



Ref.: SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/JG/77653

7 October 2011

## NOTIFICATION

Subject: **Peer-review of the prototype CBD EBSA repository**

Dear Madam/Sir,

In decision X/29, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with Parties and other Governments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in particular the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS), and other competent organizations, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) and the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), to establish a repository for scientific and technical information and experience related to the application of the scientific criteria on the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) in annex I of decision IX/20, as well as other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria that shares information and harmonizes with similar initiatives, and to develop an information-sharing mechanism with similar initiatives, such as FAO's work on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs).

Pursuant to this request, the Secretariat has developed a prototype repository, with financial support from the Government of Germany, in consultation with relevant organizations. This prototype repository is accessible at <http://ebsa-review.cbd.int/> for your review and testing of the system.

To log in the system, you can click on "Log in" in the upper right corner, using the login username: **workshopper** and the password: **get2ebsa**. Please note that there is no real data in this site—all the information currently displayed was made up solely for the purpose of testing this prototype system. Testers are encouraged to make up their own test EBSAs, as well. To do so, click on "Areas meeting EBSA Scientific Criteria". On that page you will see a box that says "Submit new information", which takes you to a page with background information. Further details on the use of the repository are provided in the attached draft document, "*Introduction to the User Interface of the CBD EBSA Repository*".

To: CBD National Focal Points and SBSTTA Focal Points; other Governments; FAO; UNDOALOS; UNESCO–IOC; OBIS; ISA; UNEP-WCMC; GOBI; other relevant organizations

Please note that this prototype repository aims mainly to support the collection and compilation of scientific and technical information and experience related to the application of the scientific criteria on the identification of EBSAs, as well as other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria. Building upon the experience to be gained in the conduct of a series of regional workshops to facilitate the description of ESBAs (please refer to notifications 2011-160, 2011-136 and 2011-166 regarding Western South Pacific and Greater Caribbean and Mid-Atlantic EBSA regional workshops to be convened by the Secretariat), as called for by COP 10 in decision X/29, we will continue to enhance this prototype to provide a mechanism for sharing information with similar initiatives, such as FAO's work on VMEs.

As such, Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations are invited to kindly review and test the prototype EBSA repository and provide their comments and suggestions to the Secretariat (secretariat@cbd.int or fax +1-514-288-6588) at your earliest convenience, but **no later than 31 October 2011**.

I thank you in advance for your continued support of the work of the Convention.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ahmed Djoghlaoui  
Executive Secretary

**Attachment**

*Kindly note that there could be some discrepancies between the screenshots contained in this document and the actual on-line screen of the prototype repository, which is still being refined. Also note that some URLs were not included in this document and will be added later.*

## **Introduction to the user interface of the CBD EBSA Repository**

### **1. What is the web-based input tool?**

The CBD's web-based input tool and database have been developed to assist countries and organizations to compile information and experiences relevant to the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs), allowing users to share data, information, tools and lessons learned. The web-based tool also allows for the upload of information of relevance to the regional identification of EBSAs.

Information uploaded to the repository will go through a thorough CBD quality assurance process, which involves several steps. As part of this "workflow", uploaded content is not publically available until it has gone through initial CBD review procedures. Subsequent reviews will occur at the regional level, as well as by the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention. As information progresses through these quality control and assurance stages, it can be revised and improved.

The database and repository use technical standards that are well-recognized, open and designed to allow for dynamic links to other databases, as required. At the time of writing, the prototype can link to the OBIS (Ocean Biogeographic Information System) to load biodiversity indices and to search for data on species. Additional linkages and features are anticipated.

### **2. Using the CBD EBSA repository**

The primary purpose of the CBD EBSA repository is to collect and review scientific information about potential EBSAs. Whereas most websites have more readers than contributors, at this stage the EBSA repository is a place for adding, storing and modifying data and information. There is a sophisticated workflow, security and permissions system that allows for varying degrees of access, visibility and editing. Information can be contributed at any time, without being made available to the general public, or even other site members.

All information will undergo an initial review for "spam and nonsense" by the CBD Secretariat to ensure that the submission is legitimate and potentially of interest. In regional workshops, information will go through a formal scientific review process, which may eventually lead to a site receiving official recognition by the CBD COP. The

repository is a central place for both collection and review, and eventually distributing relevant and approved information to the public.

The repository can hold many different types of information, but there are two main types:

1. EBSA submission reports on the description of areas meeting EBSA scientific criteria;
2. Scientific information documents and data supporting description of areas meeting EBSA scientific criteria.

The first type, EBSA submission reports, contains the information about the seven EBSA criteria and may contain supporting documents. Additional documents and data submitted with the EBSA submission reports will remain associated with its report as it is developed and reviewed.

