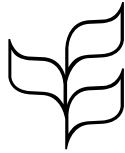




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Convention on
Biological Diversity

NFIFM/R1417 (En)

FAO
Fisheries and
Aquaculture Report

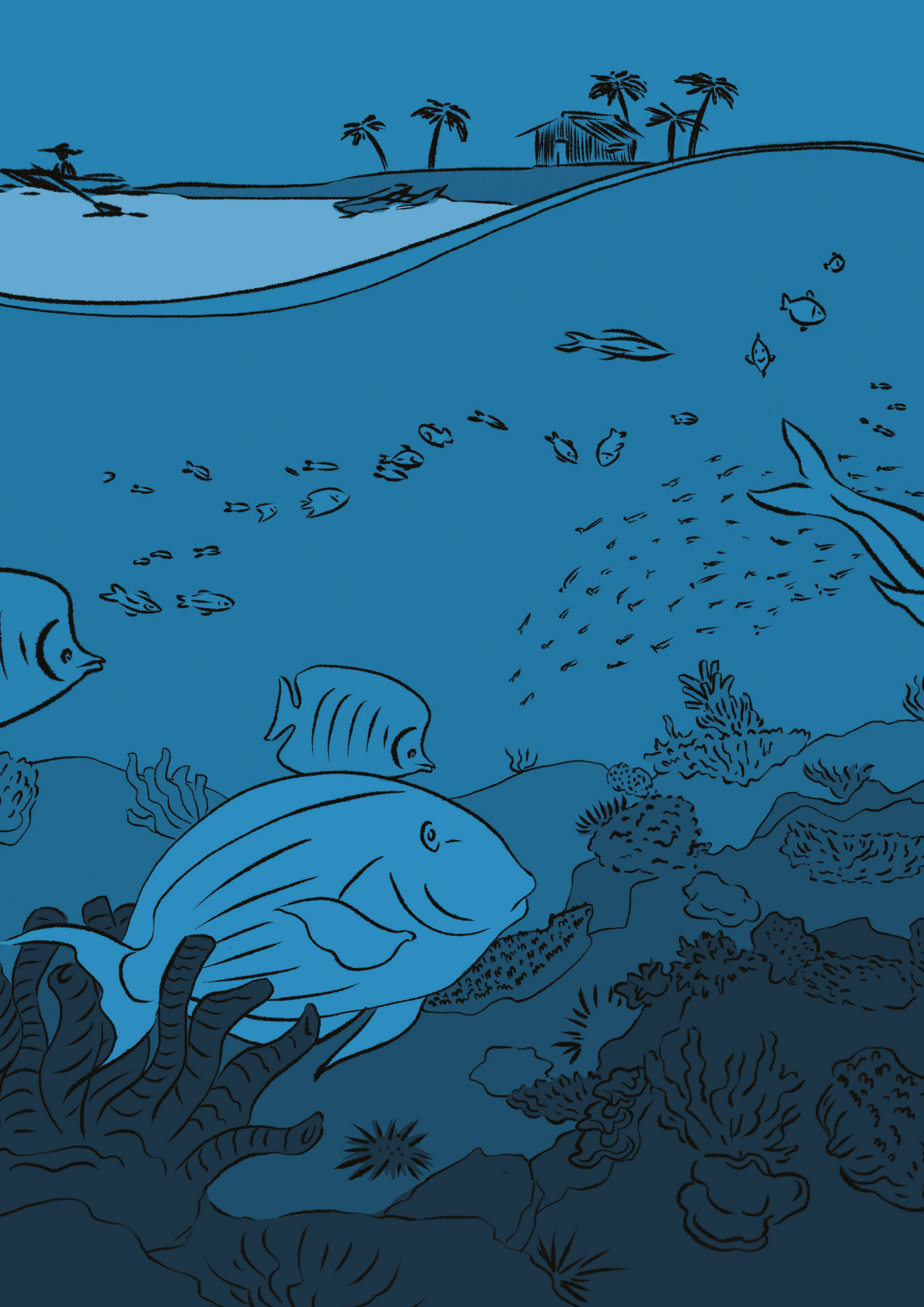
ISSN 2070-6987

Report of the

**SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP
FOR THE WIDER CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA ON
OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES
IN THE MARINE FISHERY SECTOR**

20–21 April and 27–28 April 2022





Report of the
SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR THE
WIDER CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA ON OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED
CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE MARINE FISHERY SECTOR

20–21 April and 27–28 April 2022

Published by
THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
and
THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Rome, 2023

Required citation:

FAO and SCBD. 2023. Report of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Capacity-Building Workshop for the Wider Caribbean and Central America on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures in the Marine Fishery Sector. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report, No. 1417. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8058en>

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) or the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO or SCBD in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

ISBN 978-92-5-138215-8 [FAO]
ISBN 978-92-9-225626-5 [SCBD]

© FAO and SCBD, 2023



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/legalcode>).

Under the terms of this licence, this work may be copied, redistributed and adapted for non-commercial purposes, provided that the work is appropriately cited. In any use of this work, there should be no suggestion that FAO or SCBD endorses any specific organization, products or services. The use of the FAO and SCBD logo is not permitted. If the work is adapted, then it must be licensed under the same or equivalent Creative Commons license. If a translation of this work is created, it must include the following disclaimer along with the required citation: "This translation was not created by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) nor the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD). FAO and SCBD are not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original English edition shall be the authoritative edition."

Disputes arising under the licence that cannot be settled amicably will be resolved by mediation and arbitration as described in Article 8 of the licence except as otherwise provided herein. The applicable mediation rules will be the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization <http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules> and any arbitration will be in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

Third-party materials. Users wishing to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, are responsible for determining whether permission is needed for that reuse and for obtaining permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from infringement of any third-party-owned component in the work rests solely with the user.

Requests for commercial use should be submitted via: www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request and publications@cbd.int. Queries regarding rights and licensing should be submitted to: copyright@fao.org and publications@cbd.int.

Interior illustrations: Manuela Marazzi

Unsourced tables, boxes and figures are the authors' own elaboration.

PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides a summary of the discussions, presentations, and takeaway messages from the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Capacity-Building Workshop for the Wider Caribbean and Central America on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures in the Marine Fishery Sector, which was held online on 20–21 April and 27–28 April 2022.

The meeting focused on gathering inputs from the participating experts and establishing a way forward to identify fisheries OECMs in the Caribbean. The report was prepared by Jacqueline Grekin (SCBD), Juan Francisco Lechuga Sánchez (FAO), Amber Himes-Cornell (FAO), and Joseph Appiott (SCBD).

FAO copyedited, designed and typeset this report.

ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative Capacity-Building Workshop for the Wider Caribbean and Central America on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures in the Marine Fishery Sector was co-organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The workshop was held online on 20–21 April and 27–28 April 2022. It sought to enhance the capacity of countries in the region to identify, evaluate and report on OECMs in marine fisheries in the Caribbean and Central America, as well as to provide technical input to prepare and test FAO’s practical guidance for identifying, evaluating, and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in marine fisheries.

The main points covered during the workshop related to: introducing participants to the OECM concept; providing an overview of the regional initiatives for biodiversity conservation, as well as the current and potential place of fisheries management and OECMs in these regional initiatives; providing participants with an overview of the criteria and subcriteria for OECM identification; and providing participants with an overview the OECM reporting process and the potential capacity-building needs to identify, evaluate and report OECMs in the Wider Caribbean Region.

During the workshop, participants conducted practical exercises by applying the OECM criteria to eight real-life case studies from Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and the United States of America. The goal of these exercises was to improve the participants’ understanding of the OECM properties and criteria, to familiarize them with the OECM identification process, and to provide an opportunity to identify eventual capacity-building needs.

To conclude the workshop, participants discussed and identified several key points related to the evaluation and recognition of OECMs. These measures were seen as a way to recognize and acknowledge areas where good stewardship is happening, including the efforts of fishers in conserving biodiversity. Recognizing local culture was seen as important in the OECM process, particularly for small traditional communities that depend on local resources. Participants also discussed the potential benefits of OECM recognition, including the use of OECM recognition as a quality or marketing tool, and the potential for increased financing for management-related activities. The identification and evaluation of OECMs was seen as requiring case-by-case assessment, and a common understanding of what disqualifies an area from being an OECM was seen as necessary. Finally, participants suggested looking at international guidance, such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) marine protected area guidance, to support the identification and evaluation of OECMs.

CONTENTS

Preparation of this document	iii
Abstract	iv
Abbreviations	viii
Part I	1
Background and meeting objectives	2
Part II	4
Opening of the workshop	5
Part III	8
Introduction to other effective area-based conservation measures	9
Overview of other effective area-based conservation measures	9
Types of area-based fisheries measures and potential biodiversity benefits	9
A global overview of other effective area-based conservation measures	10
What's new? FAO's work on other effective area-based conservation measures	11
FAO's handbook for identifying, evaluating, and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures in marine fisheries	11
Discussion	12
Regional context and national implementation	13
Regional ocean coordination mechanism: scope for supporting cross-sectoral, area-based conservation in the Wider Caribbean region	13
Strategies, targets and work at the regional scale for area-based conservation	13
Regional strategies/targets/work for sustainable fisheries	13
Examples of area-based fisheries management measures in the Wider Caribbean	14
Discussion	15
Criteria for the identification of effective area-based conservation measures	17
The criteria	17
Discussion	17
Identifying and reporting effective area-based conservation measures	19
Process and approaches for reporting OECMs	19
Capacity building to identify fishery OECMs	19
Discussion	21
Part IV	25
Applying the criteria for effective area-based conservation measures to illustrative case studies: Quick screening exercises	26
Marine Protected Area of the Rosario and San Bernardo Archipelagos, Colombia	27
<i>Is the area a geographically defined space?</i>	29
<i>Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?</i>	29
<i>Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?</i>	29
<i>Is the area contributing to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?</i>	30
<i>Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?</i>	30
<i>Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?</i>	30
<i>Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?</i> ..	30
Exclusive artisanal fishing zone, Colombia	31
<i>Is the area a geographically defined space?</i>	33
<i>Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?</i>	33
<i>Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?</i>	33
<i>Is the area contributing to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?</i>	33

Breakout groups: Case studies	34
Fisheries refuge zones, Mexico	34
<i>Is the area a geographically defined space?</i>	35
<i>Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?</i>	35
<i>Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?</i>	35
<i>Is the area contributing, or is it expected to contribute to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?</i>	35
<i>Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?</i>	36
<i>Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?</i>	36
<i>Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?</i> ..	36
Fisheries and turtle refuge zone in the Ulloa Gulf, Mexico	36
<i>Is the area a geographically defined space?</i>	37
<i>Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?</i>	37
<i>Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?</i>	38
<i>Is the area contributing, or is it expected to contribute to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?</i>	38
<i>Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?</i>	38
<i>Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?</i>	38
<i>Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?</i> ..	38
Marine area of responsible fishing of Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica	38
<i>Is the area a geographically defined space?</i>	39
<i>Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?</i>	39
<i>Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?</i>	40
<i>Is the area contributing, or is it expected to contribute to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?</i>	40
<i>Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?</i>	40
<i>Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?</i> ..	41
Marine area for responsible fishing of Tárcoles, Costa Rica	41
<i>Is the area a geographically defined space?</i>	42
<i>Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?</i>	43
<i>Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?</i>	43
<i>Is the area contributing, or is it expected to contribute to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?</i>	43
<i>Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?</i>	44
<i>Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?</i>	44
<i>Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?</i> ..	44
Red Hind Bank Marine Conservation District, United States of America	45
<i>Is the area a geographically defined space?</i>	46
<i>Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?</i>	46
<i>Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?</i>	46
<i>Is the area contributing to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?</i>	46
<i>Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?</i>	47
<i>Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?</i> ..	47
Gillnetter exclusion areas in South Brazil, Brazil	47
<i>Is the area a geographically defined space?</i>	48
<i>Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?</i>	48
<i>Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?</i>	48
<i>Is the area contributing to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?</i>	48
<i>Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?</i>	49
<i>Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?</i>	49
<i>Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?</i> ..	49

Part V	50
Recognition of conservation efforts	51
Recognition of fishers' local culture in the OECM process	51
OECMs and incentives	51
OECM identification and evaluation	51
Conclusions and next steps	51
Use of international guidance to support the identification and evaluation of OECMs	52
Closing of the meeting	53
References	55
Annex 1. List of participants	56
Governments	56
Other governments	57
Organizations	57
Annex 2. Agenda	61
Annex 3. Criteria for identification of other effective area-based measures from the Convention on Biological Diversity's Conference of Parties decision 14/8 on protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures	64

FIGURES

1. Marine Protected Area of the Rosario and San Bernardo Archipelagos and other overlapping protected areas, including the <i>parques nacionales naturales</i> (PNN – national parks), and the <i>santuarios de flora y fauna</i> (SFF – sanctuaries for flora and fauna)	28
2. Potential OECM in the area of the Marine Protected Area of the Rosario and San Bernardo Archipelagos ..	29
3. Exclusive artisanal fishing zone located on the Pacific coast of Colombia	32
4. Fisheries refuge zones in the (a) Golfo de Ulloa and the Corredor de San Cosme to Punta Coyote, and (b) the Península de Yucatán	34
5. Fisheries refuge zone and the specific area of fishing restrictions in the Ulloa Gulf	37
6. The marine area of responsible fishing of Barra del Colorado and neighbouring protected wildlife areas ..	39
7. Marine area for responsible fishing of Tárcoles	42
8. Map of the Red Hind Bank Marine Conservation District	45
9. Map of the gillnetter exclusion areas	48

TABLES

1. Participant questions following the introductory presentations and the associated responses	12
2. List of potential capacity needs for the identification of fishery OECMs	20
3. Key questions and challenges for OECMs in marine fisheries	23

ABBREVIATIONS

ABFM	area-based fisheries management measures
AMP ARSB	Marine Protected Area of the Rosario and San Bernardo Archipelagos (<i>Área Marina Protegida de los Archipiélagos del Rosario y de San Bernardo</i>)
AMPR	marine area for responsible fishing (<i>áreas marinas de pesca responsable</i>)
AUNAP	National Aquaculture and Fisheries Authority (<i>Autoridad Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca</i>)
BE-CLME+	Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
CLME+ SAP ICM	Interim Coordination Mechanism for the Sustainable Management, Use and Protection of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
CONANP	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (<i>Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas</i>)
CONAPESCA	National Commission of Aquaculture and Fisheries (<i>Comisión Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca</i>)
COP	Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
EAF	ecosystem approach to fisheries
EBM	ecosystem-based management
EBSA	ecologically or biologically significant marine area
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
INCOPESCA	Costa Rican Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture (<i>Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura</i>)
INVEMAR	Marine and Coastal Research Institute José Benito Vives de Andrés (<i>Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras José Benito Vives de Andrés</i>)
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IUCN-FEG	Fisheries Expert Group of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management
MCD	marine conservation district
MINAE	Ministry of Environment and Energy (<i>Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía</i>)

MPA	marine protected area
MSP	marine spatial planning
NGO	non-governmental organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OECM	other effective area-based conservation measure
PROCARIBE+	Protecting and Restoring the Ocean’s natural Capital, building Resilience and Supporting Region-Wide Investments for Sustainable Blue Socio-Economic Development
REBYC	Sustainable Management of Bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean Trawl Fisheries
SCBD	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SINAC	National System of Conservation Areas (<i>Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación</i>)
SOI	Sustainable Ocean Initiative
SAP	strategic action plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCMC	World Conservation and Monitoring Centre
WDPA	World Database on Protected Areas
WD-OECM	World Database on other effective area-based conservation measures
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ZEMP	special fisheries management zone (<i>zona especial de manejo pesquero</i>)
ZEPA	exclusive artisanal fishing zone (<i>zona exclusiva de pesca artesanal</i>)
ZRP	fisheries refuge zone (<i>zona de refugio pesquero</i>)



Part I

BACKGROUND AND MEETING OBJECTIVES

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) was created on the margins of the Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It sought to respond to the need for training and capacity building in developing country parties with respect to marine conservation and management, as emphasized by the Conference of the Parties in decision X/29 (CBD, 2010). The SOI is a global platform that aims to build partnerships and enhance capacity to achieve global goals and targets on marine and coastal biodiversity. Its implementation is being coordinated by the SCBD in collaboration with various partners.

The fourteenth meeting of the COP to the CBD in 2018 adopted a definition and criteria for the identification of “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs). As part of the same decision, the COP requested that the SCBD provide capacity building, including training workshops, to enable the application of the scientific and technical advice and guidance on OECMs (CBD, 2018).

The concept of OECMs emerged from Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, which was adopted by the COP in 2010 as part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. However, OECMs were also being discussed in the context of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which was later finalized and adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the COP in December 2022 as the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”. Target 3 of the Framework specifically mentions OECMs, thus ensuring these measures will play an important role in achieving the goals and targets of the Framework for 2030.

With a view to further supporting the achievement of area-based conservation targets, and to respond to the need for capacity building, the Executive Secretary convened, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Capacity-Building Workshop for the Wider Caribbean and Central America on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures in the Marine Fishery Sector.

The workshop – made possible thanks to financial support from the Government of the Republic of Korea through its Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries – was conducted online in two parts: the first part was held on 20 and 21 April, while the second part took place on 27 and 28 April 2022. The workshop was co-organized with FAO in collaboration with various partners: the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP), the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) Protecting and Restoring the Ocean’s natural Capital, building Resilience and Supporting Region-Wide Investments for Sustainable Blue Socio-Economic Development (PROCARIBE+) Project Preparation Grant Phase Coordination Unit, and the Fisheries Expert Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Commission on Ecosystem Management (IUCN-FEG).

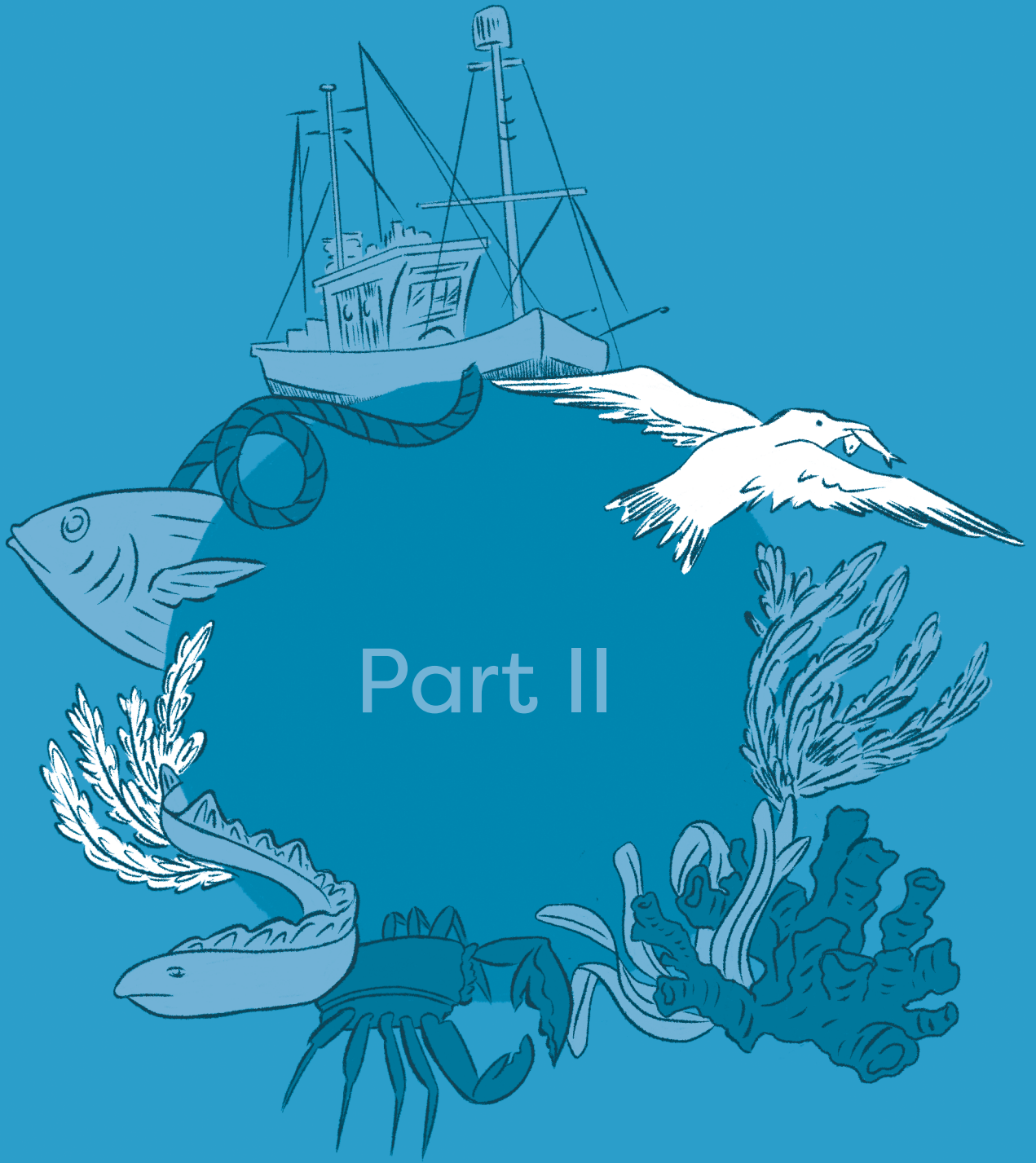
The workshop sought to enhance the capacity of countries in the region to identify, evaluate and report on OECMs in marine fisheries. It aimed to provide the participants with an understanding of what OECMs are, introducing the criteria and types as well as presenting examples of how OECMs can be applied in various contexts in the region.

