



Convention on Biological Diversity

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**Subsidiary Body on Scientific,
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Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Marine and coastal biodiversity

Further work on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. With decision IX/20 of 30 May 2008, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) in need of protection in open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats. Since 2010, in response to requests by the Conference of the Parties,¹ the Secretariat of the Convention has been coordinating a process to facilitate the description of areas meeting those criteria. Between 2011 and 2019, the Secretariat held 15 regional workshops to facilitate the description of EBSAs, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments and international organizations and with significant scientific input from various experts, including representatives from indigenous peoples and local communities, from around the world, leading to the description of more than 300 such areas.

2. In addition, and in line with decisions of the Conference of the Parties, various efforts have been made to support that work and the use of EBSA information for planning and management, including through the coordination of the Informal Advisory Group on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas.

II. Modalities for modifying the descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and describing new areas

A. Background and relevant processes

3. The process to describe EBSAs on the basis of the outputs of regional workshops has been successful, and its outcomes have been transmitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the Conference of the Parties has been discussing ways to improve it since 2014. In 2018, it requested the Executive Secretary to develop practical options to enhance scientific methodologies and approaches to describe areas meeting the scientific criteria (see decision [14/9](#)). To date, the Conference of the Parties has not reached an agreement on modalities for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and for describing new EBSAs through means other than regional workshops.

* CBD/SBSTTA/26/1.

¹ Decisions X/29, XI/17, XII/22 and XIII/12.

4. Additional information on discussions on improving the process that were held at previous expert workshops and meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and of the Conference of the Parties will be made available in information document CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/7.

B. Results of two expert workshops to review modalities for modifying the descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and describing new areas

5. In its decision [15/26](#), with a view to advancing discussions, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to convene two expert workshops with the following respective goals:

(a) To review the technical aspects of the modalities for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and describing new areas;

(b) To review the legal issues pertaining to those modalities, on the basis of the outcomes of the aforementioned technical workshop.

6. Pursuant to those requests, the Executive Secretary convened the two workshops, in Oslo, from 20 to 24 November and from 23 to 27 November 2023, respectively, with financial support from the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Germany, Norway and Sweden. The two overlapping days were used to hold joint sessions.²

7. In line with the request in decision 15/26, the Secretariat provided draft modalities for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and describing new areas, drawing on draft approaches for modalities contained in the annex to Subsidiary Body recommendation [24/10](#) and taking into consideration the information contained in documents CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/41 and CBD/EBSA/OM/2022/2/1. Participants in the technical expert workshop discussed and revised the draft modalities from a technical perspective and did not directly address the legal aspects of the draft modalities. Participants in the legal expert workshop conducted their work on the basis of the outcomes of the technical workshop and focused on the political and legal aspects of the draft modalities. Participants were not requested to arrive at consensus on all elements, and the differing views that emerged on certain issues are captured in the report of each workshop.

8. A number of key issues, many of which had already been the subject of disagreement in previous deliberations, were the focus of most of the discussions, namely:

(a) Procedures for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and describing new areas that include means to ensure transparency and scientific integrity while avoiding infringing on the rights of States and that avoid an overly onerous process that places an undue burden on Parties and the Secretariat;

(b) The respective roles of the repository and the information-sharing mechanism for EBSAs in the context of the modalities;

(c) Proponents of the modification of EBSAs and of the description of new areas;

(d) Location on the website of previous versions of EBSA descriptions in cases where a description has been modified;

(e) Means to address concerns related to claims or disputes relating to sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction.

9. Significant progress was made during the discussions at those workshops and a common understanding was reached on most of the aforementioned issues. In particular, participants in the legal expert workshop developed an approach to address concerns about claims or disputes relating to sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction. The approach reflects similar procedures followed and considerations taken into account in the context of the Commission on the Limits of the

² The reports of the workshops will be issued as documents CBD/EBSA/EM/2023/1/3 and CBD/EBSA/EM/2023/2/3, respectively.

Continental Shelf, as well as the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. It is referred to in paragraph 4 of the annex of the draft recommendation. As the issue is of a purely legal and political nature, it may not be entirely within the competence of the Subsidiary Body and the Conference of the Parties appears to be the most appropriate body to discuss it.

