



Viet Nam National Workshop on OECMs **Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 15 December 2023**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GIZ	The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
NBCA	National Biodiversity Conservation Authority
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
OECM	Other effective area-based conservation measures
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. Introduction

The government acknowledges that protected areas (PAs) play a vital role in biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation. But coverage is limited: Viet Nam's 209 PAs cover 7.58% and 0.56% of the terrestrial and marine realms respectively (UNEP-WCMC, 2023).

In December 2022, the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) with four goals and 23 targets to coordinate action-oriented efforts at global level in biodiversity conservation over the decade to 2030. The GBF includes the target of protecting at least 30% areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions through systems of PAs and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).

An OECM is defined as a geographically defined space, not recognized as a PA, which is governed and managed over the long-term in ways that deliver the effective and enduring *in situ* conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem services and cultural and spiritual values.

As a part to the CBD, Viet Nam has committed to contributing to the achievement of the 30x30 target. Viet Nam also joined the UK-led Global Ocean Alliance (GOA), which aims to protect at least 30% of the global ocean in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and OECMs by 2030.

To achieve the 30x30 target, Viet Nam will have to use OECMs. OECMs are recognized in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) to 2030 and vision to 2050 as a measure to conserve and restore biodiversity outside of the national PA network.

At the CBD COP 14 in 2018, IUCN was asked to prepare the definition and technical guidelines for OECMs. To help countries identify and establish OECMs based on this definition, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas OECM Specialist Group published a [technical report](#) on OECMs in 2019 and released an updated OECM [site assessment tool kit](#) in May 2022. The technical report and tool kit have been translated into [Vietnamese](#).

The OECM concept was introduced at a workshop organized by IUCN and ISPONRE in June 2020. A study by NBCA, DOPAM and GIZ in 2022 reviewed the status and potential of OECMs in Viet Nam, their recognition in the legal framework, and potential spatial representation. The study was peer reviewed at a consultation in December 2022. OECMs and their contribution to 30x30 were presented by GIZ at the COP15 debriefing workshop hosted by MONRE in May 2023.

In June 2023, IUCN and GIZ organized a technical workshop to present the OECM criteria and their use in freshwater, forest, and coastal/marine ecosystems. GIZ in collaboration with NBCA is currently testing the OECM screening tool in one province and summarising the experience with OECM implementation in three countries. The June 2023 workshop summary is [attached](#).

In December 2023, NBCA, GIZ, IUCN, and WWF hosted a national OECM workshop in Hanoi for government agencies, researchers, non-state agencies and development partners to discuss on how OECMs can help meet Viet Nam's GBF commitments. It was a chance to introduce OECM concepts, tools, and regional and global experiences to a new set of stakeholders. The December 2023 workshop agenda is annex 1.

The workshop objectives were to:

- Introduce the OECM concept and tools to all stakeholders.
- Share experiences and best practice in other countries on OECMs.
- Understand the current context in Viet Nam for OECMs recognition and legal and institutional framework.
- Provide insights into potential categories for OECMs in freshwater, forest, and coastal/marine ecosystems.
- Agree on elements of roadmap for OECM recognition, monitoring and reporting in Viet Nam.

2. Status of OECMs in Asia

In November 2023, IUCN published [Status of OECMs in Asia](#), which assessed the status of OECMs in 17 countries. The survey results revealed that over two-thirds of the surveyed countries do not have existing strategies for OECMs in place, but most of these countries have plans to produce one. Only one country (Maldives) has existing legislation for OECMs. Out of the remaining 16 countries that do not have existing legislation, 10 of them stated that they have plans to develop legislation for OECMs in the future.

The main challenges with developing plans or legislation for OECMs were reported to be “Lack of political will to develop these”, “Lack of knowledge on how to develop these for OECMs”, “Lack of financial resources”, and “Lack of understanding on the importance/relevance of OECMs”. Since most of the 17 countries do not have existing strategies or legislation for OECMs, it is important to better understand how to address the challenges with these and the way forward.

The key recommendations from this report to support action for OECMs are:

