATING OUR ACTIONS FOR OECMS IN MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS OF THE EAST ASIAN SEAS



El Nido, Palawan, the Philippines (fazon1/Getty Images)

3.1. STRUCTURE AND HIGHLIGHTS OF COBSEA OECM GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Margarita Victoria Caballa and Alett Nuñez, UNEP - COBSEA

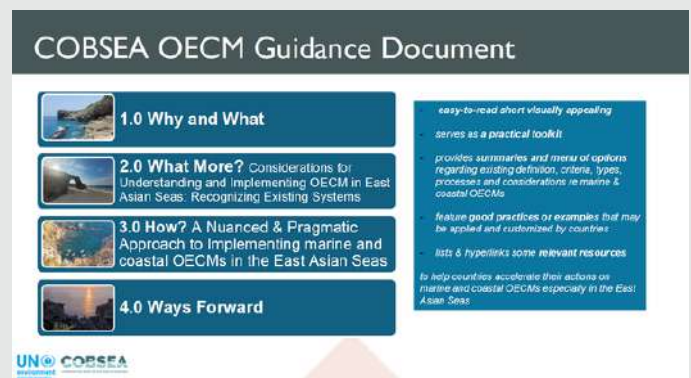
The presentation highlighted the establishment of the COBSEA Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Framework and Working Group, which provides a regional platform to advance marine and coastal conservation while linking OECMs with the Blue Economy. The framework elaborates on the cross-cutting priorities in marine and coastal ecosystems. These priorities are (1) Habitat Conservation and Restoration, (2) Marine Protected Areas, and (3) Marine and Coastal Spatial Planning. Meanwhile, inclusivity, equity, and knowledge management are integrated in the framework as its supporting mechanisms.



Ms. Alett Nuñez representing UNEP-COBSEA as an expert consultant on OECM at the OECM workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).



Ms. Margarita Victoria Caballa representing UNEP-COBSEA as a Programme Lead on Marine and Coastal Ecosystems at OECM workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).



The document collates available tools, good practices, and resources to accelerate OECM actions in the East Asian Seas, serving as a reference for practitioners. It provides clarity on definitions, concepts, and governance types, aligning closely with CBD's standards while also recognizing regional and national contexts and needs.



The guidance is organized into four main parts. Part 1 presents the rationale of establishing OECMs, the current status of these areas across the East Asian Seas. Part 2 focuses on OECM definition and criteria, ways to secure buy-ins, types of governance and OECMs, and possible leadership and oversight mechanisms at the national level. This includes institutional arrangements, roadmapping, national legal or policy framework, and registries. Part 3 offers practical steps for implementing OECMs in the East Asian Seas region, covering processes such as screening, recognizing, reporting, supporting, monitoring, and evaluating sites

Part 4 underscores the importance of accelerating national actions and building synergies across the region. By providing structured but flexible options, the guidance aims to support countries in strengthening their OECM efforts, enhancing coordination, and ensuring that biodiversity conservation outcomes contribute meaningfully to global targets such as 30x30.

Finally, participating countries indicated a preference for a concise, visually strong, and easy-to-navigate guidance document that uses more visuals and less text for better comprehension.

2.0 What More?

Considerations for Understanding and Implementing OECM in East Asian Seas: Recognizing Existing Systems

2.3 Identifying Types of OECMS in Marine and Coastal Areas

General Categories of Area-Based Conservation/Management Measures	Fisheries OECMs (FAO Handbook, 2022)	Wetlands OECMs (Convention on Wetlands, Working Note, 2023)
(1) Territories and areas governed and managed by IPLCs (2) Area-based fisheries management measures (3) Other sectoral area-based management (3.1) Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (3.2) Areas of Particular Environmental Interest Specific Country Examples a) COBSEA Countries' Types, if any b) Maldives's Islands Leased to Tourism Dev't c) India's Important Coastal Biodiversity Areas (ICBAs), Important Marine Biodiversity Areas (IMBAs) and Ecologically/Culturally/Internationally Significant Coastal and Marine Areas (EICSCMA)	(1) vulnerable marine ecosystems (2) area-based fishery closures (fisheries reserves and no-take areas) (3) community-based fisheries management areas including marine managed areas (MMAs), locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) prevalent in the South Pacific and responsible fishing areas (RFAs) common in Latin America (4) rotational closures and seasonal closures, gear-restricted areas; (5) areas covered by marine conservation agreements.	(1) Ramsar Sites(s) nested within a broader wetland OECM (2) Ramsar Site and wetland OECM adjacent to each other, joined together with a partial common border (3) Ramsar site (s) and wetland OECM geographically separated from each other but could be contributing to in situ conservation of and wise use of functionally-linked wetland biodiversity and hydrology; and (4) Ramsar Site formed partly as a protected area and partly as an OECM. provided, each site meets the CBD four-fold criteria!

Available Resources

[Guidance on the Scientific and Technical Working Group's Working Note on OECMs for the Convention and use of wetlands, 2023](#)

[Guidance on the Scientific and Technical Working Group's Working Note on OECMs for the Convention and use of wetlands, 2023](#)

[Medium-term plan for the implementation of OECMs in marine and coastal areas, 2022](#)

[FAO handbook for identifying marine and coastal OECMs in marine biotopes, 2022](#)

3.2. ADVANCING COOPERATION THROUGH ACB

Claudia Binondo, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity

The presentation underscored how the adoption of the KMGBF has been reflected in the development of the ASEAN Biodiversity Plan, prepared by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB). This plan provides a concrete framework that synergizes the biodiversity management approaches of ASEAN Member States, ensuring alignment with global targets while addressing regional priorities. Additionally, ASEAN Community Vision 2045 towards a “Resilient, Innovative, Dynamic, and People-Centered ASEAN” was introduced as the long-term vision, charting the way forward for biodiversity conservation in the region.

The effective management of ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) was also highlighted as ACB’s flagship platform for achieving KMGBF Target 3. By prioritizing AHPs, ACB seeks to strengthen on-the-ground conservation practices, enhance ecological connectivity, and improve governance of critical biodiversity sites. This focus provides a practical entry point for ASEAN countries to contribute collectively to global biodiversity goals.

Another key point emphasized was the role of partnerships at both global and regional levels in advancing biodiversity objectives. The ASEAN Biodiversity Plan integrates collaboration with partners to expand resources, knowledge exchange, and technical support for implementation. These partnerships also help ASEAN align its regional conservation initiatives with broader global frameworks.

These partnerships also help ASEAN align its regional conservation initiatives with broader global frameworks.



Ms. Claudia Binondo, Project Development Division Director of ACB, presenting at OECM workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).



Finally, the presentation highlighted the importance of implementing the AHP Regional Action Plan and expanding protection through complementary governance mechanisms. These include biodiversity corridors, OECMs, the ASEAN Urban Wildlife Network (AUWNet), and the ASEAN Flyway Network (AFN) sites. Together, these mechanisms reinforce ASEAN’s collective approach to safeguarding biodiversity, ensuring that protection extends beyond traditional protected areas.

OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION V

The open forum discussions highlighted several important considerations for strengthening OECM work in the region. Participants emphasized the value of conducting stakeholder analysis that goes beyond simply identifying actors, by also understanding their motivations and incentives. It was suggested that incentive mechanisms, such as reduced fees, recognition systems, or lessons drawn from other countries' practices, could help encourage greater engagement from both government and private sector stakeholders.

Collaboration and knowledge-sharing were also raised as key needs. A proposal was made to develop a directory or "yellow pages" of contacts, including participants, experts, and institutions, to make regional cooperation easier. Questions remain on whether such a resource should be part of the official guidance document or exist as a separate, dynamic platform. Related to this, participants raised the issue of placement within CBD frameworks and regional working groups, noting that overlapping meetings often burden focal points and hinder implementation. Streamlining processes under existing groups, such as those on nature conservation or marine ecosystems, was seen as necessary to ensure effectiveness.



Practical tools and approaches were also discussed. Participants recommended referencing existing tools for stakeholder mapping and OECM identification, while adding visual aids and sample graphics to improve clarity. Questions around recognition of OECMs were raised, particularly in the Philippines, where municipal waters managed under ordinances may not automatically qualify, highlighting the need for careful site-level screening.

3.3. OECMS IN THE COASTAL AND MARINE AREAS: A SPOTLIGHT ON FISHERIES

Dr. Regina Therese Bacalso, MERF



Dr. Regina T. Bacalso presenting at OECM workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).