10. The participants also stressed the important role of collaboration and synergies with relevant organizations, in particular intergovernmental bodies with competence in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, in the implementation of the modalities. In that regard, in decision 15/24, the Conference of the Parties recognized the need to strengthen cooperation and collaboration with competent intergovernmental organizations, including organizations with competence in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in support of the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. In the same decision, it requested the Executive Secretary, upon the adoption of an international legally binding instrument under the Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, to identify potential options for modalities for collaboration and cooperation with relevant global and regional organizations in the context of that instrument. Those options, which are contained in information document CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/8 and summarized in document CBD/SBSTTA/26/7/Add.2, include options for collaboration in the context of the draft modalities for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and describing new areas.

11. It was noted during the workshops that, in decision 15/26, the Conference of the Parties had requested the Executive Secretary to develop two documents related to the modalities: (a) draft terms of reference for a “relevant expert advisory body” in the context of the modalities; and (b) voluntary guidelines on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs and other relevant compatible and complementary scientific criteria. The participants noted that significant discussion was still needed on the modalities themselves and that the limited time available for discussion on EBSAs at the twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body should be dedicated to reaching consensus on the modalities. It was also noted that the role being discussed for a relevant expert advisory body was generally already covered by the terms of reference of the Informal Advisory Group on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas. As a result, it was recommended that deliberations on the two documents be deferred until significant progress in the development of the modalities could be made by the Subsidiary Body and the Conference of the Parties. Consequently, neither the draft terms of reference nor the voluntary guidelines are being submitted to the Subsidiary Body for consideration at the present time.

12. The results of the workshops informed the development of the draft recommendations and the annex below. It should be noted that participants in the workshops supported including in the main body of the draft recommendations the elements currently contained in section I of the annex. However, in the process of drafting the present document, the Secretariat noted that separating key elements of the modalities across the body of the draft recommendations and the annex could generate confusion. It has therefore included the elements in the annex, together with the rest of the modalities.

13. In order to facilitate understanding of the issues addressed in the modalities and support productive discussions, an information document³ will be made available, and the Secretariat will convene a webinar to provide explanations for and clarification of the modalities and an online information session of the Informal Advisory Group on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas.

³ CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/7.

III. Other matters related to ecologically or biologically significant marine areas

Informal Advisory Group on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas

14. In its decision XIII/12, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to establish an informal advisory group on EBSAs and set out terms of reference for the group in annex III to the decision. At its fourteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties amended the terms of reference to include additional activities (see decision 14/9, annex III).

15. In its decision 15/26, the Conference of the Parties extended the term of the Informal Advisory Group. Pursuant to that decision, the Secretariat issued an invitation to Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, and relevant organizations and initiatives to nominate scientific and technical experts to serve on the Group, leading to the selection of 30 experts.⁴

16. A meeting of the Informal Advisory Group was convened on 19 and 20 September 2023⁵ and was focused on the following issues:

- (a) Overview of the terms of reference of the Group;
- (b) Update on work undertaken under the Convention on Biological Diversity on EBSAs;
- (c) EBSAs in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;
- (d) Work of the Group in the context of other international processes;
- (e) Potential future modalities for the Group;
- (f) Areas of focus for the work of the Group.

17. Through the discussions held at that meeting, the Informal Advisory Group provided valuable advice to the Secretariat, including with regard to:

(a) Means to strengthen the use of EBSAs and the EBSA approach in the national, regional and global implementation of the Framework and to ensure that work be carried out on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria at various levels, as key elements of the revision or updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans in the context of the Framework;

(b) Opportunities to facilitate the uptake of EBSA information and approach in the context of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction;

(c) Means to build on, and strengthen synergies with, other efforts to identify areas of importance for marine biodiversity (e.g. important marine mammal areas, important bird and biodiversity areas);

(d) Means to increase awareness and understanding of the EBSA process and to support better use of EBSA information through communications and capacity-building, among other approaches.

18. An online discussion forum was set up for members of the Informal Advisory Group, to advance discussions on key issues within the mandate of the Group.