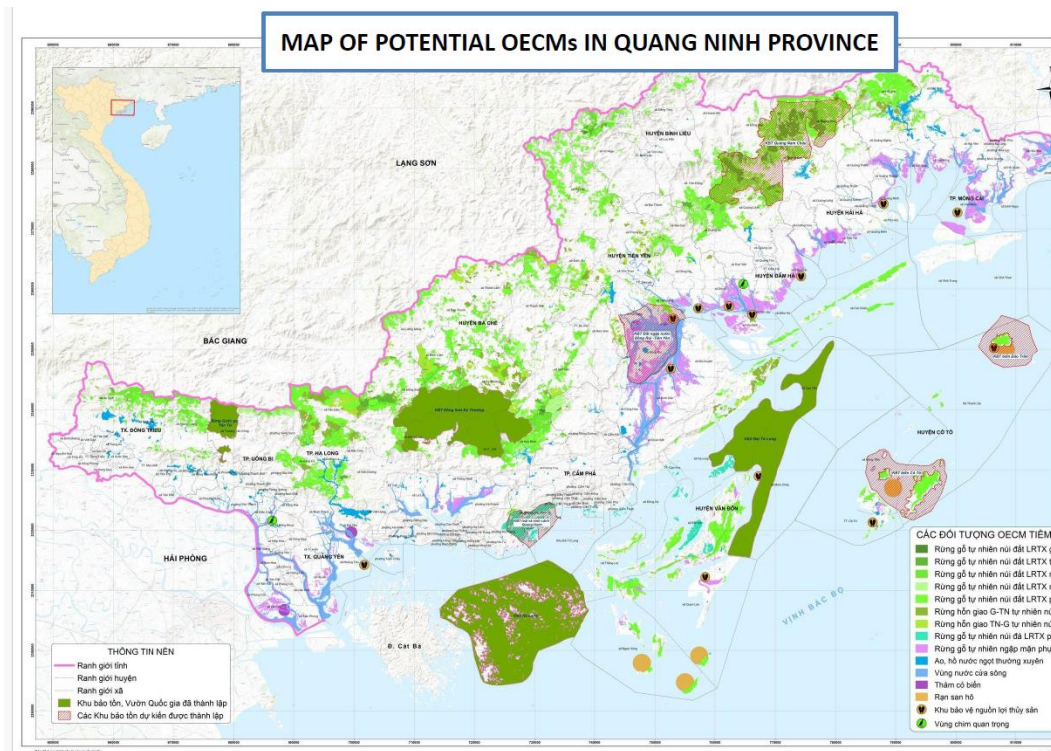
1. Capacity building for OECM recognition and important considerations such as FPIC.
2. Developing a detailed national strategy through a consultative process.
3. Developing legal or other types of mechanisms for OECMs.
4. Financing opportunities for OECMs.
5. Supporting ecologically valuable areas.

In February 2024, building on the status assessment, IUCN published [Guidance to Advance OECMs in Asia](#).

3. Status of OECMs in Viet Nam

There is no established process for recognizing OECMs in Viet Nam. Over the last year or so, GIZ, WWF, IUCN, and others have identified potential OECMs in the terrestrial and marine realms where there is some existing governance framework in place. Some of these were presented at the June 2023 technical workshop.

At the meeting, the results of a GIZ-MARD study of potential OECMs in Quang Ninh was presented. One hundred and sixteen sites were identified as potential OECMs of which 83 were protection forests, 20 were aquatic resource protection zones, and three were important bird areas. See map.



The study showed that the IUCN tools are fully applicable in Viet Nam but require additional guidance tailored to national conditions. It also showed the challenge of accessing biodiversity data with sufficient resolution to map OECMs. This highlights the importance of sharing biodiversity data.

4. Opportunities and challenges for OECMs in Viet Nam

Based on its own screening, NBCA proposed six groups of potential OECMs that are outside the national PA system:

1. Special-Use Forests.
2. Aquatic resource protection zones.
3. Biodiversity corridors.
4. Important wetland areas.
5. PA buffer zones.
6. Established conservation areas.

By definition, OECMs must be effectively managed. But identifying operational non-state land and water management structures is challenging. For this reason, state agencies will be prioritised as OECM managers, at least initially.

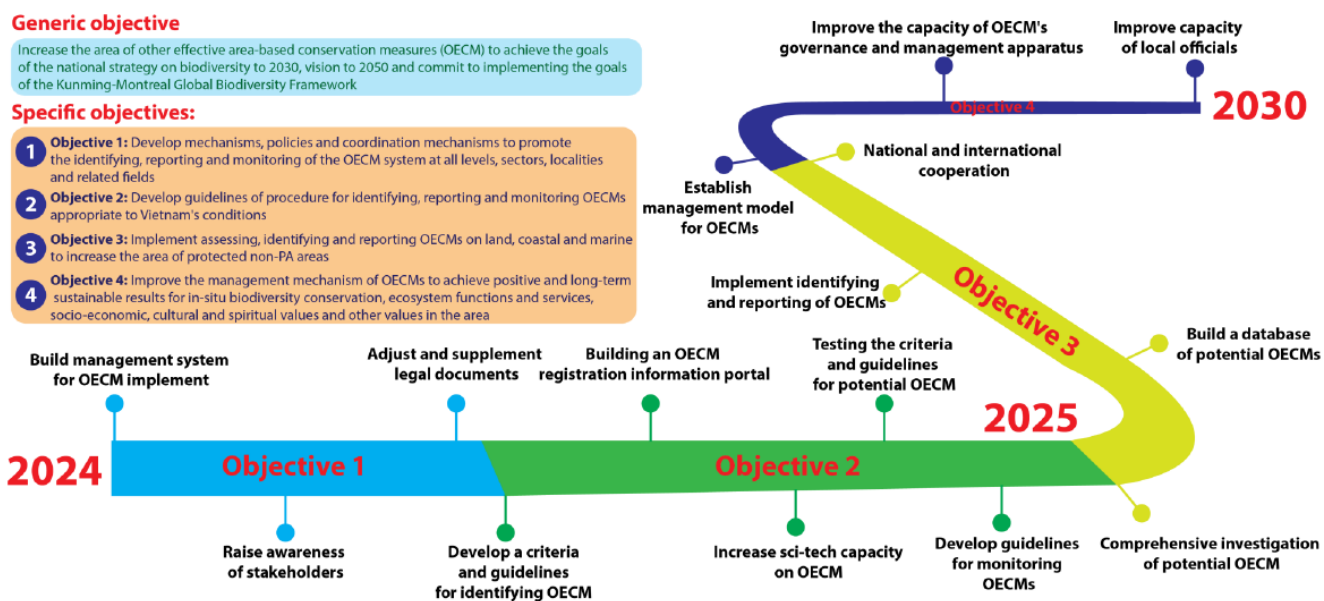
The participation of IPLCs in OECMs is included in the technical description. But cooperation mechanisms between government and IPLCs are poorly developed in Viet Nam. There is no legal basis for co-management of terrestrial ecosystems in Viet Nam and while fisheries co-management was recognized in law in 2017, implementation has been weak.