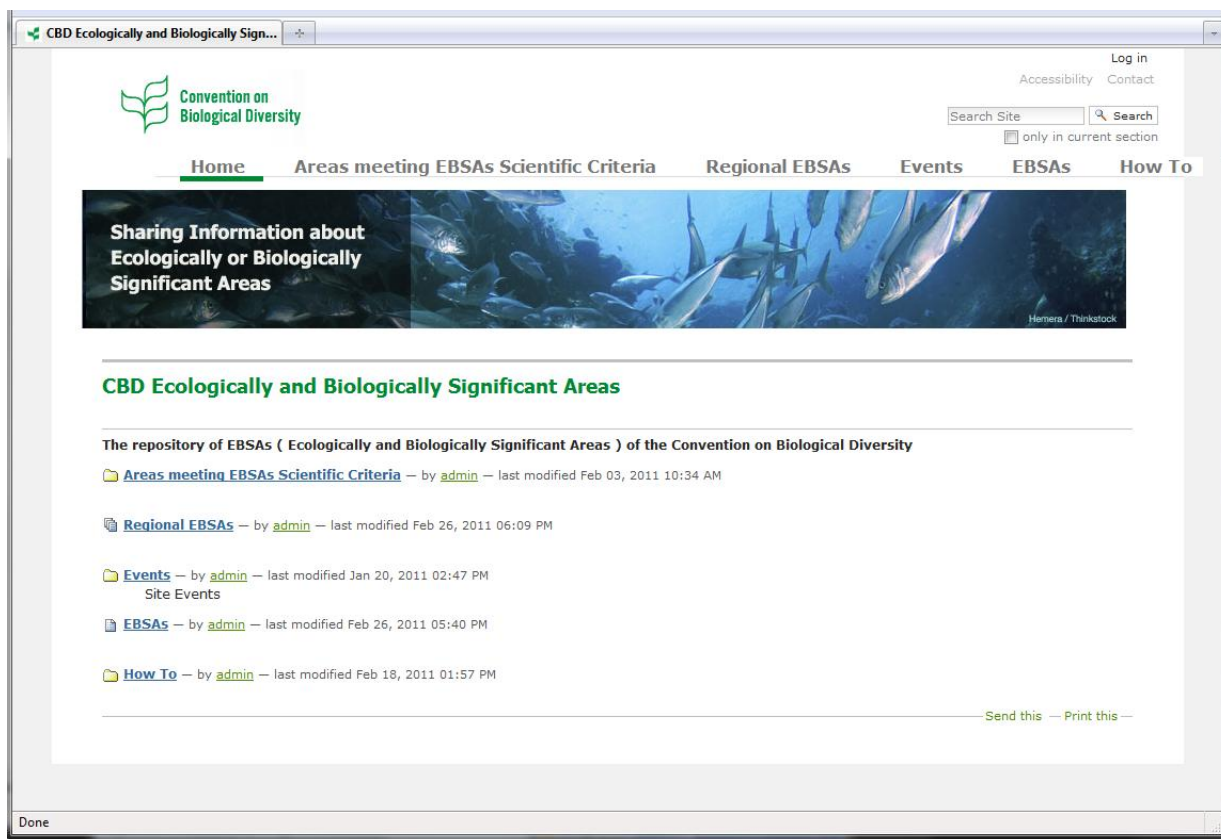
Note that not all data and information will lead to EBSAs being identified by the CBD; hence there can be much more information in the repository than there will be identified EBSAs.

### 3. Navigating to the EBSA repository

The following instructions explain the basics of how to get around the CBD EBSA repository website. They offer information about the different pages, how to move from section to section, and the various links provided.

Access to the CBD EBSA repository website is available through a link on the CBD website, <http://ebsa-review.cbd.int/>. Users can navigate through the site using the menu across the top of the page. From the top menu, users can access the following links from anywhere on the site:

- **Home:** Listing of the most recent updates to the EBSA Repository
- **Areas meeting EBSA Scientific Criteria:** Entry point to the heart of the CBD EBSA repository. This is where users can add, store, modify, and review information about potential biologically and ecologically significant areas.
- **Regional EBSAs:** Submitted reports organized according to geographic region
- **Events:** Information on upcoming and past events and workshops relevant to the CBD process for the identification of EBSAs.
- **EBSAs:** Areas recognized by the CBD (currently empty).
- **How to:** Provides links to additional information on using the CBD EBSA repository, creating an EBSA report, and workflow and visibility information.



**Figure 29:** CBD Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas home page. (Note that the final site may be may appear slightly different than these images taken from the prototype testing version.)

#### 4. Areas meeting EBSA Scientific Criteria page

The Areas meeting EBSAs Scientific Criteria page is the entry point for adding, saving, modifying, and reviewing all EBSA-related information on the site. From this page any user is able to view Submissions that have been submitted to the site, and undergone initial review procedures. Submission reports in draft form are not visible to the general public. Users are able to browse through reports in three different ways:

1. From the left-hand “Navigation” menu that lists all submitted reports;
2. EBSA reports organized by where the potential EBSA is in the CBD review process; and
3. By clicking on the “Regional EBSAs” button in the top menu bar to see the EBSA reports organized by region.