The presentation introduced Fisheries OECMs as spatially defined areas that go beyond enforcement of protection measures to deliver both in situ biodiversity conservation and fisheries outcomes. The framework for assessing these areas is based on the *FAO Handbook on OECMs in Marine Fisheries**, which outlines key criteria for identifying and managing Fisheries OECMs. These criteria emphasize the unique role of fisheries-related measures in complementing existing protected areas and ensuring the long-term sustainability of marine resources.

Criterion A specifies that Fisheries OECMs must be distinct from recognized protected areas, though they may overlap in some instances. Criterion B underscores the importance of spatially delineated governance, requiring reconciliation of overlapping management systems and actual water uses. Criterion C highlights the need for sustained management, recommending proxy biodiversity indicators related to fisheries such as species composition, predator presence, or size structures, supported by modelling and simulation tools to assess ecological outcomes

**FAO. 2022. A handbook for identifying, evaluating and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures in marine fisheries. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3307en>*

Finally, Criterion D broadens the scope by including ecosystem functions and services, cultural and spiritual values, and socio-economic objectives, consistent with the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM).

The diversity of potential Fisheries OECMs was noted as both an opportunity and a challenge, as it calls for consensus on indicators to ensure robust screening and monitoring. The presentation emphasized that clear criteria and practical indicators will be crucial in advancing Fisheries OECMs as part of broader conservation strategies.

Other recommendations for fisheries OECMs are the use of traditional knowledge and its further integration into management frameworks and plans. Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge can be taken into account throughout the process of screening, assessing, and monitoring fisheries OECMs. For long-term implementation and effective monitoring, fisheries OECMs can be further integrated into existing management frameworks and plans.

Generalizations & recommendations

- **Fisheries OECMs are diverse** owing to such factors as the nature of the fisheries, approach and scale of management, capacities of local managers (e.g., technical), data availability
- The diversity of fisheries OECMs poses **both challenges and opportunities** in identifying, assessing, evaluating, and long-term monitoring.
- **Apply a flexible approach** in the selection of biodiversity indicators or proxy indicators. Ensure **participation by local managers and experts** to agree on which indicators are relevant and can be sustainably monitored in a timely manner given the local technical and financial resources available.

Generalizations & recommendations

- **Apply available tools** to project the potential fisheries and biodiversity conservation outcomes of management.
- Recognize and incorporate into the initial screening, assessment, and system of monitoring the **traditional knowledge of indigenous communities** and their worldview of changes and observed trends using indicators outside conventional science.
- Where applicable, support the **integration of fisheries OECMs to existing management frameworks and plans** to better access support mechanisms for long-term implementation and monitoring of effectiveness.





Fishing Village, Puntalinao, Davao
the Philippines (raksybH/Getty Images)



Various contemporary evaluation tools were discussed, with particular attention to the Site-level Assessment for Governance and Equity (SAGE) tool, which explicitly recognizes the use of performance measurements and progress evaluation approaches to account for dimensions of governance and equity. Its process includes preparations such as securing Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), reviewing site profiles, and conducting courtesy visits; assessment through actor group analysis and site-level assessments; and taking action in planning and communicating results.

While SAGE was noted for being participatory, adaptable, and relatively straightforward to use through Excel-based analysis, its application may require significant time.

While SAGE was noted for being participatory, adaptable, and relatively straightforward to use through Excel-based analysis, its application may require significant time. Beyond specific tools, the presentation stressed that a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system should consider transdisciplinarity, account for social-ecological dynamics, be adaptable and practical, and operate under enabling conditions with a shared “currency” of outcomes to ensure comparability and relevance across contexts.

Contemporary Evaluation Tools					
	METT, RAPPAM, IMET	MEAT/NEAT	SEAT	The MPA Guide	SAGE
M&E Approach	Management Asmt. Needs Evaluation	Performance Meas. Progress Evaluation	Performance Meas. Progress Evaluation	Impact Evaluation	Performance Meas. Progress Evaluation
What is measured? Indicators	Iterative management cycle Intervention inputs (e.g., funding, personnel), activities, and outputs	Management Focus/Programs: (e.g., enforcement, implementation, and maintenance)	Socio-Economic benefits from MPAs Human, Financial and Social Capital	Link between governance (stage or level), enabling conditions, and outcomes	Dimensions of Equity Quality of Governance Governance Type
Who uses this tool?	NGAs, Project management units Donors	NGAs, LGUs Community-based organizations NGOs, Academe	MPA managers and organizations with direct influence on MPAs	Academe National government NGOs	Rightsholders All relevant actors
How is the tool used or applied?	Self-administered Expert judgement	Participatory, FGD Management body Consensus	Participatory, FGD management body Consensus	Self-administered Expert judgement	Participatory, FGD actor groups, rights holders

OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION VI

In the open forum, participants raised clarifications on biodiversity criteria for fisheries-related OECMs, noting that municipal waters already regulate fishing, conserve shark populations, and protect reefs, which should count toward biodiversity protection. Respondents emphasized that the guidance is not prescriptive and that biodiversity indicators can vary by context. Local experts and communities are best placed to identify which indicators matter most, with flexibility to include both ecological outcomes and values important to communities and Indigenous Peoples.

The discussion also highlighted the strong linkages between fisheries management and biodiversity conservation, with examples such as refugia concepts and aquaculture practices. While aquaculture can support biodiversity in some cases, it may also negatively affect local communities, underscoring the importance of balanced evaluations. Measuring OECM effectiveness emerged as another challenge, with calls for monitoring frameworks that go beyond ecological outcomes to include social dimensions such as community participation and gender inclusivity. Participants cited collaborative experiences, such as those between Thailand and Vietnam, that have already tested combined ecological and social monitoring approaches.

On monitoring tools, participants acknowledged a gap in integrating ecological, governance, and social dimensions, as these are often evaluated separately. Available tools range from biodiversity monitoring indices to governance assessments like METT, social tools such as gender analysis, and citizen science initiatives that build community capacity. The need for integrated approaches that reflect ecological, social, and economic interactions was strongly emphasized. Finally, discussions reaffirmed that the CBD's guidance is not about inventing new tools but about providing a menu of options adaptable to local contexts. Flexibility, inclusivity, and recognition of community perspectives were highlighted as critical principles for applying the guidance moving forward. (See **Annex 4** for current tools and indicators monitored by the countries)



3.5. BRAINSTORMING AND LISTING/MAPPING OF POTENTIAL OECMS

Across Asia-Pacific countries, potential OECM sites are diverse, from seagrass and mangroves to fisheries zones and marine parks to waters outside oil and gas platforms. Building on their early country presentations and using a simplified worksheet, participants examined potential OECMs in their country against the four-fold CBD criteria, starting with the Criterion A that the site is not a protected area.

FOUR-FOLD CRITERIA IN IDENTIFYING OECM (CBD, 2018)

CRITERION A	<i>Area is not currently recognized as a protected area</i>
CRITERION B	<i>Area is governed and managed:</i> • <i>A geographically defined space</i> • <i>Legitimate governance authorities</i> • <i>Managed</i>
CRITERION C	<i>Achieve sustained and effective contribution in situ conservation of biodiversity</i> • <i>Effective</i> • <i>Sustained over the long term</i> • <i>in situ conservation of biological diversity</i> • <i>information and monitoring</i>
CRITERION D	<i>Associated ecosystem functions and services, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values</i>

Under Criterion B, they identified sites in terms of the type of OECM, for example, seascape, mangrove areas, seagrass areas, coral reefs, wetlands, marine or fish refugia or fisheries OECM, critical habitats, sacred sites, military sites, areas beyond national jurisdiction, or other specific type. They looked into the governance type, whether the site is managed by national government, sub-national government, local community, NGO/people's organizations/cooperative, indigenous peoples, private sector, or under a shared governance. They also indicated the size and area of the location, including coordinates, if known.

