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PROGRESS REPORT ON DESCRIBING AREAS MEETING THE CRITERIA FOR ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth meeting, established a global process, based on the organization of a series of regional workshops (decision X/29, para. 36), for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) through the application of scientific criteria in annex I to decision IX/20 as well as other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria.
2. Pursuant to decisions X/29 and XI/17, the Conference of the Parties, at its eleventh and twelfth meetings, considered the summary reports on the description of areas that meet the criteria for EBSAs, prepared by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its sixteenth meeting (the first two workshops) and eighteenth meeting (the other seven workshops), respectively. Details are provided in annex I to the present note. Pursuant to decisions XI/17 and XII/22, the summary reports were included in the EBSA repository and submitted to the United Nations General Assembly as well as its relevant working groups, by means of a letter from the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.¹
3. Pursuant to decisions XI/17 and XII/22, additional regional EBSA workshops were convened by the Executive Secretary since the eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body, for the North-East Indian Ocean (Colombo, 22-27 March 2015); North-West Indian Ocean (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 19-25 April 2015); and Seas of East Asia (Xiamen, China, 13-18 December 2015). Section II of the present note provides a progress report on these three additional workshops and highlights key results arising from each of them. The full reports of these three workshops have been issued.² To assist the Subsidiary Body in the preparation of a summary report, a summary description of each of the areas meeting the EBSA criteria is provided in an addendum to the present note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/3/Add.1).

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/1/Rev.1.

¹ See A/67/838, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/838, and A/69/794, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/794.

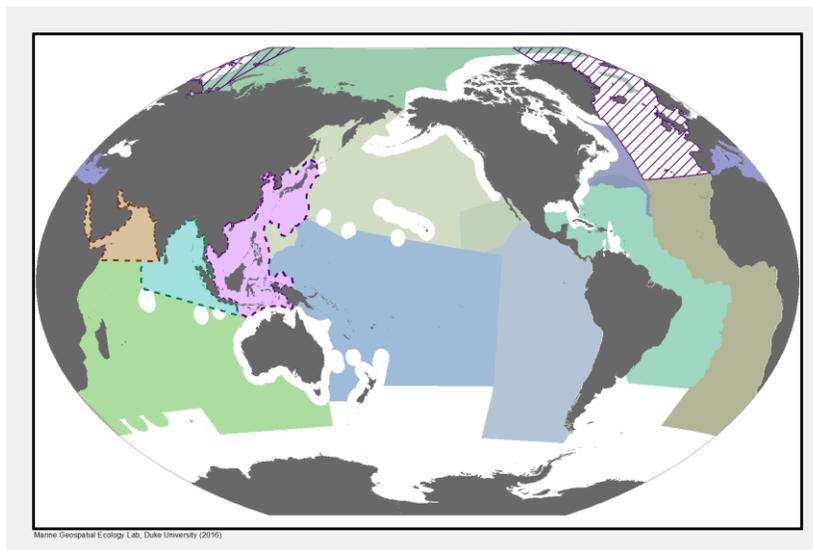
² Report of the North-east Indian Ocean regional Workshop (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/22), report of the North-West Indian Ocean and Adjacent Gulf Areas Regional Workshop (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/23) and report of the Regional Workshop for the Seas of East Asia (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/24).

4. Annex I lists all regional workshops held to date and indicates the number of countries and the number of organizations that have sent experts to these workshops. The figure below shows that regional workshops to describe areas meeting the EBSA criteria have been held for most of the world's ocean areas (nearly 74 per cent global ocean coverage or nearly 82 per cent global ocean coverage without including the area under the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources). The workshops have addressed areas within national jurisdiction when so decided by the countries concerned. It should be noted that there is an ongoing process led by the OSPAR Commission and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria in the North-East Atlantic.

5. Pursuant to decisions X/29, XI/17, and XII/22, a number of countries have been undertaking national processes within their national jurisdiction to identify areas meeting EBSA criteria or other relevant criteria. Some of these countries have shared information on their national experience at relevant regional workshops. Some have also provided information on their national experience in response to a notification issued by the Secretariat. A progress report is provided in section IV below.

6. Pursuant to decision XII/22, paragraph 10, the Executive Secretary, building upon the existing scientific guidance and drawing upon the lessons learned from the above-mentioned regional workshops and views gathered from Parties and other Governments, prepared a set of practical options to further enhance scientific methodologies and approaches for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria. Section VI provides the compilation and synthesis of lessons learned from the regional workshops and views submitted, as well as a set of practical options.

Figure. **Geographical scope of the 12 regional workshops organized to date by the CBD Secretariat to facilitate the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria**



Note: The area covered by three recent workshops, convened since SBSTTA 18, are presented with the dotted outline. The hatched area in the North-East Atlantic indicates the ongoing process on EBSAs.

II. PROGRESS ON ADDITIONAL REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON THE DESCRIPTION OF EBSAs

7. This section provides a summary of the three regional workshops organized since the eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body, as noted in the paragraph 3 above.

A. North-East Indian Ocean Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Colombo, from 23 to 27 March 2015)

8. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop in collaboration with the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme and the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project. It was hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka and organized with financial support from the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund). Scientific and technical support for this workshop was provided by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), with funding provided by the BOBLME Project. The meeting was attended by experts from India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand as well as the International Maritime Organization, SACEP, BirdLife International, the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, Manta Trust, WWF-India and CSIRO.

9. The workshop participants considered the geographic scope for the workshop, taking into account the draft report of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project undertaken for the BOBLME project, *An Ecosystem Characterisation of the Bay of Bengal*.³ The first project of its kind in the region, it resulted in the ecological characterization of 29 subsystems, or provinces, and their associated physical drivers and ecological features. Participants noted that it provided a useful framework for integrating established knowledge with the latest expert knowledge and opinion for describing the ecological systems of the BOBLME region, its species groups, habitats and their connectivity. The geographic scope of the EBSA workshop was therefore defined as the Indian Ocean Basin, geographically bound by landmasses to the north and west, and to the east by the countries and islands of South-East Asia and the Australian west coast. The southern boundary was described in the ecosystem characterization as fluid due to seasonal and longer-term cyclical oceanographic patterns driven by global circulation. Workshop participants agreed to set the southern limit of the workshop scope at 10 degrees south, a boundary that overlaps with that of the Southern Indian Ocean Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 31 July to 3 August 2012), whose northern limit was defined at 10 degrees north. Participants noted that the overlap was justified by the availability of additional scientific information in the waters surrounding Maldives, Sri Lanka and Indonesia over and above that which was available for the Southern Indian Ocean workshop, which was also attended by experts from these three countries.