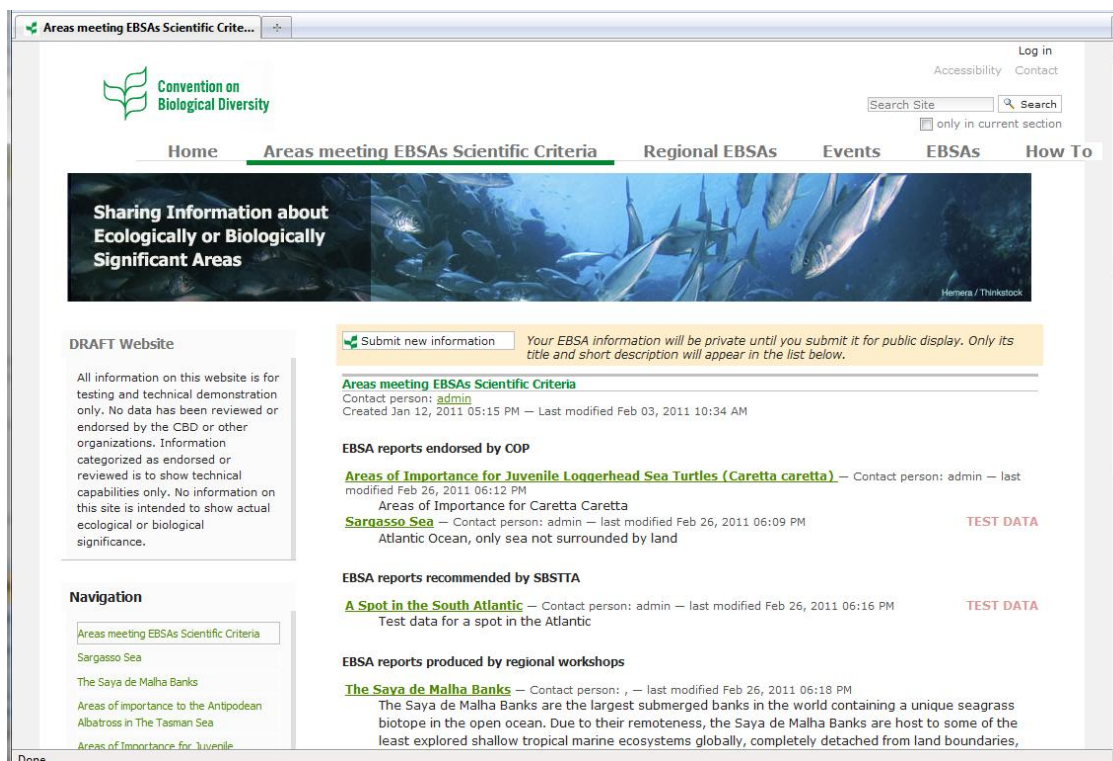


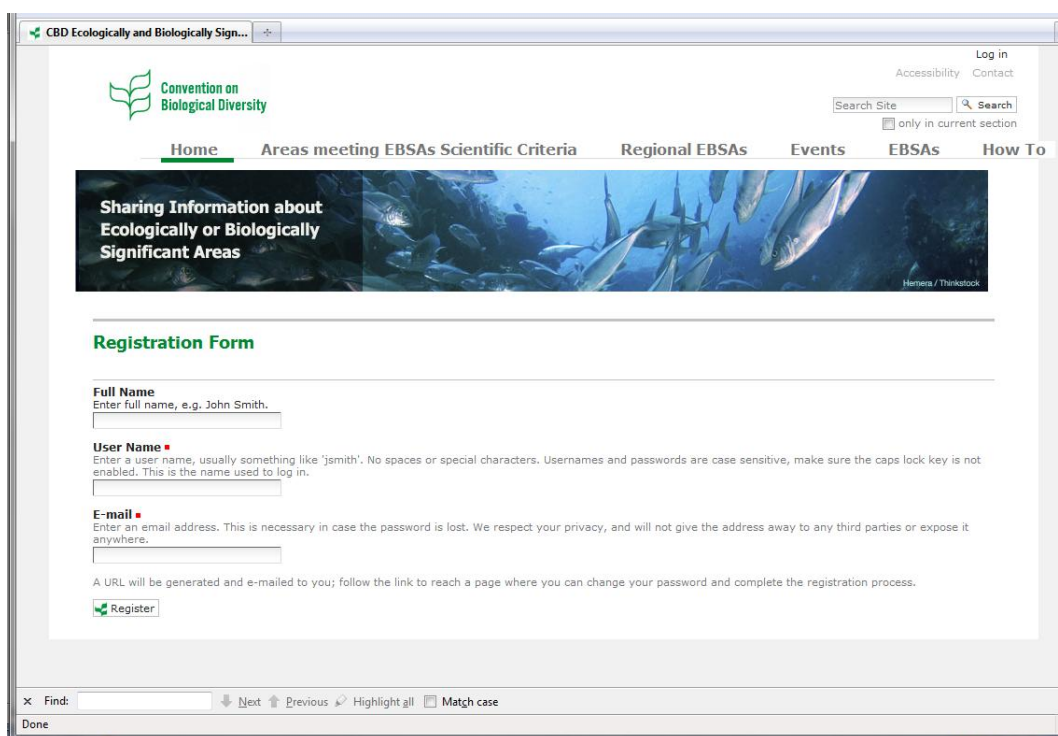
Figure 30: Areas meeting EBSAs Scientific Criteria page