Participants then considered the potential site under Criterion C, in terms of in situ biodiversity conservation, management & governance, information & monitoring results. In this segment, participants answered the following set of questions for in situ biodiversity consideration, (1) What species or ecosystems or important species aggregations are being conserved on site? Does the area provide critical ecosystem functions and services or are these areas of ecological connectivity? (2) What threats are being addressed by management?; for management and governance, (1) When was the site established? (2) Has management been continuous? Or has there been temporal gaps in managing the site? (3) Is in-situ conservation being sustained over time? (4) Are stakeholders enjoying equitable benefits? And finally for information and monitoring, (1) Are biodiversity attributes documented? (2) Is the site being monitored yearly, biennially? (3) What tools have been used (METT, MEAT, SEAT, SAGE, etc)? (4) What are the outcomes and results from the monitoring and evaluation for the past 5 years, if known?

Finally, under Criterion D, participants considered the associated values of these potential sites. Inquiry was made on the ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values the site provides, whether these are upheld by governance and management measures, and whether management leads to net positive long-term biodiversity outcomes.

The session enabled participants to dive deep and become more familiar with defining criteria for OECMs and its key elements and how they can be operationalized on the ground. More importantly, the desktop exercise demonstrated how criteria help clarify eligibility, but challenges remain: data gaps on biodiversity values, need for varied sources of data and information, management concerns, stakeholder acceptance, community conflicts and government support. Roadmapping by countries will focus on governance, financing, and long-term monitoring to strengthen recognition and management of OECMs.



3.6. ADVANCING NATIONAL ACTIONS ON OECMS



During this plenary discussions preceded by country reflections, participants identified (a) ways to further national actions on OECMs, (b) how to harness the other sectors to work with conservation agencies, (c) experiences in working across agencies, subnational governments, indigenous peoples and local communities; and (d) the insights and lessons learned from these experiences, thus far. **(Annex 5)**

A. To achieve the collective 30x30 goal, participants recommended several actions to facilitate the national implementation of OECMs at the national level.

Policy and Governance

- Harmonize existing laws or create new ones specifically for OECMs.
- Adapt international OECM criteria and definitions to local contexts.
- Establish national working groups or task forces dedicated to OECMs.
- Integrate OECMs into national biodiversity strategic plans.

Public Engagement and Capacity Building

- Promote public awareness about OECMs, emphasizing their importance.
- Engage with governments and various stakeholders to mainstream OECMs.
- Build the capacity of all individuals involved in OECM-related efforts.

B. Countries explored ways on how to involved the other sectors (private/business, academe/research, military, IPLCs) on conservation efforts, enumerating some examples below:

- Private security organizations could pilot OECMs.
- Academics and citizen scientists could provide scientific data for screening OECMs.
- Multi-sectoral groups could be involved in joint monitoring of OECMs.
- Participation of other sectors, especially communities along mangroves and seagrass meadows, may also be incentivized through carbon credits in the future.
- Partnerships could be formalized through Memorandums of Agreement or Understanding.

Participants also emphasized the importance of stronger coordination and collaboration among various sectors. They suggested that an integrated coastal zone management approach, coupled with political support, could effectively mainstream conservation across all relevant projects.

C. Countries also shared their experience in working across agencies and scales from community to the regional level. Several reiterated the challenge they face with the low level of understanding and acceptance of the concept and framework of OECMs while many highlighted the importance of coordination.

Understanding and Acceptance

Many agencies and stakeholders have a limited or sceptical view of OECMs. Explaining the concept to subnational communities was particularly difficult, though it's clear that their feedback and consensus are essential. Local communities can also offer valuable insights, such as lessons from their mangrove conservation efforts.

Coordination

Coordination among different groups was another challenge. South Korea's experience highlights the importance of a clear management plan to guide the work of various agencies. Effective coordination is needed at all levels:

- National: Agencies can work together to develop assessment criteria and policy frameworks.
- Subnational: Efforts can focus on aligning national and provincial spatial plans.
- Community: Local communities should be a primary source of feedback and input, including the free and prior informed consent especially of indigenous peoples.





Fishing Village, Mindanao
the Philippines (Alexpunker/Getty Images)

D. Participants identified several learnings and insights towards the smooth and successful implementation of OECMs, based on their experience working with national agencies, subnational governments, and local communities.

Governance and Collaboration

OECM implementation requires flexibility and often involves multiple governance models. To advance this work, countries may consider establishing a national OECM consortium that brings together government, NGOs, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

Co-Creation and Trust

OECMs thrive when conservation is not imposed but co-created, transforming diverse stakeholders into co-managers and potential co-owners of coastal and marine areas. Because building cross-sectoral trust takes time, a focused communication plan is essential for raising awareness, especially given the many users of coastal and marine resources.

Stewardship and Knowledge

For many participants, community stewardship is the fundamental basis for OECM success. Integrating local wisdom with scientific knowledge is also crucial for enhancing resilience in these areas.

SESSION 4

ROADMAPPING AND CLOSING

Twin Lagoons, Coron, Palawan, the Philippines (lemaret pierricks/Canva)





4.1. ROADMAPPING BY COUNTRY

Participants proceeded to do an internal roadmapping exercise to accelerate their actions on marine and coastal OECMs in their countries. They identified key actions, whether political, financial, institutional/staffing, policy/legal, etc, and potential focal agencies/persons and timeline for these actions.

These identified actions were enumerated considering the important elements of their OECM work. These are with respect to understanding and accepting the framework and the processes for identifying, assessing and recognizing OECMs; governance mechanisms including institutional arrangements and policy frameworks and supporting and strengthening OECMs; reporting OECMs that entails data collection, analysis and management, vetting and reporting to the global database and finally in terms of monitoring and evaluation, as follows:

OECM in general

1. Understanding and accepting the definition and framework
2. Identifying OECM: initial screening, securing consent and full assessment
3. Recognizing OECMs in the marine and coastal area

Governance mechanism

1. Institutional and policy arrangements
2. Supporting/prioritising support including incentives, financial support, strengthening OECMs

Reporting

1. Collection, compiling, and management of information, reporting to Protected Planet/WD-OECM
2. Vetting/verifying information

M&E

1. Conducting M&E, using the right tools with right people
2. Ensuring positive biodiversity outcomes and equity

The session highlighted the critical role that national government agencies play in moving forward the work on OECMs, including coordinating and collaborating with partners, right-holders, and stakeholders.



Dr. Cesar Villanoy, UP Marine Science Institute, presenting at the OECM workshop (Iloilo, 15/08/2025).

The presentation on reef connectivity highlighted the use of modeling tools to estimate larval dispersal and connectivity pathways. Coral reef locations were identified using the Allen Coral Atlas, while surface current data were sourced from Copernicus. For areas near pilot sites, higher-resolution models were applied to improve accuracy.

Indonesian LMEs were noted as having significant representation of coral reefs, which were further categorized for analysis. Mapping efforts allowed the identification of potential sources and sinks of larval dispersal, with Palawan, northern Borneo, and the Sulu-Celebes Sea highlighted as key potential source areas.

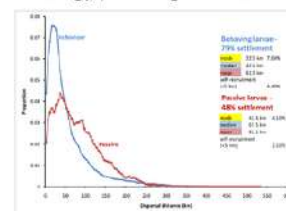
Larval output was scaled based on habitat quality, serving as a determinant for connectivity pathways. This approach provides valuable insights for prioritizing areas in reef conservation and management, ensuring that connectivity and ecosystem functions are maintained.

4.2. MARINE CONNECTIVITY IN THE REGION

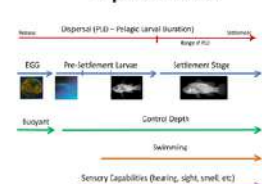
Dr. Cesar Villanoy, UP Marine Science Institute

Reef Connectivity

- Connection between populations through the exchange of eggs, larvae or other propagules (larval dispersal)
- Larval dispersal can occur in a variety of length scales depending on biology, prevailing currents and extent of favourable habitats



Dispersal Period



Summary

- Multiple resolution models provide insights of connectivities in areas with complicated coastline such as in the Southeast Asian Region
- Reef configurations can be adjusted (area and location) and the larval output scaled to habitat quality to determine major pathways of dispersal
- Multiple runs in time can help address uncertainties in connectivity matrices