10. Participants agreed on the description of 10 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/3/Add.1, table 1; a more detailed description is contained in the appendix to annex VI of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/22).

B. North-West Indian Ocean and Adjacent Gulf Areas Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 20 to 25 April 2015)

11. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office West Asia (UNEP-ROWA), Convention on Migratory Species Office – Abu Dhabi, the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA), the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), and the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI). The workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Water of the Government of the United Arab Emirates and was held in Dubai, with financial support from the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund). Scientific and technical support for this workshop was provided by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The meeting was attended by experts from Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (remote participation) as well as the UNEP-ROWA, the Convention on the Conservation of

³ Brewer, D., D. Hayes, V. Lyne, A. Donovan, T. Skewes, D. Milton and N. Murphy. (2015). *An Ecosystem Characterisation of the Bay of Bengal*. Draft report for the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project. CSIRO, Australia, ISBN: 978-1-4863-0521-6. 288 pp.

Migratory Species Office-Abu Dhabi, PERSGA, ROPME, AGEDI, CSIRO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, BirdLife International, Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment, Cousteau Society, Emirates Wildlife Society, Environment Society of Oman, RECOFI/Iran Fisheries Research Organization, Save Our Seas Foundation, and WWF-Pakistan.

12. Participants considered the geographic scope for the workshop, taking into account the ecosystem characterization, which, based on the broad oceanic circulation, has created a region separate from the broader Indian Ocean. They agreed to delimit the scope by the Red Sea and the Gulf to the north. The area is bounded to the south by the northern boundary of the area covered by the Southern Indian Ocean Regional Workshop referred to in paragraph 9 above, whose northern limit was defined at 10 degrees north. Participants noted that additional scientific information was available on the waters of the north coast of Somalia that was not available for the Southern Indian Ocean workshop and therefore agreed to have some overlap in its geographic scope with the one held for that region.

13. Participants agreed on the description of 31 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/3/Add.1, table 2; a more detailed description is contained in the appendix to annex IV of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/23).

C. Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs for the Seas of East Asia (Xiamen, China, from 14 to 18 December 2015)

14. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop with financial support from the Government of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund, in collaboration with the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) (under the Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Region) and the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP). This workshop was hosted by the Government of China (Ministry of Environmental Protection) in Xiamen, China, from 14 to 18 December 2015. Scientific and technical support for this workshop was provided by CSIRO, with financial support from the European Commission. The meeting was attended by experts from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership, GOBI, Sustainability Initiative in the Marginal Seas of South and East Asia (SIMSEA), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Malaysia, WWF - Hong Kong, and CSIRO (Technical Support Team).

15. The workshop participants noted the boundaries of the previous workshops in the Southern Indian Ocean, North Pacific, Western South Pacific and North-East Indian Ocean regions and agreed to set the geographic scope on the remaining region in such a way as to leave no gaps. They also agreed to overlap with the geographic scope of the North-East Indian Ocean Workshop (held in Colombo from 23 to 27 March 2015) with regard to the waters of Myanmar because this area was not fully considered by that workshop due to the absence of an expert.

16. Participants agreed on the description of 36 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/3/Add.1, table 3; a more detailed description is contained in the appendix to annex V of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/24).

D. Additional regional workshops

17. An additional workshop is being convened for the Black Sea and Caspian Sea, with financial support from the Government of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund. Meeting dates and venue remain to be determined in collaboration with Parties and relevant organizations in this region. Further workshops may be organized for other regions where Parties wish them to be held, in line with decisions XI/17 and XII/22, subject to the availability of financial resources.

III. PROGRESS ON CAPACITY-BUILDING RELATED TO EBSAs

A. Capacity-building related to EBSAs – EBSA training sessions

18. Pursuant to decision XI/17 and decision XII/22, and building on the experience of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) capacity-building workshops organized for West Africa (Dakar, February 2013) and for East, South and South-East Asia (Guangzhou, China, December 2013), the regional EBSA workshops noted in paragraphs 8 to 16 above were preceded by a one-day training session addressing, inter alia, scientific criteria for EBSAs; application of the EBSA criteria; data compilation and analysis; and use of EBSA information for the application of the ecosystem approach and marine spatial planning. As a result of this training day, participants were better prepared to describe and discuss areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

B. Training Manual on the Incorporation of Traditional Knowledge into the Description and Identification of EBSAs

19. Pursuant to paragraph 40 of decision X/29, EBSA training manual and modules, as contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/9, were developed to facilitate capacity development with regard to the scientific description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

20. Pursuant to decision XI/17, further training materials on the use of traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria were prepared, with financial support from the Government of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund. This draft training manual (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/21) aims to provide:

(a) Guidance on enhancing the understanding by indigenous peoples and local communities of the EBSA criteria and the application of the criteria, as well as awareness on how the EBSA description process can further enhance the existing efforts by these communities in their conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;

(b) Practical guidance for collecting and documenting traditional knowledge, including the types of research questions this knowledge can address, issues related to building respectful partnerships with knowledge holders on the ground, prior informed consent, ownership of knowledge, and other important considerations;

(c) Explanations of methodologies used for documenting traditional knowledge, and for integrating contemporary science and traditional knowledge to build new “hybrid” knowledge systems;

(d) Guidance on using traditional knowledge in assessing against the EBSA scientific criteria in support of the description of EBSAs;

(e) Detailed and practical case studies from different regions of the world to provide insights on various contexts in integrating traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria.

IV. PROGRESS ON NATIONAL EXERCISES TO DESCRIBE AREAS MEETING THE EBSA CRITERIA

21. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of decision XII/22, Parties and other Governments were invited through notification 2015-071, dated 22 June 2015, to provide information relating to their national exercises to describe areas meeting the EBSA criteria or other relevant compatible and complementary nationally or inter-governmentally agreed scientific criteria, in areas within national jurisdiction.

22. Submissions⁴ from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Finland, Mexico, Portugal and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were compiled in annex II to the present note.

⁴ Submissions by organizations were not included in this compilation, nor were submissions regarding future plans to hold such national exercises.

17. In addition, the following Parties have participated in the regional workshops convened under the Convention to describe areas within their jurisdiction meeting EBSA criteria: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, New Caledonia (France), French Guiana, Gabon, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Palau, Panamá, Peru, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, American Samoa and Viet Nam.

V. USE OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION ON EBSAs BY RELEVANT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES

23. In paragraph 17 of decision XI/17, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to make the scientific information and data sets compiled by the regional workshops available to Parties, other Governments and intergovernmental organizations for their use according to their competencies. In paragraph 8 of decision XII/22, the Conference of the Parties encouraged Parties and other Governments to make use, as appropriate, of the scientific information regarding the description of areas meeting EBSA criteria when carrying out marine spatial planning, development of representative networks of marine protected areas, with a view to contributing to national efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As part of compiling lessons learned from the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity on EBSAs, the Secretariat compiled, in annex III to the present note, some indicative examples of the ways in which the results of the EBSA regional workshops have thus far been used or referred to in global and regional/subregional processes, since its initiation in November 2011. This preliminary work needs to be further updated and complemented by a compilation of national experiences in the future.