The workshop was attended by experts from the countries of Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The workshop was also attended by experts from: the Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional de México (Center for Research and Advanced Studies of the National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico); the CEP; the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic; the Cooperativa Autogestionaria de Servicios Profesionales para la Solidaridad Social R.L. (Self-managed Cooperative

of Professional Services for Social Solidarity); the CRFM Secretariat; EnGen Collaborative; the European Bureau for Conservation and Development; FAO; Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative; the Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras (Marine and Coastal Research Institute); the Instituto Politécnico Nacional de México (National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico); the Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense; IUCN-FEG; the IUCN Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean; the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA); the Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas Trust; MY World México; Pew Charitable Trusts; Rare; the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre; The Nature Conservancy; the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Caribbean Sub-Regional Office; the University of São Paulo; WECAFC; Wildlife Conservation Society; World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Colombia; and the Secretariat to the Interim Coordination Mechanism for the Sustainable Management, Use and Protection of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+ SAP ICM).

In terms of its structure, the workshop included thematic presentations with question-and-answer sessions, plenary and moderated discussions, breakout group exercises and discussions.

The list of documents for the workshop can be found on the workshop web page: www.cbd.int/meetings/SOI-WS-2022-01



Part II

OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

Ms Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, delivered opening remarks. She welcomed participants and expressed her appreciation to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for its financial support for the meeting. She also thanked FAO for co-organizing the workshop, as well as the Caribbean Environment Programme, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission, the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem Interim Coordination Mechanism, and the IUCN Fisheries Expert Group for their collaboration convening the workshop. She noted the timeliness of the workshop, as Parties to the CBD were developing the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, containing a new set of global goals and targets and to be submitted for adoption at the Fifteenth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties (CBD COP 15) in December 2022 (which would be adopted at COP 15 as the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”). She noted that OECMs were being discussed as a key focus in the new framework and this workshop would help to inform those discussions. She added that the importance of balancing conservation and sustainable use has been emphasized by Parties in the development of the framework, and that Parties have stressed the urgent need to ensure broad engagement in the implementation of the framework. This includes a better acknowledgement that sectors must not only be engaged in sustainable use of biodiversity, but also conservation. With this in mind, she highlighted that the OECM approach is a powerful paradigm through which we can:

- (i) acknowledge and celebrate those fisheries management tools that focus on, and deliver, biodiversity benefits; and
- (ii) encourage other fisheries management tools to shift their approaches to focus more on biodiversity conservation outcomes, not only for the benefit of a healthy environment, but also a sustainable resource base.

She urged workshop participants to make use of this workshop to share experiences, learn from others and consider how make the best of the major opportunity presented by OECMs to progress towards our common goals.

Mr Manuel Barange, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, delivered opening remarks on behalf of FAO. He welcomed participants to the workshop and expressed his pleasure at seeing a great many participants joining to advance the discussions on fisheries OECMs in the region. He noted that the issue was garnering increasing attention lately, particularly with the current CBD negotiations on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. He pointed out that FAO has long recognized the critical role of biodiversity in fisheries production, sustainable livelihoods and the provision of ecosystem services, as well as recognizing the growing importance of conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity in light of increasing threats, pressures and shocks. He pointed to protected areas and OECMs as essential area-based management tools for achieving these goals. He noted that FAO’s Fisheries and Aquaculture Division was supporting the efforts of FAO Members to report on how the fisheries sector contributes to area-based biodiversity conservation goals, in particular by identifying and recognizing fisheries OECMs. He commented that this was one of the first regional workshops to take a comprehensive look at fisheries OECMs in a regional sea. His hope for the workshop was that it would help to establish a collective understanding of what OECMs are, and how they can support fisheries and other sectors improve biodiversity conservation outcomes. The workshop was an opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and share challenges, he noted, because readily available answers are not yet available in many instances. He thanked the SCBD and regional partners for their collaboration on this endeavour and looked forward to a productive process.

Mr Milton Haughton, Executive Director of the CRFM, welcomed participants and partners to the workshop. He began by emphasizing the richness of the Caribbean region in terms of its marine ecosystems and resources, which support fisheries that are vital to the region’s food security and nutrition, employment and livelihoods, trade, tourism, culture and recreation. He noted that if these natural assets are protected and well managed, they can make continue to contribute to a broad range

of economic, social, nutritional and cultural development goals. However, he underlined that these ecosystems face numerous threats and challenges arising from human activities, poor governance and management; the quest for job creation and economic development has also led to their irresponsible utilization. For these reasons, he cautioned that countries must redouble their efforts to conserve, protect and use these valuable resources sustainably, both for current and future generations. Mr Haughton went on to introduce the CRFM, a regional fisheries body established by the governments of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) 20 years ago to promote sustainable use of the living marine and other aquatic resources of its 17 Member States. At the heart of the intergovernmental agreement that established the CRFM is a commitment to the sustainable use of marine resources. This is achieved through the conservation, protection and efficient management of the fisheries and their ecosystems through cooperation between Member States. He noted that the CRFM contributes to all aspects of fisheries governance and management in its Member States, for which area-based conservation and management tools have been very important and widely used in fisheries since the 1970s and 1980s. He pointed out that strengthening the use of area-based management approaches is an important objective in Third Strategic Plan of the CRFM, covering the period from January 2022 to December 2030. This workshop therefore represented a very important event, to which the CRFM is fully committed. Mr Haughton expressed his hope that the workshop would provide a better understanding of OECMs and the important role they are likely to play in achieving the goals of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Finally, it would also significantly enhance the capacity to identify, designate and report on OECMs in marine fisheries.

Ms Yvette Diei Ouadi, Executive Secretary of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), delivered her opening remarks. She thanked the SCBD for taking the lead role in the organization of the workshop, and for bring together a multidisciplinary audience. She highlighted activities undertaken by WECAFC members that are consistent with ensuring the long-term harvesting of targeted fish species, while minimizing adverse impacts on non-target species and the ecosystems. One example is the current area-based fisheries management measures (ABFMs) for stocks under their full and economic sovereignty; the other concerns the prospect of deep-sea fisheries development in areas beyond national jurisdiction, which many members are increasingly considering. She outlined several examples of ABFMs involving spatial or temporal closures in the WECAFC region to safeguard stocks against overfishing and critical habitats from destruction:

- various marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Caribbean;
- the regional, seasonal closure for all fishing activities of Nassau Grouper in identified spawning areas for the period from 1 December to 31 March, starting in December 2014, which was the first ever regional fisheries management measure agreed by WECAFC members;
- the Sustainable Management of Bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean Trawl Fisheries (REBYC-II and REBYC-III projects) for responsible fishing, improved management of bycatch and minimizing discards and seabed damage; and
- the marine spatial planning (MSP) project for the National Blue Economy priorities “BE-CLME+”: Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus.

Ms Ouadi pointed out that these measures do not fully meet the criteria for OECM but noted that they provide a good foundation for it. With respect to deep-sea fishing, she noted that this activity is currently rare in the WECAFC area, though this could change. In this context, she remarked that the WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries had adopted a recommendation “on the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas”. The recommendation identified five selected and delineated areas that contain or are likely to contain vulnerable marine ecosystems and requested that states act accordingly to close these areas to bottom fishing on a temporary basis and subject to review. By way of conclusion, she emphasized that there is a solid foundation on which to build an OECM process, and this capacity-building workshop would facilitate better understanding. She said

that she looked forward to building partnerships and enhancing capacity to conserve and sustainably use marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner.

Mr Vincent Sweeney, Head of the Caribbean Sub-Regional Office–UNEP, delivered opening remarks on behalf of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat. He began by outlining the role of the Cartagena Convention, which provides a legal framework for the establishment of conservation measures within the jurisdiction of each Contracting Party in the Wider Caribbean. He noted that its Secretariat, hosted by UNEP, has been supporting countries in the Wider Caribbean in their national efforts to strengthen and develop relevant policies and activities. These aim to counter land-based and marine-based pollution, safeguard biodiversity and fragile ecosystems, and implement activities for environmental education and capacity building. More specifically, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat is a mechanism for implementing global agreements and decisions at a regional level, and therefore welcomes this partnership and opportunity to support this important training. Mr Sweeney highlighted some of the regional strategies, action plans and guidelines that governments and practitioners can use to improve area-based conservation at the national and local levels, including:

- the Secretariat’s 2021–2030 Regional Strategy, which serves as a basis for the further development and implementation of various initiatives that focus on integrated ocean governance;
- the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021–2030, which aims to strengthen national and collective action by countries in the region to manage coastal ecosystems. In particular, it focuses on coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses in order to maintain the integrity of the habitats and ensure the continued flow of ecosystem goods and services necessary for national development; and,
- the recently finalized Strategies and Action Plans on Nutrients Pollution and Marine Litter.

Finally, Mr Sweeney noted some recent publications and reports, including *The State of Nearshore Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean and the 2020 State of the Convention Area* report on pollution. He emphasized that partnerships are critical for coordinated and integrated responses to shared environmental challenges and outlined several such partnerships. In addition, he summarized the outputs of the ongoing project on Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries. Finally, he emphasized that the Cartagena Convention’s Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife provides the only legal framework for marine biodiversity conservation in the region. He added that the Secretariat was working through this and the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities to implement integrated solutions on the ground that will have the greatest impact and long-term sustainability. He encouraged all participants to be advocates for the ratification of these important regional legal instruments, which complement the work of the CBD and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and help the region’s governments achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr Patrick Debels delivered opening remarks on behalf of the Secretariat of the CLME+ SAP ICM. He noted the importance of bringing together the countries, organizations and regional partners present at this workshop. He introduced the CLME+ SAP ICM, which was created in 2017 and includes UNEP, WECAFC and CRFM as members, as well as six other intergovernmental organizations with an oceans-related mandate. He explained that this mechanism was expected to be replaced in 2023 by a more long-term Ocean Coordination Mechanism for the Wider Caribbean Region. The latter would better articulate the actions of the regional organizations and national institutions mandated to work on marine conservation, and those taken by organizations and institutions mandated to support sustainable development, food security and livelihoods. He suggested that this event could be the start of a major regional campaign to upscale efforts and achieve the levels of protection needed to safeguard biodiversity and critical ecosystem services, and underpin the sustainable ocean-based socioeconomic development that the region, its countries and people need. He expressed his gratitude to colleagues from the SCBD and FAO for providing the opportunity to discuss the important topic of OECMs and wished everyone a very successful workshop.



Part III

INTRODUCTION TO OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES

This agenda item aimed to introduce the participants to the OECM concept, the relation between the OECM concept and area-based fisheries management, and FAO's work on delivering practical guidance to identify, recognize and report OECMs in the fisheries sector.

Overview of other effective area-based conservation measures

Ms Amber Himes-Cornell, Fisheries Officer at the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, delivered a brief introduction to the concept of OECMs.

In 2018, at its Fourteenth meeting, the CBD COP adopted decision 14/8 on Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, in which the Parties to the CBD formally adopted the definition for OECMs:

a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the *in situ* conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values. (CBD, 2018)

Decision 14/8 also welcomed the scientific and technical advice that provides a set of characteristics and identification criteria for OECMs. These need to be applied on a case-by-case basis and in a flexible way. Decision 14/8 encouraged Parties to identify and submit data on OECMs and invited expert bodies, including FAO, to assist Parties in identifying OECMs and applying scientific and technical advice (CBD, 2018).

It is worth noting that OECMs are complementary to protected areas. They have a relevant role in conserving biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, while allowing for sustainable human activities. However, unlike protected areas, OECMs may or may not have biodiversity conservation as their primary objective. Regardless of their management objectives, the management of areas that aim to be recognized as OECM should have a clear potential to demonstrate positive biodiversity outcomes, such as: communities of rare, threatened, or endangered species; representative natural ecosystems; range-restricted species; key biodiversity areas; areas providing critical ecosystem functions and services; areas beneficial for ecological connectivity.

Types of area-based fisheries measures and potential biodiversity benefits

Ms Himes-Cornell introduced the concept of ABFMs and their potential to contribute to biodiversity conservation.

The fisheries sector is dependent on healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. Given this, for decades, the fisheries management world has been trying to make fisheries more sustainable for them to contribute to biodiversity conservation, human well-being, food security, and livelihoods.

The management of a fishery involves the regulation of its inputs (e.g. fleet size, gears, and fishing effort) and its outputs (e.g. allowable catches and landing). In addition, restrictions may be applied on fishing time (closed seasons) or fishing areas (closed areas) and often combined with spatiotemporal measures. An ABFM is a fishery closure (i.e. a spatially defined area) in which specific regulations apply that can constrain time (areas are closed to fishing permanently, temporarily, seasonally, on a rotational basis, or in real time); space (areas are closed in the high seas, the entire exclusive economic zone [EEZ] or all or part of a fishing ground within the EEZ); and fishing activities (there can be a total closure or partial closure to harvesting activities).

Although ABFMs can produce multiple positive biodiversity outcomes, one cannot rely solely on ABFM types or categories on the assumption they will likely be identified and recognized as OECMs (Rice *et al.*, 2018); this makes case-by-case evaluation fundamental. Nonetheless, several assumptions can be made when starting an OECM identification and recognition process:

1. In poorly managed fisheries, ABFMs are unlikely to meet OECM criteria.
2. The single, short-term, move-on-rules areas are the least likely OECM.
3. Extra-large ABFMs (including footprint closures) might be too complex to be fishery OECMs and may be better conceived as a network of OECMs.
4. The ABFMs created with biodiversity conservation as their primary objective are good potential OECM candidates (e.g. vulnerable marine ecosystems and essential fish habitats).
5. Community-based, multi-objective management areas are good OECM candidates, but their effectiveness remains to be checked and strengthened.

A global overview of other effective area-based conservation measures

Mr Serge Garcia (IUCN-FEG) presented a brief overview of the OECMs already identified in the World Database on OECMs (WD-OECM), as well as on existing efforts to establish a way forward for identifying fisheries-related OECMs.

By the end of April 2022, few countries had started the OECM identification, recognition, and reporting process. The countries who had reported marine OECMs were limited to Canada in North America, Algeria and Morocco in Africa, and the Philippines in Asia and the Pacific. Of these, only a few were fishery OECMs. However, although not many examples exist, tentative conclusions can be drawn on the global picture of OECMs based on the data reported in the WD-OECM:

- Countries seem to have chosen a comprehensive approach for identifying, recognizing, and reporting OECMs, covering their entire territory.
- The identification, recognition, and reporting initiatives have been led by fisheries authorities (Canada) and environment authorities (the Philippines).
- Only Canada has provided detailed information on the areas and on how the criteria were applied. It is therefore not possible to know how the rest of the countries applied the OECM criteria.

Beyond the existing OECM identification, recognition, and reporting processes, recent events have contributed to establishing a way forward for identifying fisheries OECMs. Examples include the expert meeting co-organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and FAO, and the workshop organized on the North Atlantic by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) in collaboration with the IUCN-FEG, and North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). These initiatives performed screening exercises by applying the CBD criteria for OECMs to case studies on fisheries-related measures. Full summaries of the case studies can be reviewed in the FAO/GFCM workshop report (FAO, 2023) and the WKTOPS workshop report (ICES, 2021). Based on these exercises and the global picture of OECMs, the following conclusions emerged:

- The global process is just taking off.
- With good preparation and the necessary competencies, the CBD guidance provided in decision 14/8 can easily be applied for quick screening, even though clarifications were often necessary. The full assessment was obviously more demanding.
- The ABFMs established with biodiversity conservation as the primary objective or explicit secondary objective appeared to be good potential OECMs.
- The measures established by the GFCM – i.e. the closure of all waters below 1000 m depth, and gear restrictions within 3 nautical miles from the coast or within the 50 m isobath – were de facto

the most extensive ABFMs on Earth. These extra-large ABFMs may be too large and complex to be managed effectively as single OECMs, and many smaller specific areas within them might be better and more manageable OECMs.

- Most countries have chosen a comprehensive approach to OECM identification, considering all potential candidates in their area of competence as part of a single exercise.
- In many cases, the limited information included at present on identified OECMs was insufficient to judge their effectiveness.

What's new? FAO's work on other effective area-based conservation measures

Ms Himes-Cornell delivered a presentation on FAO's work to create practical guidance for identifying, evaluating, and reporting fisheries OECMs.

Noting the relevance of OECMs to achieving the SDGs and biodiversity conservation goals, at its Thirty-fourth Session the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), gave FAO a mandate to produce and disseminate practical guidelines to support Members in the identification and implementation of OECMs. To fulfil this request, FAO has started developing guidance through a knowledge-sharing process in which FAO: (1) organizes regional workshops; and (2) publishes fisheries-OECM-focused products with practical guidance on issues related to identifying, evaluating and reporting fisheries OECMs.

The first product to be published under the FAO Fisheries OECM series was the handbook for identifying, evaluating, and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures in marine fisheries (FAO, 2022). The handbook aimed to outline a process for identifying, evaluating, and reporting OECMs in marine fisheries in order to encourage global recognition of the role that fisheries management plays in biodiversity conservation.

FAO's handbook for identifying, evaluating, and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures in marine fisheries

Ms Tundi Agardy, FAO consultant, briefly presented the content of the first document developed by FAO to provide practical guidance for identifying, evaluating, and reporting fisheries OECMs.

While guidance on OECMs exists (IUCN-WCPA, 2019), sector-specific guidance is needed to support countries to evaluate ABFM against the OECM criteria. The aim of the FAO handbook for identifying, evaluating, and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures in marine fisheries is to catalyse OECM reporting. This in turn enables the recognition of effective ABFMs and creating pathways towards improving ABFM contributions to biodiversity conservation, and thus allows governments to consider the effectiveness of their area-based management systems of MPAs and OECMs in their totality (FAO, 2022).

The handbook describes a practical and efficient process that fisheries management agencies, as well as other government bodies and stakeholders, can readily undertake, and has been built on the practical experience that has surfaced in multiple regional workshops such as this one. The handbook consists of five parts:

- Part I provides background on the term OECM and explores OECMs in the context of fisheries management.
- Part II describes the OECM criteria and related principles in the context of fisheries management to provide a basis for identifying, evaluating and reporting fisheries OECMs.
- Part III sets out a process for the identification, evaluation against criteria, and reporting of fisheries OECMs.
- Part IV details the steps to undertake an initial fisheries OECM screening and full evaluation.
- Part V describes how OECMs can work in concert with other fisheries management measures for maximum positive effect.

Discussion

Following introduction to OECMs presentations, the floor was opened for discussion (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Participant questions following the introductory presentations and the associated responses

<p>How would cases where smaller MPAs might be nested in larger OECMs be portrayed in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)?</p>	<p>There is a way to account for this through the WDPA and the World Database on OECMs (WD-OECMs) (www.protectedplanet.net). This website includes mapping tools that allow the two databases to be viewed simultaneously, which enables one to view the connectivity and avoid double-counting. The fact that an OECM is adjacent to an MPA can also be taken into account when assessing the outcomes. The way in which this information is communicated and visualized is important because it is preferable to avoid the appearance of holes. However, caution is required: although a large OECM can have an MPA within it, if there is a fishery OECM inside an MPA it cannot be considered an OECM. Instead, it should be counted as an MPA.</p>
<p>How are the duration and extent of a threat meant to be counted in the assessment?</p>	<p>In response, it was noted that it is important to remember why the term came into place. From Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, OECMs are useful to show that sometimes an area needs to be fully protected and, in other cases, managing only one sector can still achieve conservation objectives. It is important to consider what is intended to be protected and from which threats. It is the responsibility of the legitimate authority, often the national government, to coordinate with different sectors once an area is reported. The goal is to conserve the area from threats, not just from those related to one sector. Unsustainable fisheries may be the only threat, but there may be others as well, hence the need for intersectoral coordination where possible.</p>
<p>How should overlapping jurisdictions be considered? Should areas be looked at holistically or in terms of what the governing authority can manage?</p>	<p>This is a point worth careful consideration because there are important implications in relation to the scale at which the impacts are considered. Overall, net impact of threats to a specific area within the OECM boundary are the primary concern; however, if the resources within move around, the net impact could be considered locally, regionally, or globally. One should also be realistic. While it would be nice to be able to assess threats at a regional or global level, it can become very complicated to look at net impact at larger scales and may only be feasible at the local level.</p>

REGIONAL CONTEXT AND NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

This agenda item aimed to provide an overview of the regional initiatives for biodiversity conservation and the current and potential place of fisheries management and OECMs in these regional initiatives.

Regional ocean coordination mechanism: scope for supporting cross-sectoral, area-based conservation in the Wider Caribbean region

Mr Patrick Debels, Secretariat of the Interim Coordination Mechanism, delivered a presentation in which he discussed efforts to consolidate a regional coordination mechanism. Such a mechanism would help deliver synergistic action among stakeholders to achieve the health of the marine environment, and the well-being of current and future generations.

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is key to ensuring the sustainable provision of goods and services from marine ecosystems in support of national, regional and global sustainable development targets. It demands coherent, well-coordinated action among different ocean users and stakeholders. Achieving this means enhancing dialogue and collective action at national and regional levels. This is particularly relevant in the Wider Caribbean, where a multitude of countries and intergovernmental organizations share a marine space and have overlapping marine mandates. A shared roadmap is therefore required to achieve the integration of measures geared towards protection, conservation, and sustainable use.

In this context, GEF is supporting the region to develop a more coordinated, integrated approach to ocean governance through its financial support for the operationalization of a regional ocean coordination mechanism and the development of a holistic, ten-year regional marine action programme (2015–2025). The support that will be provided by the forthcoming UNDP/GEF PROCARIBE+ project (expected implementation timeframe 2023–2027) can catalyse a region-wide upscaling of action on OECMs, as the new project will continue to support regional coordination efforts and deliver the next iteration of the ten-year regional, multistakeholder Strategic Action Programme.