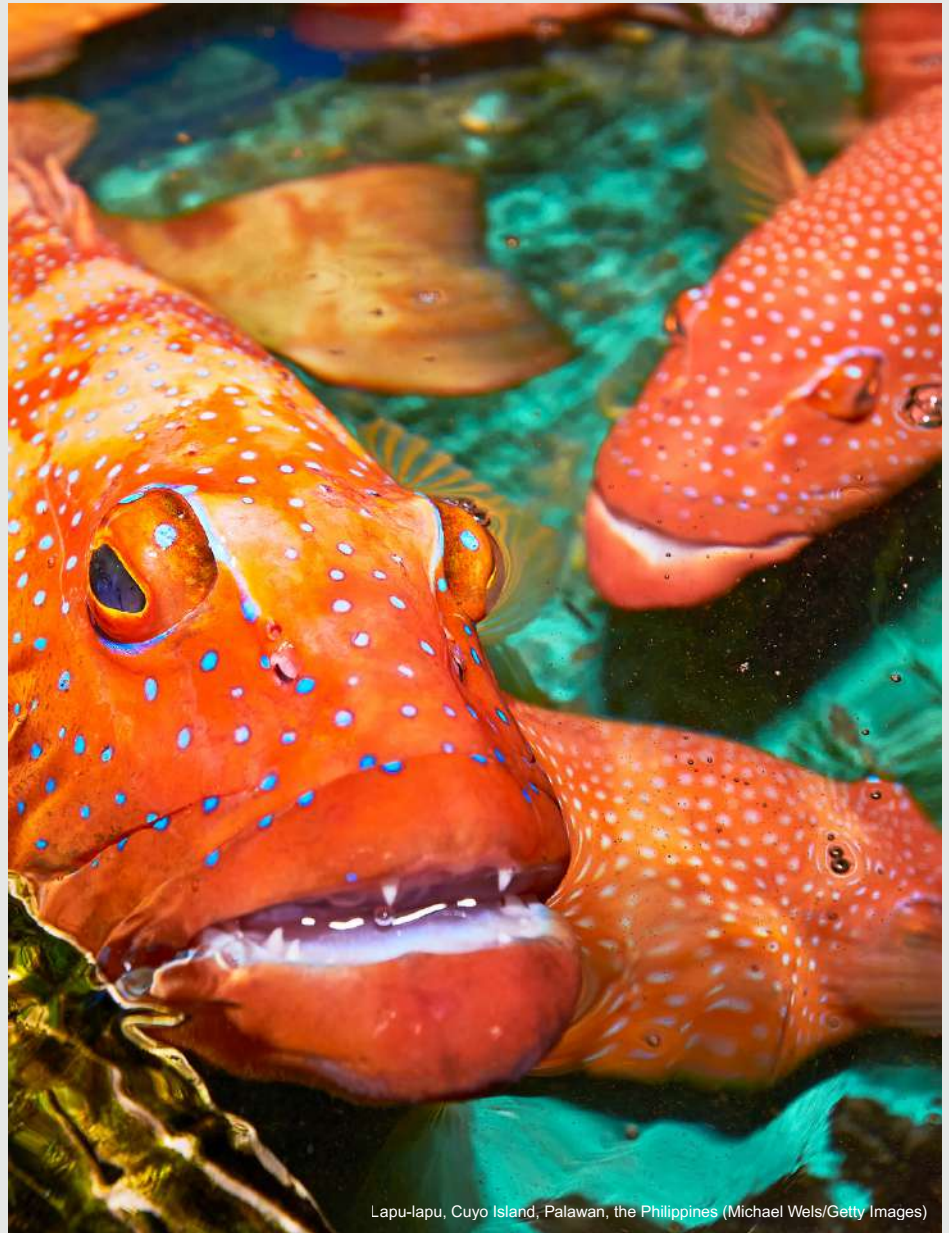
OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION

During the open forum, a participant inquired whether the study had identified specific species of larvae and their connectivity. In response, it was clarified that the current study focused on restoration using general parameters, such as a five-day competency period, rather than species-specific behavior. It was noted that the approach could be refined in the future if species-level data becomes available. The discussion emphasized the importance of understanding larval dispersal, as this knowledge is crucial in identifying source areas and mapping connectivity between ecosystems to better inform restoration and conservation efforts.

4.3. DISCUSSION: POTENTIAL TRANSBOUNDARY OECMS FOR BIODIVERSITY OR FISHERIES, AND ADVANCING REGIONAL COOPERATION

The discussion focused on the potential of developing transboundary OECMs to strengthen marine biodiversity protection, particularly for migratory species such as turtles, sharks, and key fisheries. Participants highlighted the importance of moving beyond single-site protection, such as nesting areas, toward safeguarding broader habitats, life stages, and movement corridors that cross national boundaries.

Examples of ongoing and potential initiatives were presented, including the Philippines–Malaysia agreement, which could be expanded beyond islands and marine parks to address migratory species, and Vietnam–Cambodia efforts where seagrass habitats and nurseries are already partially conserved, with a proposal for a joint transboundary OECM between provinces. Lessons were also drawn from the Eastern Tropical Pacific, where regional collaboration among Panama, Ecuador, Colombia, and Costa Rica established migratory swimways, supported by the Coast Guard. While challenging to establish, such initiatives were noted to deliver high conservation benefits.



The discussion emphasized that MPAs should remain the first line of protection, with OECMs complementing them by serving as buffer zones, fishing closures, or conservation-supportive areas outside protected zones. A combined approach was seen as more effective in achieving long-term biodiversity outcomes. Regional and global platforms such as the Coral Triangle Initiative, IUCN, ACB, and COBSEA were recognized as important in providing technical support, funding, and opportunities for wider cooperation, including possible models from other regions such as the Yellow Sea collaboration among China, Korea, and Japan.

4.4. WAYS FORWARD



Sardine Run, Moalboal, Cebu, the Philippines (AndamanSE/Getty Images)

The workshop concluded with strong reflections on the value of regional knowledge sharing, as countries gained new insights into definitions, criteria, and strategies for OECMs. Participants emphasized the importance of localizing approaches by involving communities, adapting conservation tools to national contexts, and recognizing the role of Indigenous and local knowledge. Capacity building and collaboration were highlighted as critical, with many countries expressing intentions to apply shared strategies within their own contexts.

Looking ahead, participants identified several concrete next steps. These include further exploring the potential of transboundary OECMs, continuing regional dialogues, and submitting country surveys by the agreed deadline. Upcoming engagements such as workshops in Bali and Bangkok, alongside online knowledge exchanges, will provide further opportunities for technical discussions and collaboration.

There was broad agreement on the importance of joint efforts for conserving transboundary and migratory species, with strong interest expressed in pursuing future projects, joint monitoring initiatives, and capacity-building activities. Participants committed to reconvening in about two years to review progress. The outputs of the workshop will also directly contribute to shaping a regional program designed to support countries in achieving the 30x30 biodiversity conservation targets.



Marine and Coastal Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECM)
Knowledge Sharing and Exchange Workshop
2025



EVENT REPORT



La Muy Leal y Noble Ciudad de Iloilo

ILOILO, THE PHILIPPINES

14 -16 AUGUST, 2025

MARINE AND COASTAL OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECM)

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING EXCHANGE WORKSHOP

ANNEXES



ANNEX 1

Agenda with links to presentation

ANNEX 2

List of participants

ANNEX 3

Collated raw results of sharing on OECM Experiences Across Countries (World Cafe)

ANNEX 4

Collated raw results of current M&E Tools and Indicators Used by EAS Country

ANNEX 5

Raw results on discussion on Advancing National Actions

ANNEX 6

Other resources

ANNEX 1

AGENDA WITH LINKS TO PRESENTATION

Day 1	Activity
Aug 14	Field trip to two community-managed mangrove eco-parks in Ajuy and Leganes
18:30	Reception dinner
Aug 15	Day 1 of Knowledge and Learning Exchange
07:45	Registration/socialization
08:00	Opening and rational message
08:05	Mr. Mahesh Pradhan, Coordinator, UNEP-COBSEA
08:10	Dr. Jerome Montemayor, Executive Director, ACB
08:15	Objective, schedule, and ground rules
08:20	Acknowledgement of participants and creative introduction/icebreaking
SESSION 1: OECMs IN MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS, STATE OF AFFAIRS	
08:30	1.1 Setting the Stage: The What and Why of OECMs in Marine & Coastal Areas, As Compared with & Distinguished from MPAs Broadening our Approach to Area-Based Conservation Joe Appiott, Secretariat, Convention on Biological Diversity Communities, OECMs and Biodiversity Olivier Chassot, IUCN-Asia Pacific Objective: To level off on understanding of the concepts and principles behind OECMs in marine and coastal areas and to set the stage for the 2-day workshop to present/review OECMs in Marine and Coastal Areas in general so everyone in the room is on the same page and can effectively participate.
	1.2 10-Minute Country Sharing on OECMs in their Marine & Coastal Areas Objective: To enable participants to learn from their peers from other countries and exchange ideas as well as to find out where participating members are at in terms of contributing to the 30x30 goal through their OECMs in marine and coastal areas.