VI. PRACTICAL OPTIONS TO FURTHER ENHANCE SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGIES AND APPROACHES ON THE DESCRIPTION OF AREAS MEETING THE EBSA CRITERIA

24. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of decision XII/22, the Secretariat of the Convention issued a notification on 30 September 2015 (ref No. 2015-113) inviting Parties and other Governments to submit views and information on practical options to further enhance scientific methodologies and approaches on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria. The submissions from Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, the European Union, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, the International Maritime Organization, the South-east Atlantic Fisheries Organization, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, and The Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force of IUCN, in response to this notification are compiled in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/19.

25. Drawing upon this compilation, the Secretariat prepared, through commissioning a consultancy with financial support from the European Commission, a background document entitled "Compilation of experiences and lessons learned from scientific methodologies and approaches for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria". This background document was made available for peer review by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations as well as experts. After revision, incorporating peer review comments, this document was made available as UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/20. In order to facilitate the peer review process, an expert meeting was convened by the Secretariat of the Convention, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, in Berlin, Germany, from 22 to 24 February 2016, to provide further inputs on the compilation of experiences and lessons learned on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria. The meeting report is also contained in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/20. Based on the consolidation of lessons learned, draft future options to further enhance scientific methodologies and approaches on the description of areas meeting the EBSA

criteria have been prepared, and are contained in the annex IV to the present note for consideration by the Subsidiary Body.

VII. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions X/29, XI/17 and XII/22 on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs),

1. *Welcomes* the summary reports prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its twentieth meeting,⁵ and the reports of the regional workshops for describing ecological or biologically significant marine areas held in three regions: North-East Indian Ocean (Colombo, 22-27 March 2015); North-West Indian Ocean (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 19-25 April 2015); and Seas of East Asia (Xiamen, China, 13-18 December 2015) and *expresses its gratitude* to the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund) and the European Commission for their financial support and to hosting countries and collaborating organizations involved in the organization of the regional workshops referred to above;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to include the summary reports prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its twentieth meeting, annexed to the present draft decision, in the EBSA repository, and to submit the summary reports to the United Nations General Assembly, in particular its Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, as well as relevant Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations in line with the purpose and procedures set out in decisions X/29, XI/17 and XII/22;

3. *Notes with satisfaction* that the summary reports on the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs have been considered and made use of by the United Nations General Assembly, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission/Ocean Biogeographic Information System, as well as by a number of regional and subregional processes;

4. *Expresses* appreciation to those Parties that have initiated or completed national exercises to describe areas meeting the EBSA criteria or other relevant compatible and complementary nationally or intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria, and those that have participated in the regional workshops under the Convention to describe areas within their national jurisdiction meeting the EBSA criteria;

5. *Takes note* of the practical options for further enhancing scientific methodologies and approaches on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, as contained in the annex to the present draft decision,⁶ *invites* Parties to designate national EBSA information curators, as referred to in annex to present draft decision,⁶ and *requests* the Executive Secretary to convene the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on EBSAs, with the terms of reference provided in the annex to the present decision,⁷ through e-mail, online forums or meetings once every two years, subject to available financial resources, in order to implement practical options in collaboration with Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations, and indigenous peoples and local communities, as outlined in the annex to present draft decision;⁶

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, 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

⁵ To be developed by SBSTTA on the basis of UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/3/Add.1.

⁶ Annex IV to the present note.

⁷ Appendix to annex IV to the present note.

description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs through the organization of additional regional or subregional workshops where Parties wish workshops to be held, taking into account the results of the work done by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, as referred to in paragraph 5 above;

7. *Recalling* paragraph 24 of decision XI/17 and paragraph 15 of decision XII/22, *welcomes* the training manual on the use of traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria,⁸ and *requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments, donors, relevant organizations, and indigenous peoples and local communities to apply this training manual by organizing training activities, subject to the availability of financial resources.

⁸ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/21.

Annex I

Regional workshops on the description of EBSAs convened by the Executive Secretary

Regional workshop on EBSAs	Date	Host country	No. of countries*	No. of organizations	EBSAs (A)	EBSAs with NJ (B)	EBSAs with ABNJ (C)	Status
Western South Pacific	Nov 2011	Fiji	15	10	26	22	11	Reviewed by SBSTTA-16 and COP-11 Decision XI/17
Wider Caribbean & Western Mid-Atlantic	Feb-Mar 2012	Brazil	23	15	21	21	5	
Southern Indian Ocean	July-Aug 2012	Mauritius	16	20	39	30	13	Reviewed by SBSTTA-18 and COP-12 Decision XII/22
Eastern Tropical & Temperate Pacific	Aug 2012	Ecuador	13	12	21	18	7	
North Pacific	Feb-Mar 2013	Russian Federation	8	7	20	15	5	
South-Eastern Atlantic	April 2013	Namibia	17	15	45	42	7	
Arctic	March 2014	Finland	7	13	11	9	2	
North-West Atlantic	March 2014	Canada	2	5	7	0	7	
Mediterranean	April 2014	Spain	21	16	17	**	**	
North-East Indian Ocean	March 2015	Sri Lanka	5	7	10	10	2	
North-West Indian Ocean and Adjacent Gulf Areas	April 2015	United Arab Emirates	14	16	31	31	2	
East Asian Seas	December 2015	China	12	6	36	34	1	
<i>Sum</i>			<i>153</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>284</i>	<i>232</i>	<i>62</i>	
						***	***	

* *Note:* Some countries and some organizations have participated in more than one workshop.

** Information is not available.

*** These numbers do not include those from the Mediterranean.

(A) Number of areas described to meet the EBSA criteria by the workshop.

(B) Number of areas described to meet the EBSA criteria wholly or partly within national jurisdiction.

(C) Number of areas described to meet the EBSA criteria wholly or partly beyond national jurisdiction.

Note: A does not equal to B+C because some EBSAs contain areas within and beyond national jurisdiction.

