

What are Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)?



Origin



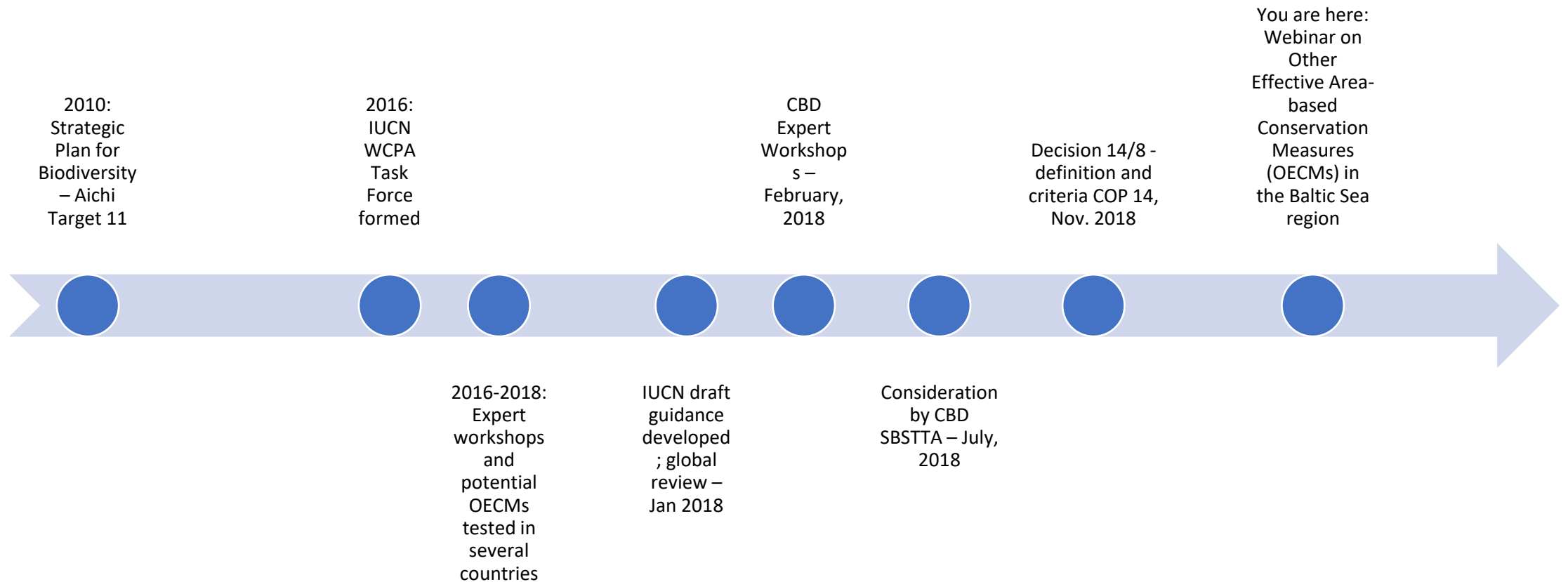
Strategic Plan for
Biodiversity 2011–2020
and the Aichi Targets
“Living in Harmony with Nature”



Target 11

By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and **other effective area-based conservation measures**, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

How did we get here?



What are OECMs? CBD Decision 14/8

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

What are OECMs not?

- OECMs is a conservation designation for areas that are achieving the effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity **outside of protected areas.**

➡ MPAs cannot be OECMS and OECMs cannot be MPAs.

Core difference:

Protected areas should have a *primary* conservation objective. Their core function is to promote the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity.

➡ Intention based

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

➡ Outcome based

But possibly most important, where MPAs start with an area, OECMs start with the measure.

What are OECMs?

- Areas identified as ‘potential OECMs’ should demonstrate **relevant ecological standards** and not just an improvement in the ecological condition. OECM’s definition requires the ‘in-situ conservation of biodiversity’.

What does in-situ conservation mean for OECMs?