08:50	Cambodia , China , and Indonesia
09:20	Open forum and Q&A session
09:35	Republic of Korea , Malaysia , and the Philippines
10:05	Open forum and Q&A session
10:20	Health break
10:30	Thailand , Singapore , and Viet Nam
11:00	Open forum and Q&A session
08:15	Objective, schedule, and ground rules
08:20	Acknowledgement of participants and creative introduction/icebreaking
	1.3 Sharing from Partners and Other Stakeholders Objective: To provide benchmarks and/or comparative experience and lessons on how specific select sites, countries and regional sea understand and work with OECMs in marine and coastal areas.
11:15	OECMs in Sweden and the Baltic Sea <i>Jenny Hertzman</i> , Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
11:25	Recognizing Locally Managed MPAs in the Philippines as Protected Areas <i>Dr. Hazel Arceo</i> , MPA Support Network
11:35	Capturing the 30x30 Targets: Recognizing Existing Systems and Reporting OECMs <i>Jack Sutton</i> , UNEP WCMC
11:45	Open forum
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Energizer & instructions for afternoon session
SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING OUR ACTIONS FOR OECMs	
13:15	2. Workshop on Identifying Facilitating & Hindering Factors and Optimizing Opportunities and Overcoming Barriers 2.1 Individual Country OECM Assessment Objective: To enable each country representative to work on their own to identify and list: 1. OECMs in the respective country 2. Key elements of these OECMs 3. Main processes involved in implementing your country's OECM commitments 4. Factors that support or hinder OECM work in your marine and coastal areas 5. Opportunities and barriers to achieving the 30x30 target through OECMs, both within your country and in the East Asian Seas region

13:45	2.2 World Cafe: Sharing OECM Experiences Across Countries <i>Objective: To solicit ideas and insights on what can accelerate or currently or prospectively delay the work of participating countries on OECMs in the marine and coastal areas</i> Table 1 – National Experience Sharing A (15 mins) Guide Question: What facilitates our work on OECMs in marine and coastal areas in your country and the East Asian Seas, apart from financial and human resource issues? Table 2 – National Experience Sharing B (15 mins) Guide Question: What hinders our work on OECMs in marine and coastal areas in your country and the East Asian Seas, apart from financial and human resource issues? Table 3 – Regional Connections & Common Barriers (10 mins) Guide Question: What are the shared opportunities and common barriers we face in achieving 30x30 through OECMs across the East Asian Seas? Table 4 – Learning & Collaboration (10 mins) Guide Question: How can we learn from the experiences of other countries, and how can our own experiences contribute to regional learning and collaboration?
14:45	Health break
15:00	2.3 Plenary/reporting by participants (45 minutes)
15:45	Wrap up and announcements (5 minutes)
Pre/Post-dinner	Coffee Chat with Partners: One-to-One Informal Conversations/Consultations 1. CTI-CFF on monitoring criteria 2. IUCN Asia Pacific on definitions, site assessments, Green List 3. SWAM on national processes, positive biodiversity outcomes 4. UNEP WCMC on reporting OECMs 5. University of Brock on assessing for Equity, Sage 6. MERF on Fisheries OECM <i>Objective: To enable participants to ask specific questions particular to their own country concerns and enable partners to thoroughly share more ideas</i>
Aug 16	Day 2 Knowledge and Learning Exchange
07:45	Registration for Day 2
08:00	Recap of Day 1
SESSION 3: ACCELERATING ACTIONS FOR OECM IN THE MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS	
08:15	<u>3.1 Presentation of Structure and Highlights of COBSEA OECM Guidance Document & Open Forum</u> Margarita Victoria Caballa and Aleth Nuñez, COBSEA

08:45	<u>3.2 Advancing Cooperation through ACB</u> <u>Claudia Binondo, ACB</u>		
09:00	3.3 Fisheries OECMs and Effective and Equitable Management		
09:00	Pre-presentation Exercise on Tracking Progress What are the existing tools (METT, etc), methods (bio-physical monitoring, socio-economic monitoring, etc) and the corresponding indicators that are used for protected and conserved areas in your countries?		
	Dimensions of management and governance	Tools and methods	Indicators monitored and evaluated
	Political/governance (ex. decision-making processes, participation, etc.)		
	Social (human rights, well-being, etc.)		
	Economic (e.g income, livelihood)		
09:20	<u>OECM in Coastal and Marine Areas: A Spotlight on Fisheries</u> <i>Dr. Regina Bacalso, MERF, with insight from Ms. Rattana Tiaye, SEAFDEC</i>		
09:30	<u>How Do We Track Progress in the Pursuit of Effectively Managed and Equitable Governed Marine and Coastal Areas</u> <i>Norielyn España, University of Brock</i>		
09:40	Synthesis of exercise and discussion/open forum		
10:15	Health break		
10:30	3.4 Plenary Discussion: Advancing our National Actions How can we further our national actions on OECMs to advance our collective goal of 30x30? How can we harness the other sectors to work with us - private/business, academe/research, military, IPs/ICCs, etc? What are your experiences in working on OECMs across agencies? Across different scales (community, subnational, national, etc)? What lessons or insights have you learned from them?		
10:45	3.5 Brainstorming and Listing/Mapping of Potential OECMs Kick Off Remarks by Olivier Chassot, IUCN-Asia Pacific Break-Out Groups by Country with Other Stakeholders & Partners		
12:00	Lunch		
13:15	Plenary reporting and discussion (continued).		

SESSION 4: ROADMAPPING AND CLOSING

14:00	4.1 Roadmapping by Country Breakout groups by country with other stakeholders
14:30	4.2 Working across the region • Presentation: Marine Connectivity in the Region by Dr. Caesar Villanoy, UP Marine Science Institute • Discussion: Potential Transboundary OECMs for Biodiversity, or Fisheries, if any • What is the potential for a transboundary OECMs for biodiversity, or fisheries, if any, in the East Asian Seas? How do we make that happen? • How can we work better across the region in general? In specific areas? • Advancing Cooperation through COBSEA (on Regional Collaborative MPA) by <i>Margarita Victoria Caballa</i> 4.3 Way forward and next steps
15:30	Closing ceremony: Insights and Messages

ANNEX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CAMBODIA

Mr. Meas Rithy

Deputy Director
Department of Coastal Zone and
Marine Conservation
Ministry of Environment (MOE)
Cambodia

Mr. Eng Polo

Director
Kampot Provincial Department of Environment
Ministry of Environment
Cambodia

Mr. Porchhay Taing

Deputy Chief Office
Ministry of Environment (MOE)
Cambodia

Mr. Meng Sokmean

Officer
Ministry of Environment (MOE)
Cambodia

CHINA

Professor LIAO Guoxiang

National Marine Environmental
Monitoring Center
Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE)
Dalian, The People's Republic of China

Ms. ZHU Xiaotong

Engineer
First Institute of Oceanography
Ministry of Natural Resources
Qingdao, The People's Republic of China

Professor ZHANG Zhiwei

First Institute of Oceanography
Ministry of Natural Resources
Qingdao, The People's Republic of China

INDONESIA

Ms. Linda Krisnawati

Associate Environmental Facilitator
Coastal and Marine Pollution and
Degradation Control
Ministry of Environment
Jakarta, Indonesia

Ms. Niken Wuri Handayani

Senior Ecosystem Officer
Biodiversity Conservation
Ministry of Environment
Jakarta, Indonesia

Mr. Yousef Rio Gunawan Simanjuntak

Junior Environmental Impact Assessor
Ministry of Environment (MOE)
Jakarta, Indonesia

Ms. Vidlie Putri Rosady

Junior Marine Ecosystem Specialist
Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries
Jakarta, Indonesia

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Ms. So Hyun Park

Assistant Director
Marine Protected Area Management Team
Korea Marine Environment Management
Corporation (KOEM)
Email: gusdl@koem.or.kr

MALAYSIA

Ms. Yannie Anak Benson

Research Officer Q 12
Coastal and Oceanography
Research Center, National Water Research
Institute of Malaysia (NAHRIM)
Ministry of Energy Transition and Water
Selangor, Malaysia

