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Caring for our landscapes and seascapes

A Q&A style handbook to understanding socio-ecological landscapes
and seascapes (SEPLS) and other effective area-based conservation
measures (OECMs)

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IUCN is pleased to acknowledge the support of its Framework Partners who provide core funding: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark; Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland; Government of France and the French Development Agency (AFD); Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea; The Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

This publication has been made possible through the support of Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MoEJ) provided through UNU-IAS. The authors gratefully acknowledge the longstanding leadership and commitment of the Government of Japan in advancing the Satoyama Initiative and the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI), including sustained support for the development of scientific knowledge on socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS), international knowledge exchange, and global collaboration among IPSI members and partners, including IUCN.



Published by:	IUCN, Gland, Switzerland
Produced by:	Protected, Conserved and Heritage Areas Team
Copyright:	© 2026 IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature
Recommended citation:	Sharma, M., Åberg, U., Matsuzaki, H. & Lau, C. (2026). <i>Caring for our landscapes and seascapes: A Q&A style handbook to understanding socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)</i> . IUCN.
Layout and design:	<u>Emergent Studios Inc.</u>

CONTENTS

5 | ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

6 | ACRONYMS

7 | BACKGROUND

8 | WHAT ARE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTION LANDSCAPES AND SEASCAPES (SEPLS)?

How are SEPLS monitored and evaluated? 10

12 | WHAT ARE OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECMS)?

What does 'long-term' in the OECMs criteria and definition mean? 14

What does 'in-situ' in the OECMs criteria and definition mean? 14

How are OECMs mentioned in GBF Target 3? 14

Which types of areas are likely to be OECMs? 15

What is the difference between protected areas and OECMs? 16

How can OECMs be governed? 16

How are OECMs being identified? 16

What is the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas? 16

How should OECMs be monitored? 16

17 | WHAT ARE THE MAIN SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEPLS AND OECMS?

Can a SEPLS be recognised as an OECM? 17

Can the Resilience Indicators (RIs) be used to support OECM identification, recognition and monitoring? 18

19 | WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF OECM RECOGNITION?

Benefits 19

Challenges 19

20 | SHORT QUIZ

21 | REFERENCES

21 | QUIZ ANSWERS

22 | ANNEX A

26 | ANNEX B

33 | ANNEX C

BOXES

Box 1. SEPLS definition	8
Box 2. OECMs definition	12
Box 3. GBF Target 3	14
Box 4. Management objectives of OECMs	15
Box 5. Definition of a protected area	16

FIGURES

Figure 1. Key features of SEPLS	9
Figure 2. Resilience Indicators for assessing, planning and monitoring socio-ecological resilience of SEPLS	10
Figure 3. Management objectives of OECMs and examples of types of OECMs	15
Figure 4. Comparison of the key features of SEPLS and the OECMs criteria	17

TABLES

Table 1. Summary of Resilience Indicators (United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability [UNU-IAS] et al., 2024)	11
Table 2. CBD criteria for OECMs (Annex III, Decision 14/8)	12
Table 3. IUCN criteria and assessment process for identifying OECMs (Jonas et al., 2023)	13

Acknowledgments

This product is the result of a joint collaboration between the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI), United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

We are thankful to the IPSI members, Rissa Edoo (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), Paulina G. Karim (National Dong Hwa University), Yoji Natori (Akita International University) and UNDP coordinators for supporting our consultation process.

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Acronyms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
COP	Conference of the Parties	OECMs	Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent	Q&A	Question and Answer
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	RIs	Indicators of Resilience/Resilience Indicators
GEF	Global Environment Facility	SEPLS	Socio-Ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes
GIS	Geographic Information System	SGP	Small Grants Programme
IGES	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IPSI	International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative	UNEP-WCMC	United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature	UNU-IAS	United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area	WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
MoEJ	Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan	WDPCA	World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas

Background

The International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) was established during the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP10)¹ as a global collaborative platform dedicated to realising societies in harmony with nature. In its [Decision X/32](#), the Satoyama Initiative was recognised by the CBD as a “potentially useful tool to better understand and support human-influenced natural environments for the benefit of biodiversity and human well-being.” Since its launch, IPSI has supported the implementation of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which were adopted at the same conference. Its successor, the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted in 2022, now guides the effective implementation of the Convention through four overarching goals and 23 targets. Among these, GBF Target 3, also known as the “30x30” target, calls for the effective conservation of at least 30% of terrestrial, inland waters and coastal and marine areas by 2030.

Following the GBF, the IPSI Strategy and Plan of Action 2023–2030 was adopted in 2023. It sets out five Strategic Objectives aligned with the framework, including Strategic Objective 3, which emphasises the contributions of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS) to area-based conservation measures. This learning material, building on CBD Decision 14/8 and IUCN WCPA’s publications on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) (“[Site-level tool for identifying other effective area-based conservation measures \(OECMs\)](#)”) (Jonas et al., 2023) and “[Guidance on other effective area-based conservation measures \(OECMs\)](#)” (Jonas et al., 2024)), was developed with the aim to strengthen IPSI members’ understanding of OECMs, and, in doing so, support the alignment of their activities with the IPSI Strategy and Plan of Action 2023–2030 and GBF Target 3.