## 5. Creating a login account

*[Note: For testing purpose during the peer-review, please log in the system, using the login username: **workshopper** and the password: **get2ebsa**]*

A login account is needed to submit information. Request an account here: [\[link to be added later\]](#) or by pressing the “Submit new information” button in the pink box on the “Areas meeting EBSAs Scientific Criteria page.” A pop-up box will appear advising users that they need to log in to proceed with submitting information. New users will be taken to a simple registration page (pictured below). Once a user completes the form (the blanks with the little red boxes next to them are required) and clicks “Register” an email will be sent to the address provided during registration. Follow the link in the email to reach a page where you can change your password and complete the registration process.





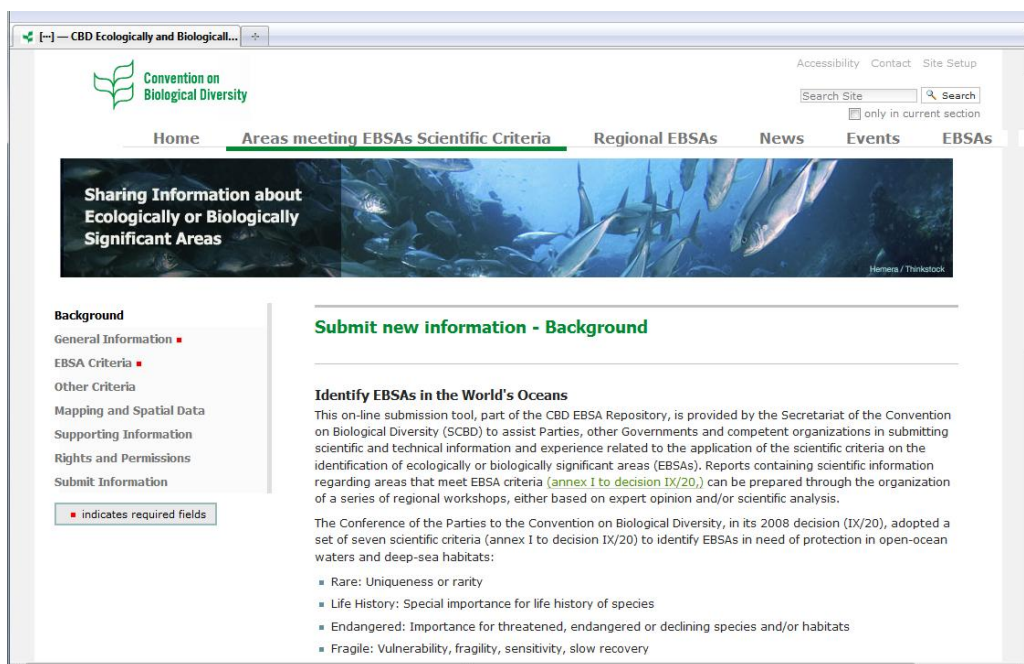
**Figure 31:** Registration form

Users who already have log in names and passwords can access the “log in” page from the top right of any page on the website. Once logged in, users can log out of the site at any time by pressing the “log out” button at the top right of any page within the website.

## 6. Creating a new Submission

The process of contributing to the site begins with initiating a new EBSA Submission report. Supporting documents are not required at first. Indeed, the only required information is a description of the area's significance, a measure of its relative relevance to the EBSA criteria, and its geographic location. Supporting images, articles, geographic information system files, and datasets can be added later.

Users who have logged in can access the EBSA report survey pages by clicking on “Submit New Information” button in the pink box under the fish banner at the top of the “Areas meeting EBSAs Scientific Criteria” page. At first, the user will be taken to the “Submit new information – Background page.” The Background page contains information on CBD EBSA criteria and how the CBD repository online submission tool came to be. From the Background page users also can find links to more information on the CBD criteria (URL to be added later), example illustrations of how the CBD criteria have been applied (URL to be added later), and access to the learning manuals and modules (URL to be added later). Users can submit comments and concerns on the online submission tool at the bottom of the page by clicking on the highlighted words “this website’s Contact form” or by going to this link (URL to be added later).



**Figure 32:** Background page.

Once users are within the survey part of the website, they will be able to navigate within the survey using the left-hand side menu.

An EBSA Submission report has the following subsections- you can click between them without losing what you've added to the subsection. Once you've filled out the General Information and EBSA Criteria section, you can save the report for later editing.