Annex II

**SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO NOTIFICATION 2015-071 (22 JUNE 2015)
REQUESTING INFORMATION RELATING TO NATIONAL EXERCISES TO DESCRIBE
AREAS MEETING THE EBSA CRITERIA OR OTHER RELEVANT COMPATIBLE AND
COMPLEMENTARY NATIONALLY OR INTERGOVERNMENTALLY
AGREED SCIENTIFIC CRITERIA**

Argentina

1. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina held a workshop in June 2014 on strengthening the governance of MPAs, as part of a GEF project. During this workshop, they discussed and revised descriptions of six preliminary sites within the Exclusive Economic Zone of Argentina using the EBSA criteria. During the workshop, two additional sites were added, one of which extends beyond the EEZ of Argentina (only the part within the EEZ is being considered as a potential MPA). The detailed description of the eight areas is available in the workshop report, available at the following link:

<http://www.ambiente.gov.ar/archivos/web/GTRA/file/Proyecto%20Marino/Documento%20base%20Identificaci%C3%B3n%20C3%A1reas%20alto%20valor%20de%20conservaci%C3%B3n.pdf>

2. The areas were then evaluated according to a set of feasibility criteria for the creation of MPAs, which were agreed upon by the 48 experts in attendance, representing experts from government, academia and non-governmental organizations.

Australia

3. Australia has developed criteria for 1) Key Ecological Features (KEFs) and 2) Biologically Important Areas (BIAs) to describe its conservation values in the marine region, as a national alternative to EBSAs. KEFs are elements of the Commonwealth marine environment in the marine regions that are considered to be of regional importance for either the region's biodiversity, or ecosystem function and integrity. KEFs meet one or more of a set of four criteria. An interactive map detailing protected matters including the location of KEFs in Australia can be found at <http://www.environment.gov.au/webgis-framework/apps/pmst/pmst.jsf>. KEFs are used to assist with decision-making under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, including the assessment of impacts of proposed activities and in prioritizing monitoring of marine ecosystem health. The experience of Australia in the development of these plans and their application may provide examples of how areas identified using similar criteria might be used to support spatial management and sustainable development.

4. Australia has developed criteria for BIAs of regionally significant marine species. BIAs are spatially defined areas where aggregations of individuals of a species are known to display biologically important behaviour such as breeding, foraging, resting or migration. These areas serve to highlight the parts of a marine region that are particularly important for the conservation of protected species. They are an important consideration for decisions made under the environmental protection laws of Australia. The Australian Government offers to provide KEF spatial data to the Secretariat of the Convention, for inclusion in the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism. It was proposed that the EBSA repository could also host text hyperlinks to relevant Australian Government web products (for example, the [Conservation Values Atlas](#)) that provide information on BIAs (<http://www.environment.gov.au/marine/marine-species/bias>).

Brazil

5. The National Commission on Biodiversity (CONABIO) of Brazil conducted work (1998-2000, updated 2006-2007) to identify Priority Areas for Conservation, through the use of agreed criteria that are similar to that of EBSAs. The process of updating the priority marine and coastal areas was conducted through a partnership between several agencies, universities and NGOs, and used the methodology of

Systematic Conservation Planning, conducted through technical meetings. The methodology also allowed the identification and mapping of the main threats to the conservation targets, assessing threats such as oil and gas activities, fishing, and urbanization, among others. The data used and generated in the publication *Priority Areas for Conservation, Sustainable Use and Benefits Sharing of Brazilian Biodiversity: Update - Ordinance N^o. 9 of the 23rd of January of 2007* are public and available.

6. The second updating process of the priority areas of the coastal and marine region is funded by the Protected Maritime and Coastal Areas Project – “GEF-Mar” (initiated in 2014), which aims to increase to 5 per cent the marine and coastal biodiversity protection of Brazil in Conservation Units; increase protection of biodiversity in at least 9,300 km² in coastal and marine areas; and identify, design and prepare to implement at least two financial mechanisms capable of contributing to the sustainability of coastal and MPAs in the long term. The project involves the identification of the best conservation action for the selected conservation targets.

Canada

7. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has developed national guidance for the identification of EBSAs in Canadian waters, and Canada has endorsed the very similar EBSA criteria of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Since 2005, DFO has undertaken the identification of EBSAs within Canadian waters, primarily within the five Large Ocean Management Areas (LOMAs). Canada is continuing to identify areas that meet the EBSA criteria outside the boundaries of the LOMAs, for example within each of the country’s 13 bioregions using an approach aligned with the EBSA guidance under the Convention. A formal science advisory process has identified, for example, 33 EBSAs in the Canadian Pacific Region. Canada is using these bioregions and the EBSAs within them as the basis of its national MPA network.

8. Lessons learned (http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/SAR-AS/2011/2011_049-eng.pdf) include: EBSAs need to be re-evaluated and updated with new information approximately every five years; selection of experts (mostly from DFO) consulted should be expanded in several ways, including by consulting those able to provide traditional and local knowledge; guidance is needed on how to use EBSAs in policy and management outside of the development of MPA networks, for the diversity of management situations in different sectors. Submission includes extensive list of documents: Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat documents <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/index-eng.htm>.

Finland

9. MPAs in Finland, which were established prior to the EBSA process under the Convention, belong to the following categories: EU Natura 2000 sites; HELCOM; World Heritage Site; marine Ramsar sites; national parks in marine areas; private marine and coastal protected areas; and seal reserves. The selection criteria, in most cases, match the EBSA criteria, in particular for the HELCOM MPAs (<http://www.helcom.fi/action-areas/marine-protected-areas/Background%20of%20HELCOM%20MPAs/selection-criteria>). The EU Natura 2000 sites selection criteria follow those of the EU Habitats Directive, Annex III which are in practice very similar to the EBSA criteria. Links to HELCOM maps and data, Natura 2000 areas: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/access_data/index_en.htm.

India

10. The Wildlife Institute of India, an autonomous organization of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, undertook an exercise in 2007 to describe Important Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Areas (ICMBAs), other than beyond the 130 existing coastal and MPAs. The following six criteria (which broadly cover the EBSA criteria) were used to identify ICMBAs: ecosystem resilience (corresponds to EBSA criterion 4); ecosystem function (includes EBSA criterion 5); biodiversity uniqueness (corresponds to EBSA criteria 1, 2, 3 and 7); cultural religious and aesthetic significance; socioeconomic potential; and land tenure. In all, 350 potential sites were surveyed all along the coast of India, of which 106 sites were identified and prioritised as ICMBAs. This exercise will be considered in the process of strengthening the MPA network.