19. As noted in the previous section, participants in the technical and legal expert workshops addressed the potential role of a “relevant expert advisory body” in the context of the modalities and noted that the terms of reference of the Informal Advisory Group already encompassed such a role.

⁴ See notifications Nos. [2023-014](#) and [2023-065](#), respectively.

⁵ The report of the meeting will be issued as document CBD/EBSA/IAG/2023/1/2.

IV. Recommendations

20. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may wish to recommend that, at its sixteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties,

Reaffirming Articles 4 and 22 of the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹ as well as its decisions X/29 of 29 October 2010, XI/17 of 19 October 2012, XII/22 of 17 October 2014, XIII/12 of 17 December 2016, in particular paragraph 3, and 14/9 of 29 November 2018,

Recalling resolution 78/69 of the General Assembly of the United Nations on oceans and the law of the sea and its preambular paragraphs on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,^{2,3}

Reiterating the central role of the General Assembly in addressing issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction,

Recognizing that the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas is an important scientific and technical process that may contribute to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework⁴ and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction,⁵

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Germany, Norway and Sweden for their financial support for the organization of the technical and legal expert workshops to review modalities for modifying the descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and describing new areas, and takes note of the reports of the workshops;⁶

2. *Extends* the term of the Informal Advisory Group on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas, and requests the Executive Secretary to facilitate the work of the Group in line with its terms of reference, as contained in annex III to decision XIII/12 and amended in annex III to decision 14/9;

3. *Stresses* that the modification of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the description of new areas do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries, that it is strictly a scientific and technical exercise and that no action or activity carried out on the basis of the present decision shall be interpreted or considered as prejudicing the position of States on a land or maritime sovereignty dispute or a dispute concerning the delimitation of maritime areas;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of financial resources, in line with paragraph 36 of decision X/29, paragraph 12 of decision XI/17 and paragraph 6 of decision XII/22, to continue to facilitate the description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas through the holding of additional workshops;

5. *Adopts* the modalities for the modification of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the description of new areas contained in the annex, and requests the Executive Secretary to facilitate the implementation of the modalities;

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1833, No. 31363.

³ [Footnotes to be provided by Parties wishing to do so].

⁴ Decision 15/4.

⁵ A/CONF.232/2023/4.

⁶ CBD/EBSA/EM/2023/1/3 and CBD/EBSA/EM/2023/2/3.

6. *Invites* Parties, other Governments, competent intergovernmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities and other relevant stakeholders to collaborate in the implementation of the modalities;

7. *Notes* the importance of synergies between the process to facilitate the description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas using the modalities and the implementation of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, and invites Parties to the Agreement and intergovernmental organizations with competence in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction to actively engage in the development and review of submissions of the modification of descriptions of such areas and the description of new areas, in line with the modalities, in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Annex

Modalities for the modification of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the description of new areas *

I. Guidance in the implementation of the modalities

1. The modification of a description of an ecologically or biologically significant marine area, which can entail a modification to the textual description of the area, a modification to the ranking of the area against the criteria for such areas or a change in the location, shape, depth or size of the area, may be proposed for any of the following reasons:⁷

- (a) Editorial errors in the description;
- (b) For areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction:
 - (i) Newly available or accessible knowledge, including scientific and traditional knowledge, on features associated with the area;
 - (ii) Change in the ecological or biological features of the area;
 - (iii) Scientific errors identified in the description;
- (c) For areas within national jurisdiction, any of the reasons noted in paragraph 1 (b), as well as any other reason deemed valid by the State or States within whose jurisdictions the modification is proposed;*

2. The modification of an existing description or the description of a new area can only be submitted by the following proponents:

- (a) For areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, any State or States, individually or collectively, including through competent intergovernmental organizations;
- (b) For areas within national jurisdiction, the States or States within whose jurisdictions the modification or description is proposed.

3. Proponents that develop submissions for the modification of an existing description or the description of a new area should consider the following at an early stage:

- (a) Collaboration with competent intergovernmental organizations; other relevant organizations; experts; and knowledge holders, including indigenous peoples and local communities,

* An asterisk inserted after a paragraph indicates that there were divergent views on the provisions of that paragraph during discussions at the technical and legal expert workshops.