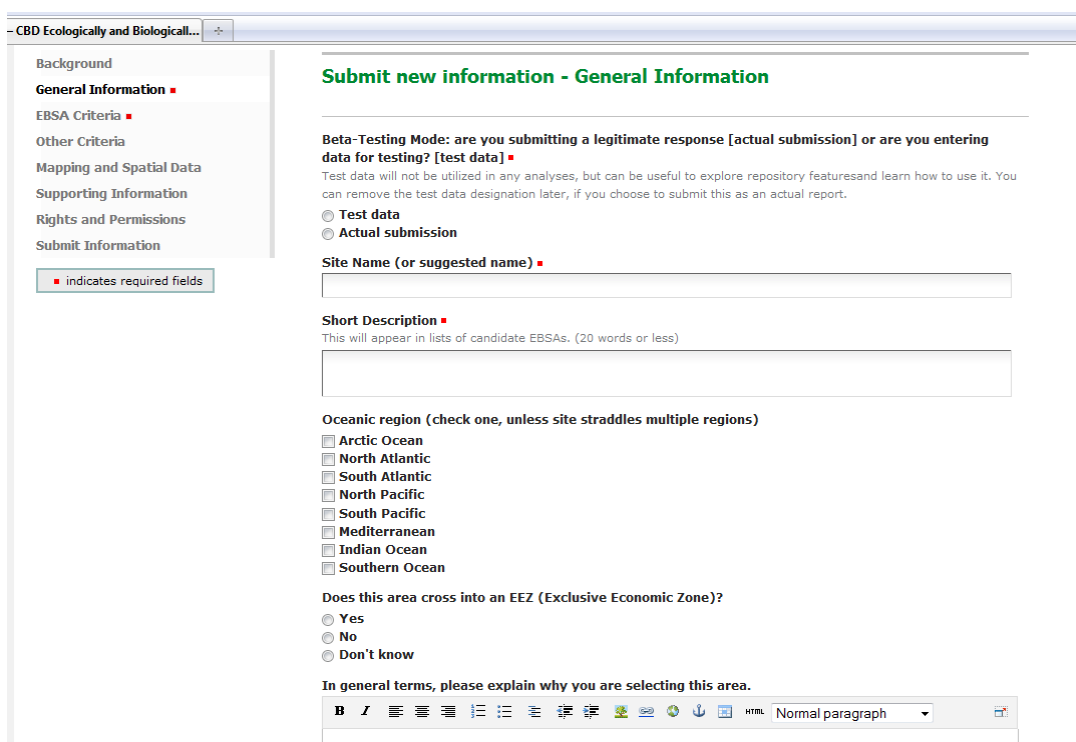
- **General Information** (required): The name, ocean basin and general description of the site.
- **EBSA Criteria** (required): A simple questionnaire ranking the sites significance in relation to the EBSA criteria.
- **Other Criteria** (optional): A similar questionnaire that has other non-CBD criteria which the user may also use.
- **Mapping and Spatial Data** (optional, but highly recommended): an interactive tool for identifying the area geographically.
- **Supporting Information** (optional): tools to upload supporting PDFs, spreadsheets, and other files.
- **Rights and Permissions** (optional): for storing contact information and detailing contributors to the report.



## 7. Procedures for creating a new EBSA report – Section by section

### General Information (required)

General Information is one of the two sections that is required for authors to fill out in order to save a draft report. Authors are asked to designate whether or not the information is test data or an actual submission and provide a name for the site and a short description of the site, which will appear in the list of Submissions. On the general information page, authors can also select the oceanic region(s) that the site belongs to, whether or not the area is in international waters or crosses into an exclusive economic zone (EEZ). A space is also provided where authors can explain in general terms why they are selecting the area.



**Figure 33:** General Information. Note that red squares denote required fields.

#### *Notes about the General Information section:*

- Users can identify a submission as "test data" to become familiar with using the system. No one will take further action on a submission in this state, although you can subsequently change a test submission to a real submission.
- The main text area will allow you to embed images once you've saved the whole report, but only accepts text initially.

### EBSA Criteria (required)

In this section, authors are asked to rate the Submission according to the seven EBSA criteria. Users can scroll the cursor over each criterion to see a pop up of the relevant definitions.

To help address some of the EBSA questions, the interactive mapping tool on the Mapping and Spatial Data page can help users explore the Biological Diversity and presence of species in a given area (*more information on the interactive mapping tool is provided in the Mapping and Spatial Data page below*).

Sharing Information about Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas

Background  
General Information ■  
**EBSA Criteria ■**  
Other Criteria  
Mapping and Spatial Data  
Supporting Information  
Rights and Permissions  
Submit Information

■ indicates required fields

**Submit new information - EBSA Criteria**

**Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas**  
Please rate the candidate site according to the following CBD EBSA criteria. (Roll mouse over each criterion's name for a definition.)

	Don't know	Low	Some	High
1. Uniqueness or rarity ■	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Special importance for life history stages of species ■	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats ■	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Vulnerability, Fragility, Sensitivity, or Slow recovery ■	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Biological productivity ■	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Biological diversity ■	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Naturalness ■	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Figure 34:** EBSA Criteria page. Note that the red squares denote required fields.