Japan

11. In 2011, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan began a three-year project to identify marine areas of Japan that meet the EBSA criteria. To this end, a scientific committee was established consisting of five experts from universities and government research agencies with broad-ranging knowledge of marine biodiversity. The project developed the following three principles for identification of EBSAs: (a) focusing on ecological and biological perspectives (not taking into consideration social, economic and/or cultural aspects and future possible threats caused by human activities); (b) applying available and existing scientific data objectively; and (c) selecting areas where marine biodiversity conservation measures can readily be applied. Based on these principles, the committee applied the seven CBD EBSA criteria and added an additional criterion: “representativeness or typicality” to their national exercise. The committee decided on the concrete means for identifying EBSAs, including analysing scale and method, and gathered information from various scientific references. Information was also collected from other sectors as well as national government agencies, including the Fisheries Agency, prefectural governments and several marine-related academic societies. The committee decided to use GIS as a data input system and several other tools, including MARXAN, for analysing the data. After adjustment based on expert opinion, the committee made its final description in 2014 and is currently coordinating the publication of the final results. The contents of the discussion of this national exercise provided inputs to the regional workshop on EBSAs in the Seas of East Asia held in Xiamen, China, in December 2015.

Mexico

12. In 2005, Mexico organized a national process on Gap Analysis for the Determination of Marine and Coastal Priority Sites for Conservation attended by experts from all over the country. The workshop used the EBSA criteria, but in a methodology different from that of the regional workshops on EBSAs under the Convention. Priority sites were defined based on digital cartography and then were validated with the aid of an internet site, which served, in addition, as a gateway for the exchange of opinions and information among participants and specialists. Gap analysis has been adopted as a general framework for marine conservation actions and to some extent for the research agenda. It provides a reference to strengthen and broaden the current PA system by providing guidelines to help the proposition and creation of new areas, as well as other alternatives for sustainable management. Scientific information on the application of the EBSA criteria for the Chapopote asphalt volcano and the Guaymas Basin, using the EBSA template format was submitted to the Secretariat.

Portugal

13. The Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF), the national authority for the conservation of nature and biodiversity in Portugal, in coordination with the General Directorate of Natural Resources, Safety and Maritime Services (DGRM), established an inclusive process, with the participation of the administrations of the Autonomous Regions of Azores and Madeira and the academy to prepare descriptions of areas meeting the EBSA criteria. The process was presented in December 2014 to the Working Group on Marine Biodiversity, which includes representatives of the DGRM, the General Directorate of Marine Policy, Ocean and Atmosphere Portuguese Institute, the Portuguese Environment Agency, the Regional Spatial Planning and Environment Directorate of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, the Regional Directorate of Maritime Affairs of the Azores and the ICNF. Six areas with significant structures were preselected (e.g., seamounts, ridges, hydrothermal vents, faults), and information was collected.

14. In October 2015, ICNF organized a meeting to raise awareness of the process and collect scientific contributions from the academy in order to consolidate the proposals to be submitted by Portugal, in particular, regarding boundaries, additional remarkable structures to be considered and relevant literature. An exhaustive literature review was conducted to compile information needed to identify areas meeting EBSA criteria within the Exclusive Economic Zone of Portugal and on the seabed of the extended continental shelf. A description of Madeira-Tore, using the EBSA template provided by the Secretariat of the Convention, was submitted for inclusion in the repository and/or information-sharing mechanism, as appropriate.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

15. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has been designating a range of MPAs to achieve the long-term conservation of marine biodiversity. The United Kingdom has used “other relevant compatible and complementary nationally or intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria, in areas within national jurisdiction, taking into account States’ own established processes within their respective jurisdictions”. Scientific criteria used include: various European Union Directives, notably the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive, and by domestic policy and legislation in each of the component parts of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales). The various United Kingdom and European Union MPA designations comprise: Special Protection Areas for birds (EU Birds Directive); Special Areas of Conservation for habitats and non-bird species (European Union Habitats Directive); Marine Conservation Zones in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and United Kingdom offshore waters; and Nature Conservation Marine Protection Areas in Scotland. These designations also make up the United Kingdom’s contribution to the ecologically coherent network of MPAs in the north-East Atlantic under the OSPAR Convention. Information on OSPAR MPAs that have been submitted by Contracting Parties is available from the OSPAR Commission. Submission provides links to interactive map with descriptions and locations of current MPAs in the United Kingdom.

Annex III

INFORMATION REGARDING THE WAYS IN WHICH THE RESULTS OF THE EBSA REGIONAL WORKSHOPS HAVE BEEN USED OR REFERRED TO IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL/SUBREGIONAL PROCESSES

Global processes

United Nations General Assembly: In resolutions 68/70, 67/78 and 66/231, the General Assembly recalls the EBSA criteria for identifying areas in need of protection in open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats and scientific guidance for selecting areas to establish a representative network of MPAs, including also in these areas. The reference to EBSA criteria in General Assembly resolution 68/70 of 9 December 2013 on oceans and the law of the sea highlights the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity, specifically the complementary technical and scientific work relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. Further, the resolution stresses the importance of area-based conservation measures that are based on best available scientific information as a tool for conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components. The role of the Convention was highlighted with regard to the decision to conserve 10 per cent of marine and coastal areas through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2020. In the context of the identification of marine areas that may require protection, the General Assembly noted the work of CBD on the assessment of scientific information on and compilation of ecological criteria that could be used to underpin the development and facilitation of diverse approaches such as the ecosystem approach and the establishment of MPAs, including representative networks.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO): FAO has been collaborating with the CBD Secretariat to create awareness and provide technical input to some of the EBSA regional workshops and training activities, in particular with regard to information on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF). FAO also coordinates the GEF project on Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep-Sea Living Marine Resources and Ecosystems in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction also called the “FAO Deep-Sea ABNJ Project”, which includes components on EBSAs. The project aims to facilitate improved sustainable management practices for deep-sea fisheries and related ecosystems, and testing of area-based planning tools for deep-sea ecosystems, especially through pilot projects in the Southeast Atlantic, the Western Indian Ocean, and the Southeast Pacific, in collaboration with countries and regional fishery bodies in these regions. The CBD Secretariat provides technical advice regarding the implementation of the project

activities related to EBSAs, including activities to strengthen networks and databases that provide EBSA information to communities of practice; improving EBSA descriptions; and supporting training workshops on the application of the EBSA criteria.

International Maritime Organization (IMO): The Report of the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the IMO on its sixty-sixth session (25th April 2014) noted the information in a communication (MEPC 66/INF.6) by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity regarding summary reports on the description of areas that meet the EBSA criteria.

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS): The 11th Conference of the Parties to the CMS (2014) noted in UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.25, on Advancing Ecological Networks, the relevance of the EBSA criteria with regard to migratory species. The Contracting Parties were encouraged to further engage in the ongoing work on describing EBSAs and to allow for updates and access to the best available science in relation to marine migratory species. Furthermore, the Contracting Parties and other competent international organizations were invited to further explore the potential for the scientific data and information describing EBSAs to contribute to the conservation of migratory species in marine areas within and beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, particularly with respect to ecological networks and connectivity.