- CBD Art.2: ‘the conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats and the maintenance and recovery of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings and, in the case of domesticated or cultivated species, in the surroundings where they have developed their distinctive properties’.
- IUCN (2019) :‘...should deliver biodiversity outcomes of comparable importance to, and complementary with, those of protected areas’.
- COP Decision 14/8 (CBD, 2018) :‘...is expected to include the identification of the range of biodiversity attributes for which the site is considered important (e.g. communities of rare, threatened or endangered species, representative natural ecosystems, range restricted species, key biodiversity areas, areas providing critical ecosystem functions and services, areas for ecological connectivity) ’.

What are OECMs?

Criteria	Interpretation	CBD guidance
Criterion A: Area is not currently recognized as a protected area	a. not an MPA	The area is not currently recognised as a protected area or part of a protected area; it may have been established for another function
Criterion B: Area is governed and managed	b. "geographically defined area"	Size and area are described, including in three dimensions where necessary. Boundaries are geographically delineated.
	c. "governed"	Governance has legitimate authority and is appropriate for achieving in situ conservation of biodiversity within the area; Governance by indigenous peoples and local communities is self-identified in accordance with national legislation; Governance reflects the equity considerations adopted in the Convention. Governance may be by a single authority and/or organization or through collaboration among relevant authorities and provides the ability to address threats collectively
	d. "managed"	Managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained outcomes for biodiversity conservation. Relevant authorities and stakeholders are identified and involved in management. A management system is in place that contributes to sustaining the in situ conservation of biodiversity. Management is consistent with the ecosystem approach with the ability to adapt to achieve expected biodiversity conservation outcomes, including long-term outcomes, and including the ability to manage a new threat.
Criterion C: Achieves sustained and effective contribution to in situ conservation of biodiversity	e. "positive outcomes"	
	f. "sustained long-term"	The other effective area-based conservation measure is in place for the long term or is likely to be. "Sustained" pertains to the continuity of governance and management and "long term" pertains to the biodiversity outcome.
	g. "in-situ conservation of biodiversity"	Recognition of other effective conservation area measures is expected to include the identification of the range of biodiversity attributes for which the site is considered important (e.g. communities of rare, threatened or endangered species, representative natural ecosystems, range restricted species, key biodiversity areas, areas providing critical ecosystem functions and services, areas for ecological connectivity).
	h. "biodiversity"	
Criterion D: Associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values	Information and Monitoring	Identification of an OECM should, to the extent possible, document the known biodiversity attributes, as well as, where relevant, cultural and/or spiritual values, of the area and the governance and management in place as a baseline for assessing effectiveness. A monitoring system informs management on the effectiveness of measures with respect to biodiversity, including the health of ecosystems. Processes should be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of governance and management, including with respect to equity. General data of the area such as boundaries, aim and governance are available information.
	i. "ecosystem functions and services"	Ecosystem functions and services are supported, including those of importance to indigenous peoples and local communities. Management to enhance one particular ecosystem function and service should not impact negatively on the sites overall biological diversity.
	j. "cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values"	

What are OECMs?

- While protected areas must have a primary conservation objective, this is not necessary for OECMs. OECMs may be managed for many different objectives but they must deliver effective conservation. They may be managed with conservation as a primary or secondary objective or long-term conservation may simply be the ancillary result of management activities.
- This definition covers three main cases:
 1. **‘Ancillary conservation’**: areas delivering in-situ conservation as a by-product of management, even though biodiversity conservation is not an objective (e.g. some military training grounds, protected marine war graves).
 2. **‘Secondary conservation’**: active conservation of an area where biodiversity outcomes are only a secondary management objective (e.g. some conservation corridors).
 3. **‘Primary conservation’**: areas meeting the IUCN definition of a protected area, but where the governance authority (e.g. community, Indigenous peoples’ group, religious group, private landowner) does not wish the area reported as a protected area.

What are OECMs?

Achieves in-situ conservation of biodiversity

Lower intention

Higher intention

Ancillary

E.g.

- Marine war graves
- Shipwrecks
- Military areas
- APMs based on ship safety

Secondary

E.g.

- Areas which are protected through very low-impact use
- Conservation corridors

Primary

E.g.

- Privately governed areas with a primary conservation objective (areas meeting the IUCN definition of a protected area)...