Ms. Izarenah Md Repin

Fishery Officer
Fisheries Conservation & Protection Division
Department of Fishery
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

Dr. Muhammad Nur Arif bin Othman

Senior Researcher
Coastal and Marine Environment
Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA)
arif@mima.gov.my

THE PHILIPPINES

Ms. Rosalyn Molinyawe

Ecosystems Management Specialist II
DENR-Environmental Management Bureau
Cave, Wetlands, and
Other Ecosystem Division
Quezon City, the Philippines

Ms. Grick Cordero

Ecosystems Management Specialist II
DENR-Environmental Management Bureau
Coastal and Marine Division
Quezon City, the Philippines
grick.cordero@bmb.gov.ph

SINGAPORE

Dr. Samantha Lai

Deputy Director
Biodiversity (Coastal & Marine)
National Biodiversity Centre
National Parks Board
Singapore
nparks_ibc@nparks.gov.sg

Dr. Jeremy Woon

Deputy Director
International Biodiversity Conservation
National Biodiversity Centre
National Parks Board
Singapore
nparks_ibc@nparks.gov.sg

THAILAND

Mr. Sakanan Plathong

Lecturer
Dept. of Biological Sciences
Faculty of Science
Prince of Songkla University
Hat Yai, Songkla

Ms. Rossanan Aiyala

Fishery Biologist (Practitioner Level)
Marine Protected Areas Management Subdivision
Dept. of Marine and Coastal Resources
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Supawadee Khunmuang

Fishery Biologist (Practitioner Level)
Marine Protected Areas Management Subdivision
Dept. of Marine and Coastal Resources
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
Bangkok, Thailand

VIET NAM

Mr. Tran Van Hung

Vietnam Agency of Seas and Islands
Division of Science, Technology, and
International Cooperation (DSTIC)
Ministry of Agriculture and Environment
Hanoi, Vietnam

Ms. Nguyen Thi Lan Huong

Administrative Office
Vietnam Agency of Seas and Islands
Ministry of Agriculture and Environment
Hanoi, Vietnam

Mr. Le Huu Tuan Anh

Master of Biology, Deputy Head
Division of Protection and Aquatic
Resources Development
Department of Fisheries and Surveillance
Ministry of Agriculture and Environment
Hanoi, Vietnam

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Mr. Mahesh Pradhan

Coordinator
Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on
The Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
UN Environment Programme
Bangkok, Thailand
Email: mahesh.pradhan@un.org

Ms. Margarita Victoria Caballa

Programme Lead on Marine and Coastal
Ecosystems
Marine Specialist, UNEP/GEF SCS-SAP
Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on
The Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
UN Environment Programme
Bangkok, Thailand
Email: margarita.caballa@un.org

Ms. Nonglak Kasemsanta

Administrative Assistant
Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on
The Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
UN Environment Programme
Bangkok, Thailand
Email: kasemsant@un.org

Ms. Jimin Hong

Programme Associate on Marine and
Coastal Ecosystem
Technical Associate, UNEP/GEF SCS-SAP
Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on
The Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
UN Environment Programme
Bangkok, Thailand
Email: jimin.hong@un.org

ASEAN CENTRE FOR BIODIVERSITY (ACB)

Ms. Claudia Binondo

Project Development Division Director
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
Laguna, the Philippines
Email: cbbinondo@aseanbiodiversity.org

Ms. Angelica de Castro

Programme Officer – Coastal and Marine
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
Laguna, the Philippines
Email: ardecastro@aseanbiodiversity.org

Mr. Allan Kristofer Pormento

Country Manager for the Philippines
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
Laguna, the Philippines
Email: aklpormento@aseanbiodiversity.org

Ms. Erica Villavelez

Science and Research Officer
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
Laguna, the Philippines
Email: etvillavelez@aseanbiodiversity.org

Ms. Grace Ann Malolos

Technical Associate – Programmes Dept.
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
Laguna, the Philippines
Email: gasmalolos@aseanbiodiversity.org

CONSULTANTS AND EXPERTS

Ms. Alett Nuñez

OECM Consultant for COBSEA

Email: ma.nunez@un.org

Norielyn España

PhD Candidate

on tracking progress and assessing equity
Brock University

Email: ne21vk@brocku.ca

Dr. Regina Bacalso

MERF, Spotlight on Fisheries OECM

Email: regina.bacalso@gmail.com

Dr. Cesar Villanoy

UP Marine Science Institute

Email: cesarv@msi.upd.edu.ph

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES GEF SOUTH CHINA SEAS STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME PROJECT (SCS-SAP)

Mr. Anders Faaborg Poulsen

Senior Project Manager

GEF SCS-SAP Project

UN Office for Project Services

Email: andersp@unops.org

Mr. Reynaldo Molina

Project Management Support Specialist

GEF SCS-SAP Project

UN Office for Project Services

Email: reynaldom@unops.org

Mr. Si Tuan Vo

Regional Science Coordinator

GEF SCS-SAP Project

UN Office for Project Services

Email: situanv@unops.org

Mr. Ob-Orm Uttasit

Project Management Support Senior Assistant

GEF SCS-SAP Project

UN Office for Project Services

Email: obormu@unops.org

Mr. Kampanat Khunwan

Project Management Support

Administrative Assistant

GEF SCS-SAP Project

UN Office for Project Services

Email:

Mr. Pei Xiangbin

National Coordinator for China

GEF SCS-SAP Project

UN Office for Project Services

Email: xiangbinp@unops.org

Mr. Yu Yunjun

Regional Working Group

Chair on Mangroves

GEF SCS-SAP Project

UN Office for Project Services

Email: yuyunjun@scies.org

Mr. Romeo Trono

National Coordinator for the Philippines

GEF SCS-SAP Project

UN Office for Project Services

Email: romeot@unops.org

CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE FOR CORAL REEFS, FISHERIES, AND FOOD SECURITY (CTI-CFF)

Mr. Christovel Rotinsulu

Deputy Executive Director of Program Services
CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat
Email: christovel.rotinsulu@cticff.org

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION (IUCN)

Dr. Olivier Chassot

Senior Programme Officer
Protected, Conserved and Heritage Areas,
IUCN-Asia Regional Office
Email: olivier.chassot@iucn.org

PARTNERSHIP IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA (PEMSEA)

Prof. Marie Frances Nievaes

Division of Biological Sciences
University of the Philippines (UP VISAYAS)
Miagao, Iloilo
Philippines
Email: mjnievaes1@up.edu.ph

THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SEAFDEC)

Ms. Rattana Tiaye

Fisheries Management Scientist
Training Department Southeast Asian Fisheries
Development Center
Email: rattana@seafdec.org

THE SWEDISH AGENCY FOR MARINE AND WATER MANAGEMENT (SwAM)

Ms. Jenny Hertzman

Senior Analyst
Swedish Agency for Marine and Water
Management (SwAM), Sweden
Email: jenny.hertzman@havochvatten.se

Mr. Wilhelm Gårdmark

Swedish Agency for Marine and Water
Management (SwAM), Sweden
Email: wilhelm.gardmark@havochvatten.se

UNEP WORLD CONSERVATION MONITORING CENTRE (WCMC)

Mr. Jack Sutton

Programme Officer
UNEP – WCMC
Cambridge, UK
Email: jack.sutton@unep-wcmc.org

ANNEX 3

COLLATED RAW RESULTS ON WORLD CAFE: FACILITATING AND HINDERING FACTORS, INSIGHTS, AND LEARNING

TABLE 1. What facilitates our work on OECMs in the marine and coastal areas in your country, in the East Asian Seas?