Strategies, targets and work at the regional scale for area-based conservation

Ms Tamoy Singh, Programme Manager Assistant at the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme, delivered a presentation on the Cartagena Convention and its role in area-based conservation.

The Cartagena Convention is the only regional legal framework for the protection and development of the Wider Caribbean. In particular, the Protocol to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife provides an important role in improving ocean governance. Specifically, it establishes a framework for the Wider Caribbean for which parties of the Cartagena Convention shall protect, preserve and manage areas that require protection in a sustainable way, in addition to threatened or endangered species of flora and fauna. These objectives are achieved through the establishment of protected areas and other protection measures, cooperative measures, and cooperation programmes within the framework of the Convention.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat and its partners are working towards conservation through project implementation with a focus on MPAs, ecosystem-based management, and the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries. These projects include the Africa, Caribbean, and the Pacific Environmental Agreements Programme and the MPA Connect project.

Regional strategies/targets/work for sustainable fisheries

Mr Peter A Murray, Advisor on Fisheries Management and Development at the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, delivered an overview of regional projects, their relation to the OECM concept and the potential recognition of OECMs.

In the Caribbean region, various regional plans and projects exist that include marine-spatial planning as part of their goals. These projects can serve as a basis for talking about MPAs and OECMs, and include:

- The WECAFC Strategic Action Plan (SAP). Its vision is to ensure the long-term sustainable use of living marine resources, with the overarching goal of a sustainable and resilient fisheries and aquaculture sector in order to benefit communities and people in coastal areas while operating responsibly. The SAP includes several technical goals, including the goal to “increase regional information exchange and collaboration in fisheries management”. One of the identified sub-actions is to increase attention to marine biodiversity and its conservation.
- The CRFM Strategic Plan 2022–2030. Several principles and strategic goals and objectives are linked to biodiversity and MSP. At the strategic level, the two fundamental principles on the use of an EAF and maintaining biodiversity in the marine environment, drawing on the best available scientific approaches to management, are leading us to investigate things like OECMs.

Other projects might also be relevant for the recognition of OECMs, as there is scope to do work for the countries involved in them related to MPAs and OECMs. These include: the Caribbean Regional Oceanscape Project; the Biodiversity Support Programme in African, Caribbean and Pacific Coastal Environments of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Commission; the “BE-CLME+” project: Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus (among its outcomes is ecological representativeness of protected area ecosystems and coverage of protected areas, OECMs); as well as the Strategies, technologies, and social solutions to manage bycatch in tropical Large Marine Ecosystem Fisheries project. It was also worth mentioning the work of fishers in pushing for sustainable fisheries management in the region, including the Regional Code of Conduct for Caribbean Fisheries (2020–2025) developed by the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organization.

Examples of area-based fisheries management measures in the Wider Caribbean

Mr Garcia and Ms Maren Headley, Programme Manager at the CRFM, delivered a presentation describing closed areas established in the Wider Caribbean for fisheries purposes.

The Wider Caribbean region is rich in MPAs covering essential habitats that are often expected to contribute to fisheries. In that context, OECMs are expected to play a complementary role in the conservation network. However, there is as yet no regional inventory of ABFMs comparable to the WDPA database. Some of the types of ABFMs encountered in the Wider Caribbean could have the potential to be recognized in the future. Here, we present a list of example ABFMs from the Wider Caribbean region to demonstrate the diversity of situations encountered:

- Seasonal red hind grouper closures (Puerto Rico): areas established to protect spawning aggregations (usually groupers, lutjanids, or lobsters).
- Queen conch seasonal and area closure (Puerto Rico): area opened for a short time to queen conch fishing. The larger distribution area of the species is permanently closed.
- Fishery Refuge Zone in the Golfo de Ulloa (Mexico): refuges established to conserve and contribute, naturally or artificially, to the development of fisheries resources, their reproduction, growth, or recruitment, and to preserve and protect the surrounding environment.
- Marine Areas for Responsible Fisheries of Golfo de Nicoya and Golfo Dulce (Costa Rica): managed marine areas in the region, managed for fisheries and conservation purposes jointly by the state and local communities.
- Cocos Island Seamount Management Area (Costa Rica): protected deep-sea area.
- Gear-restriction zones (Brazil): trawl exclusion areas designed as zones defined by a distance from the coast or an isobath.

- Special fishery conservation areas (Jamaica): no-fishing zones referred to as “sanctuaries” to protect genetic diversity, target resources, mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs, and ensure the conservation of indigenous populations.
- Cades Bay Marine Reserve (Antigua and Barbuda): marine reserve created to monitor biodiversity, sustain fisheries resources, and create an environment for local communities and tourism. It contains a no-fishing zone.

These ABFM are conventional fishery closures and community-managed areas with multiple objectives. The closures may be permanent, seasonal or rotational, and aim to protect stocks from overfishing as well as critical habitats. The community-managed areas tend to be multipurpose areas, aiming at biodiversity conservation and fisheries optimization. Overall, many area-based measures used in fisheries or within which fisheries operate may be candidates for an OECM identification, if carefully checked against the CBD criteria.

There are also formally designated MPAs in the region that allow artisanal fisheries and have been established under national fisheries legislation. These include, for example, the Soufrière Marine Management Area (Saint Lucia), the Soufrière-Scott’s Head Marine Reserve (Dominica), the Marine Managed Area of (Saint Kitts and Nevis), and the South Coast Marine Managed Area (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). However, it is not always clear whether all areas referred to as MPAs are formally designated as MPAs, recorded in the WDPA, and already counted in global conservation coverage targets.

Discussion

Following presentations on the subject and an overview of the objective of the session, Mr Debels presented four guiding questions to open the discussion:

- Are there any relevant fisheries approaches that deliver biodiversity conservation outcomes?
- Are there any mechanisms to link biodiversity conservation and fisheries planning?
- Are there any major bottlenecks/obstacles that need to be removed?
- Are there any specific plans for the near future?

It was noted that there are numerous opportunities to implement OECMs at the local level. For example, in 2003 and 2004, Costa Rica recognized the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) to participate actively in conservation processes to increase the number of MPAs. There are now traditional governance models where decision-making is in the hands of the government. There is concern that if OECMs do not recognize human rights, IPLCs might lose their rights to those areas and spaces that are used for fishing. With this in mind, it is important to understand how to respect and safeguard human rights so IPLCs maintain their rights to fishing, rather than have these rights weakened by anything reported as an OECM. In this context, an example from the Yucatan was shared, where there are legally established approaches for working with communities to implement fisheries refuge zones. The advantage of this strategy is that the area has to be defined and monitored by the communities with the support of the government. It is preferable for the initiative to come from the community because it is less likely to be considered a restriction. Tourism in the area is growing without control. Protected areas are not always effective, and those who fish are considered the guilty parties, so they are excluded from these areas even though there may be other activities that affect biodiversity. Without intersectoral coordination and participative processes, it is difficult to establish effective means of conservation.

It was noted that in the United States of America, the domestic fishing industry also has concerns about OECMs: they are afraid of reporting OECMs that then cannot be modified. The fisheries managers and the industry want flexible fisheries management (especially with climate change and shifting of stocks) and fixing an OECM in one specific geographic location seems to hinder such an approach. The need for flexibility is

thus the biggest challenge for OECM recognition. There is also a concern about the impact of OECMs on fishing communities regarding food security and livelihoods among those who fish for subsistence.

Regarding the classification of an OECM, it was noted that in Brazil there are community-based and area-based approaches, rules, and agreements that are pioneers in the sustainable use of resources (e.g. restriction for industrial fishing activities and exclusion areas, community-based fishing agreements inside marine reserves, protected areas that allow sustainable use), which protect areas from other sectors. These community-based approaches safeguard communities' traditions and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. However, the issue of community-based approaches and their potential as OECMs is complex. Many of these community-based arrangements are currently inside MPAs and would not currently meet the criteria, although they could be potential OECMs in the future. Discussion is needed to see how these agreements can highlight fishers' contribution to biodiversity conservation.

It was noted that in Haiti, where more than 10 000 people rely on fishing for subsistence, dealing with MPAs is critical. In particular, mangrove destruction is a longstanding problem, with complicity among actors to remove mangroves, such as for highway construction, as well as a lack of coordination and sensitivity. The existing approaches to solve this issue are inefficient, and the means to deal with it are lacking. Participants asked if faster ways of getting funds exist so as not to lose the efforts already made. It was pointed out that the potential approaches to solve this issue should centre around co-decision-making, as the main beneficiaries should be fishers, who are not currently benefitting. The awareness of the biodiversity required should also be enhanced.

Participants pointed to the need to consider the possible value of areas that do not necessarily appear to be conservation areas because they allow certain activities, but limit other activities –for example, a particular area where fishing is the priority and other activities are restricted or prohibited.

It was noted that in some countries in the region there is often a red line between sectors, such as conservation and fisheries, or tourism; each has its own goals and targets. They are considered opposites: you either conserve, or you fish. Yet many forget that sustainable fisheries are related to conservation. In the Gulf of Mexico, the oil sector is not compatible with fisheries, yet the platforms might contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. In the case of tourism and fishing, which both use coastal areas, these two sectors do not understand each other from a governance point of view. However, if OECMs are properly defined, this could be a good opportunity to convert these interests into an integrated approach: the OECM concept provides an opportunity for the convergence of conservation and fisheries. If the goal is to avoid confrontation between conservation and fishing, that should be addressed beforehand. If it can bring everyone together and consider all interests, OECM recognition is an excellent tool.

Participants pointed to the example of a three-tiered approach to enable the upscaling of marine conservation by combining targeted MPA designations and sector-specific opportunities with the recognition of OECMs, in addition to wider-ranging, multistakeholder MSP efforts.

Participants noted that on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica there is a responsible fisheries area (Barra del Colorado) that is a mosaic of different management categories other than protected areas; one of which could be a good candidate for OECM recognition. There is an initiative to update the management plan with an ecosystem approach for all the areas.

CRITERIA FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES

This agenda item aimed to provide the participants with an overview of the criteria and sub-criteria for OECM identification included in annex III of decision 14/8 and to have an open discussion about possible doubts for clarification regarding the OECM criteria before starting the session “applying the criteria for effective area-based conservation measures to illustrative case studies”.

The criteria

Ms Himes-Cornell presented the criteria and sub-criteria for OECM identification included in Annex III of decision 14/8.

As part of its Annex III, decision 14/8 includes a series of criteria and sub-criteria for OECM identification (see Annex 3 of this document). Together with the common principles and voluntary guidance from decision 14/8 – and based on their governance structures – countries can use the following four OECM identification criteria to design their internal strategies to identify and recognize OECMs in their waters:

Criterion A: the area is not currently recognized as a protected area;

Criterion B: the area is governed and managed;

Criterion C: the area achieves sustained and effective contribution to *in situ* conservation of biodiversity

Criterion D: the area supports associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual values socioeconomic and other locally relevant values.

Identifying OECMs against these criteria requires many different types of knowledge, from the best available science to the local and traditional knowledge available. The latter ensures the representation and relevance of IPLCs when discussing the various aspects of area-based management measures.

Discussion

Following a presentation on the subject delivered by Ms Amber Himes-Cornell, the floor was opened for discussion.

A participant noted the need to clarify the meaning of “long-term” biodiversity outcomes in the face of external shocks such as climate change or natural disasters: these are difficult to predict and beyond the control of those managing such areas.

The importance of strong governance/political will was highlighted as an essential ingredient to engage in the OECM process, because activities that have a potentially adverse effect on biodiversity – such as bioprospecting, oil and gas, and shipping – are socioeconomically critical for developing countries.

Participants noted that in the language of ‘conservation’, it is crucial to identify threats to a particular site before management actions are proposed. However, OECMs seek to recognize conservation efforts where conservation is not normally the primary objective. As a consequence, the actors concerned are not thinking about how to reduce threats, but how to improve fishing, tourism, etc. Identifying these threats and getting political leaders to embrace this issue is therefore a big challenge. Regarding potential threats, it was noted that if a particular threat is not probable or predictable, it will not be considered. For example, the example of a volcanic eruption was discussed. Although it would likely result in a huge cost to the environment, it is generally neither probable nor predictable.

A participant asked whether oil and gas platforms, which are designated as exclusion zones by law in some countries, could be considered OECMs. In response, it was noted that such cases are very similar to offshore wind farms, which have been discussed in this context in OECM workshops in the Mediterranean Sea and the Baltic Sea. There are arguments both for and against. The argument against them is that the seabed is damaged during the installation of these farms. However, over time they can fulfill the functions of artificial reefs and potentially provide positive biodiversity outcomes. Oil and gas platforms have similar considerations, plus the potential risk of an oil or gas spill. Given this, there are pros and cons to considering an oil and gas platform as an OECM, and since there is no clear answer, these should be discussed.

The issue of adjacency was noted. Can areas that are adjacent to MPAs – such as archaeological sites, for example – be considered buffer zones and therefore OECMs, because they limit other activities in the area, and could therefore contribute indirectly to the protection of biodiversity? The need to be imaginative was emphasized, when considering potential OECMs and thinking about the creation of MSP networks and various types of technical measures, such as MPAs.

A question was asked enquiring about examples of OECMs based on cultural assets; to which the reply was that very few OECMs of any kind have been reported thus far. A clarification of criterion D was also offered, insofar as it was meant to ensure that, in cases where there is a multiplicity of values associated with a certain area (including use values, biodiversity values, and cultural values), efforts to improve the biodiversity status of that area do not adversely impact its spiritual/cultural values.

A participant noted that tourism-related activities, such as cruise ships, diving, and the anchoring of recreational vessels, which are so important to this region, are new and important areas for discussion. A suggestion was made to discuss tourism in the same context as the fisheries sector.

A participant asked whether an area can be considered an OECM if it does not comply with all the criteria – a frequently asked question. Can the applicable criteria vary from one case to another? In particular, if an area does not have a permanent monitoring system in place, can it still be considered? The response underlined that the criteria are meant to be applied on a case-by-case basis, in a flexible way; in other words, one should consider an area and, based on what is known about it, determine whether the OECM label can be applied or not. There could be some criteria that are not particularly relevant to a particular area. There may not be information available for a particular criterion. Participants were reminded to stay grounded in the concept's intention and the criteria, as well as the importance of considering the context. Whether or not an area is an OECM might not be a simple yes or no: it might be, “probably”, “maybe”, or “we don't have enough information to say”. The need is to work with what we have, as there are many different cases, levels of capacity, and levels of data.

Emphasis was also placed on the importance of considering the potential benefits of putting in place an imperfect OECM rather than nothing at all. Does it make sense to miss the potential benefits because one criterion is missing? If an area becomes an OECM and is managed better than it was previously, that is positive, even if it achieves less than it would if it met all the criteria. A suggestion was made to ask would what be the benefit of putting in place an imperfect OECM versus the risk of not putting it in place at all. Based on this comparison, a decision can be made.

The participants suggested a need to clarify the concept of sustained biodiversity outcomes found under criterion B and how environmental and management changes, and the potential loss of positive biodiversity outcomes, would affect already reported OECMs.

IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES

This agenda item aimed to provide the participants with an overview the OECM reporting process and the potential capacity-building needs to identify, evaluate and report OECMs in the Wider Caribbean Region.

Process and approaches for reporting OECMs

Ms Himes-Cornell addressed the OECM reporting process, focusing on who can report OECMs and where. She highlighted the need to recognize OECMs through an appropriate consultation process; with this in mind, she used the one developed by Colombia as an example of how an OECM could be recognized and reported.

The recognition of OECMs should follow an appropriate consultation process with relevant governance authorities, rights owners, stakeholders, and the public. More specifically, recognizing OECMs in areas within the territories of IPLCs should be conducted on the basis of self-identification, and with their free, prior, and informed consent; it should also be consistent with national policies, regulations, and circumstances. It also requires supporting measures to enhance the legitimate authorities' governance and management capacity, in order to secure positive and sustained outcomes for biodiversity.

To make the contribution of OECMs to biodiversity conservation and international targets visible, countries are encouraged, in decision 14/8, to report them to the World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (WCMC) for inclusion in the WD-OECM. Relevant legitimate authorities such as national governments, private entities, Indigenous Peoples or local communities can request the inclusion of an OECM in the WD-OECM. This follows a standardized process (UNEP-WCMC, 2019) in which the data will go through different verification and quality control checks depending on who submits the request:

- data submitted by governmental sources are considered state-verified and will be included in the WD-OECM after data formatting and quality control;
- data submitted by non-governmental sources will undergo an expert verification process before their inclusion in the WD-OECM.

To date, few countries have reported OECMs to WD-OECM. One of them is Colombia, whose efforts to recognize and report OECMs provide an example of a formal coordination mechanism for the recognition and reporting process at a national level (Santamaria Gómez *et al.*, 2021). The process in Colombia works as follows:

1. Initial review: The process begins with an initial review of potential OECMs, which is undertaken by a facilitating group composed of a state ministry (Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible – i.e. the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the coordinating ministry for the OECM recognition and reporting process), a civil society organization (Foundation Natura), and a research institute (Humboldt Institute).
2. External evaluators consider nomination: Following the initial review, the facilitating group sends the nomination to external evaluators (regional autonomous corporations, research institutes, and networks of experts). The nomination is accepted only after favourable recommendations from the facilitating group and the external evaluators.
3. Submission to WCMC: Once the nomination is accepted, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development completes all the documentation required by the WCMC for reporting to the WD-OECM.

Capacity building to identify fishery OECMs

Mr Garcia presented his reflections on the areas in which states, institutions and communities from the region may need to improve their capacity in order to undertake an efficient OECM identification process.

In fisheries, the recurrent assessment of individual ABFMs is not standard, and when it happens, it tends to focus solely on the area’s contribution to fisheries sustainability. With the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), attention has broadened to the collateral impact of fishing activities on non-target species and habitats. Although the level of evidence required and the methodological complexity of the EAF will be adapted to local conditions, applying the EAF may require capacity building. Similarly, providing supporting evidence for the identification, recognition and reporting of ABFMs as OECMs will require an evidence-based adaptive management process. The latter, much like the EAF, may require an increase in capacity to evaluate how the ABFM(s) check all four OECM criteria. **Table 2** shows a list of potential capacity needs.

Table 2. List of potential capacity needs for the identification of fishery OECMs

Selected potential capacity enhancements	
Process enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update fisheries and conservation acts and policies • strengthen interministerial coordination and intersectoral collaboration • provide incentives, including the financing of management for fisheries-related OECMs
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify the central and local legitimate authorities/responsibilities • identify/strengthen local governance, including IPLCs, as appropriate • enhance local collaboration frameworks • identify/involve stakeholders and enhance participatory processes • seek equity recognition, participation, and equitable distribution • clear statement of the long-term intent of policies and management
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update biodiversity-related objectives, targets, indicators • update biodiversity-related enforcement • develop risk assessment and management capacity • show the “sustained” management intent • strengthen adaptive management capacity (projections, decision rules) • strengthen EAF • integrate OECMs in fisheries and management plans • protect and support ecosystem services
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobilize the best scientific and local evidence • enhance multidisciplinary assessment capacity • strengthen stakeholders’ analyses • develop/access GIS capacity • analysis of ecosystem services and their interactions and trade-offs • identify locally relevant values • document use of local institutions, practices, local knowledge • identify the biodiversity values: (i) in the general area; (ii) in the OECM • identify specific attributes of concern from fishing activities
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve monitoring systems (formal or informal) • national registry of ABFMs (optional but obvious in a comprehensive approach) • national registry of MPAs and OECMs • maintain an archiving system for the complete OECM information • provide access to the archived information

These capacity needs will differ between countries, between fisheries, and even between OECMs themselves. A substantial part of the capacity has probably already been – and is still being – developed across the numerous national and regional initiatives that relate to sustainable development, the EAF, MPA management, risk assessment, adaptation to climate change, and the blue economy. This capacity can be mobilized for the OECM process, but countries might need additional resources.

Effective and sustainable capacity building needs to be highly participative, recipient-driven, and adapted to specific local needs local capacity in order to absorb additional resources and burdens. It should also recognize the importance and vulnerability of traditional communities and small-scale fisheries, while paying attention to the engagement and empowerment of stakeholders, tenure rights, transparency, equity, and local knowledge. As a result, learning by doing in an incremental approach – starting with pilot initiatives and scaling up progressively – may be more suitable in many parts of the region, nesting the additional needs for capacity within those of broader national initiatives.

Discussion

Following presentations on the process and approaches to reporting OECMs (by Ms Amber Himes-Cornell), and capacity building for the identification of fishery OECMs (by Mr Garcia), the floor was opened for discussion.

Process and approaches for reporting OECMs

It was noted that the identification of OECMs is an important means of articulating how Parties are progressing on the implementation of the CBD at the national level; it is therefore highly relevant for reporting, given that there is national-level information that is not being captured. The SCBD urges Parties to include OECMs in their national biodiversity strategy and action plans. Embracing the OECM concept enhances dialogue, coordination, and intersectoral planning between ministries, to ensure that different actions across the seascape are part of a holistic strategy.

Participants noted human capacity limitations make it challenging for some national governments, such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS), to collect the information necessary to report to different multilateral environmental agreements. In response, it was acknowledged that the reporting process is a resource-intensive endeavour. Participants pointed out that countries are in the early stages of the OECM process, and that it is expected that FAO will provide guidance, with clear steps on how to proceed with this exercise.