*Note on saving your report: Once an author has completed the General Information and EBSA Criteria sections a report can be saved in draft form by pressing the save button at the bottom right of the page. If a user tries to save a draft of their report prior to having filled out all of the required information, an error message will pop up advising the user of the missing parts.*

### **Other Criteria**

Authors can also rate the candidate site according to the following other criteria: Dependency, representativeness, biogeographic importance, structural complexity, natural beauty, earth's geological history. Definitions are included for each criterion. In some cases authors might like to apply a national, regional, or international criterion that are not listed in either the EBSA Criteria list or the Other Criteria list. There is a final "freeform" criteria where an additional criterion can be described.

## Mapping and Spatial Data

**Submit new information - Mapping and Spatial Data**

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**Site Location**

Provide a written description along with latitude/longitude coordinates, if available. We will also record any areas that you delineate on the map below. If you have GIS files of boundaries, please use the file upload tools in the section below labeled **Spatial Data**.

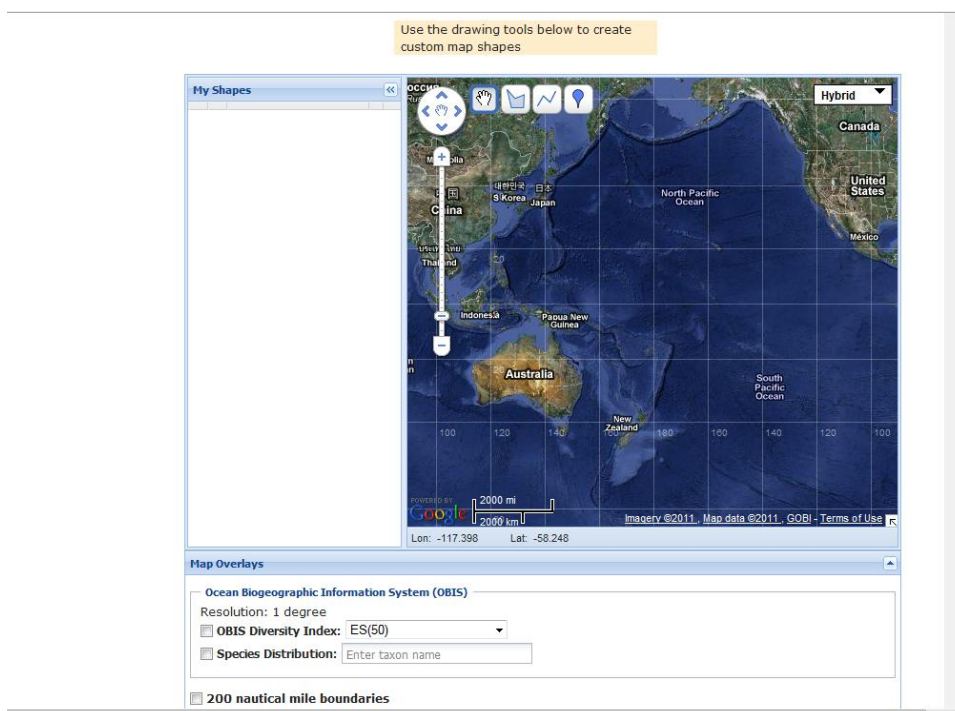
**Draw the area that meets scientific criteria of EBSAs on the map below.**

Please use this mapping tool to indicate the general location of your candidate EBSA. If you also provide latitude-longitude coordinates (above) or GIS files (below), these will be considered to be more accurate. However, we ask that you draw the site here so that we can double-check that the location data are correct. Draw a polygon to represent the general area; lines to represent boundaries, breaks, or other borders; and points to represent specific small sites. Please refrain from drawing multiple shapes unless the candidate EBSA is actually a related group of separate sites. Please label your shapes with titles and descriptions.

Use the drawing tools below to create custom map shapes

9

Below the text box described above, users are presented with an interactive map editor. We strongly encourage users to draw a rough sketch of the area using the tools providing in the interactive map editor.



**Figure 37:** Interactive Mapping tool (bottom part of Mapping and Spatial Data page).

If this is a new Submission, it will initially display a blank world map. If this is an existing Submission with user-drawn map data, the map will show all previously drawn shapes. This map will display any areas demarcated by the user while creating and editing the shape. (Note: Only spatial data drawn by the user via the map-editing interface will appear here. Spatial data files submitted via the file upload tool are saved but not mapped. More information on uploading spatial data files is below.)

The map will display any points, lines, or polygons drawn by the submitters. Clicking on a shape will pop up a window with the name and description of the feature. Navigating the map is done by clicking and dragging on the map or using the map control overlays on the left side of the map window.

To add a new shape to the map, click on one of the map editing tool buttons along the upper left edge of the map. You will see instructions for each tool as you move your mouse over the icons.