The recognition of OECMs managed by IPLCs will require some form of FPIC and long-term support from state agencies.

Determining OECM ownership and lines of accountability could be difficult in areas that is managed by communities without clear boundaries.

5. Roadmap

A roadmap was proposed by GIZ divided into two phases and four objectives:



2024-2025

This phase focuses on implementing tasks under Objectives 1 and 2, including building OECM management capacity within government, awareness raising, policy analysis, testing the criteria and guidelines for OECM recognition, and developing guidelines for monitoring OECMs.

2025-2030

This phase focuses on implementing tasks under Objectives 3 and 4, including a nation-wide assessment of potential OECMs, building an OECM database, OECM reporting to IUCN WPCA, and building OECM management capacity.

In addition to the roadmap, other approaches were proposed:

- Conduct OECM demonstrations in different landscapes, ecosystems, and management systems.
- Institutionalize OECMs by amending the Biodiversity Law and issuing an OECM decision.
- Develop and start to implement resource mobilization plans for OECM implementation.
- Communicate, raise awareness, and build capacity of state and non-state stakeholders on OECM.
- Need financial policy to use the existing environmental funds for OECM development.

6. Recommendations

1. MONRE should establish an OECM Coordinating Body chaired by NBCA.
2. Government should start to integrate OECMs into legal documents and agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other sectoral plans, including marine spatial plans.
3. MONRE should establish a comprehensive program to implement OECMs nationwide.
4. MONRE should establish an OECM Working Group to exchange information and promote collaboration.

ANNEX 1: DECEMBER 2023 WORKSHOP AGENDA

Time	Content	Responsibility
8:00-8:30	Registration	
8:30-8:40	Introducing the event objective & agenda	NBCA
8:40-9:00	Opening speech	MONRE/NBCA
	Welcome remarks	GIZ/IUCN/WWF
9:00 - 9:15	Potential for OECMs in Viet Nam and National mainstreaming	NBCA
9:15-09:30	OECMs: key findings from the technical workshop in June 2023	IUCN
9:30-09:45	Q&A	All participants
09:45-10:00	Tea break	
10:00-10:15	Inclusive Approach in OECM: ensuring bottom-up leadership	WWF
10:15 – 10:30	Results from applying OECM criteria in one province	NBCA, GIZ
10:30 – 11:00	<p>Working Groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OECM categories, criteria set and tools for OECMs in Viet Nam 2. Expectations and resources for OECMs recognition 3. Inclusive Approach in OECM 4. OECM roadmap in Viet Nam 	<p>All</p> <p>Lead facilitator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG1: IUCN - WG2: GIZ - WG3: WWF - WG4: NBCA
11:00-11:45	<p>Short highlights from the discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two key points from each WG 	Group representatives
11:45-12:00	Wrap up morning session	NBCA
12:00-13:30	Lunch	

13:30-13:45	OECMs implementation in other countries and recommendations for Viet Nam	GIZ
13:45-14:00	Best practices on OECM implementation at regional and international levels	IUCN Regional
14:00-14:15	Marine conservation and potential of OECMs in marine area in Viet Nam	Dept of Fishing Control, MARD
14:14-15:00	Group work cont.	All participants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finalization of group work to summarise key points for feedback session 	
15:00-15:15	Coffee break	
15:15-15:45	Feedback from WGs 1-3 & Q&A	All participants
15:45 - 16:30	Plenary discussion: Review potential road map for OECM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback from WG 4 ● Exchange on road map with all 	All participants
16:30-16:45	Conclusion on road map and closing event	MONRE/NBCA