Regarding the expected benefits of engaging in the OECM process, countries such as Canada – the first country to undertake the exercise of identifying OECMs – were able to use OECMs to demonstrate how they were living up to their global commitment to Aichi Biodiversity Target 11. In other cases, an expected key benefit of engaging in this process will be to access new types of resources and funding. If it can be demonstrated that these areas are contributing to the achievement of biodiversity objectives, it could become possible to access financial support, such as from the GEF, as an investment in biodiversity.

Key questions and challenges for OECMs in marine fisheries

Participants took part in a discussion, moderated by the organizers, which centred on the key assets and challenges in identifying and managing OECMs. Participants were asked to focus on enabling factors and elements needed to do this work, since much of the previous discussion had focused on obstacles and challenges.

Currently, OECMs are already a part of many political commitments. They were first included in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the draft targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which means they have the support of all the countries represented at this workshop. The question is how the recognition of OECM fits into national, subregional, and regional objectives. It was noted that recognition as an OECM is an asset in itself. An area reported as an OECM may gain political status and becomes a government achievement; this in turn provides a defence mechanism against other sectors that could otherwise degrade those values. Identifying OECMs therefore becomes a shield, in some respects, a stewardship tool. In line with this, participants pointed out that the traditional way of looking at sectors in the ocean is to assume that they are either posing a threat to the environment or ecosystems, or not. Instead the OECM approach asks whether there “are benefits here” for biodiversity – which is a more positive way to start the discussion.

Participants emphasized that the OECM label is attached to an area because its management characteristics end up improving biodiversity in some way, by providing net conservation. How the benefits are evaluated will be the crux of the matter.

Governance was also identified as an important issue. The decision-making process must include IPLCs with respect to conservation, and their territorial rights must be respected. This region has many areas managed by IPLCs, which is a great asset because their values and approaches often already incorporate sustainability and conservation in terms of their relationship(s) with the ocean. This is one of the region's important strengths/advantages, in terms of its approach to the OECM concept, but it is not being used to the full.

Participants noted a number of additional assets and strengths in the region, including: political will; a political mandate from a regional organization; having a mandate through being a signatory to the CBD; having regional collaborative frameworks, either within or between institutions; having sectoral buy-in so that different sectors consider being recognized as an OECM as a strength or advantage; continuity; and adopting a long-term perspective in public policies. As an example, it was pointed out that Colombia is making significant progress towards the 30 × 30 target, including work focused on identifying OECMs, which is considered essential for this progress.

There was much support for the idea of using a gradual, step-by-step approach to meeting the OECM criteria. A progressive approach also allows for the recognition of areas that do not yet meet all the criteria but will be improved. The OECM concept is still very new. Participants made the comparison with the EAF, which has been used for years, and for which countries have shared experiences. It is not the same with OECMs, where there are differences in interpretation. One thing to keep in mind is that everyone is learning, and countries need to share learning experiences in order to move forward and offer ways to proceed consistently. Participants also noted that the concept is new to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are accustomed to MPAs and can receive funding for them. Those that provide funding should begin to think about OECMs as another tool in the box.

In response, participants pointed out that there are funding streams for MPAs, which may be why this is the first logical step for implementation planning. Discussions at the regional level, like this one, will focus more attention on funding agencies. The GEF will look at OECMs as a key funding priority, alongside MPAs. Highlighting OECMs through entities that are working on them, like FAO, is a good way to build up the need for funding. It was noted that the GEF is already funding OECM projects in many countries, and this approach is starting to gain momentum.

It was highlighted that OECMs are areas that already exist and are not recognized as MPAs. Given that they already exist, it is possible to check whether they meet some of the criteria. If an area is closed, there must be some governance and management – but is that management effective? Are there outcomes for biodiversity? That aspect needs to be determined. Regardless, the fact remains that some of those criteria must already be met.

Participants noted that the issues relating to OECMs and fisheries or other ocean-related sectors are often the same as those faced by terrestrial sectors. Taking inspiration from other tools is therefore valuable, as it starts from a common language or understanding. One example is evident in an exercise conducted in the nine countries of the Amazon basin, whereby a number of partners (including WWF, UNEP, FAO, and IUCN) developed a tool to determine whether an area meets the OECM criteria (REDPARQUES, 2023). It was emphasized that the process is different from the path for MPAs; OECMs are different because they already exist – they just need to be recognized, and a different framework is needed for this to happen.

Tourism was mentioned as an important sector in this region that depends on the services of the ocean but takes the ocean for granted, not contributing to efforts to ensure that it is used sustainably. In other words, the sector benefits from the ocean but does not contribute to safeguarding its benefits. Generally speaking, tourism is out of control in this region, and the point was made that many of the capacities required to deal with such threats lie outside the conservation sector. The biodiversity angle has the potential to be a catalyst to bring together the conservation sector and those sectors focusing on resource use.

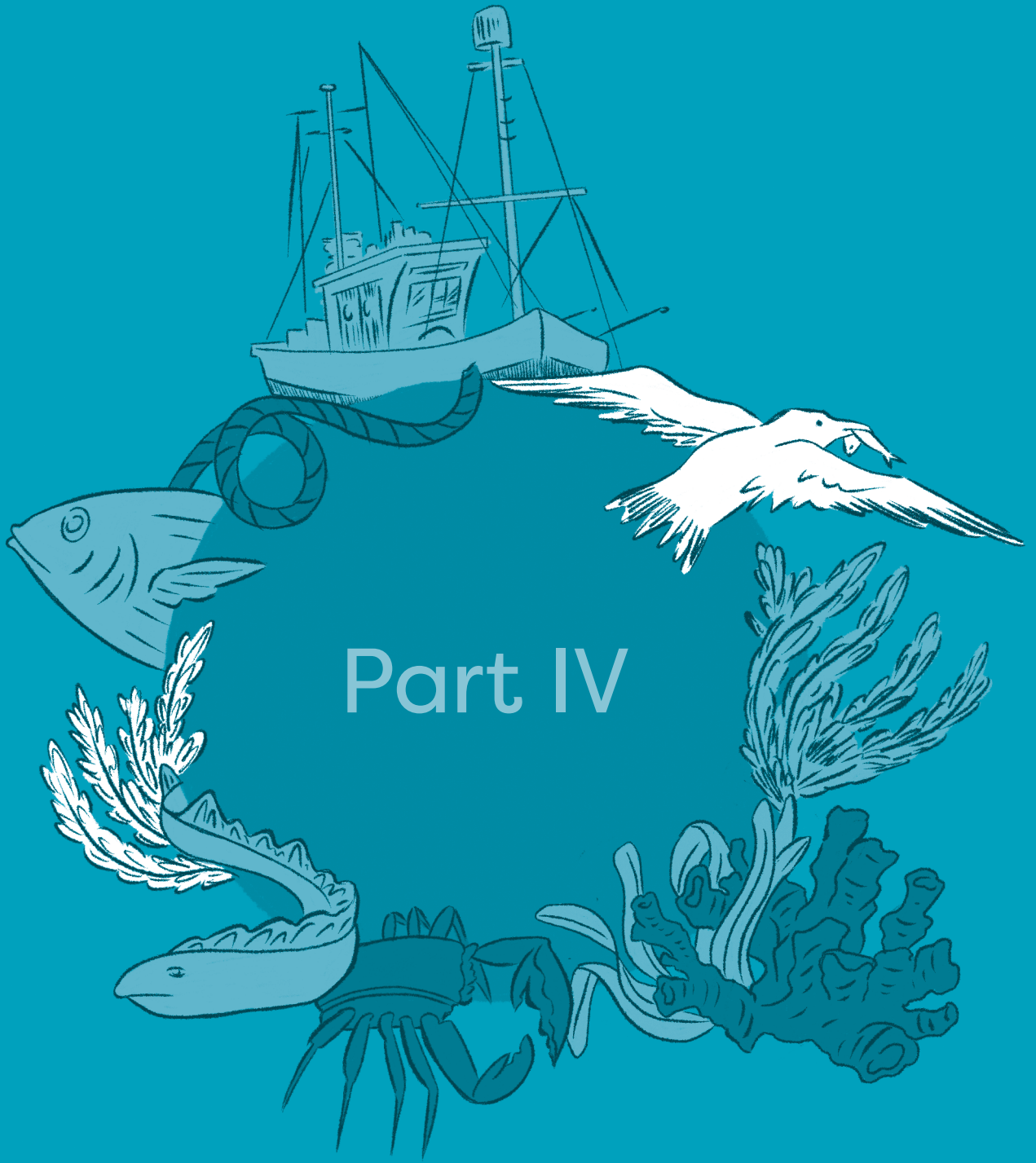
There was some discussion about linking OECMs with the evolving concept of “nature-based solutions”, the focus of which is often on climate adaptation. In some situations, however, some of the biodiversity features are conserved because of the nature-based solutions they deliver, meaning that OECMs could be considered nature-based solutions. One participant asked whether that could be an argument in favour of funding OECMs.

Several further questions came up in the discussion, as outlined in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Key questions and challenges for OECMs in marine fisheries

Participant question	Response and discussion
<p>What would disqualify an area from being an OECM?</p>	<p>Arguably every area-based management measure can potentially contribute to conservation, to some extent. Defining where to draw the line would be useful as it would allow the administration to exclude many fisheries management areas, especially for large countries. It would therefore be helpful to have excluding criteria and maybe look at the many fisheries management areas in a hierarchical fashion.</p>
<p>What opportunities for regional- and subregional-scale frameworks or collaborative efforts exist?</p>	<p>The example of the Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy was noted as a positive response to this question. It speaks to the possibility of identifying and managing at the subregional level. In terms of the limited capacity in the region, technical cooperation among states with limited human capacity can be utilized at the subregional level to allow for identification, management, and reporting. The next question is how to operationalize this.</p>
<p>Is there consistency in the application of decision 14/8 and is it acceptable for countries to interpret it differently?</p>	<p>These dynamics are often challenging in the CBD process, and Parties generally implement COP decisions in a way that makes sense in their own contexts. Decision 14/8 clearly indicates that the criteria are to be “applied in a flexible way and on a case-by-case basis”. Whether there needs to be more standardization – whether certain criteria should be more or less flexible, for example – is something the broader community may wish to consider. It was also pointed out that a similar approach has been used with the EAF.</p>
<p>Can only national authorities govern and report OECMs, or can communities also be involved?</p>	<p>The language of the decision does not say that only national authorities can govern an OECM. Instead, the approach is for the “legitimate governance authority” to do so, whatever form that may take, and which is most appropriate. This is a complex issue. Everyone must remember that any action taken in the territories of IPLCs should be in the control of the IPLCs themselves. Thus far, all proposed OECMs have been proposed by states. The point was made about free, prior, and informed consent being essential to this endeavour, taking “blue justice” and biodiversity into account, rather than the “blue economy”. There are structural problems, such as a need to authorize fishers to fish (e.g. Costa Rica), which need to be solved before discussing the need to quantify conservation efforts.</p>





Part IV

APPLYING THE CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES TO ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDIES: QUICK SCREENING EXERCISES

Under this agenda item, participants conducted practical exercises by applying the OECM criteria to real-life case studies. The goal of the exercise was not a formal assessment of the case studies, but to improve the understanding of OECM properties and criteria, to familiarize participants with the OECM identification process, and to provide an opportunity to identify eventual capacity-building needs.

The two first quick screening exercises were performed in plenary for all the participants to understand how the group exercises would work. These screenings focused on Colombia's Área Marina Protegida de los Archipiélagos del Rosario y de San Bernardo (Marine Protected Area of the Rosario and San Bernardo Archipelagos [AMP ARSB]) and the zona artesanal de pesca artesanal (exclusive artisanal fishing zone [ZEPA]).

After the first exercise, the participants were divided into three groups, each group performing screening exercises for ABFMs from four different countries: Group 1 worked on Mexico; Group 2 worked on Costa Rica; and Group 3 worked on the United States of America and Brazil.

MARINE PROTECTED AREA OF THE ROSARIO AND SAN BERNARDO ARCHIPELAGOS, COLOMBIA

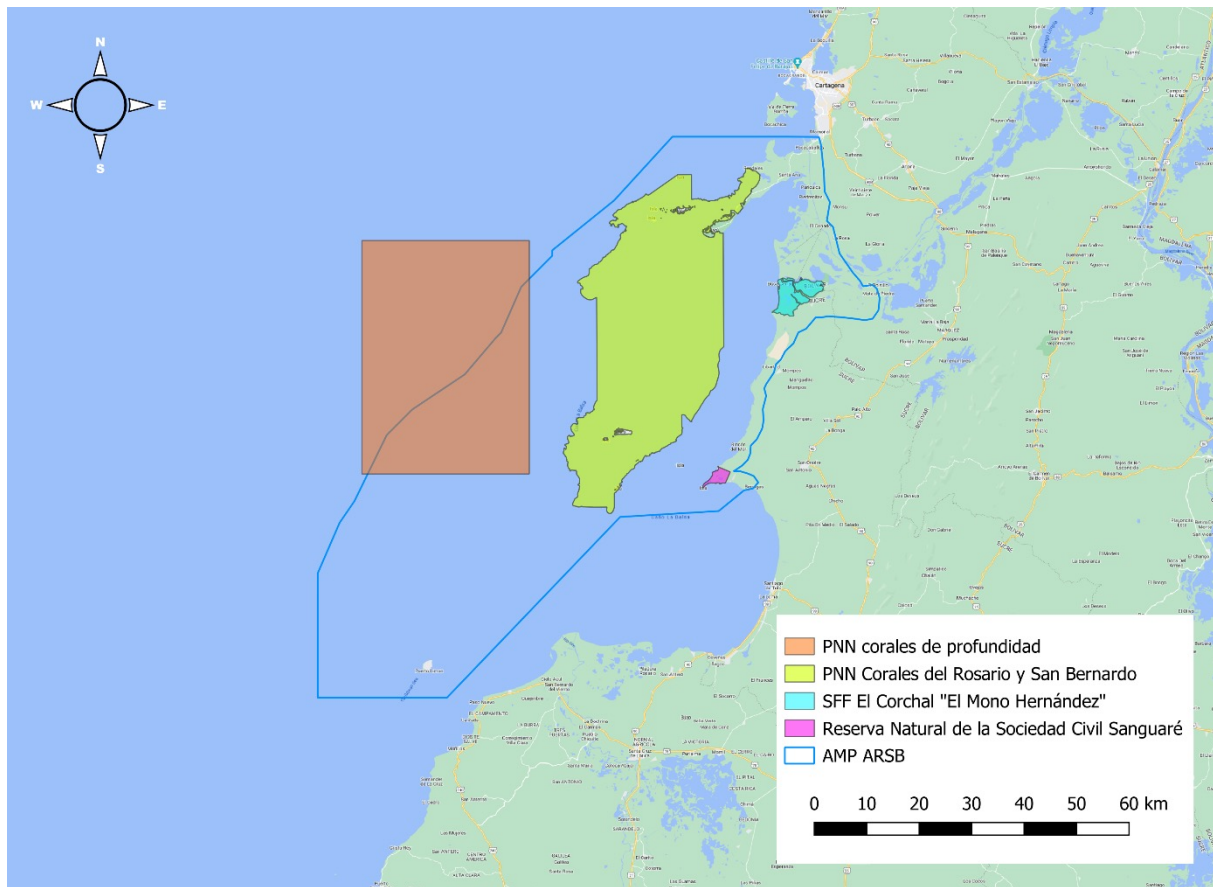
Mr Gustavo Lara, a hydrobiological resources specialist at the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, gave a presentation on the AMP ARSB to provide participants with enough information to evaluate its potential as an OECM.

Colombia is making great efforts to identify conservation areas, and OECMs are of particular interest to the country. So far, Colombia has identified areas related to specific ecosystems in the northern part of Latin America, including forest areas, paramos and wetlands. Around 32.8 million ha, not including MPAs, have been identified as potential OECMs.

The AMP ARSB was officially awarded its status in 2005 by the Ministry of Environment (when it was the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development). Its objective was to conserve a representative sample of marine and coastal biodiversity and the ecological processes that support the environmental supply of the area, as well as facilitating the region's sustainable development through its multiple uses.

The AMP ARSB is located in the northern part of the country on the Caribbean coast, bordering three departments (Bolívar, Sucre, and Córdoba) and covers a wide area of 558 593.31 ha. It overlaps with four protected areas – the *Parque Nacional Natural Corales del Rosario y San Bernardo*, the *Parque Nacional Natural Corales de Profundidad*, *Santuario de Flora y Fauna El Corchal “El Mono Hernández”*, and the *Reserva Natural Sociedad Civil Sanguaré*. Each of these is a no-take area that has its own management regimes (**Figure 1**). The AMP ARSB area includes seagrass meadows, coral formations, mesophotic reefs, deep-sea corals, coastal lagoons, mangroves, forests, rocky shorelines and sandy beaches, as well as habitats of marine-coastal species of great ecological value. As it also has multiple uses, the AMP ARSB is under a zonal management regime whereby different areas are allocated for preservation, sustainable use – including the use of fisheries resources and community use – and development and infrastructure (e.g. harbours). The area is also important for tourism.

Figure 1. Marine Protected Area of the Rosario and San Bernardo Archipelagos and other overlapping protected areas, including the *parques nacionales naturales* (PNN – national parks), and the *santuarios de flora y fauna* (SFF – sanctuaries for flora and fauna)

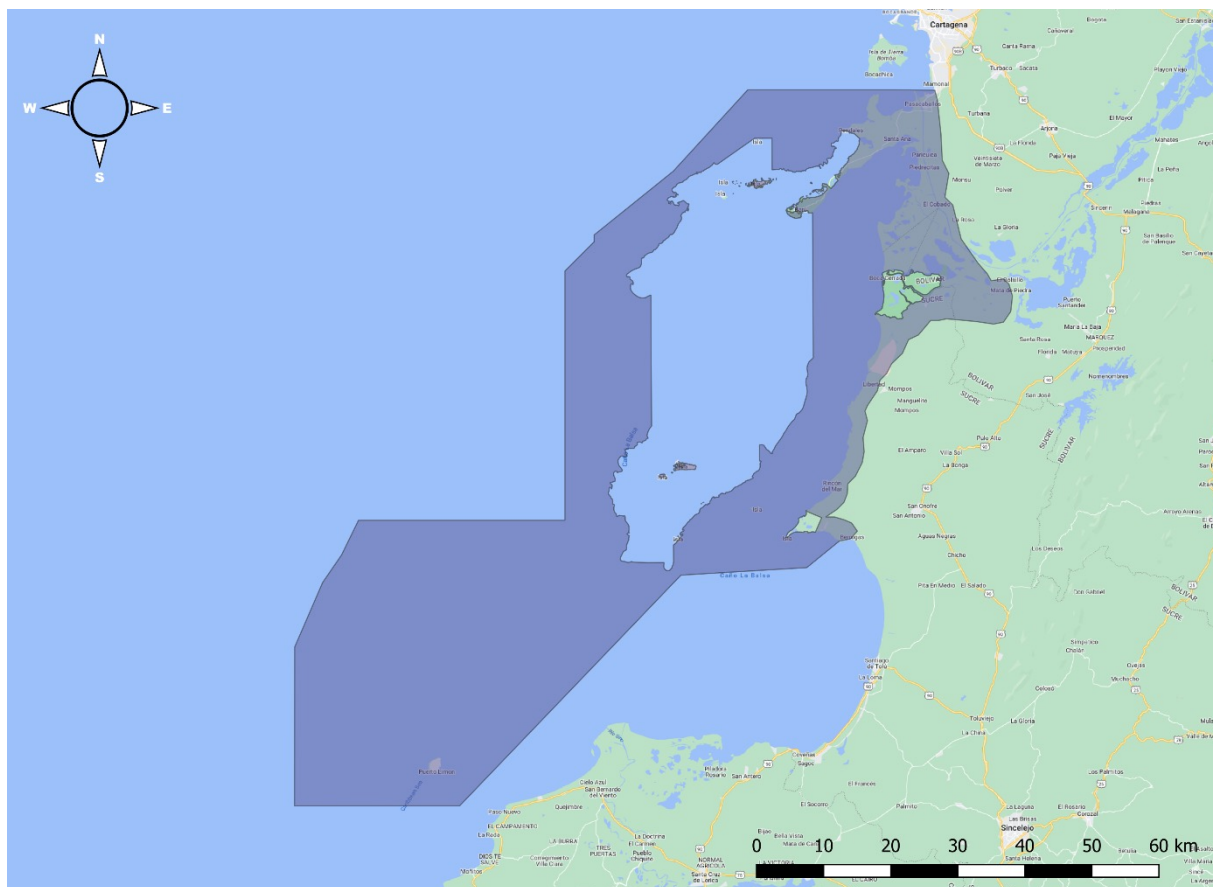


Source: Authors' own elaboration.

A potential OECM would only include the area of the AMP ARSB, excluding those four protected areas (see **Figure 2**), and could have the following benefits:

- increasing connectivity between protected areas;
- allowing subsistence fishing (not commercial), which could not be allowed if the area was recognized as an MPA, since it would become a no-take area; and,
- harmonizing the different interests of the fishing and environmental sectors.

Figure 2. Potential OECM in the area of the Marine Protected Area of the Rosario and San Bernardo Archipelagos



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Is the area a geographically defined space?

Participants agreed that the area of the AMP ARSB – without taking into account the area of the four MPAs – is geographically defined (Figure 2).

Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?

Participants confirmed that the area is not currently designated as a protected area. However, they wondered why the AMP ARSB should be recognized and reported as an OECM instead of declaring the area as an MPA. Mr Lara explained that the potential recognition of the area as an OECM would be preferred because, although the AMP ARSB has conservation objectives, it allows fishing activities. Declaring the AMP ARSB an MPA would lead to the prohibition of all fishing activities. Considering the area as a potential OECM would include marine conservation areas in such a way that it could contribute to ecological connectivity, allowing the management of the spillover from the adjacent MPAs to ensure their contribution to conservation while still being subject to fishing activities.