⁷ The reason for a modification must be provided in the submission.

as holders of traditional knowledge, with their free, prior and informed consent,⁸ in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples⁹ and international human rights law;

(b) The need to avoid developing submissions that may raise concerns regarding sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction;

(c) The need for a strong scientific basis with sufficient information, as well as the importance of transparency;

(d) The regional dimensions of marine and coastal ecosystems and their ecological and biological features and processes, including regional differences in data availability, as well as collaboration across regions.

4. With respect to a submission for the modification of an existing description or the description of a new area,¹⁰ any State may formally communicate to the Executive Secretary, at any time, an objection to the inclusion of a description or modification in the repository or the information-sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, owing to the existence of a claim or dispute relating to sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction involving an area included in the submission. In such a case, the submission will not be advanced any further and will not be included in the repository or information-sharing mechanism until a withdrawal of the objection is communicated to the Executive Secretary by the objecting State.¹¹

II. Repository and information-sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas

5. The repository for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas is to contain:

(a) The descriptions of areas meeting the criteria that have been considered by the Conference of the Parties and that the Conference of the Parties has requested the Executive Secretary to include in the repository and to transmit to the General Assembly of the United Nations for its information and relevant processes, as well as to relevant international organizations;

(b) For archive purpose, previous versions of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas held in the repository, in cases where the descriptions have been modified, including information on the modalities by which the descriptions were initially included in the repository.¹²

6. The information-sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas is to contain:

(a) Links to national processes and their related scientific information pertaining to areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, and other relevant compatible and complementary nationally agreed scientific criteria in national jurisdiction that were provided by the State concerned as information for the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Conference of the Parties;

(b) Reports of the regional workshops convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas;

⁸ “Free, prior and informed consent” refers to the tripartite terminology of “prior and informed consent”, “free, prior and informed consent” and “approval and involvement”.

⁹ General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.

¹⁰ Irrespective of whether the description is developed during workshops held pursuant to a decision of the Conference of the Parties or through the modalities in the present annex.

¹¹ A record of the fact that a submission was received and objected to will be included in the information-sharing mechanism, regardless of whether the objection is withdrawn or not.

¹² Paragraphs 5 (b) and 6 (c) reflect alternative options for where that paragraph should be placed.

(c) For archive purpose, previous versions of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas held in the repository, in cases where the descriptions have been modified, including information on the modalities by which the descriptions were initially included in the repository;¹²

(d) Guidance related to the application of the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the use of information contained in the descriptions of such areas;

(e) Other relevant scientific and technical information and other forms of knowledge, including the indigenous and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, with their free, prior and informed consent, where appropriate, related to areas described as meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas;

(f) Information and experience relating to the application of other relevant and complementary intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria.

III. Modification of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and description of new areas

A. Modification for editorial errors

7. In the case of editorial errors in a description of an ecologically or biologically significant marine area, the Secretariat, after being informed by a State, is to issue a notification to provide information regarding the editorial error and the revision needed, and, subsequently, to implement the modification, three months after the issuance of the notification. A footnote is to be added to the modified description to indicate that an editorial change was made, and when. A report on modifications made to address editorial errors is to be submitted by the Secretariat to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Conference of the Parties, for information.

B. Modification or description of areas within national jurisdiction

*Inclusion in the repository for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas*¹³

8. The submission¹⁴ of a modification or description of an area within national jurisdiction for inclusion in the repository for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas must be provided to the Secretariat together with information on the process by which the submission was developed, including any scientific peer-review process, and, in cases where information based on traditional knowledge is included, any information on consultations with indigenous peoples and local communities conducted with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Mo' otz Kuxtal Voluntary Guidelines.¹⁵ The proponent may also use the following options with respect to the development of the submission:

(a) The proponent may request the Secretariat to issue a notification, for information purposes, regarding its intent to submit a description or modification before the submission is developed;

(b) The proponent may also choose to develop or refine a draft submission at a workshop on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas held pursuant to a decision of the Conference of the Parties before submitting it to the Secretariat.

¹³ An inclusion under the present section entails consideration of the submission by the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies.