- **The hand tool** is activated by default and is used for normal map navigation. It does not create map features.
- **The polygon tool** allows users to draw filled shapes on the map.
  - After selecting the polygon tool button, the tooltip by the mouse cursor will present the user with step by step instructions. Click once on the map to set the first vertex of the polygon, then continue to click to add

additional vertices. When finished adding points, double clicking will add a vertex and connect it to the first vertex, ending the edit session. The same can be accomplished by clicking on the first vertex directly.

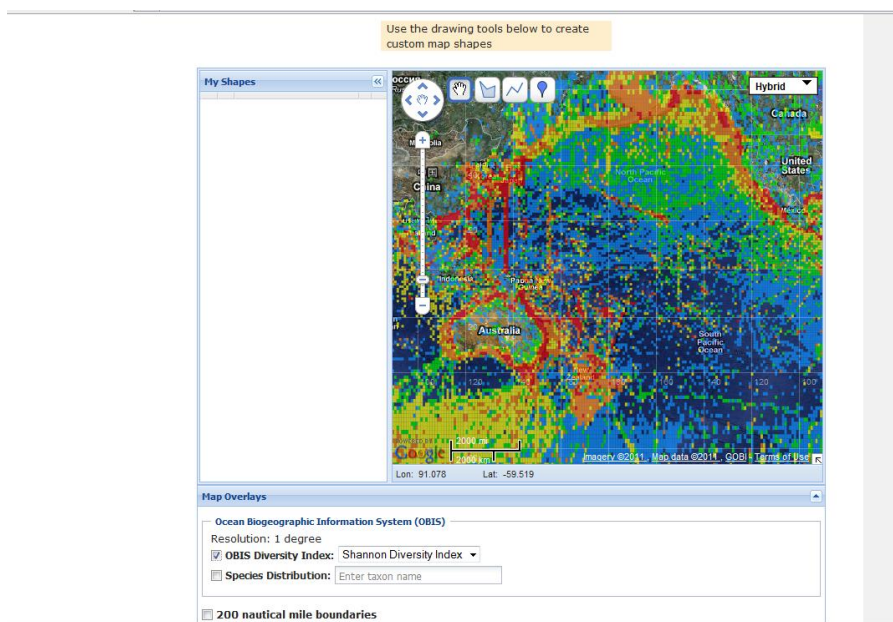
- **The line tool** allows users to draw lines on the map.
  - Drawing a line is almost identical to drawing a polygon except that the line does not need to return to the first vertex. On-screen instructions are provided during the process.
- **The point tool** allows users to draw place markers on the maps.
  - After selecting the point tool, clicking anywhere on the map will drop the place marker.

Once a shape of any type has been drawn, the user will be asked to provide a name and description for the shape. An entry will also be shown in the My Shapes list to the left of the map. Clicking on the entry in the list or clicking on the shape on the map will pop up the name and description window.

**Clicking on the red “x”** next to the shape entry in the My Shapes list will delete the shape from the map.

**Clicking on the “+” button** to the left of the shape entry in the My Shapes list will show all of the longitude/latitude coordinates of the shape vertices. These vertices can be deleted individually or edited manually by clicking on the coordinates.

Below the map pane are optional map layers that can be overlaid along with the user-defined EBSA shapes. Checking the box for the EEZ layer displays marine areas that lay within 200 nautical miles of shore. Checking the box for the OBIS Diversity Index will display a global overlay of the biodiversity index selected in the dropdown menu. There are two layers that query data directly from the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (iobis.org). To view the distribution of observations of a particular taxon or taxa grouping, check the box for species distribution and then begin typing the taxon name (genus and species, genus, family, etc.). As you type, a list of matching taxa will be displayed. Select the taxon of interest to view its distribution on the map. Only one OBIS layer can be viewed at one time.



**Figure 38:** Interactive mapping tool with OBIS Diversity Index layer turned on (Shannon-Wiener Diversity Index).

### **Uploading spatial data**

While creating a new Submission report or editing an existing one, users have the ability to provide spatial data to help define the area. A file uploading tool allows for multiple spatial data files in any format to be uploaded. Uploaded files are then associated with the Submission. These uploaded files are not currently interpreted by the EBSA web application and are not viewable on a map on the website.

### **Supporting Information**

If a user has other datasets, related documents, or media they would like to submit relevant to the areas that meet scientific criteria for EBSAs or other criteria (optional). Submission of any scientific and technical supporting information in the form of publications, maps, and relevant data products are welcome. Additionally, photographs and audio/visual media can further clarify the description of such areas. Users can use the tools embedded in the Supporting information page to submit supporting documentation and media, providing references where they are known and uploading data and media files if they are in the public domain.