Participants asked about the fishers' opinion with regard to the possibility of recognizing the area as an OECM, and about the potential of this area becoming an MPA in the future. They also noted that fishers could be reluctant to support this idea, which could be problematic if the area was to be recognized as OECM. It was clarified fishers would participate and co-manage the area through a committee to ensure that their opinions were heard.

Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?

Participants noted a lack of clarity in terms of the agency that would assume the active governance

of the area. It was clarified that the area management is coordinated through the Comité Ambiental Interinstitucional (Interinstitutional Environmental Committee), which is composed of different authorities and stakeholders, including the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Autoridad Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca (the Aquaculture and Fisheries National Authority [AUNAP]), and local fishing communities. As AUNAP is the authority on fisheries management, any fisheries-management-related issues need to be negotiated with it (e.g. rules related to fishing gear).

Is the area contributing to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?

Participants asked about the management measures implemented in the area and their capacity to achieve biodiversity conservation *in situ*. The response clarified that management measures have been implemented to support sustainable development, and work is ongoing to elaborate additional management plans and tools that can facilitate the application of management in perpetuity. It was noted that the extension of the AMP ARSB is large enough for *in situ* and long-term conservation of biodiversity; this includes the ecosystems present in the area, herpetofauna, fish, sharks, and rays, which have an essential role in the conservation of coral environments. Nevertheless, participants noted that there was still a lack of clarity regarding the level of fishing activity taking place or anticipated in the proposed OECM, and whether the measures are meant to be in place over the long term.

Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?

There are existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area. In particular, the area is vulnerable to climate change in terms of rising sea levels, increasing water temperatures, coastal erosion, and drought as a result of decreasing precipitation and heat waves. Other drivers of change – such as tourism, loss and fragmentation of coastal ecosystems, and human settlements – also have an impact on the ecosystem.

Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?

The area is monitored regularly. The Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras José Benito Vives de Andrés (the José Benito Vives de Andrés Marine and Coastal Research Institute [INVEMAR]) monitors the area's different physicochemical characteristics (e.g. water quality, state of mangroves, and ecosystems). The monitoring performed by INVEMAR is complemented by academic institutions, who permanently monitor biodiversity attributes and species.

Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?

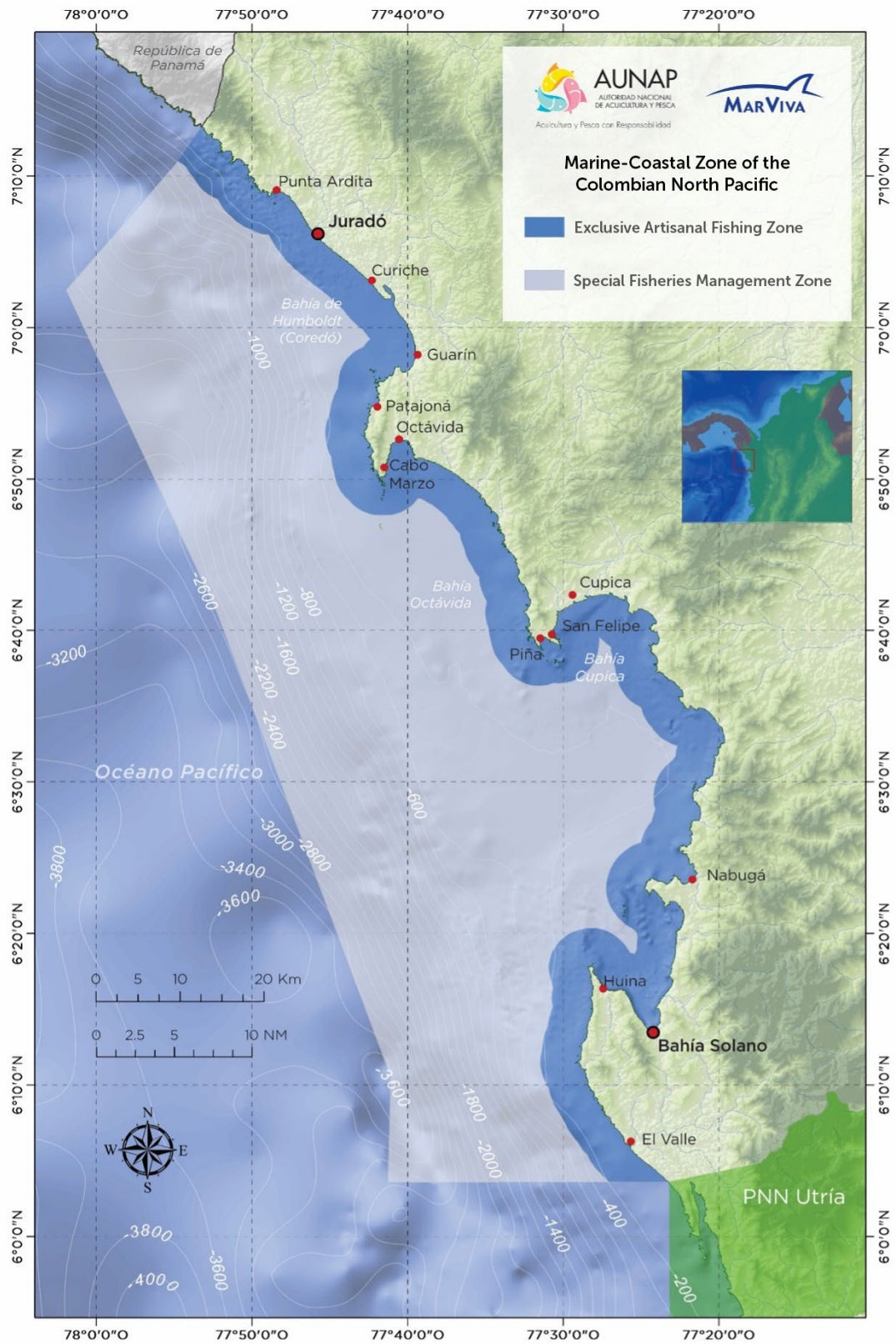
Participants did not address this question.

EXCLUSIVE ARTISANAL FISHING ZONE, COLOMBIA

Mr Juan Carlos Gutiérrez, contractor at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, gave a presentation on the ZEPA to provide the participants with enough information to evaluate its potential as an OEEM.

The ZEPA is located on the Colombian Pacific coast and covers the coastline from the border with Panama to the Utría National Natural Park (see **Figure 3**). Together with the *zona especial de manejo pesquero* (special fisheries management zone), the ZEPA was implemented by AUNAP through resolution 899 of July 2013, to avoid conflicts between industrial and artisanal fishers and ensure the sustainable use of fisheries resources and food security. As a result, only subsistence and recreational fishing activities are allowed in the ZEPA. Fishing nets are prohibited in the area, which facilitates clean captures and avoids negative environmental impacts such as lost nets, ghost fishing, and entanglement of important non-target species. Given the ban on nets, trawling is also prohibited.

Figure 3. Exclusive artisanal fishing zone located on the Pacific coast of Colombia



Source: MarViva. 2023. Mapas de Zona Exclusiva de Pesca Artesanal (ZEPA). Modified by the authors. Cited 12 April 2023. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/715b508e2c05436d8912470bb5e67318>.

The ZEPA is not a protected area, and the management measures only apply to fishing. Although there is no monitoring for biodiversity, AUNAP collects landing and fishing data and monitors certain areas in partnership with fishers. Academic and research institutes also contribute to monitoring by evaluating fishing resources.

The area aims to be co-managed using an EAF to achieve a balance between sustainability and benefits for fishers. According to many indicators, the mangrove has recovered (work has been done with fishers to reduce the exploitation of the mangrove forests), and the catch has increased. Indeed, fishers in this area have the highest income in the country, earning more than the country's minimum wage.

Is the area a geographically defined space?

Participants agreed that the area of the ZEPA is geographically defined (see **Figure 3**).

Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?

Participants confirmed that the area is not currently designated as a protected area.

Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?

Participants confirmed that the area has a legitimate governance authority: AUNAP, which reports to the Ministry of Agriculture, is responsible for governing the area. There are meetings twice a year with local communities that are well organized and represented.

Is the area contributing to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?

Participants wondered about the intentions of the measures in place and how those measures contribute to biodiversity outcomes. Explanations were provided regarding Colombia's biodiversity monitoring system, which has shown that actions aimed at reducing fishing efforts have increased the abundance and number of species in the area, despite global issues such as climate change.

Additionally, the response pointed out that the ZEPA and the ZEMP – together with two other area-based measures that include mangrove management – were creating an ecological corridor on the Pacific coast with increased sightings of marine mammals and indications of healthy ecosystems. These findings have been supported by research institutes, whose studies are showing that marine mammals (dolphins, whales, killer whales) and sharks have increased in numbers.

The discussion on the remaining questions for this case study did not continue because of a lack of time.

BREAKOUT GROUPS: CASE STUDIES

After this first exercise in plenary, ABFM case studies were presented, which would serve as examples for discussion related to the OECM criteria. Participants were then divided into small breakout groups. Each group focused on a specific country – Group 1 worked on Mexico, Group 2 on Costa Rica, and Group 3 worked on the United States of America and Brazil. Each group performed quick screening exercises for case studies of potential OECMs from each country.

The following sections summarize each case study and the discussions that were held in each breakout group. The discussions were based on the same set of questions in order to facilitate comparisons between case studies.

Fisheries refuge zones, Mexico

Ms Susana Perera Valderrama, Marine Monitoring Specialist at the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity, gave a presentation on an ABFM implemented in Mexico – the *zonas de refugio pesquero* (fisheries refuge zones [ZRP]) – to provide participants with an insight into what they are and their characteristics, as well as their potential contribution to biodiversity conservation.

The ZRPs are areas limited to waters under federal jurisdiction, with the primary purpose of conserving and contributing, naturally or artificially, to the development of fishery resources for their reproduction, growth, or recruitment, as well as preserving and protecting the surrounding environment. Specifically, commercial fishing activities are not allowed inside ZRPs in order to allow the recovery of target species and habitats, and the biological processes that are critical for these species.

In 2012, the Comisión Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca (National Commission of Aquaculture and Fisheries [CONAPESCA]) established 32 ZRPs in Mexican waters. Each ZRP was valid for five years. In November 2017, CONAPESCA extended the validity of these refuges by five more years, expanded their area coverage, and added a new one. Fishers, government, scientists and civil society organizations are all involved in the management of ZRP, which includes surveillance, monitoring, and enforcement activities.

Figure 4. Fisheries refuge zones in the (a) Golfo de Ulloa and the Corredor de San Cosme to Punta Coyote, and (b) the Península de Yucatán





Source: SIMAR/CONABIO. 2023. Coastal Marine Information and Analysis System. In: *SIMAR/CONABIO*. Cited 12 April 2023. <https://simar.conabio.gob.mx/explorer/>

Results from the biological monitoring of 11 ZRPs from the Corredor de San Cosme to Punta Coyote in the Caribbean show that at least 60 percent of the target species monitored are recovering within the refuge areas (Niparajá, 2015).

Is the area a geographically defined space?

Participants agreed that all fisheries refuges zones have well-defined boundaries with coordinates.

Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?

Participants pointed out that it would not be possible to answer this particular question for all the ZRPs, as some of these ZRPs in the Caribbean have been established inside Biosphere Reserves and might also overlap with protected areas.

Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?

Ms Perera explained that a combination of entities have formal governance powers to achieve the conservation of biodiversity in the area. The governance authority for fisheries is CONAPESCA, while the Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (National Commission of Natural Protected Areas [CONANP]) is the governance authority in charge of preserving the Mexican system of protected areas to contribute to the sustainability and preservation of ecosystems. Both institutions collaborate in the same areas, and work towards a common objective. Additionally, local communities are in charge of enforcing the refuges, and they interact with NGOs and other institutions to perform biological monitoring.

Is the area contributing, or is it expected to contribute to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?

The example provided by Ms Perera showed an increase in biomass, density, and species richness in the Corredor de San Cosme to Punta Coyote, which shows the potential of ZRP to contribute efficiently to biodiversity conservation. Additionally, it was estimated that the fisheries refuges could increase the resilience of ecosystems and biodiversity conservation given that they are no-take areas.

Participants asked about the duration of the ABFM and if it could be considered long-term. The response reiterated that ZRPs are in place for five years, and subject to renewal. The five-year duration was decided on the basis of the minimum recovery period for target species (e.g. three years for lobster). It was suggested that modifying ZRP regulation might be needed to extend their duration for it to be considered long-term.

Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?

Participants highlighted two issues that might affect the impact of ZRPs on biodiversity conservation on the Caribbean side of Mexico. First, the lack of monitoring capacity is a problem. Second, there is a significant amount of pollution and uncontrolled coastal development. On the Caribbean side of Mexico, the tourism sector and the development of tourism infrastructure are an existing threat to biodiversity. In this respect, the fisheries refuges are one of the measures that are slowing infrastructure development and mitigating possible impacts in the areas where it is being implemented.

Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?

The response specified that the objectives of most of the ZRP – e.g. those related to fishing gear and monitoring – are related to target species. There is therefore no regular monitoring of other species. However, it was pointed out that when implementing and renewing refuges an assessment is made to assess the areas, the critical habitats for biodiversity, and the target species. When the areas are too small, the connectivity effect is also assessed. Monitoring of resources is carried out by academics, NGOs, and local research centres with the collaboration of local communities.

Participants highlighted two issues that might affect the impact of ZRPs on biodiversity conservation on the Caribbean side of Mexico. First, the lack of monitoring capacity is a problem. Second, there is a significant amount of pollution and uncontrolled coastal development.

Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?

It was highlighted that the areas provide provisioning services (e.g. fisheries), regulating services (e.g. protection of mangroves), and supporting services (e.g. biomass production). They also provide cultural services through tourism activity. The sites are monitored by the communities because of their connection and sense of belonging to the area. The sites can also have other cultural values, such as the case of the Yucatan ZRP in San Felipe, which is close to a Mayan archaeological site that has enormous cultural significance at the local level.

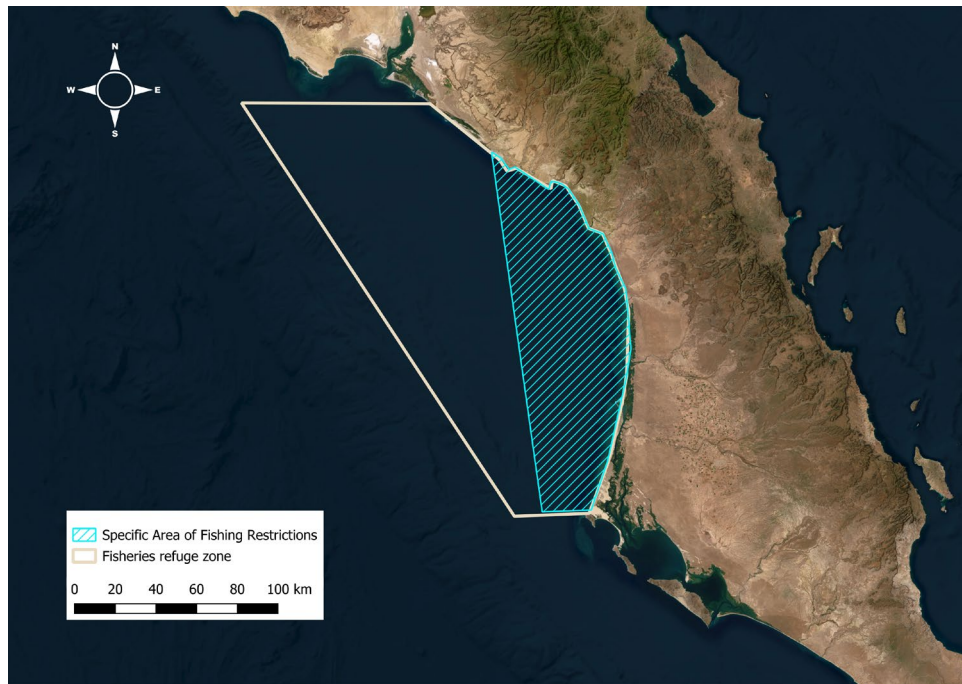
Fisheries and turtle refuge zone in the Ulloa Gulf, Mexico

Mr Francisco Arreguín-Sánchez, professor and researcher from the Mexican Centro Interdisciplinario de Ciencias Marinas del IPN (Center of Interdisciplinary Marine Sciences of the Polytechnic Institute), gave a presentation on the ZRP to provide the participants with the requisite information to evaluate its potential as an OECM.

The ZRP of the Ulloa Gulf is the biggest ZRP in Mexico. It is unique because it was also recognized as a refuge zone for turtles by CONANP in 2018 (**Figure 5**). In April 2015, CONAPESCA implemented the ZRP to reduce the interaction between fishing activities and the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) population, in order to reduce the number of deaths caused by the fishing activity in the Ulloa Gulf (estimated at between 1 500 and 2 950 dead turtles per year). The designation of the ZRP included the implementation of controls and restrictions on the use of fishing gear, including the prohibition of trawling activities. Additionally, the refuge includes an area called “Specific Area of Fishing Restrictions,” where

the use of trammel nets and longlines is limited and subject to technical specifications, and pound nets are forbidden (see **Figure 5**). The decision was also taken to suspend all fishing once 90 dead turtles related to the activity are registered. The area uses a monitoring system to follow and enforce the measure. The Ministry of Agriculture created a management committee and developed an onboard observers programme in 2015 to monitor the interaction between fishing and turtles. In total, the coverage of onboard observers in 2018 was 80 percent. The remaining boats that did not have onboard observers had to have cameras to monitor the fishing activity.

Figure 5. Fisheries refuge zone and the specific area of fishing restrictions in the Ulloa Gulf



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

After the implementation of the ZRP in 2015, data from 2016 and 2017 showed lower levels of turtle mortality relating to fishing activities than originally estimated (a total of 13 deaths caused by fishing activities were registered). In April 2018, the appearance of 114 dead turtles washed up on a beach raised suspicion regarding the causes behind the high rates of mortality. Studies found that the high mortality figures could potentially have been caused by environmental variability in the region and abrupt temperature drops.

Overall, the refuge seems to have had a positive impact on biodiversity conservation. Interviews with the fishing sector show that fishers consider the refuge's implementation positive, since it promotes more sustainable fishing practices and avoids the incidental capture of sea turtles. It also allowed them to value the importance of fishing, the marine environment, and the interaction between the two. However, potential threats exist from the mining sector, as the area has deposits of phosphates that are of interest to the private sector.

Is the area a geographically defined space?

Participants agreed the area has well-defined boundaries with coordinates.

Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?

Participants confirmed that the area is not recognized as a protected area.

Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?

It was confirmed that the area has a legitimate governance authority. The governance authority for fishing activity is CONAPESCA, and fishing communities are included in the decision process. However, the management system operates on a top-down basis, rather than as a co-management system. Additionally, CONANP also forms part of the decisions related to the protection of turtles and can implement additional regulations to ensure their protection.

Is the area contributing, or is it expected to contribute to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?

Participants discussed the contribution of the area to the *in situ* conservation of biodiversity. It was noted that area contributes to the protection of the loggerhead turtle. In addition, other species present in the region, such as sea lions, benefit indirectly from the protection offered by the fisheries regulations. Participants also mentioned that other species found in the area are protected by federal law: this was deemed important if the area was to be recognized as OECM in the future.

Participants suggested that the connectivity with other areas should also be explored, in order to evaluate whether connections with other protected areas would be possible.

Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?

Participants highlighted the threats mentioned during the presentation, namely the potential threats coming from the mining sector.

Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?

It was clarified that monitoring of the resources is ad hoc and is carried out by government and academia.

Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?

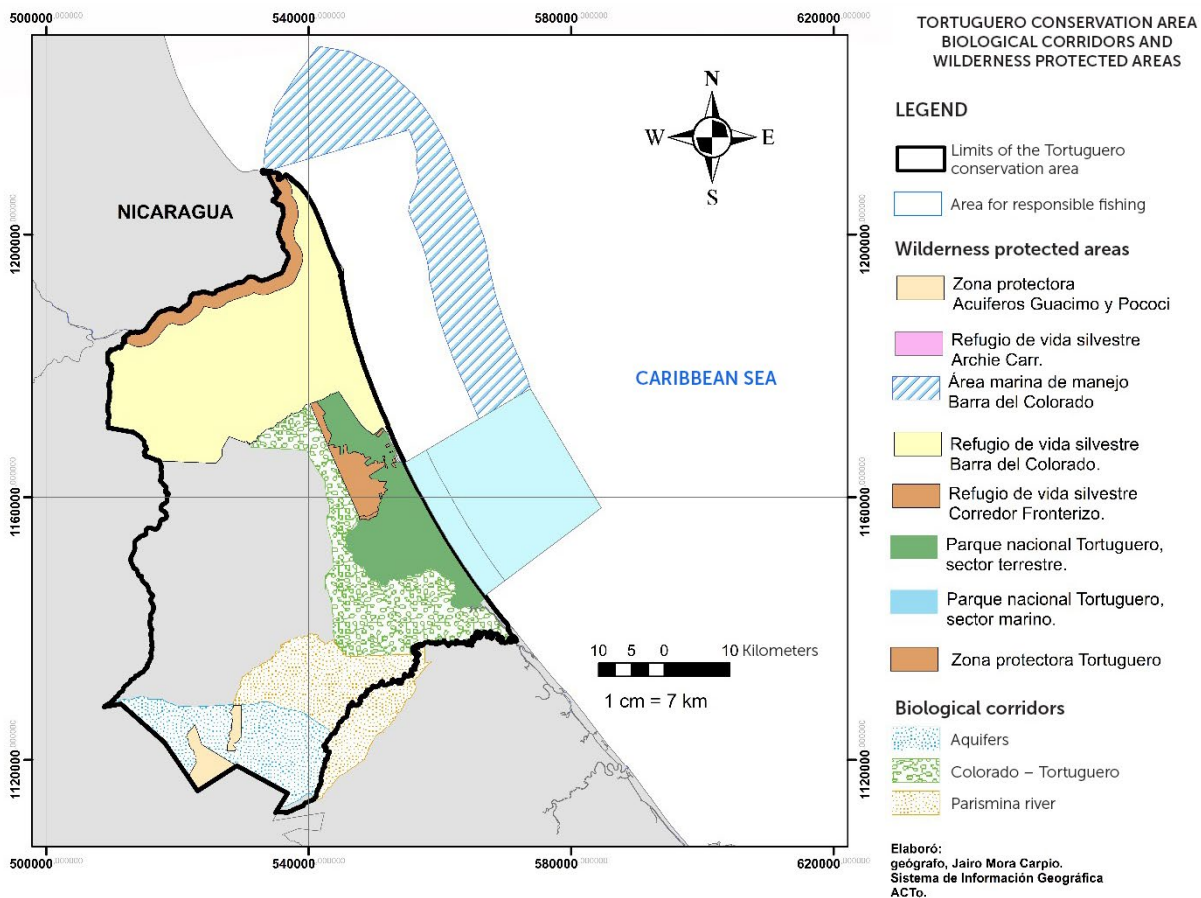
No discussion was recorded related to this item.