- ... but the governance authority is unable to secure PA designation or prefers not to be recognised as a PA

- The above categories are not precise and OECMs need to be judged on a case-by-case basis. OECMs should only be recognised in areas where there is significant biodiversity, and which meet the CBD criteria

Link to strategies: 2021 Baltic Sea Action Plan

Spatial protection

Direct

By 2030 at the latest, establish a resilient, regionally coherent, effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected system of HELCOM marine protected areas (MPAs), supported by those other spatial conservation measures, under alternative regimes for marine protection, which can contribute to the coherence of the network. Where scientifically justified, special attention should be given to offshore areas beyond territorial waters. The network of marine protected areas will:

- cover at least 30% of the marine area of the Baltic Sea, of which at least 1/3 will be strictly protected. Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) could be counted towards the 30% targets only if they, as a minimum, comply with the OECM criteria agreed by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- where scientifically justified, consider including no-use zones within marine protected areas, which can also serve as scientific reference areas.
- expand conservation efforts to actively include areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, including important ecosystem elements such as species or areas recognized to be ecologically significant based on function for the ecosystem/provisioning of ecosystem services and broad habitat types, but which may not necessarily be rare or threatened.

B1

By 2022 come to a common understanding of the Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) criteria and their use in HELCOM, based on definitions agreed in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the EU, and define how OECMs can support the coherence of the Baltic Sea marine protected area (MPA) network. By 2025 identification of OECMs in the Baltic Sea region.

B2

Indirect

The coherence of the marine protected area (MPA) network will be periodically assessed at least every ten years, with the next such assessment to be carried out by 2025. By 2027 the results from the coherence assessment are to be used to take appropriate actions to ensure conservation and resilience of biodiversity, and to identify possible spatial conservation expansion needs to improve coherence.

B6

Species protection

- Habitat building species
- Haploids
- Fish
- Birds
- Marine mammals

Link to strategies: EU Biodiversity Strategy

- The EU and its 27 Member States are each party to the CBD.
- Environmental matters in the EU, including biodiversity policy, are a shared competence between the EU and Member States. Each can legislate and adopt legally binding acts and EU Member States exercise their own competence where the EU does not.
- Since 2019, environment has risen significantly up the EU political agenda:
 - European Green Deal its top strategic priority with biodiversity one of its eight key initiatives.
 - EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (May 2020) which makes explicit reference to the role of OECMs in contributing to the Strategy's 2030 nature protection targets. Specifically, the Strategy announces that: ... the Commission, working with Member States and the European Environment Agency, will put forward in 2020 criteria and guidance for identifying and designating additional [protected] areas, including a definition of strict protection, as well as for appropriate management planning. In doing so, it will indicate how **other effective area-based conservation measures** and greening of cities could contribute to the targets.
- OECMs can support, amongst other objectives, EU targets for 30 % of land and water to be protected by 2030, the EU restoration plan and aspects of the Green New Deal.

Want to know more?

- IUCN has prepared technical guidelines that explain the definition of OECMs and help to explain how these may be applied in practical conservation strategies (IUCN-WCPA, 2019).
- The concept has been explored in more detail, for instance:
 - in the context of marine conservation (Laffoley et al., 2017),
 - in the context of privately protected areas (Mitchell et al., 2018)
 - in the context of community conservation (Jonas et al., 2017).
- The European Environment Agency commissioned a scoping report to "Assess the potential of other effective area-based conservation measures as a driver for landscape-level conservation and connectivity in the EU". The report was created by UNEP-WCMC, IEEP, and Trinomics.
- IUCN WCPA OECM Specialist Group is currently developing and field-testing a site-level methodology for identifying OECMs (Marnewick et al., forthcoming).

Conclusion

- OECMs are included in the updated post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, in the EU Biodiversity Strategy and in the Baltic Sea Action Plan.
- OECMs reflect **an opportunity to provide *in situ* conservation of biodiversity over the long-term** in marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. **They may allow for sustainable human activities while offering a clear benefit to biodiversity conservation.**
- Management of other effective area-based conservation measures is **consistent with the ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach**, providing the **ability to adapt to achieve biodiversity outcomes**, including long-term outcomes, inter alia, the ability to manage a new threat;
- There are expectations that they will play a large role in the conservation agenda for the next decade.

Thank you for your
attention!