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission/Ocean Biogeographic Information System (IOC/OBIS): The IOC, through OBIS, issued a joint circular letter with CBD (no. 2586, 12 August 2015) to its Member States and Officers containing background information on the EBSA process and the summary report of the nine regional EBSA workshops considered by COP up to that point. The letter also indicates that OBIS has been one of the primary data sources for the EBSA workshops, expresses the hope that the scientific information on the areas meeting the EBSA criteria will be helpful in their national efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and that additional data will be contributed to OBIS.

Regional processes

Abidjan Convention: The 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention in March 2014, adopted decision CP 11.9 on Marine Areas of Ecological or Biological Significance. The decision outlined the need to further describe EBSAs in the region, following on from the CBD South-Eastern Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Swakopmund, Namibia, 8 to 12 April 2013) and to that end, the Contracting Parties stressed the need to build the capacity of Parties to meet their regional priorities also with a view to Aichi Biodiversity Targets 6 and 11. Furthermore, the Contracting Parties stressed the work on EBSAs and its use and application in marine spatial planning initiatives in the context of the LMEs. The 2015-2017 Programme of Work of the Abidjan Convention was extended on the occasion of COP 11 so as to include collaboration of the Abidjan Convention Secretariat in form of partnership with, among others, the Convention on Biological Diversity, in order to determine the protection of EBSAs.

Arctic Council: Arctic Council working groups, including Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment, have on several occasions referred to the results of the Arctic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Helsinki, 3-7 March 2014), including in connection with a project for the development of a network of Arctic MPAs for safeguarding important marine areas for biodiversity and contributing to relevant international processes and a project on integrated ecosystem assessment for the Central Arctic. In addition, the EBSA data submitted to inform the Arctic EBSA workshop will be accessible on CAFF's Arctic Biodiversity Data Service, where it is hoped that the biodiversity information will be used by scientists, practitioners, managers, policymakers and others working to understand, conserve and manage the Arctic's wildlife and ecosystems. Data and maps compiled for the EBSA process will also be used to inform the *State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report*, the first integrated reporting outcome from the CAFF's Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme. SAMBR will provide a targeted assessment of Arctic marine ecosystems and the biodiversity that they support, where possible an assessment of historical trends.

Nairobi Convention (Eastern and Southern Africa): Decision CP7/7 (December 2012) on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas urged the Contracting Parties to participate in the process of recognizing and describing EBSAs within their exclusive economic zones and areas beyond national jurisdiction as an approach to management of marine and coastal ecosystems; and requested the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention to support Contracting Parties to participate in the process of recognizing and describing EBSAs, and where feasible, establish MPAs.

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO): Since 2012, NAFO has been considering measures to protect habitats in the Sargasso Sea – particularly seamounts. At its 37th Annual Meeting in Halifax in September 2015, NAFO acted to adopt regulatory measures for fisheries in the Sargasso Sea, including the closure of seamounts in the northern Sargasso Sea to bottom fishing (NAFO/FC DOC. 15/13), in part due to the information on these seamounts in the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic Regional EBSA Workshop (February–March 2012) and the North-West Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (March 2014). NAFO is still actively considering whether the Sargasso Sea provides forage area or habitat for living marine resources that could be impacted by different types of fishing and whether there is a need for any management measure including a closure to protect this ecosystem. The Sargasso Sea Association highlighted that the information shared through the EBSA identification process may help strengthen the scientific basis for protective measures at other sectoral entities.

Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS): CPPS has used the EBSA process as an example in MSP training activities. EBSAs will be also relevant in the implementation of the GEF/FAO/UNEP ABNJ Deep seas project, in particular component 4 in which CPPS will be involved. It was agreed that the area of the pilot project in the Southeast Pacific is the one defined during the description of EBSAs in the Eastern tropical and temperate Pacific region. Furthermore, the EBSA process will be the base of the MSP analysis to be carried out in this project in this region.

South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO): At the first meeting of its Scientific Committee (October 2013), SPRFMO considered COP decision XI/17 containing the summary report of the first two EBSA workshops, including the Western South Pacific region, as an information document (SC-01-INF-06: Areas meeting criteria for Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas). The Committee also considered a map indicating the location of areas meeting EBSA criteria that overlap with the SPRFMO Convention Area (SC-01-INF-07).

United Nations Environment Programme, Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP), Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC-SPA): The scientific information made available at the Mediterranean Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Málaga, Spain, 7-11 April 2014) has provided an overall framework for the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in their efforts to achieve Aichi Target 11 through area-based management. Current interest by SPA Focal Points for future management actions in the Mediterranean is focused on the EBSAs described, due to the updated information made available. During the 12th Meeting of SPA/RAC Focal Points held in Athens in May 2015, riparian countries delivered a set of recommendations for a comprehensive, coherent network of well managed MPAs, taking into account the scientific information provided in the description of EBSAs (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.408/Inf.9 rev2). The Mediterranean countries have continued compiling valuable information and incorporating new scientific data for several EBSAs with the support of the RAC/SPA.

Subregional processes

The Benguela Current Commission (BCC) and the German Agency for International Technical Cooperation (GIZ): The BCC and its member states (Angola, Namibia and South Africa), together with the GIZ, are implementing a capacity-development project for marine spatial planning (MSP) and EBSAs, with funding from the German Federal Environment Ministry, through its International Climate Initiative. The Benguela Current Marine Spatial Management and Governance Project (MARISMA) aims to support the development of marine spatial management plans in priority ocean areas at the national level. The project will support BCC member states in reviewing and enhancing current EBSA

descriptions produced during the South-Eastern Atlantic Regional EBSA Workshop, convened by the CBD Secretariat in Swakopmund, Namibia, in April 2013. It also aims to identify additional areas in the region that would meet the EBSA criteria. The project furthermore seeks to assess the vulnerabilities of selected EBSAs for the development of possible management measures necessary to sustain and conserve their ecological and biological significance. This will enable the countries to move EBSAs from scientific information to management — or “from maps to action”.

Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation in Western Africa (PRCM) and the West Africa Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas (RAMPAO): As a follow-up to the South-Eastern Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Swakopmund, Namibia, from 8 to 12 April 2013, the Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation in Western Africa (PRCM) and the West Africa Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas (RAMPAO) organized a regional workshop on EBSA processes in West Africa, in Banjul, Gambia, from 29 to 30 September 2015. The 7 member countries of PRCM in attendance (Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde, Guinea and Sierra-Leone), which together described 15 areas meeting EBSA criteria at the CBD workshop, put in place a regional working group on EBSAs and each established a national working group to follow up on the work done at the regional workshop. It is reported that the Parties involved are taking into account the information emerging from the EBSA workshop in their decision-making regarding the management strategies for the areas. Possible options considered include extending the existing MPAs using this information or improving the management and governance of these areas.