Marine area of responsible fishing of Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica

Ms Andrea Montero-Cordero, Chair of the Expert Assessment Group for the Green List of Costa Rica, gave a presentation on the *área marina de pesca responsable* (marine area for responsible fishing [AMPR]) of Barra del Colorado, in order to provide participants with enough information to evaluate its potential as an OECM.

The Barra del Colorado AMPR was created in 2019 by the Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura (Costa Rican Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture [INCOPESCA]) and is part of the Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación (National System of Conservation Areas [SINAC]), the national protected area system. It is located along the northern coast of Costa Rica, surrounded by four protected areas: the *Área marina de Manejo Barra del Colorado*, the *Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre Barra del Colorado*, *el Parque Nacional Tortugero*, and the *Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre Corredor Fronterizo Norte*) (see **Figure 6**).

Figure 6. The marine area of responsible fishing of Barra del Colorado and neighbouring protected wildlife areas



Source: Área de Conservación Tortuguero. 2023. Área de Conservación Tortuguero. In: *Acerca de ACTo*. Modified by the authors. Cited 13 April 2023 <https://acto.go.cr/acto-celebra-la-creacion-de-una-nueva-area-silvestre-protogada-area-marina-de-manejo-barra-del-colorado/>

The management plan for this area has species management targets, but not necessarily conservation/biodiversity targets. Species under management include shrimp, lobster, tarpon and snook. A fisheries management plan was developed in 2019 for this responsible fishing area. There are also several management plans for surrounding areas, including the National Wildlife Refuge and the Marine Management Area. With respect to governance, different groups coordinate with one another, rather than there being one main ‘appointed’ governance body. Local councils and local fisheries association take charge, depending on the topic to be discussed. There is strong multisectoral dialogue with the local marine council. Costa Rica is developing a seascape approach, which involves coordination across INCOPECA and the Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía (*Ministry of Environment and Energy [MINAE]*).

Is the area a geographically defined space?

Participants agreed that the area is a geographically defined space with geographical coordinates, as per the INCOPECA agreement.

Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?

Participants noted that the area is not a protected area (see **Figure 6**).

Participants asked if there was any local disagreement about the designation of this area as an area of responsible fishing. It was explained that opportunities for local input are received through well-structured

and organized processes, so there has been minimal or no conflict with fishing communities about the designation of this area as a responsible fishing area. For many years there has been dialogue with SINAC, which manages the neighbouring Tortuguero Conservation Area, and the communication between conservation partners and fishing groups has been respectful. Additionally, new marine and terrestrial designations are built on what most actors have agreed on over the course of longstanding negotiations.

Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?

Participants considered the topic of governance at this site. A governance model is in place, whereby a coordinated governance council composed of representatives from INCOPECA (the institution with the mandate to manage fisheries in the region) and fisheries representatives from local communities and fisheries councils, negotiate the management rules to be applied at the Barra del Colorado AMPR every year. This governance council is not formally recognized, but given that the rules are applied participants considered that a de facto co-management system was well established and operating. On a related point, it was highlighted that before the actual designation of the responsible fishing area, the local advisory council and the fisheries cooperatives were already coordinating their actions. There is thus a long history of significant community involvement in Barra del Colorado.

Participants asked whether there were conflicts between INCOPECA and the Ministry of Environment, given the different protected areas established next to Barra del Colorado. It was clarified that INCOPECA and MINAE have been coordinating in this region of the country for many years, and that there are no conflicts.

Is the area contributing, or is it expected to contribute to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?

It was noted that the AMPR was created to ensure the responsible management of fisheries (crustaceans and fish) only. However, there are also secondary conservation attributes in the area such as marine mammals and sea turtles, mangroves, riverine environments, riparian plant species associated with those rivers, and forests, which are protected by the adjacent protected areas.

Participants highlighted a possible link between fisheries management and biodiversity conservation. The fisheries management plan tries to regulate certain fishing gears, which would have a positive impact on ecosystems. Moreover, the management plan not only manages commercial fisheries but other activities such as sport fishing. Another link to conservation targets is that the area is also divided into management zones, and conservation targets were taken into account when defining fisheries actions within those zones.

Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?

The point was made that no threat analysis has been conducted for this site. Some threats are mentioned in the fishing management plan, but no strategic actions are in place to address them.

Participants mentioned some “major threats” recognized for this site, including climate change and invasive species, which are addressed in the protected area management plans, but not specifically in the management plan for the responsible fishing area. Illegal fishing and trawling to catch shrimp were also mentioned as threats.

Participants mentioned that the fishery management plan includes research and monitoring actions assigned to the state, specifically to the fisheries entity (INCOPECA). This data could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area.

Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?

It was noted that the fisheries management plan does not address the issue of ecosystem services, although SINAC and INCOPECA are working on a shared management version for future action plans, in which these issues are mentioned. Participants, however, considered that this particular question should be addressed holistically, thinking of the AMPR in conjunction with the other protected areas and employing a seascape approach, as is the case within SINAC and MINAE.

Marine area for responsible fishing of Tárcoles, Costa Rica

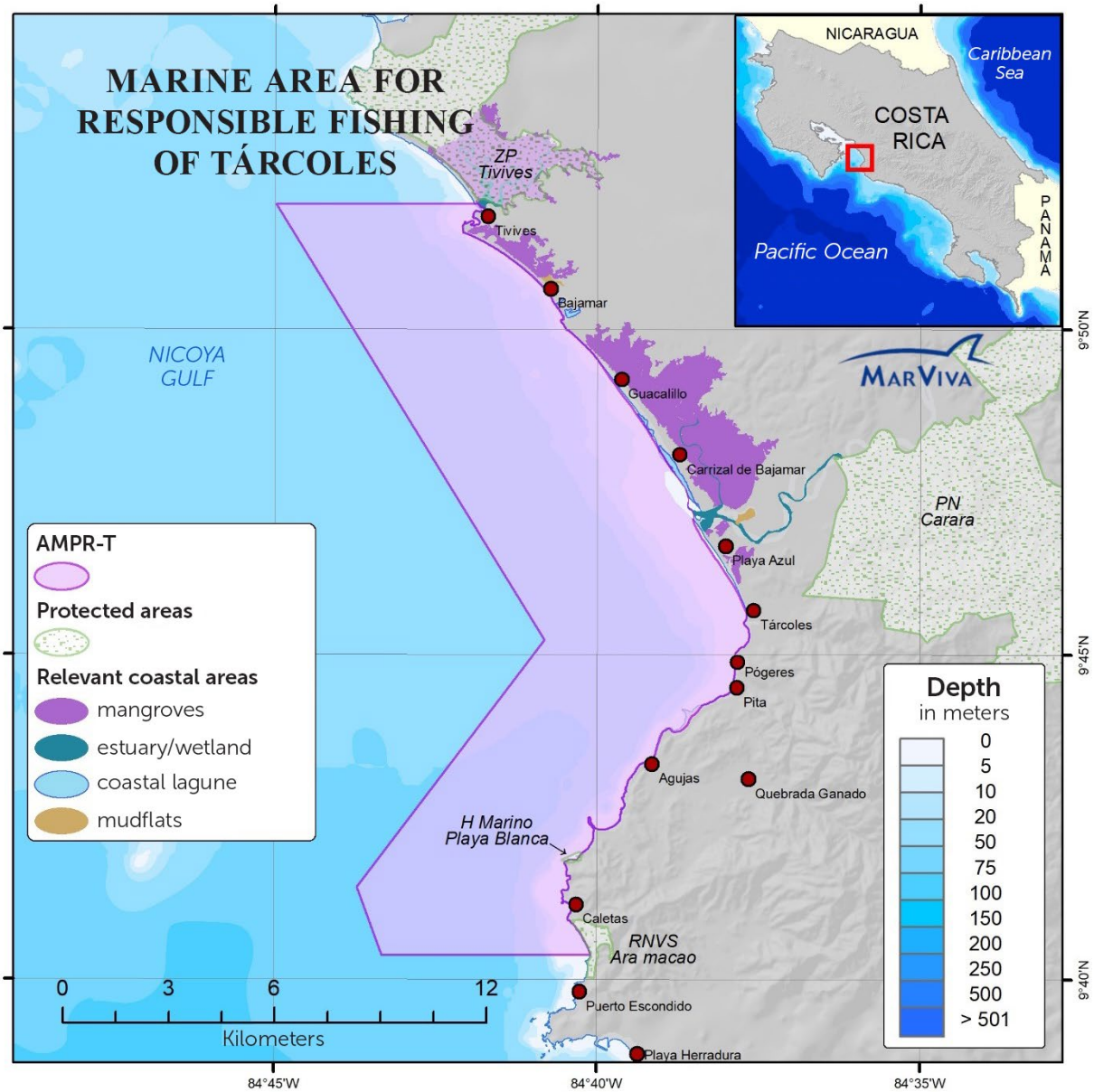
Mr Marvin Fonseca-Borras, manager of CoopeSolidar R.L., gave a presentation on the AMPR of Tárcoles to provide participants with enough information to evaluate its potential as an OEEM.

The AMPR are areas with important biological, fishing, or sociocultural characteristics, which are delimited by geographical coordinates and other mechanisms that allow their limits to be identified. In each AMPR, fishing activity is regulated in a particular way to ensure the long-term exploitation of fishery resources, and so that INCOPECA may count on the support of coastal communities and/or other institutions for their conservation, use and management. The AMPRs are established at the communities' request to allow them to have a say in the management of fishing activities.

The AMPR Tárcoles is an ABFM located on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica and covers an area of 129 km² (**Figure 7**). The objectives of the AMPR Tárcoles are:

- to recognize the importance of responsible artisanal fishing as a relevant economic activity for job creation, food security, and poverty eradication for coastal populations;
- to conserve marine resources; and
- to recognize the contribution of CoopeTárcoles R.L. artisanal fishers in the conservation of marine biodiversity.

Figure 7. Marine area for responsible fishing of Tárcoles



Source: MarViva. 2023. Mapas Áreas Marinas de Pesca Responsable (AMPR) del Pacífico. Modified by the authors. Cited 12 April 2023. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/715b508e2c05436d8912470bb5e67318>

The AMPR is divided into six zones, which have been defined according to their biological and biophysical characteristics. Accordingly, each zone allows different fishing activities and has gear restrictions based on its characteristics.

The AMPR has a relevant role in terms of contributing to biodiversity conservation. However, it also promotes issues related to human rights such as fishing rights, the right to land, decent work, social recognition of women’s work, governance, food security, and livelihoods.

Is the area a geographically defined space?

Participants agreed that the area was geographically defined. Some participants noted that the AMPR was not big enough to protect and conserve biodiversity effectively in the area, and biodiversity was at risk. However, it was argued that despite the area’s small size, governance could be improved, and

the AMPR could be combined with other measures to enhance the conservation outcomes. They also recognized the key role of the AMPR in recognizing community efforts to make a difference in the conservation of the area.

Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?

Participants agreed that the AMPR Tárcoles is not a protected area.

Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?

Participants asked who was managing the area and whether a governance system has already been set up. It was explained that the AMPRs originated and were promoted in 2013 by INCOPECSA to recognize different governance systems, including governance frameworks where communities could participate in management alongside government. Currently, there is a de facto governance system involving a local council, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, INCOPECSA, and an association of fishers who govern on a day-to-day basis. However, participants pointed to the need for – and the difficulty of obtaining – formal, well-defined and established governance.

Participants noted that recognizing the AMPR as an OECM would help create alliances between new and existing partners, including financing monitoring and enforcement of the sites.

Participants asked whether other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had similar management systems to the AMPR. It was noted that Jamaica had set out agreements between the national fisheries authority and non-governmental organizations for specific special fishery conservation areas.

Is the area contributing, or is it expected to contribute to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?

Participants reflected on the biodiversity features conserved by the AMPR. It was pointed out that the focus of the management is to conserve fishing biomass, which has indeed improved. Fishing biomass increases could contribute to biodiversity conservation, as several of these target species are also important in the trophic chain. In addition, it was explained that measures intended to improve fisheries resources in each responsible fishing area do exist (e.g. measures defining the size of nets, fishing gear allowed, etc.). One prominent example is a trawling ban on the muddy seabed in the centre of Tárcoles, which stipulates that the industrial trawling fleet is required to stay at least one nautical mile away from the area. This measure helps biodiversity in the area and minimizes conflicts between small- and large-scale fishing.

Participants discussed the improvement of the fishing biomass and its relationship with the conservation of biodiversity *in situ*. Some participants argued that although biomass has improved and this is an important outcome, it does not imply that the whole of biodiversity is conserved. It was therefore not clear whether the management efforts and results described for Tárcoles could be deemed to be contributing to biodiversity conservation, and whether the area could be considered a potential OECM. Other participants disagreed and pointed out that OECMs do not have to conserve 100 percent of all species, habitats, and ecosystems in the area. They noted that ABFMs with the potential to be recognized as OECMs should be providing net-positive benefits for biodiversity or be heading in that direction. Furthermore, it was pointed out that by virtue of their traditional knowledge fishers understand the link between improved biodiversity and their fishing species. Small-scale fisheries have already made considerable efforts to improve their situation, resolve conflicts, limit trawling, and eliminate the use of damaging gear, potentially resulting in vast improvement and benefits which have not yet been calculated. It was proposed that these communities may wish to demonstrate the as-yet-uncalculated improvements.

Participants asked whether it would be possible to integrate biodiversity elements from outside the fishing sector, given that valuable conservation elements exist inside the area; these could include wetlands, shark

breeding areas, and migrating marine mammals. The response suggested that at the moment INCOPECSA and the Ministry of Environment and Energy were not working closely in the AMPR Tárcoles. Participants noted that fishing and environment authorities need to work together to avoid creating weaknesses and to conduct joint actions to ensure the sustainability of the fishing industry and the protection of biodiversity.

Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?

Participants asked whether there are other threats from within the fisheries sector or other sectors such as oil and gas, transportation and shipping, and military activities.

One significant threat is illegal small-scale fishing, given that 8 out of 10 fishers do not have fishing licenses.

Participants also noted that tourism in the area, especially that involving sportfishing, is increasing because of improving environmental conditions and is currently a threat. However, this is not yet being discussed as an issue, and there are no control measures and no coordination between the tourism and fishing sector. Participants considered that sportfishing in Tárcoles is not an isolated threat, as it is also a threat in other Latin American countries. For example, sportfishing is very important on the Pacific coast of Guatemala, where it has been the source of conflict with small-scale fishing. As a result, some species have been banned from sportfishing to conserve them for small-scale fishing conducted by locals. It was noted that in Guatemala, three ministries are involved in these efforts.

Participants highlighted the value of MSP in coordinating communities and other entities to implement management systems that consider the objectives of large areas while managing threats and impacts on smaller areas like Tárcoles. It was also pointed out that threats from other sectors should be managed as part of an MSP framework.

Participants emphasized the importance of the criterion “addressing existing or reasonably anticipated threats” in order to enhance the coordination with other ministries to tackle threats that are beyond the control of local sectors or communities.

Participants also highlighted the need for guidelines to address threats in areas like the AMPR Tárcoles.

Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?

Participants indicated that there have been 15 studies of fishing activity in the area. However, it was noted that the goal of this monitoring was to show INCOPECSA that there is regular fishing activity, in order to solidify fishing rights. Participants pointed out that recognizing the area as an OECM could bring financing and partnerships for monitoring and surveillance of the site.

Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?

Participants noted the difficulty in addressing this question because of incomplete knowledge of the ecosystem services in the area. However, they considered that if there are positive biodiversity outcomes one could expect an improvement in the ecosystem services, even without precise knowledge of all the ecosystem services of the area. Participants also noted that even if we do not know everything about a specific area and its features, ecosystem services and associated values, there is guidance available to help identify good practices and methodologies to assess them.

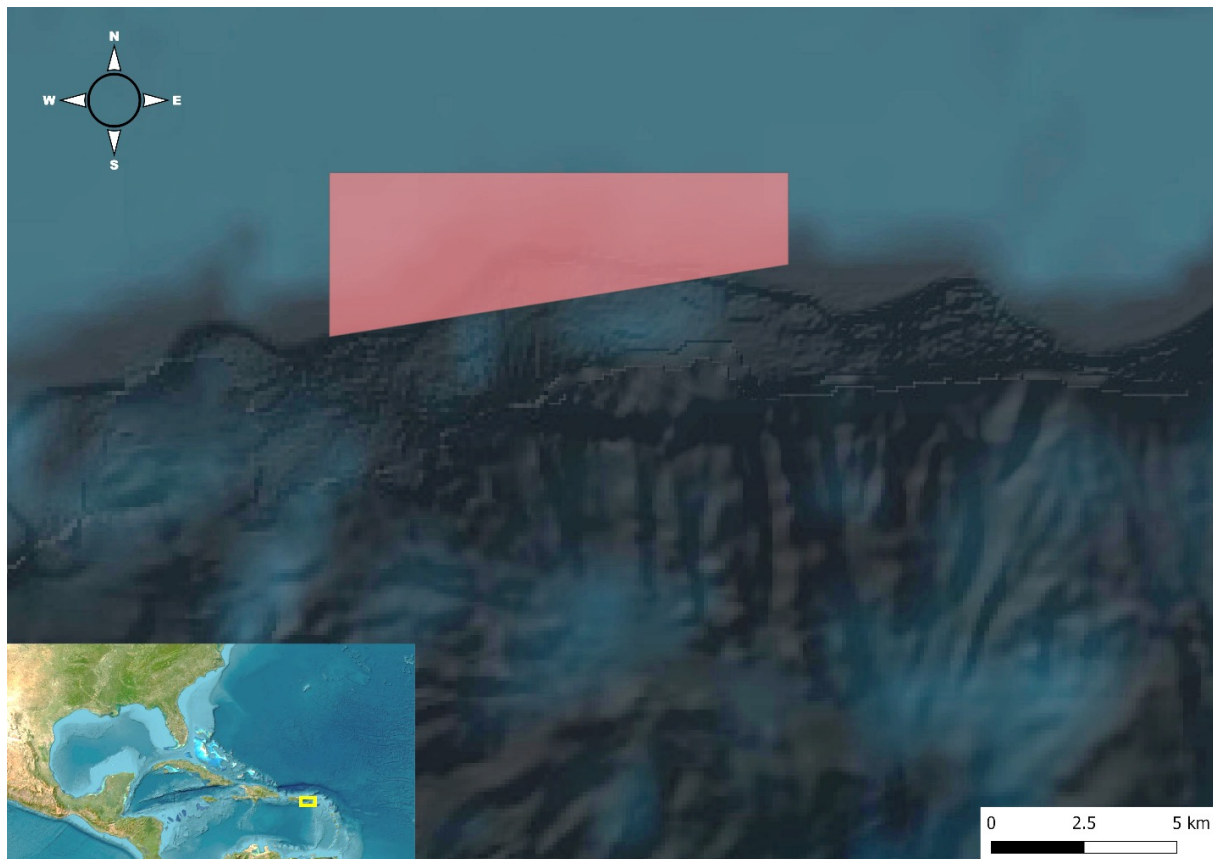
Finally, participants noted the link between community welfare and healthy ecosystems in this area: as fishing activities have improved, so has food security. In doing so, they emphasized the importance of small-scale fisheries, which pass on vast amounts of traditional knowledge between generations.

Red Hind Bank Marine Conservation District, United States of America

Ms Mimi Diorio, GIS Manager, NOAA Marine Protected Areas Center, gave a presentation on the Hind Bank Marine Conservation District (MCD) to provide participants with enough information to evaluate its potential as an OECM.

The Hind Bank MCD is located approximately 12 km South of St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands, at the shelf's edge (**Figure 8**). Established under governing regulation 50 CFR § 622.435(b)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation & Management Act, as per the recommendation of fishers, scientists, and government officials in 1999, Hind Bank is a 41 km² no-fishing area.

Figure 8. Map of the Red Hind Bank Marine Conservation District



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The Hind Bank MCD was established to protect the coral habitat and the ecosystem and evaluate the effectiveness of implementing a reserve to increase the levels of fish stocks in the surrounding area. The fisheries conservation and management objectives of the Hind Bank MCD are:

- to conserve and protect the species in the fishery management unit;
- to minimize adverse human impacts on the resources; and
- to provide for special management of reef and seagrass habitats of particular concern through the establishment of reserves or other protected areas.