¹⁴ To be included in the repository, the submission must be prepared in the template for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and include a map clearly indicating the area that is being modified or described.

¹⁵ Decision XIII/18, annex.

9. Upon receipt, the Secretariat includes the submission in the information-sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and issues a notification to provide information on the submission and communicate its inclusion in the mechanism. The submission will be open for a period of six months for comments by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, which are then transmitted to the proponent by the Secretariat.

10. Upon receipt of such comments, which will be posted in the information-sharing mechanism, the proponent may do one of the following:

- (a) Address the comments, if any, and, if necessary, provide a revised version of the submission to the Secretariat;
- (b) Not address the comments and not proceed further;
- (c) Request the Secretariat to remove its original submission from the information-sharing mechanism.

11. If the proponent decides to address the comments and provide a revised version of the submission to the Secretariat, the Secretariat will transmit the submission to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Conference of the Parties for their consideration. The proponent may also request that the submission be discussed at a workshop on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas held pursuant to a decision of the Conference of the Parties before it is submitted to the Subsidiary Body.

12. The Conference of the Parties decides whether to request the Executive Secretary to include the submission in the repository for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas. A record of the submission remains in the information-sharing mechanism, regardless of whether it is included in the repository or not.

*Inclusion in the information-sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas*¹⁶

13. The submission¹⁷ of a modification or description of an area within national jurisdiction for inclusion in the information-sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas must be provided to the Secretariat together with information on the process by which the submission was developed, including any scientific peer-review process, and, in cases where information based on traditional knowledge is included, any information on consultations with indigenous peoples and local communities conducted with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Mo' otz Kuxtal Voluntary Guidelines. The proponent may also use the following options with respect to the development of the submission:

- (a) The proponent may request the Secretariat to issue a notification regarding its intent to submit a description or modification before the submission is developed;
- (b) The proponent may also choose to develop or refine a draft submission at a workshop on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas held pursuant to a decision of the Conference of the Parties before submitting it to the Secretariat.

14. Upon receipt, the Secretariat includes the submission in the information-sharing mechanism and issues a notification to provide information on the submission and communicate its inclusion in the information-sharing mechanism. The proponent may request that the submission be open for comments by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations for a period of six months, in which case the Secretariat will transmit any comments received to the proponent.

¹⁶ An inclusion under the present section does not entail consideration by the Conference of the Parties or its subsidiary bodies.

¹⁷ To be included in the information-sharing mechanism, the submission must contain geographical coordinates and a map clearly indicating the area that is being modified or described.

15. Upon receipt of such comments, which will be posted in the information-sharing mechanism, the proponent may do one of the following:

- (a) Maintain the submission as provided to the Secretariat;
- (b) Address the comments and provide a revised submission to the Secretariat for inclusion in the information-sharing mechanism;
- (c) Request the Secretariat to remove its original submission from the information-sharing mechanism.

C. Modification or description of areas beyond national jurisdiction

16. The submission¹⁸ of a modification or description of an area beyond national jurisdiction must be provided to the Secretariat together with information on the process by which the submission was developed, including any scientific peer-review process, and, in cases where information based on traditional knowledge is included, any information on consultations with indigenous peoples and local communities conducted with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Mo' otz Kuxtal Voluntary Guidelines.

17. Before developing a submission, the proponent may request the Secretariat to issue a notification regarding its intent to submit a description or modification.

18. The Secretariat includes a record of the submission, as received, in the information-sharing mechanism of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and disseminates information about the submission through a notification. The submission is open for comments by Parties, other Governments, competent intergovernmental bodies and relevant organizations for a period of six months.

19. The submission, as well as any comments received in response to the notification, are provided for discussion at a workshop on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas held pursuant to a decision of the Conference of the Parties, the outputs of which are submitted to the Subsidiary Body and the Conference of the Parties for their consideration.

20. The Conference of the Parties decides whether to request the Executive Secretary to include the submission in the repository of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas. A record of the submission remains in the information-sharing mechanism, regardless of whether it is included in the repository or not.

¹⁸ To be included in the repository, the submission must be prepared in the template for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and include geographical coordinates and a map clearly indicating the area that is being modified or described.