International Commitment spurring National Actions:

- SDG 14
- 30x30 Target
- CBD Contracting Party
- National obligation under the international framework/NPBD 2022-2030
- PBSAP 2024-2040
- IPBSAP, IBSAP target 3
- Protected planet database

Regional Cooperation and Partnerships:

- Regional Cooperation
- Establishment of Regional x National WGs on OECMs
- CBD->NBSAP Malaysia
- IUCN0->UN-SDG14
- FAO->CTI->COBSEA
- RPOA 2.0 CTI-CFF
- SEAFDEC: technical support, training and knowledge sharing
- COBSEA IGM Decision adopting strategic direction MCE Framework
- Strengthening PEMSEA work
- IOC WestPac

National Laws and Policies

- NCD 3.0 Adoption Measure expanding x enhancing MPA
- Policy guide lines (DAO)
- Republic Acts (ENPAS, GAA, etc)
- Legal framework for formal name under national law

Engagement and Support of/to Other Sectors

- MPA Support Network in the Philippines
- Well-established network of small-scale fishers in the Philippines
- National assistance consulting in Republic of Korea
- Engagement of private sector in establishing of OECMs in Vietnam

Institutional Arrangements and Processes

- NRES in Malaysia as a focal point for CBD
- 5 year cycle of Malaysia National Plan (RMK-13)
- OECM consortium for Indonesia established
- Encouraging that a reporting system is in place, clear coordinating mechanisms is in place
- Flat government structure - ease of communication within Singapore
- national policy for OECM

Incentives:

- Incorporating OECMs in Interior Government's Seal of Good Local Governance for continued local action

National Consensus:

- National Consensus in Republic of Korea

Size of OECM:

- Small size leads to better understanding of habitat/natural areas in Singapore

Initial Identification of OECMs

- Potential areas of OECM implementation have been identified in Vietnam



TABLE 2. What hinders our work on OECMs in the context of your country, in the East Asian Seas?

Low Level of Understanding and Acceptance of OECMs:

- Lack of awareness on OECMs among stakeholders
- lack of knowledge
- Awareness among stakeholders on OECM
- Misconceptions when there are too many eg. MPA, OECM, EBS
- Confusion caused by overlap or similarity with other PAs
- Culturally rejected or frustrated over protected areas initiatives, scepticism
- OECMs as a new concept
- OECM still in draft phase

Stakeholder Engagement/Buy-In:

- Lack of multi stakeholder engagement
- Lack of consensus from different stakeholders

Multiple Layers:

- Cross jurisdiction among sectors
- Overlapping mandates and turfing among government agencies
- Boundaries (Geographical, Administrative, sectoral)

Data/Information Needs:

- Lack of data and information
- Data collection, analysis and harmonisation
- difficulty in data sharing among stakeholders

Political Commitment:

- High level commitment
- Political priorities/ political stability

Policy Concerns on OECMs:

- Lack of regulations on OECMs in marine and coastal areas
- no harmonized standard, criteria

Resource Intensive:

- Resource + time to facilitate a thorough mapping exercise

Geo-Political Tensions:

- geopolitical tension for potential transboundary OECMs for sea

Development Pressures:

- Development pressure (cases where offshore wind farms overlap with OECM)
- Marine economic development

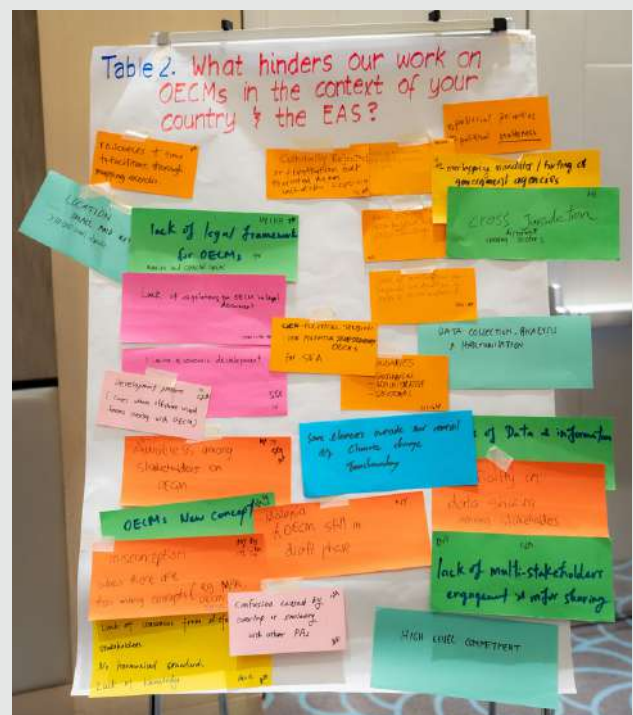


TABLE 3. Considering the specific processes in executing our commitment to achieve 30x30 targets throughout the marine and coastal areas, what are the opportunities and barriers within your country and the EAS ?

Opportunities:

Strategic Partnerships

- Involve the researcher institute and NGOs
- Strategic partnership with NGOs, Universities, private sector research institutes
- Roster of local experts

- Regional corporation
- Synergy through the regional network
- Foreign-assisted projects

Broader Areas for Conservation, Manageable Sizes

- ECRL Restoration in marine areas in China
- More protected marine areas
- More type of protection for conserved areas
- EEZ areas - focus on EEZ area because the ocean is too large
- More manageable small sized areas

Good Understanding on Biodiversity Areas

- Good understanding of biodiversity areas in Republic of Korea
- On going research and integration data
- Improving fishery management (connectivity, biodiversity, sustainable) in Thailand

Integration with NBSAPs and other national programs

- NBSAP (2023-2030), IBSA - Indonesia National Biodiversity Strategic Action plan, PBSAP 2024-2040 adopted
- MPA vision 30x30
- Ocean environment management

Growing National Interest on OECMs:

- Growing national interest and momentum for OECMs in Republic of Korea

Constraints:

Lack of Acceptance of OECM concept & Need for Awareness Raising

- Lack of acceptance of OECM concept
- Awareness raising capacity building education (CEPA)
- Public awareness to be mainstreamed

Inadequate Policies

- Lack of policy framework
- Lack of regulations on OECM in legal document
- Policy gap
- Existing policies closely related to OECM

Financial Constraints

- Financial gap
- Lack of budget for professional services to assess extensive areas

- Financial mechanism through ecological fiscal transfer by NGOs to the state

Data Needs to Recognize OECMs

- Data and Information, Data integration
- Recognizing OECM (30x30 target)

- Changing government political agenda/priorities
- Navigating through political landscapes

- Large coverage area (small island and remote coastal)

- Need for national-level work



TABLE 4. How can we learn from the experience of other countries and how might our country's experience contribute to shared learning and regional collaboration?

Bilateral or Regional Learning Exchange and Sharing of Best Practices:

- Best Practice sharing on OECMs through regional exchange
- Learning exchange and study tours/visits
- Regional exchange for knowledge sharing among countries
- Sharing of Experience on sustainable financing mechanism for OECMs (National -> Regional)
- Knowledge exchange
- Learning on effective initiation of OECM in ASEAN: Successful Models
- High level dialogue (among diverse case studies/ pilot project sharing platform)
- Dialogues with/through CTI-CFF, ASEAN, COBSEA
- Bilateral Dialogues and workshops
- Sharing experience with other countries including site visit
- We like to learn experience from CTI-CFF, on designing effective locally managed of marine areas
- establishment of regional WGs/ TF on OECMs to strengthen the knowledge and information exchange
- Multi-national workshop

Knowledge Management Platform for Data Sharing:

- OECM KM platform, inquire into a possible KM platform
- Regional/COBSEA knowledge management
- Sharing data implementation system and good practise
- Regional data base and harmonized
- Sharing data base
- Does a protected planet have a KM component/sub-site?