The Hind Bank MCD was established in 1990 with community involvement as a seasonal closure to protect a red hind spawning aggregation. It transitioned to fishery closure in 1999, with adjacent seasonal restrictions and gear restrictions; it currently has the following regulations:

- fishing for any species is prohibited; and
- anchoring by fishing vessels is prohibited.

This area is monitored through the Biogeography Diver Based Surveys (historical) and National Coral Reef Monitoring Program, Reef Visual Census Surveys, Caribbean Reef Fish Video Survey, and Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program for the Caribbean in the United States Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The Coast Guard, Office and Law Enforcement of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are in charge of enforcement activities in the area. In addition, an active outreach and education programme exists, which aims to engage fishers and the general public in protecting these areas.

As shown by Nemeth (2005), the area has key biodiversity attributes, including 70 percent coral cover found at depths of 38–40 m, coral reef and leatherback sea turtle critical habitat, and an abundance of mangroves and seagrass beds. The closure has proven to be effective and provide positive outcomes. The study showed that:

- The seasonal protection of the red hind spawning aggregation allowed the spawning population to rebound relatively rapidly from overfishing – in terms of its size, density, and sex ratios.
- The permanent protection of large areas surrounding the spawning habitat provided additional benefits towards increasing spawning stock density and biomass.
- Commercial and recreational fishers indicate that there has been a noticeable increase in the size and abundance of red hind in the past few years.

Is the area a geographically defined space?

Participants agreed that the site was a geographically defined space chosen by scientists and fishers together in an open, community-based process.

Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?

It was noted that although some communities might consider it an MPA, the area was born as a fisheries management area, which in the United States of America excludes the possibility of it qualifying as an MPA, as its primary intent is sustainable fisheries and not conservation. It could qualify as an MPA in the future, but this would require reconsideration of its primary objective.

Participants asked why the area would qualify as an OECM versus a Category six IUCN Protected Area. In response to this query, respondents argued that we should go beyond categorizing areas and focus on tracking how an area contributes to conservation outcomes and how to upgrade them, when needed, with improved governance.

Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?

Participants confirmed that NOAA Fisheries and the Caribbean Fishery Management Council are the legitimate authorities.

Participants wondered whether management authorities have a holistic and accurate picture of how the closure of the area has impacted the communities that used to use its resources. It was noted that work is ongoing to evaluate the impact of the management measures on the socioeconomic values of the communities. Through surveys, it has been determined that communities are supportive.

Is the area contributing to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?

Participants wondered if an area effectively regulated and managed, where the biodiversity attributes are maintained and biodiversity loss stopped, could be considered as contributing to biodiversity

conservation. Additionally, they asked if, in case positive biodiversity outcomes are not observed through monitoring, the contribution of an area to biodiversity conservation could be inferred based on regulation and management effectiveness.

Participants discussed the concept of biodiversity conservation and the concept of long-term. Participants highlighted the importance of the “sustained” and “long-term” elements of the OECM criteria and the need to define them. It was noted that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans of Canada defines “long-term” in this context as a minimum of 25 years. However, it was pointed out that, with climate change, flexibility is needed in the face of changing conditions, such as the displacement of a breeding ground. Participants also considered that the term “biodiversity” needs to be very clearly defined in the context of OECMs.

Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?

It was noted that the area faces no significant threats from other activities, although climate change impacts have been observed.

Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?

Participants confirmed that the area contributes to tourism, and the site supports recreational activities such as scuba diving.

Participants asked whether the closure of this area impacts the small-scale or vulnerable communities that once used it. It was explained that although socioeconomic impacts resulting from the measure have not been documented for this area, community interviews have shown that fishers support the measure and see it as positive for the fishery.

Gillnetter exclusion areas in South Brazil, Brazil

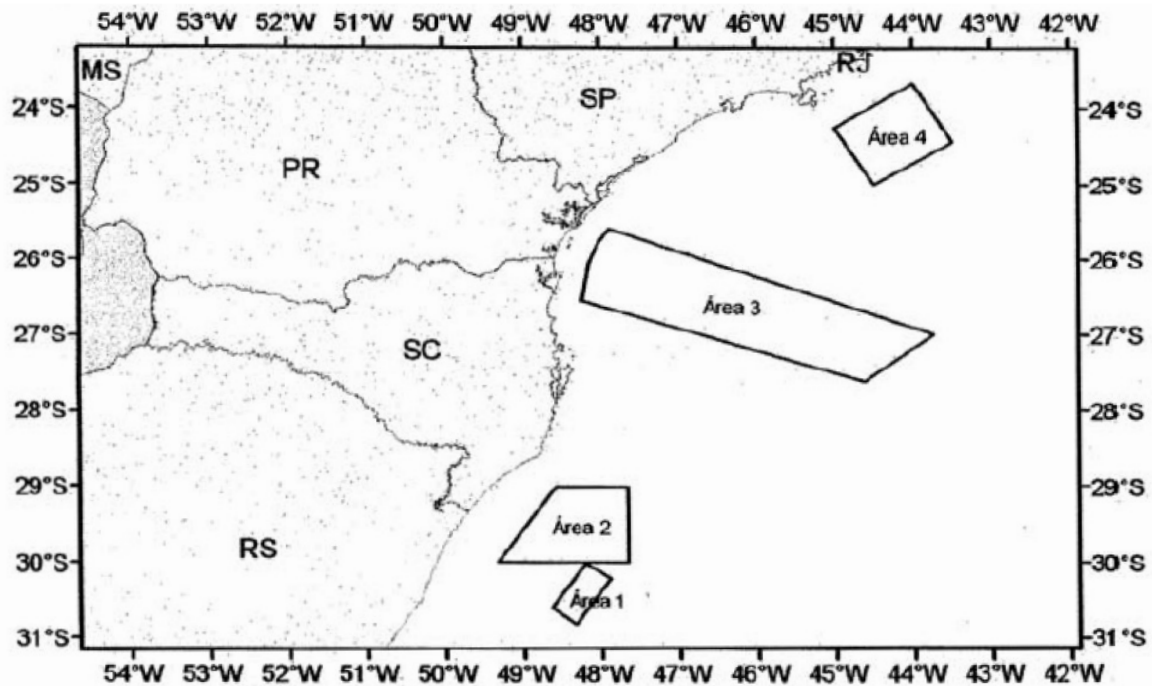
Ms Mary Gassalla, Professor at the Oceanographic Institute of the University of São Paulo, gave a presentation on the gillnetter exclusion areas in southern Brazil to provide participants with enough information to evaluate its potential as an OECM.

The gillnetter exclusion areas in southern Brazil came into force in 2012. These fisheries closures were implemented to protect marine biodiversity in an area of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystems from gillnets, which is considered an impactful fishing technique on the biodiversity of the area.

The ABFM includes fisheries exclusion areas, separated into two distinct units, which were established to protect endangered species (cetaceans, sharks), fully exploited fish stocks, and critical habitats. These two units are divided into five main areas, four of which are large permanent areas and one seasonal area, totaling 71 451 km².

In Unit 1 (**Figure 9**, areas 3 and 4), bottom gillnets are prohibited, and there are gear-size restrictions at the surface and midwater column. The target species here are croaker, sciaenid, mullets, bluefish, monkfish, and several bycatch species. Unit 2 (**Figure 9**, areas 1 and 2) includes a permanent closure to motorized gillnetters to protect megafauna (such as bottlenose dolphins and franciscana dolphins) and bycatch species of sharks, dolphins, turtles, penguins, and birds and to reduce conflicts with small-scale fisheries. In addition to its biodiversity aspect, the area also aims to limit conflicts with small-scale fisheries, thus having a strong socioeconomic value.

Figure 9. Map of the gillnetter exclusion areas



Source: Ministério da Agricultura e Pecuária. 2023. Instrução Normativa Interministerial MPA/MMA N° 12, de 22 de Agosto de 2012. In: *Emalhe*. Cited 20 April 2023. <https://www.gov.br/agricultura/pt-br/assuntos/mpa/legislacao/emalhe/instrucao-normativa-mpa-mma-no-12-de-22-08-2012.pdf/view>

The exclusion area in Unit 2 overlaps with the Southern Brazilian Sea, an ecologically or biologically significant marine area (EBSA), described at a CBD regional EBSA workshop in 2012 (area number 22; CBD, 2012). The area was described as oceanographically complex, with high biological productivity, which entails a high concentration of industrial fishing and a concomitant overexploitation or collapse of several fishery stocks. There are also high levels of bycatch in the area, including endangered species of cetaceans (e.g. the franciscana dolphin), seabirds (e.g. wandering albatross), marine turtles (e.g. green, loggerhead, and leatherback sea turtles), fishes (e.g. wreckfish) and sharks (e.g. soupfin shark, angelfish, Brazilian guitarfish). The ABFM was also meant to protect this EBSA.

Is the area a geographically defined space?

Participants confirmed that the area is clearly delineated geographically.

Is the area currently recognized as a protected area?

Participants confirmed that the area is not a protected area.

Does the area have a legitimate governance authority?

Participants explored if the areas have a legitimate governance authority. It was noted that the areas were created and are governed through a joint interministerial regulation enacted by the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture, with participation from different sectors and civil society. However, the Ministry of Environment is the authority responsible for management. Inputs from the Ministry of Fisheries are needed as the area remains an area-based fisheries management measure. Various ministries are represented on a commission.

Is the area contributing to achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity?

It was explained that the area was established for the long term (it has existed for 10 years) and that other, broader biodiversity-positive outcomes include the protection of endangered species, and the

conservation of turtles, mammals, birds, corals/cnidarians, teleosts, and elasmobranchs. Regarding the measure's effectiveness, there have been governmental evaluations in 2017, 2019, and 2020, and the five gillnet exclusion areas shown in **Figure 9** appear very important to improving biodiversity.

Are there any existing or anticipated threats to biodiversity in the area?

Participants asked whether the dolphins and other species being protected by the gillnet restriction are subject to other pressures by other gears that are allowed. The response explained that the main threat in the area was gillnets, especially motorized gillnetting.

It was pointed out that although shipping, oil and gas exploitation and pollution all affect the area, the fisheries (especially gillnet gear and bottom-trawling) account for more than 90 percent of threats.

It was explained that an integrated ecosystem assessment is currently being conducted in the area; other sectors that may pose threats are also being assessed.

Measures are protecting part of the stock, contributing to the maintenance of cultural values. Mullet, for example, has a strong cultural importance for traditional communities, values and religious activities.

It was noted that the difference in management regimes shows how challenging it will be to find a common definition of OECMs. The good work being done in Brazil is different from that of the United States of America. Varying approaches will therefore make it difficult to find common ground. Indeed, it was acknowledged that OECMs will vary a lot from one country to another.

It was explained that the areas discussed are closed to gillnetters but are open to bottom trawlers. Bottom trawlers are not present in significant numbers in the area in question, and do not operate in deep water but mostly on the shelf, up to depths of 2 000 m. There are only very small areas closed to bottom trawlers along the coast. Unit 2 falls inside an area where the state wants to ban bottom trawling. If this occurs, the area would have even more protection, as it would exclude both bottom trawlers and gillnetters.

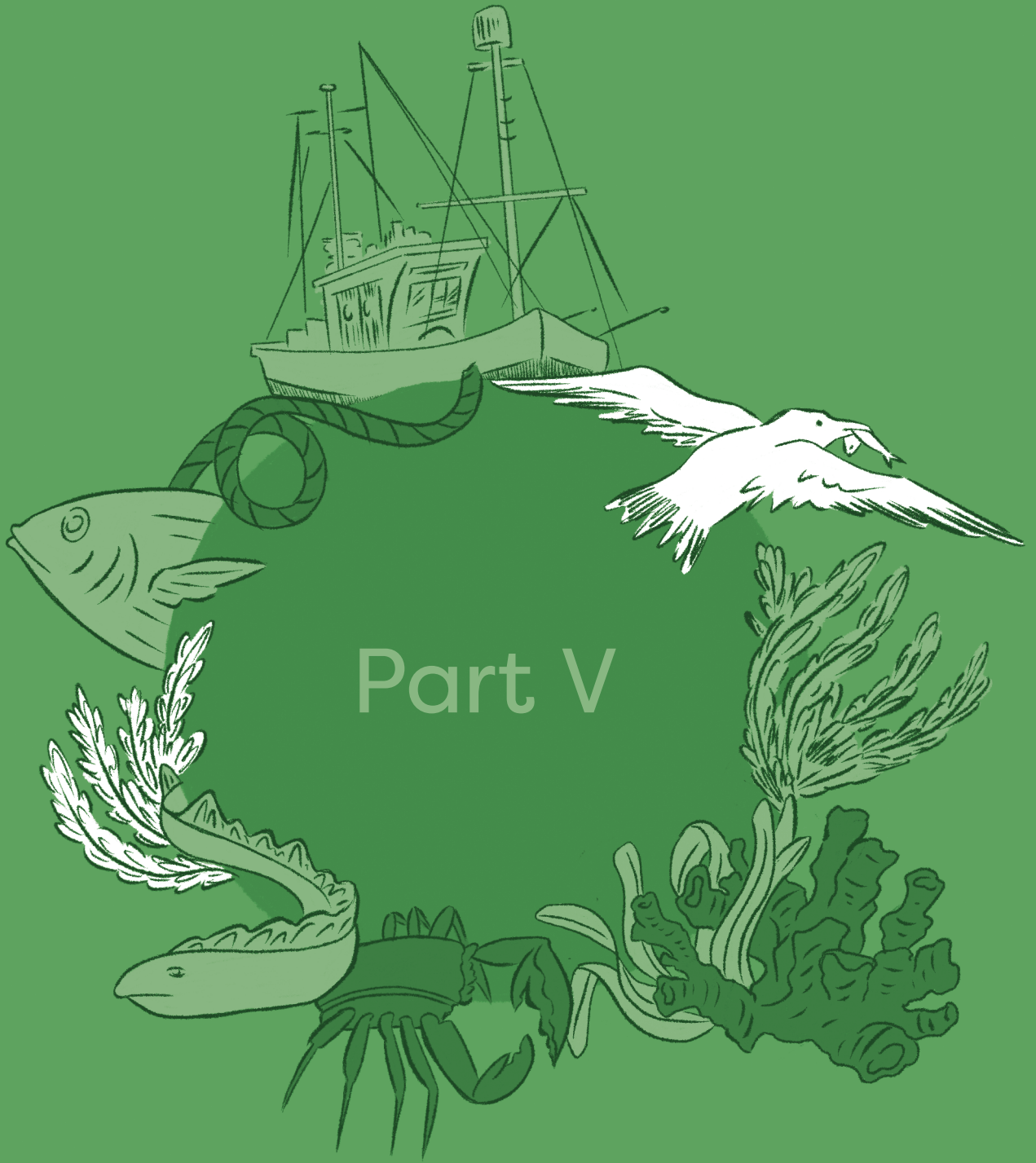
The question was asked whether there is a need to exclude an activity that is not actually occurring; for example, in this area bottom trawling is permitted, but not practicable because of the presence of deepwater canyons. What should be prohibited versus what is actually happening? How do you distinguish the actual activities from the prohibitions? In response, participants discussed that just because an activity is not an existing threat, this does not mean that it will never become a threat. Prohibition adds long-term clarity to the sustainability of an OECM.

Is any monitoring being conducted that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the current management measures in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation in the area?

Participants asked whether the dolphins and other species being protected by the gillnet restriction are also subject to pressures from other gear that are allowed. It was explained that an integrated ecosystem assessment is currently being conducted in the area and other sectors that may pose threats are also being assessed. However, it was pointed out that although shipping, oil, and gas exploitation, and pollution all affect the area, the fisheries (especially gillnet gear) account for more than 90 percent of threats.

Does the management system in place include measures to support associated ecosystem services?

Participants explained that the measures are protecting part of the stock, contributing to the maintenance of cultural values. For example, mullets have a strong cultural importance for traditional communities, cultural values, as well as religious activities.



Part V

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In this final session, participants shared what they learned during the workshop and discussed what is needed to apply the OECM criteria effectively.

At the end of the meeting, participants discussed: the role of OECMs in recognizing conservation efforts; the need to recognize fishers' local culture in the OECM process; the incentives provided by OECM recognition; OECM identification and evaluation; and the use of international guidance to support the identification and evaluation of OECMs. They provided the following conclusions and recommendations:

Recognition of conservation efforts

- Participants agreed that OECMs could recognize areas where good stewardship is happening.
- They noted that OECMs could acknowledge fishers' conservation efforts and highlight their contribution to biodiversity conservation.

Recognition of fishers' local culture in the OECM process

- Participants emphasized the importance of recognizing the local culture in the OECM identification, evaluation, and recognition process. Many small, traditional communities have a tradition of depending on local resources, so they care deeply about conservation and want to protect their fishing areas and their culture.

OECMs and incentives

- Participants noted the potential challenges in obtaining community-level support for OECM recognition and the importance of outlining the benefit of recognizing OECMs to generate interest among fishing communities. One suggested potential benefit for fishing communities might be to use the OECM recognition as a quality label. Participants also wondered if the OECM label could be used as a marketing tool, similar to a certification label.
- Recognizing OECMs can be an incentive to improve management in the region, encouraging agencies to devote further attention to management (more staff, monitoring, tools) and increasing management potential for biodiversity conservation.
- Recognizing OECMs can stimulate opportunities for financing monitoring and enforcement activities. Participants cautioned, however, that this might not always be the case and warned about initiating an OECM recognition process to obtain more funding.

OECM identification and evaluation

- Participants noted that in many cases it would not be possible to recognize an ABFM as an OECM without conducting a case-by-case evaluation. However, it was stressed that there must be at least some evidence to conclude that there are or will be positive biodiversity outcomes.
- Participants emphasized the importance of avoiding overcomplicating the OECM process and suggested focusing on recognizing positive actions taking place in fisheries and other sectors and determining how to adjust these actions to enhance their contribution to biodiversity conservation.
- Participants emphasized that it would be helpful to have a common understanding of what would disqualify an area from being an OECM.
- Participants considered the timeframe of biodiversity outcomes as another relevant issue, and it was considered that there is a need to expand the understanding and definition of the long-term concept.
- Participants proposed layering different values when identifying areas for evaluation. For example, a fisheries management area can overlap with features important to biodiversity conservation, such

as an EBSA. They suggested taking these possible overlaps into account when identifying potential OECMs, which could be based on overlaps of all these features.

Use of international guidance to support the identification and evaluation of OECMs

- Participants noted that there could be value in looking at IUCN MPA guidance, such as the Guidelines for Applying the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories to Marine Protected Areas, to try to identify what is relevant for OECMs, as there could be overlaps, including for the assessment of governance quality and support of ecosystem services.

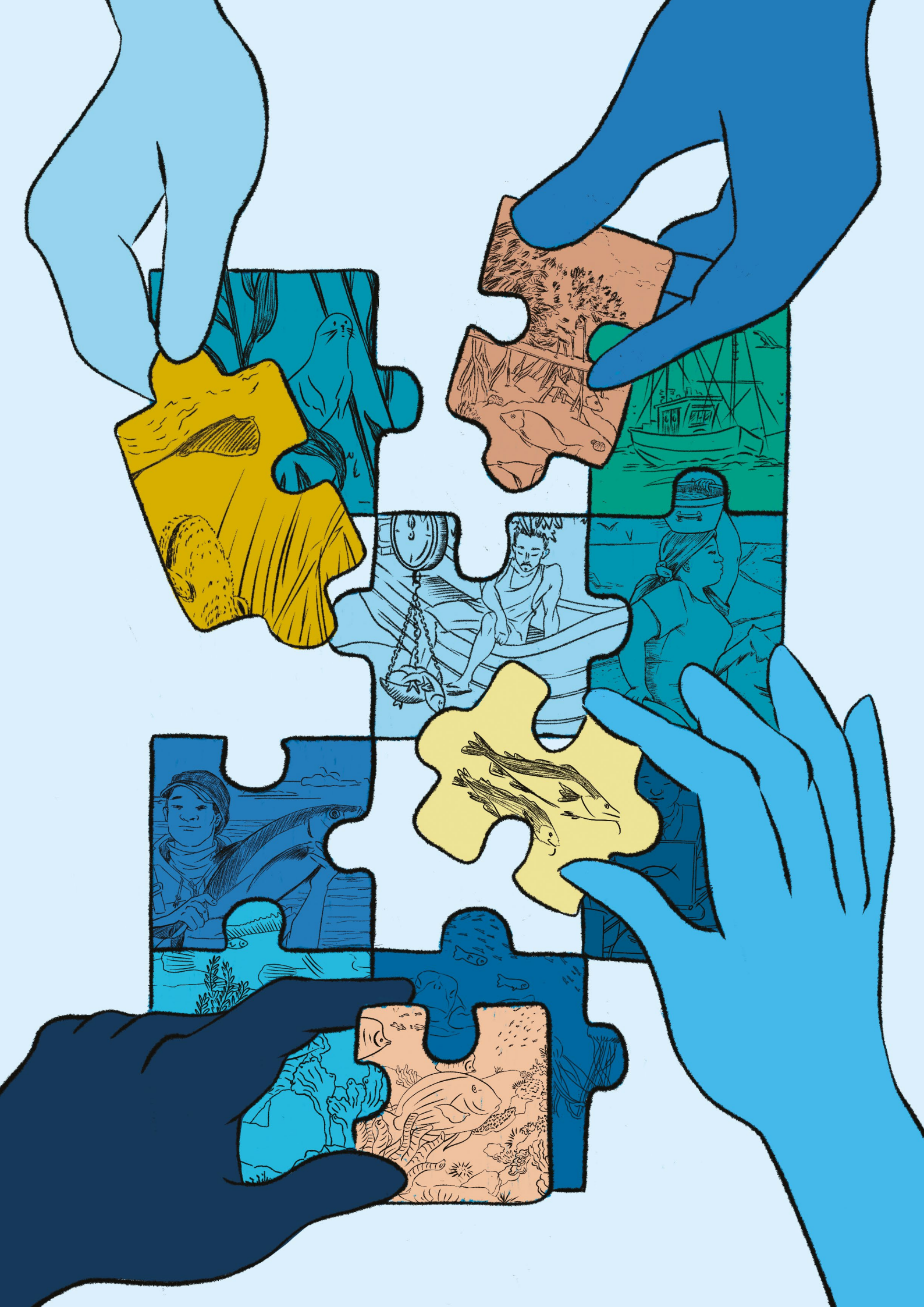
CLOSING OF THE MEETING

Mr Appiott and Ms Himes-Cornell concluded the workshop, noting that the high level of engagement in the conversation over the four-day workshop was encouraging. Mr Appiott noted that the SCBD was engaged in thinking about global targets, but noted the importance of matters on the ground. Engagement from FAO and IUCN-FEG, among others, would encourage further action on the issue and further uptake of the concept. He noted that it was instructive to hear about the challenges that are being dealt with on the ground.