Annex IV

PRACTICAL OPTIONS FOR FURTHER ENHANCING SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGIES AND APPROACHES ON THE DESCRIPTION OF AREAS MEETING THE EBSA CRITERIA

1. Improving data compilation and synthesis and application of the EBSA criteria

1.1 Improving the scientific guidance for the application of the EBSA criteria

Existing scientific guidance includes the training manual and modules for the description of EBSAs (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/9, prepared in 2012) and the scientific and technical guidance on the use of biogeographic classification systems and the application of the scientific criteria for the EBSAs (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/INF/4, prepared in 2009). This guidance could be improved by incorporating the lessons learned from the twelve EBSA regional workshops held thus far. In particular, more detailed guidance could be provided on the following: Interpretation of each criterion, examples of how to apply the criteria; assessments/rankings of the regional significance of areas relative to each of the EBSA criteria; the issue of thresholds in determining the degree to which an area meets each of the criteria; expert judgement processes; areas that meet multiple criteria; dealing with relatively small ecosystem features vs. very extensive oceanographic features; areas that are overlapping or nested within broader areas meeting the EBSA criteria; and different characteristics of areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

1.2 Improving the systematic assessment of areas against the EBSA criteria

The expert judgement process through the EBSA regional workshops could be supported by prior systematic assessments of areas at the regional or subregional scale conducted against the EBSA criteria. These would be provided as inputs to the regional/national workshops to be validated by experts nominated by CBD Parties according to existing procedures. In particular, this approach would be useful for marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, where experts nominated by individual countries do not necessarily have at hand all the required scientific data for application of the EBSA criteria.

1.3. Characterizing or categorizing areas meeting the EBSA criteria

The usefulness of the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria could be enhanced by providing information on the characterization of areas meeting the EBSA criteria such that the description of these areas would better inform conservation and management as well as research or monitoring. This characterization could generally be related to the geographic nature and the complexity of features within an area. For example, areas could be categorized as: (a) geographically stable with a single feature of ecological or biological significance, (b) geographically stable with aggregated features, (c) geographically dynamic with single feature of ecological or biological significance, and (d) geographically dynamic with aggregated features. Characterization of areas meeting the EBSA criteria could also depend on the extent to which the features described are “benthic” and/or “pelagic”. This characterization should be flexibly applied and only to an extent that such characterization would facilitate the use of the information in the EBSA description.

1.4. Improving data availability and accessibility

A number of steps could be taken to improve the availability of relevant data and the ability of experts to make use of it:

(a) CBD national focal points could be encouraged to coordinate with relevant national scientific institutions, e.g. through national EBSA preparatory meetings, to provide scientific input to EBSA regional workshops and/or national exercises on the description of EBSAs;

(b) Scientific data/information, including the results of statistical analysis or modelling, could be accompanied with direct online links to (or hardcopies of) respective scientific papers or reports, so that the information submitted to the workshops can be fully validated at the workshops;

(c) If possible, subject to available resources, participants who attend the EBSA regional workshops could undergo training 2-3 months prior to the workshops, so that participants are fully aware of the types and range of data that they need to compile in order to effectively describe areas meeting the EBSA criteria during the workshop using the template provided by the Secretariat;

(d) A formal mechanism could be set in place to engage relevant United Nations/international organizations, international network of scientific institutions, regional seas organizations, regional fisheries bodies, large marine ecosystem programmes, or other relevant regional initiatives. In particular, regional seas organizations can play the role of regional EBSA data repositories (complementing the CBD global EBSA repository), linking various global and regional data partners/online portals;

(e) Various sectors or business communities who hold relevant scientific information could be engaged, while also exploring ways and means to address their concerns related to data confidentiality.

1.5. Enhancing the use of the traditional, scientific, technical and technological knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities

Given the unique nature challenges associated with the use of traditional knowledge, which may not be adequately addressed by regional workshops that is based on nomination process of one expert per country Party and organization, the most effective setting for using traditional knowledge in the description of EBSAs may be in workshops conducted at the national or local scales. Training could be organized, targeting both the experts from indigenous peoples and local community and from scientific institutions prior to workshops at the national or local levels. This would build on the training manual on incorporating traditional knowledge into the description of EBSAs, as contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/21, as well as the relevant work by the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (e.g. Report from the Expert workshop on Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems to IPBES, June 2013, Tokyo, as contained in document IPBES/2/INF/1.

2. Approaches for incorporating new scientific information and new consideration of existing information in future description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, including traditional knowledge

Consideration of new scientific information, or the new consideration of existing information, could: support the existing EBSA descriptions (case 1); suggest revision of the descriptions and/or geographic boundaries of the areas (case 2); suggest removal of the EBSA description from the repository (case 3); or suggest the description of additional areas meeting the EBSA criteria in areas already covered by regional workshops.

Different approaches for incorporating new information would be needed depending on the jurisdiction of the area.

2.1. Compilation of new scientific information related to the description of EBSAs in marine areas within national jurisdiction

The following elements are proposed:

(a) Encouraging Parties and other Governments to each designate through their national focal points, a “national EBSA information curator” to be responsible for collecting and accumulating all new EBSA related scientific information within their national jurisdictions;

(b) Exploring the use of the national biodiversity clearing-house mechanism (CHM) and other relevant online portals for making available new scientific information related to either areas that have been described as meeting the EBSA criteria or potential new areas meeting the EBSA criteria, in collaboration with the EBSA information curators (as noted above) and CHM national focal points;

(c) Requesting the “EBSA information curator” to undertake a gap analysis with regard to available scientific information on the geographic and thematic coverage of existing EBSA descriptions in areas within their respective national jurisdiction;

(d) Providing new scientific information compiled by the EBSA information curators from respective countries as well as the results of the gap analyses noted above as inputs to future regional or subregional workshops, which may take place where Parties wish workshops to be held at minimum four-year cycle, subject to available financial resources;

(e) Inviting relevant organizations, in particular scientific institutions, and individual experts to provide new scientific information related to existing or potential new EBSA descriptions to respective CBD national focal points for their transmission to their respective EBSA information curator;

(f) Requesting the Executive Secretary to provide “EBSA information curator” with detailed guidelines on information collection, protocol for data quality control, guidelines for gap analysis, and relevant training opportunities, subject to available financial resources, in partnerships with relevant United Nations/international organizations or initiatives, such as the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) and the Ocean Biogeographic Information System of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission/UNESCO.