Background  
General Information ■  
EBSA Criteria ■  
Other Criteria  
Mapping and Spatial Data  
**Supporting Information**  
Rights and Permissions  
Submit Information

■ indicates required fields

### Submit new information - Supporting Information

Do you have other datasets, related documents, or media you'd like to submit relevant to the areas that meet scientific criteria for EBSAs or other criteria (optional)? Submission of any scientific and technical supporting information in the form of publications, maps, and relevant data products are welcome. Additionally, photographs and audio/visual media can further clarify the description of such areas. Please use the tools below to submit supporting documentation and media, providing references where they are known and uploading data and media files if they are in the public domain. Please use the tools below to submit supporting documentation and media, providing references where they are known and uploading data and media files if they are in the public domain.

#### Relevant Documents and Publications

Upload or describe relevant documents and publications, if available.

- Item Name**  
**Item Type** ☐ File ☒ Link ☐ Text Reference  
**URL**  
**Description / Reference**

[Add Another Document](#)

#### Relevant Datasets

Upload or describe files of relevant data sets, if available.

- Item Name**  
**Item Type** ☐ File ☒ Link ☐ Text Reference  
**URL**  
**Description / Reference**

**Figure 39:** Supporting Information page.

### **Rights and Permissions**

Users are asked to provide contact information for the contributors to the report in this subsection. If the author would like to submit information regarding copyrights statements or other rights information a text box is provided. Users also are asked to read and acknowledge that

- by submitting this information, it will appear on this CBD website and may be shared with Parties and other relevant competent organizations, in accordance with the guidance provided by COP in decision X/29, unless separate arrangements are made with the Secretariat; and
- give permission to publish the information in CBD publications.

Tick boxes are provided.

**Figure 40:** Rights and Permissions page

### **Submit Information**

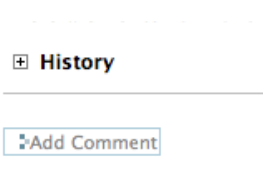
When a user is ready to submit their information, they can press the save button on the “Submit Information” page and carefully review the Summary page. When the user is happy with the Summary page, click the “Submit to workshops” button at the top of the summary page.

**Figure 41:** Submit Information page.

## 8. Workflow and Visibility of information

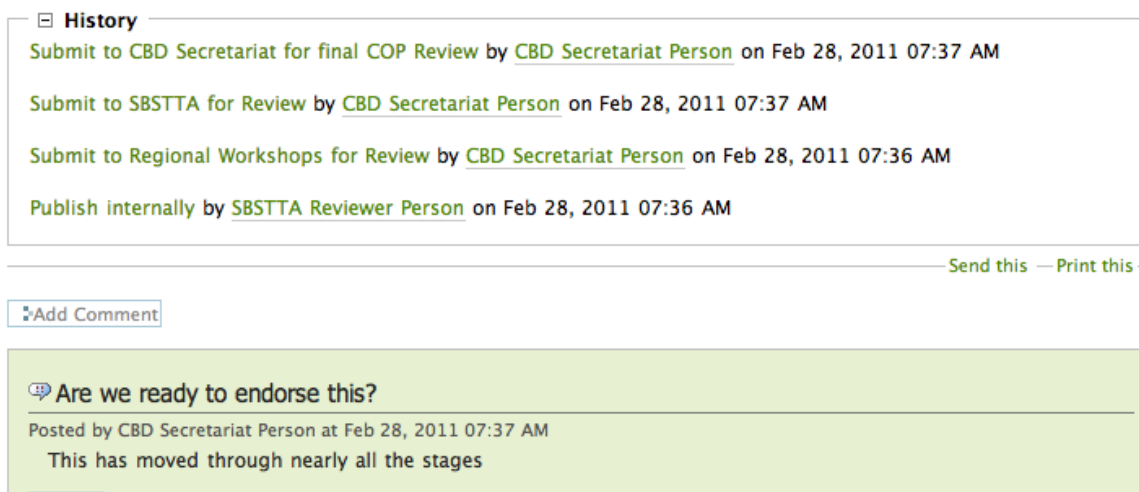
The web-based repository and information tool is open to all users, and anyone may register to make a Submission. However, log-on and security measures have been put in place to ensure that Submissions are not tampered with, and that they flow through the approved CBD work processes.

New data in the repository begin in a private state. While in draft state, before a Submission is submitted, the information is only available to the user making the Submission. If the Submission is held in draft state, only the title of the report is visible to site members. To share the full content of the report, the author may publish their Submission internally, before formally submitting. Once submitted, the information will flow through the CBD quality control and assurance process, beginning with an initial 'spam and nonsense' review. Subsequent reviews will occur at the regional level, as well as by the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Conference of the Parties to CBD. As information progresses through these quality control and assurance stages, it can be revised and improved.



**Figure 42:** History icon.

The history of a Submission can be tracked near the bottom of the page. Clicking on the [+] icon will reveal the site member who advanced the Submission and the time at which its state changed.



**Figure 43:** Sample History View

Comments can be attached to a Submission and appear at the bottom of the Submission. The visibility of the comments follows the visibility of the Submission.

The Site Administrator can bypass the visibility/invisibility of the workflow, and correct an item's position in the workflow if an item is categorized incorrectly. Administrators can remove comments, as can the owner of a comment.