Mr Appiott informed participants that the SCBD coordinates the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, under which national capacity-building initiatives can be conducted. He suggested that if any countries in the region are interested in further activities such as national EBSA workshops or MSP workshops, it may be possible to find resources for such activities.

Ms Himes-Cornell noted that FAO is keen to help out countries that are interested in moving forward on OECMs, including through national workshops, and invited those interested to reach out.

Ms Himes-Cornell and Mr Appiott extended their thanks to participants for their interest and active engagement, especially those who contributed case studies. They also thanked moderators, note-takers and interpreters.



REFERENCES

- CBD.** 2010. Decision UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/29 Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its Tenth Meeting: Marine and coastal biodiversity. Nagoya, Japan & Montreal, Canada, CBD. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-29-en.pdf>
- CBD.** 2012. Report of the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic regional workshop to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas. Montreal. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/mar/rwebsa-wcar-01/official/rwebsa-wcar-01-sbstta-16-inf-07-en.pdf>
- CBD.** 2018. Decision CBD/COP/DEC/14/8 Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its Fourteenth meeting: Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt & Montreal, Canada, CBD. www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-08-en.pdf
- FAO.** 2022. *A handbook for identifying, evaluating and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures in marine fisheries*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3307en>
- FAO.** 2023. Report of the expert meeting on fisheries-related other effective area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc4870en>
- ICES.** 2021. ICES/IUCN-CEM FEG Workshop on Testing OECM Practices and Strategies (WKTOPS). ICES Scientific Reports 3:42. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8135>
- Niparajá.** 2015. Resultados biológicos-ecológicos de las zonas de refugio del corredor San Cosme a Punta Coyote: Monitoreo submarino 2012–2016. <https://niparaja.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Resultados-biologicos-ecologicos-de-las-Zonas-de-Refugio-del-Corredor-San-Cosme-a-Punta-Coyote-Monitoreo-submarino-2012-2016-DIGITAL.pdf>
- REDPARQUES.** 2023. Herramienta para la evaluación rápida de potenciales OMEC. In: *REDPARQUES*. Cited 11 May 2023. <https://omec.redparques.com/web/#/publico>
- Santamaría Gómez, M., Cely Gómez, A., Matallana Tobón, C., Echeverri Marín, J., Galán Rodríguez, S. & Rey Rodero, D.** 2021. *Otras Medidas Efectivas de Conservación Basadas en Áreas (OMEC): guía para su identificación, fortalecimiento y reporte en Colombia*. [Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM): Guide for their identification, strengthening and reporting in Colombia.] Colombia, Resnatur, Instituto Humboldt, Fundación Natura y Proyecto Regional Áreas Protegidas Locales. www.minambiente.gov.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Cartilla-OMEC-guia-identificacion-fortalecimientoreporte-colombia.pdf
- UNEP-WCMC.** 2019. User Manual for the World Database on Protected Areas and world database on other effective area-based conservation measures: 1.6. Cambridge, UNEP-WCMC. www.wcmc.io/WDPManual

ANNEX 1. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Governments

Antigua and Barbuda

Mr Ruleo Camacho
Marine Ecologist
Environmental Unit, National Parks Authority

Belize

Mrs Alicia Eck-Nunez
Fisheries Officer – Marine Reserves
Operations Manager
Ecosystem-based Management Unit,
Belize Fisheries Department,
Ministry of Blue Economy

Mr Kenneth Esquivel
Fisheries Officer
Capture Fisheries Unit Coordinator
Fisheries Department
Ministry of Blue Economy

Brazil

Mr Roberto Gallucci
Environmental Analyst
Department of Species
Ministry of the Environment

Colombia

Mr Juan Carlos Gutiérrez
Contractor
Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural
Autoridad Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca (AUNAP)

Mr Gustavo Lara
Contratista especialista en recursos hidrobiológicos
Dirección de Asuntos Marinos
Costeros y Recursos Acuáticos
Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible

Costa Rica

Ms Jenny Asch Corrales
Coordinadora de Areas Silvestres Protegidas y
del Programa Marino Costero
Programa Marino Costero
Departamento de Conservación y uso
sostenible de la biodiversidad y sus servicios
ecosistémicos (CUSBSE)
Sistema Nacional de Areas de Conservación
Ministerio del Ambiente y Energía

Cuba

Ms Julieta Gonzalez Mendez
Assistant Researcher
Department of Marine Protected Areas
National Center for Protected Areas
Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment

Dominica

Ms Wynnona Joseph
Senior Fisheries Officer
Fisheries Division, Blue and Green Economy

Dominican Republic

Mr Francis Omar Reyes Polanco
Biodiversity Technician
Department of Genetic Resources
Ministry of Environment

El Salvador

Mr Vladimir Humberto Baiza Avelar
Tecnico en Gestion de Areas Naturales Protegidas
Direccion de Ecosistemas y Biodiversidad,
Gerencia de Ecosistemas
Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales

Mr Jaime Javier Espinoza Navarrete
Coordinador area de Humedales
Direccion de Ecosistemas y Biodiversidad,
Gerencia de Ecosistemas
Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y
Recursos Naturales

Guatemala

Ms Airam Andrea López Roulet
Asesor Especializado en Areas Marino Costero
y Humedales
Direccion de Desarrollo del Sistema
Guatemalteco de Areas Protegidas
Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas (CONAP)

Guyana

Ms Lauren Sampson
Senior Environmental Officer
Policy and Planning/MEAs Unit
Environmental Protection Agency

Haiti

Mr Jacques Peguy
Coordinator
Ministry of Environment
Marine Protected Areas Directorate

Mr Jean Wiener
Executive Director
Ministry of Environment,
Fondation pour la Protection de la
Biodiversite Marine

Jamaica

Ms Carla Gordon
Manager
Protected Areas Branch
National Environment and Planning Agency

Mexico

Ms Susana Perera Valderrama
Marine Monitoring Specialist
Marine Monitoring Subcoordination
National Commission for the Knowledge and
Use of the Biodiversity (CONABIO)

Saint Lucia

Ms Monique Calderon
Fisheries Biologist
Department of Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security
and Rural Development

Surinam

Ms Muriel Wirjodirjo
Senior Policy Officer
Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry
and Fisheries

Mr Ranjitsing Soekhradj
Research Coordinator
Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry
and Fisheries

Trinidad and Tobago

Ms Farahnaz Solomon
Research Officer
Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Programme
Institute of Marine Affairs
Ministry of Planning and Development

Ms Rosemarie Kishore
Senior Research Officer
Institute of Marine Affairs,
Ministry of Planning and Development

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Mr Lermis Alexander Lara Perdomo
Director General de Pesca Industrial
Viceministerio de Producción Primaria
Pesquera y Acuicola
Dirección General de Pesca Industrial
Ministerio Del Poder Popular de Pesca
y Acuicultura

Other governments**United States of America**

Ms Mimi D'Iorio
Geospatial MPA Manager
National Ocean Service/Office of National
Marine Sanctuaries/Marine Protected Areas Center
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Ms Heather Sagar
Senior Policy Advisor
NOAA Fisheries Service
Department of Commerce

Mr Erik Williams
Chief
Atlantic Fisheries
Southeast Fisheries Science Center/Sustainable
Fisheries Division
U.S. Dept. of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Organizations**Caribbean Environment Programme**

Ms Tamoy Singh
Programme Management Assistant
SPAW Sub-Programme

Ms Sarah Alexandra Carolin Wollring
Associate Programme Management Officer

Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA)

Ms Maria Paula Conrado Martinez
Consultant
Marine Programme

Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat

Mr Milton Haughton
Executive Director

Ms Maren Headly
Programme Manager,
Fisheries Management and Development

Mr Peter Murray
Advisor
Fisheries Management and Development

Ms June Masters
CRFM Ms Sandra Grant

Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional (Center for Research and Advanced Studies of the National Polytechnic Institute)

Ms Silvia Salas- Márquez
Researcher
Marine Resources
Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzado del IPN (CINVESTAV) – Merida Unit

Cooperativa Autogestionaria de Servicios Profesionales para la Solidaridad Social R.L.

Mr Marvin Leonel Fonseca-Borrás
Gerente General
CoopeSoliDar R.L. (Costa Rica)

EnGen Collaborative

Ms Margaux Granat
Director

European Bureau for Conservation and Development

Ms Despina Symons
Director, EBCD
Coordinator, IUCN/CEM/FEG

Mr Jacopo Pasquero
International Affairs Advisor

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Ms Amber Himes-Cornell
Fishery Officer
Fisheries and Aquaculture Division

Mr Juan Lechuga Sanchez
Fisheries Management Consultant
Fisheries and Aquaculture Division

Ms Imen Meliane
Fisheries Management Consultant
Fisheries and Aquaculture Division

Ms Tundi Agardy
Fisheries Management Consultant
Fisheries and Aquaculture Division

Ms Kristin Hoelting
Fisheries Management Consultant
Fisheries and Aquaculture Division

Ms Vera Agostini
Deputy director
Fisheries and Aquaculture Division

Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative

Mr David Johnson
Coordinator

Instituto Politécnico Nacional (Mexico)

Mr Francisco Arreguín-Sánchez
Professor, scientific researcher
Centro Interdisciplinario de Ciencias Marinas

INVEMAR (Marine and Coastal Research Institute)

Ms Martha Patricia Vides Casado
Head of Research Line - Species Inventories,
Taxonomy and Biology
Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem
Research Programme

IUCN Fisheries Expert Group

Mr Serge Garcia
Chair
IUCN Fisheries Expert Group

Ms Daniela Diz
Associate Professor, International
Ocean Governance
IUCN Fisheries Expert Group / Lyell Centre,
Heriot-Watt University

Mr Tony Charles
Senior Research Fellow in Environment
and Sustainability
Professor, School of the Environment &
School of Business
Director, Community Conservation
Research Network

IUCN Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

Ms Hyacinth Armstrong-Vaughn
Protected Areas Coordinator
Biodiversity and Rights Unit
BIOPAMA Programme

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas

Ms Andrea Montero Cordero
Finance Conservation Program Officer
Caribbean Biodiversity Fund

Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas Trust

Ms Ruth Spencer
Chair
Department: Environmental Governance

Ms Sasha Middleton
CEO, Head of Secretariat.

MY World Mexico

Ms Isabel Bello Ontiveros
Ambassador of the State of Guerrero
Accelerator Program

Pew Charitable Trusts

Ms Megan Jungwiwattanaporn
Officer, Environment
Environment – International Conservation Unit

Ms Masha Kalinina
Senior Officer
International Conservation Unit

RARE

Ms Lisa Schindler Murray
Senior Manager
Policy & Partnerships

Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC)

Ms Souha El Asmi
Programme Officer
UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention

The Nature Conservancy

Ms Felicity Burrow
Senior Fisheries Specialist
Caribbean Region

University of Sao Paulo

Ms Maria Gasalla
Professor
Oceanographic Institute
University of Sao Paulo

Wildlife Conservation Society

Mr Christian Barrientos
Marine Coordinator
Mesoamerica Marine Program

WWF Colombia

Ms Paula Bueno
Policy Advocacy Specialist / PCAs ACAI Focal
Point for Latin America and the Caribbean
Protected and Conserved Areas, Area of
Collective Action and Innovation (ACAI)

UNEP – Caribbean Sub-Regional Office

Mr Vincent Sweeney
Head of the Caribbean Sub-Regional Office

**Secretariat to the CLME+ SAP Interim
Coordination Mechanism**

Mr Patrick Debels
Regional Coordinator
UNDP/GEF PROCARIBE+ PPG Coordination Unit
Secretariat to the CLME+ SAP Interim
Coordination Mechanism

**Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
(WECAFC)**

Ms Yvette Dieiouadi
Executive Secretary
WECAFC Secretariat
Food and Agriculture Organization of
the United Nations
Subregional Office for the Caribbean (FAO-SLC)

**Secretariat of the Convention On
Biological Diversity**

Mr Joseph Appiott
Associate Programme Officer
Marine and Coastal Biodiversity
Science, Society and Sustainable Futures Division
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Ms Jacqueline Grekin
Programme Assistant
Marine and Coastal Biodiversity
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Ms Johany Martinez
Programme Assistant
Marine and Coastal Biodiversity
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

ANNEX 2. AGENDA

Day 1 (20 April)

Time (EDT)	Agenda item
10–10.30 am	<p>Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting <i>Opening statements (5 mins each)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity • Manuel Barange, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division, FAO • Milton Haughton, Executive Director, CRFM Secretariat • Yvette Diei Ouali, Executive Secretary, WECAFC • Vincent Sweeney, Head of UNEP Caribbean Sub-Regional Office • Patrick Debels, CLME+ Regional Coordinator, Secretariat of the CLME+ Interim Coordination Mechanism
10.30–10.45 am	<p>Agenda item 2. Workshop background, objectives, scope and expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on background and objectives – by Joe Appiott (SCBD)
10.45 am–12 pm	<p>Agenda item 3. Introduction to other effective area-based conservation measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the OECM approach and overview of the criteria (15 min) – by Amber Himes-Cornell (FAO) • Presentations on types of area-based fisheries measures and types of biodiversity benefits they may provide – by Amber Himes-Cornell (FAO) • Presentation of examples of already-identified OECMs elsewhere – by Serge Garcia (IUCN-FEG) • Presentation on relevant outcomes of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) regarding OECMs – by Amber Himes-Cornell (FAO) • Presentation on FAO's OECM Primer – by Tundi Agardy (FAO) • Q&A and discussion
12–12.30 pm	BREAK
12.30–1.45 pm	<p>Agenda item 4. Regional context and national implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on a Regional Ocean Coordination Mechanism: scope for supporting cross-sectoral area-based conservation in the wider Caribbean – by Patrick Debels Secretariat of the CLME+ Interim Coordination Mechanism • Presentation of strategies/targets/work at the regional scale for area-based conservation – by Tamoy Singh (Cartagena Convention/CEP) • Presentation of strategies/targets/work at the regional scale for sustainable fisheries – by Peter Murray (CRFM) • Presentations on status and types of area-based fisheries measures in the region – By Serge Garcia (IUCN-FEG) Maren Heady (CRFM) • Q&A (20 mins)
1.45–2.30 pm	<p>Moderated discussion on relevant national experiences <i>(moderated by Patrick Debels [CLME+])</i></p>

Day 2 (21 April)

Time (EDT)	Agenda item
10–11 am	Agenda item 5. Criteria for the identification of effective area-based conservation measures <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation on criteria<ul style="list-style-type: none">– by Amber Himes-Cornell (FAO)• Q&A on criteria
11–11.15 am	Agenda item 6. Identifying and reporting effective area-based conservation measures <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation on process and approaches for reporting OECMs (15 mins)<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Amber Himes-Cornell (FAO)
11.15 am–12 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderated discussion on potential challenges in applying OECM criteria and managing OECMs in the region (30 mins) (moderated by co-chairs)
12–12.30 pm	BREAK
12.30–1 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation on areas in potential need of capacity building to support OECM identification (15 mins)<ul style="list-style-type: none">– by Serge Garcia (IUCN-FEG)• Discussion (15 min)
1–2 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Part II of the workshop<ul style="list-style-type: none">– by Serge Garcia (IUCN-FEG)• Q&A

Day 3 (27 April)

Time (EDT)	Agenda item
10–10.30 am	Agenda item 7. Applying the criteria for effective area-based conservation measures criteria to illustrative case studies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to breakout group work<ul style="list-style-type: none">– by Serge Garcia (FEG)• Q&A
10.30 am–12 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plenary exercise
12–12.30 pm	BREAK
12.30–2 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakout group work
2–2.30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plenary session to check on progress

Day 4 (28 April)

Time (EDT)	Agenda item
10–11.30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakout group work
11.30 am–12 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back to plenary
12–12.30 pm	BREAK
12.30–1.15 pm	<p>Agenda item 8. Conclusions and next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on lessons in applying OECM criteria and managing OECMs in the region; what is needed to do this effectively? (<i>moderated by co-chairs</i>)
1.15–2.15 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap-up plenary discussion and on future steps
2.15–2.30 pm	<p>Agenda item 9. Closing of the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing

ANNEX 3. CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED MEASURES FROM THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY'S CONFERENCE OF PARTIES DECISION 14/8 ON PROTECTED AREAS AND OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES

Criterion A: Area is not currently recognized as a protected area	
Not a protected area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area is not currently recognized or reported as a protected area or part of a protected area; it may have been established for another function.
Criterion B: Area is governed and managed	
Geographically defined space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size and area are described, including in three dimensions where necessary.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundaries are geographically delineated.
Legitimate governance authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance has legitimate authority and is appropriate for achieving <i>in situ</i> conservation of biodiversity within the area;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance by indigenous peoples and local communities is self-identified in accordance with national legislation and applicable international obligations;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance reflects the equity considerations adopted in the Convention.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance may be by a single authority and/or organization or through collaboration among relevant authorities and provides the ability to address threats collectively.
Managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained outcomes for the conservation of biological diversity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant authorities and stakeholders are identified and involved in management.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A management system is in place that contributes to sustaining the <i>in situ</i> conservation of biodiversity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management is consistent with the ecosystem approach with the ability to adapt to achieve expected biodiversity conservation outcomes, including long-term outcomes, and including the ability to manage a new threat.
Criterion C: Achieves sustained and effective contribution to <i>in situ</i> conservation of biodiversity	
Effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area achieves, or is expected to achieve, positive and sustained outcomes for the <i>in situ</i> conservation of biodiversity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threats, existing or reasonably anticipated ones are addressed effectively by preventing, significantly reducing or eliminating them, and by restoring degraded ecosystems.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms, such as policy frameworks and regulations, are in place to recognize and respond to new threats.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To the extent relevant and possible, management inside and outside the other effective area-based conservation measure is integrated.

Sustained over long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The other effective area-based conservation measures are in place for the long term or are likely to be.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sustained” pertains to the continuity of governance and management and “long term” pertains to the biodiversity outcome.
<i>In situ</i> conservation of biological diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of other effective area-based conservation measures is expected to include the identification of the range of biodiversity attributes for which the site is considered important (e.g., communities of rare, threatened or endangered species, representative natural ecosystems, range restricted species, key biodiversity areas, areas providing critical ecosystem functions and services, areas for ecological connectivity).
Information and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of other effective area-based conservation measures should, to the extent possible, document the known biodiversity attributes, as well as, where relevant, cultural and/or spiritual values, of the area and the governance and management in place as a baseline for assessing effectiveness.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monitoring system informs management on the effectiveness of measures with respect to biodiversity, including the health of ecosystems.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes should be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of governance and management, including with respect to equity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General data of the area such as boundaries, aim and governance are available information.
Criterion D: Associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values	
Ecosystem functions and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystem functions and services are supported, including those of importance to indigenous peoples and local communities, for other effective area-based conservation measures concerning their territories, taking into account interactions and trade-offs among ecosystem functions and services, with a view to ensuring positive biodiversity outcomes and equity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management to enhance one particular ecosystem function or service does not impact negatively on the sites overall biological diversity.
Cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and management measures identify, respect and uphold the cultural, spiritual, socioeconomic, and other locally relevant values of the area, where such values exist.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and management measures respect and uphold the knowledge, practices and institutions that are fundamental for the <i>in situ</i> conservation of biodiversity.

Source: CBD. 2018a. *Definition of “other effective area-based conservation measures”*. Adopted: Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 30 November 2018. CBD/COP/DEC/14/8. Page 12. Montreal. www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-08-en.pdf

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative capacity-building workshop for the Wider Caribbean and Central America on other effective area-based conservation measures in marine fisheries was co-organized by Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It sought to enhance the capacity of countries in the region to identify, evaluate and report on OECMs in marine fisheries in the Caribbean and Central America, as well as providing technical input to prepare and test FAO's practical guidance for identifying, evaluating, and reporting OECMs in marine fisheries.

This report outlines the main points covered during the expert meeting, including the initial application of the criteria for OECMs to eight real-life case studies from Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and the United States of America. The meeting sought to improve participants' understanding of the OECM properties and criteria, to familiarize them with the OECM identification process, and to provide an opportunity to identify eventual capacity-building needs.

ISBN 978-92-5-138215-8 ISSN 2070-6987



9 789251 382158

CC8058EN/1/10.23