2.2. Compilation of new scientific information related to the description of EBSAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction

The following elements are proposed:

(a) Convening an “Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on EBSAs” (see draft terms of reference in the appendix to this annex) by inviting Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to submit nominations of relevant experts who could contribute to the compilation of new EBSA-related scientific information in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The work of this technical expert group could be undertaken through e-mail, online fora or meetings once every two years, subject to available financial resources. This Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group can also provide scientific and technical assistance to the Executive Secretary in preparing detailed guidelines on information collection, protocol for data quality

control, guidelines for gap analysis, and relevant training opportunities, as noted in the subparagraph 2.1 (f) above;

(b) Making available, through the EBSA information-sharing mechanism, new scientific information related to areas that have been described as EBSAs, together with scientific analysis on how the new information might affect existing EBSA descriptions and suggestions on the need for additional regional or global workshops;

(c) Requesting this “Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group” to undertake a gap analysis with regard to available scientific information regarding the geographic and thematic coverage of existing EBSAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

(d) Inviting relevant organizations, in particular scientific institutions, and individual experts to provide new scientific information related to existing or potential new EBSA descriptions to the Secretariat for their transmission to this “Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group”.

Summary table of procedures for incorporating new scientific information into EBSA description process

Outcome of the consideration of new scientific information	Suggested processes⁹ and roles of national EBSA information curators, the “Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on EBSAs” and the CBD Secretariat
Case 1: New scientific information, based on new monitoring data and/or research, which would further strengthen existing EBSA descriptions	<p><u>For information related to areas within national jurisdiction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National EBSA information curator could request the CBD Secretariat to make available the relevant scientific references through the EBSA information-sharing mechanism
	<p><u>For information related to areas within national jurisdictions of more than two countries (transboundary areas)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National EBSA information curators of relevant countries can jointly request the CBD Secretariat to make available the relevant scientific references through the EBSA information-sharing mechanism
	<p><u>For information related to areas beyond national jurisdiction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on EBSAs can request the CBD Secretariat to make available the relevant scientific references through the EBSA information-sharing mechanism
Case 2: New scientific information, based on monitoring data and/or research, which may necessitate revision of existing EBSA descriptions and/or the geographic boundaries of the areas Case 3: New references, based on monitoring data and/or research, which may necessitate removal of	<p><u>For information related to areas within national jurisdiction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National EBSA information curator can submit the relevant scientific information as inputs to future regional/subregional workshops or national exercises on EBSA description.
	<p><u>For information related to areas within national jurisdictions of more than two countries (transboundary areas)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National EBSA information curators of relevant countries can jointly submit the relevant scientific references to future

⁹ The results of future regional/subregional workshops will be considered by future meetings of SBSTTA and COP, in accordance with the processes established by COP in decisions X/29, XI/17 and XII/22.

<p>the EBSA description from the EBSA repository</p> <p>Case 4: Compilation of existing information (that were not available at the time of the previous regional workshop) or new scientific information, which may necessitate the description of new areas meeting the EBSA criteria in areas covered by previous EBSA workshops</p>	<p>regional workshops.</p> <hr/> <p><u>For information related to areas beyond national jurisdiction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on EBSAs can submit the relevant scientific references to future regional/global workshops.
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3. Enhancing the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism

The EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism may be enhanced through a number of measures:

(a) Including multi-faceted filtering with the ability to perform data searches based on thematic or geographical categories, in the functionality of the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism;

(b) Applying cartographic methods to better visualize the scientific information associated with the respective areas meeting the EBSA criteria on the map, by providing metadata, such as the characterization of ecosystem features (as noted in subparagraph 1.3), ranking of different EBSA criterion, sources of information (e.g. CBD regional workshops vs. national exercises), etc. Any additional precision in mapping should be in line with the original EBSA description, and used to better communicate the information in the EBSA description through publications and the EBSA website (www.cbd.int/ebsa);

(c) Providing links to relevant information portals, such as the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) of IOC/UNESCO or other relevant global/regional information portals related to areas described as meeting the EBSA criteria;

(d) Using the EBSA website to facilitate networking among databases, experts and information holders at national and global levels;

(e) Setting up a mechanism in the repository/information-sharing mechanism so that users can obtain more detailed information about each area meeting the EBSA criteria through linking with other databases and/or knowledge holders at national and global levels (e.g. workshop participants, experts, referenced authors, etc.).

Appendix

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS

The terms of reference of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) are:

1. Drawing on the information in the compilation and synthesis of experiences and lessons learned regarding the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria in documents UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/19 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/20 as well as the results of twelve regional workshops convened by the Secretariat, and recognizing that a range of issues and potential options exist to improve scientific methodologies and approaches for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, as articulated in the annex IV of the present note, undertake the following activities:

(a) Providing scientific and technical assistance to the Executive Secretary in preparing detailed guidelines on information collection, protocol for data quality control, guidelines for gap analysis, and relevant training opportunities to “EBSA Information Curators”, as noted in the subparagraph 2.1 (f) above;

(b) Making available, through the EBSA information-sharing mechanism, new scientific information related to areas that have been described as EBSAs, together with scientific analysis on how the new information might affect existing EBSA descriptions and suggestions on the need for additional regional or global workshops;

(c) Undertaking a gap analysis with regard to available scientific information regarding the geographic and thematic coverage of existing EBSAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

(d) Requesting the CBD Secretariat to make available the relevant scientific references through the EBSA information-sharing mechanism, if new scientific information, based on new monitoring data and/or research, would further strengthen existing EBSA descriptions in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (Case 1, as noted in annex IV to the present note);

(e) Providing advice to the CBD Secretariat on the need to organize additional regional or global workshops and submitting the relevant scientific references to future regional/global workshops regarding the following different cases of information (as noted in annex IV to the present note):

- Case 2: New scientific information, based on monitoring data and/or research, which may necessitate revision of existing EBSA descriptions and/or the geographic boundaries of the areas.
- Case 3: New references, based on monitoring data and/or research, which may necessitate removal of the EBSA description from the EBSA repository.
- Case 4: Compilation of existing information (that were not available at the time of the previous regional workshop) or new scientific information, which may necessitate the description of new areas meeting the EBSA criteria in areas covered by previous EBSA workshops.

2. Revise existing scientific guidance and the EBSA template for the application of the EBSA criteria, reflecting the results of the work, described in paragraph 1 above, and as noted in subparagraph 1.1 of annex IV to the present note, with inputs from “national EBSA Information Curators”, as noted in subparagraph 2.1 of annex IV to the present note.

3. The procedures for ad hoc technical expert groups outlined in the consolidated modus operandi of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (decision VIII/10, annex III (h)), will be followed. The work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will be informed by background information prepared by the Executive Secretary in collaboration with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations.

4. The results of the activities outlined above by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will be made available for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at a meeting held prior to the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