Regional or Global Clearing House Mechanisms for OECMs:

- Regional / global Clearing House Mechanism

Multilateral Cooperation, Capacity-Building/Technical Support

- SEAFDEC : contribute technical expertise & regional training programs to help countries build capacity in OECM
- Multilateral cooperation

Engagement/Integration with Other Sectors, including Community Involvement:

- Integration of OECM in other sector (eg port, cruise)
- Strengthening contact among stakeholders
- Public Private Partnership on OECMs
- Community involvement is important

National Strategy and Laws:

- Need for a national strategy to achieve the OECM goals
- Local & Regional customary law

Regional and National Reports on the Coasts and Biodiversity:

- PEMSEA- State of the coast
- CBD - National Report
- Country Report

Awareness Raising on OECMs

- Promote OECMs through CEPA



ANNEX 4

COLLATED RAW RESULTS ON EXISTING TOOLS AND INDICATORS USED FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROTECTED AREAS

Dimension of Management and Governance	Tools and Methods+ Indicators Monitored*			
Political/ Governance (ex.decision-making processes, participation, etc)	Cambodia • METT • R-METT - wetland • Management plan China • Hire local talks to join conservation or supervision activities	Indonesia • focus group discussion within stakeholder communities and private • proposed action plan • follow up partnership • corresponding indicator monitored Malaysia • Management effectiveness assessment tool (MEAT)	Philippines • METT/MEAT for political monitoring, governance, enforcement • Functionality of ENIPAS Protected Area Management Board (PAMB); PAMB Resolutions adopted	Republic of Korea • local management committee • frequency of the committee meetings • suitability of agenda Singapore • engagement • communities networks Thailand • METT • EAFM
Biodiversity /Ecological (ex. species richness, representativeness, habitats, interactions, connectivity)	Cambodia • Camera trap • Biodiversity • Remote sensing • Drone survey China • Monitoring/ Evaluation reporting including ecological indicators • Indicators species, habitats, water quality	Indonesia • biodiversity/ ecological/ tools and methods • corresponding biodiversity indicators - data for decision making and management plan • Ocean Accounts • Key Biodiversity Areas Malaysia • MMWQS (water quality) • Coastal Clean Index (CCI) • IUCN • MMWQI marine status quality • SLR Monitoring (Inundation Map) • Reef check for live coral	Philippines • BAMS/BMS, citizen science, PCBW, Alwan, Marine, PCRA, VA, carrying capacity studies • biodiversity • species diversity • abundance • species distribution • habitat condition Republic of Korea • marine ecosystem monitoring • number of marine protected species	Singapore • biodiversity surveys + habitats • habitats mapping (eg.remote sensing) • ecological profiling tool • Habitat quality, size • Species diversity richness • Change in Community Structure Thailand • catch monitoring & logbook • community based resources mapping

Social (human rights, well-being, etc)	China T&M : Survey (questionnaire) for local community according to needs	Indonesia - community right regarding the customary marine area - community empowerment Malaysia - Management effectiveness customer tool (MECAT)	Philippines - knowledge, attitude, perception surveys Singapore - park user survey - number of individual engaged - groups represented - number of engagement	Thailand - gender analysis - quality of life, gender participation
Economic (e.g. income, livelihood)	Cambodia - Socio-Economic China - Household income GDP of country, town	Indonesia - assistance for the improvement of small/ medium sized communities - access to funding	Philippines - SEAT, SEAMS/SRPAO, BDFE Tools, HGDG, KAP Surveys, - Sukat ng Kalikasan - socio-economic status - education	Thailand - household income - livelihood diversification - socio-economic monitoring - average household income, livelihoods

ANNEX 5

RAW RESULTS ON ADVANCING OUR NATIONAL ACTIONS

Question 1: How can we further our national actions on OECMs to advance our collective goal of 30x30?

Cambodia

- Legal and policy/ framework on OECMs
- Develop National WG/TF on OECMs
- Identify potential site/candidate for OECM
- Promote awareness on OECMs to public

Malaysia

- Road tour to every relevant stakeholders (explain, why we need, etc)

Indonesia

- Integrating OECM to global and National target of biodiversity
- Harmonizing policy and legal basis for OECM

Singapore

- Adapt CBD criteria or definitions for local circumstances
- Further engage w/government to mainstream OECMs

Republic of Korea

- Potential law and policy framework
- Internal condition within each country shall be imported
- Raise capacity and awareness

Philippines

- Capacity building & actions

Thailand

- Fisheries management areas
- LMMAs

Question 2: How can we harness the other sectors to work with us - private/business, academe/research, military, IPs/ICCs, etc?

Cambodia

- Pilot OECMs in Cambodia (lesson learned, experience)
- Integrate coastal zone management approach

Malaysia

- Political drive in mainstreaming conservation in other related project

Indonesia

- Compile other sector interest of OECM
- Recognized and empowered customary communing
- Strengthen coordination and corroboration to provide data for decision making
- Encourage joint monitoring on multi sectoral

Singapore

- Engage with academics + citizen scientists to provide scientific data for screening

Republic of Korea

- Piloting the assignment of OECM to private protection organization
- Clarify the interest of stakeholders

Philippines

- Harness other sectors through formalized agreement (MOUs, MOAs, etc)

Thailand

- Carbon credit with private sector for seagrass and mangroves

Question 3: What are your experiences in working on OECMs across agencies? Across different scales (community, subnational, national, etc)?

Cambodia

- Why OECMs ? what OECMs?

Malaysia

- Hardest to Explain OECM concept to subnational community

Indonesia

- Cross agency, cross level experience, scale and a system strategy including cross level governance is successful in sweden
- National level: processing legal framework protocol/ criteria assessment
- Sub-national: coordination or integrating (National - OECM -provincial spatial plan)
- Community: community feedbacks and learning opportunities of mangrove natural resources in local level

Republic of Korea

- Have a clean management plan
- Community consensus

Philippines

- There are varying understanding ; different levels of acceptance and willingness to contribute

Thailand

- Challenge in coordination with various acts but if actors are working on a regional OECM, it can build a strong network

Question 4: What lessons or insights have you learned from them?

Malaysia

- Clear direction can make OECM run smoothly

Indonesia

- OECM thrive where conservation is not imposed but cocreated turning diverse stakeholders into co-owner marine future
- Community stewardship is the foundation
- Policy without practice is weak
- Cross sector trust takes time
- Science and local wisdom = resilience
- Each country may establish national OECM consortium bringing government and NGOs to progress the country OECM

Philippines

- More awareness raising to do, need for a focused communication plan; comprehensive MGE framework

Thailand

- Flexibility and multiple governance model (flexibility is important in the countries where difference context)
- Many users in marine areas

ANNEX 6

OTHER RESOURCES

- [2018] IUCN. Area-Based Management Tools, Including Marine Protected Areas in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
- [2019] IUCN. Reporting OECM
- [2021] HELCOM. Regional Common Understanding of the CBD Criteria for Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)
- [2021] Jonas, Harry D. Equitable and Effective Area-based Conservation: Towards Conserved Areas Paradigm
- [2022] FAO. A Handbook for Identifying, Evaluating, and Reporting Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures in Marine Fisheries
- [2022] FAO. Report of the Expert Meeting on Fisheries-Related Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures in the Mediterranean
- [2022] TNC. Best Practice Delivering 30x30 Target
- [2023] IUCN. Site-level Tool for Identifying Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs)
- [2023] PEW and ACB. Building the Case for Expanding Marine Conservation Areas: An Urgent Call in the ASEAN Region
- [2024] Estradivari, Indah Kartika. Prospective Ecological Contributions of Potential Marine OECMs and MPAs to Enhance Marine Conservation in Indonesia
- [2024] Fitzsimons, James A. Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in Australia: Key Considerations for Assessment and Implementation
- [2024] GIZ. Other Effective Conservation Measures in Viet Nam: Heading Towards Recognition and Effective In-Situ Conservation Beyond Protected Areas
- [2024] ICIMOD. Leveraging the Prospects and Potential of OECMs for transboundary Cooperation in the Hindu Kush Himalaya
- [2024] IUCN. Guidance on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)
- [2024] IUCN. Technical Notes on Establishing Marine OECMs under the Convention on Biological Diversity
- [2024] Jonas, Harry D. et. al. Global Status and Emerging Contribution of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) Towards the '30x30' Biodiversity Target 3
- [2024] Yan, Zhang, et. al. A Stocktaking Report on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures in China
- [2025] Ban, Natalie C., et al. Accounting for human-nature linkages in area-based conservation monitoring through socio-ecological indicator bundles
- [2025] Bird Life International. OECMs: What Contribution Can They Make to Area-based Marine Conservation?
- [2025] Blue Cradle. Tiaki Moana: Pacific Wisdom and Community Action for Ocean Protection
- [2025] FAO. Documenting biodiversity outcomes in Marine Fisheries Management
- [2025] Indonesia. IBSAP 2025 – 2045
- [2025] Indonesia. Visi Kawasan Konservasi & OECM 2045
- [2025] IUCN. Building Urban Ecological Networks for Conservation in the ASEAN Region
- [2025] Pasha, Mohammad Khalid S, et. al. Supporting the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Through the Added Value of the IUCN Green List Standard
- [2025] Pasha, Mohammad Khalid S, et. al. Unpacking OECMs: Pathways for Effective Implementation and Operationalization in Asia
- [2025] RAMSAR. Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) for the Conservation and Wise Use of Wetlands
- [2025] Republic of Korea. K-OECM Tool-kit Version 2.0
- IUCN. OECM XL Tool-kit Final Version 1.0