The content of this learning material was developed and finalised after consultation with IPSI members based on feedback received during an online learning meeting. The section on the Resilience Indicators (RIs) was supported by consultations with experts from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and National Dong Hwa University.

Who this resource is for

This learning material was primarily developed for IPSI members, as well as other stakeholders involved in SEPLS. IPSI’s diverse membership includes:

- National government agencies
- Other government-affiliated organisations
- Local government organisations
- Non-governmental and civil society organisations
- Indigenous or local community organisations
- Academic, educational and/or research institutes
- Industry or private sector organisations
- United Nations or other intergovernmental organisations

Together, these groups contribute to the stewardship, revitalisation and sustainable management of SEPLS around the world.

Learning objectives

Both SEPLS and OECMs are global forms of recognition for conservation efforts implemented on the ground. Both highlight approaches in which human activities and nature conservation are integrated in a sustainable, balanced and sometimes mutually reinforcing ways.

To foster an understanding of the linkages between the two forms of recognition, this learning material provides information on both SEPLS and OECMs and explores the practical contextualisation and application of these frameworks for achieving GBF Target 3. The learning material is presented in a question and answer (Q&A)-style format, with additional relevant information and case studies in the Annexes.

[1] The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has three main objectives:

- “The conservation of biological diversity
- The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity
- The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources” <https://www.cbd.int/intro>

The Conference of the Parties is the governing body of the CBD <https://www.cbd.int/cop10>

What are socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS)

SEPLS is a concept promoted by IPSI. The partnership is made up of hundreds of member organisations from across the world dedicated to working together to realise societies in harmony with nature.

According to the IPSI Charter, SEPLS are defined as:

Box 1. SEPLS definition

“dynamic mosaics of habitats and land and sea uses where the harmonious interaction between people and nature maintains biodiversity while providing humans with the goods and services needed for their livelihoods, survival and well-being in a sustainable manner, and are found in many places in the world under different names and are deeply linked to local culture and knowledge.”

While a definition exists, it is important to note that SEPLS do not have a formal assessment and designation or recognition process like protected areas and OECMs; they are primarily self-identified, though there can be national or sub-national recognition processes in some countries. Although some SEPLS cases are reported to the IPSI Secretariat by its members², there is no global repository of SEPLS. Therefore, the status of biodiversity conservation and the recognition of SEPLS can vary significantly depending on the national and sub-national context and area; for instance, some SEPLS may partially or fully include designated protected areas in their landscapes and seascapes (United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability [UNU-IAS] and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies [IGES], 2018).

Based on the definition, the IUCN and the IPSI Secretariat have identified key features of SEPLS (Figure 1) as follows:

- 1

Landscape or seascape with dynamic mosaics of land and sea use: SEPLS are characterised by a patchwork or mosaic of ecosystems and human-managed areas such as forests, agricultural fields, coastal zones and fishing grounds, interwoven in a way that allows for both ecological functions and human livelihoods.
- 2

Harmonious human-nature interaction: A central feature of SEPLS is the positive interaction and balanced relationship between people and nature, where traditional practices, sustainable resource use and cultural values contribute to maintaining ecological integrity while supporting human well-being.
- 3

Maintains biodiversity: SEPLS play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity, including wild species, domesticated varieties and genetic resources. This is achieved through land and sea management practices that are often rooted in local knowledge and customs.
- 4

Sustainable livelihoods and well-being are supported by nature: SEPLS provide essential goods and ecosystem services such as food, water, medicine and cultural benefits that support the livelihoods and well-being of local communities in a sustainable manner.
- 5

Cultural and knowledge embeddedness: SEPLS are deeply tied to local culture, traditions and knowledge systems. They often go by different names in different regions, reflecting the diversity of human–nature relationships and the importance of community stewardship.

SEPLS have been conserving biodiversity and providing local communities with ecosystem services around the world for hundreds of years. However, with rapidly growing demands for food and other goods, as well as changes in socio-economic systems, these diverse production areas have been transforming into areas with more intensive and less environmentally friendly production systems, also negatively impacting other ecosystem services.

[2] Available on the Satoyama Initiative website https://satoyamainitiative.org/case_study/#start

Figure 1. Key features of SEPLS



1. Landscape or seascape with dynamic mosaics of land and sea use

2. Harmonious human-nature interaction

3. Maintains biodiversity

4. Sustainable livelihoods and well-being are supported by nature

5. Cultural and knowledge embeddedness

How are SEPLS monitored and evaluated?

While there are some national, sub-national or site-based efforts to monitor SEPLS, there is no formal international requirement for monitoring and evaluation. However, it is beneficial for communities to do this voluntarily to help secure their SEPLS against certain threats, thereby increasing their resilience.

The [Indicators of Resilience in SEPLS](#) (2024 edition), or Resilience Indicators (RIs), is a tool developed by UNU-IAS, Alliance of Bioversity International and International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) to help communities assess the resilience of their SEPLS and support adaptive management.

The RIs consist of 20 indicators across nine themes (Table 1). They are primarily used for assessments in workshop settings led by facilitators, but communities that are well-versed with the process can also use them as a self-assessment tool.

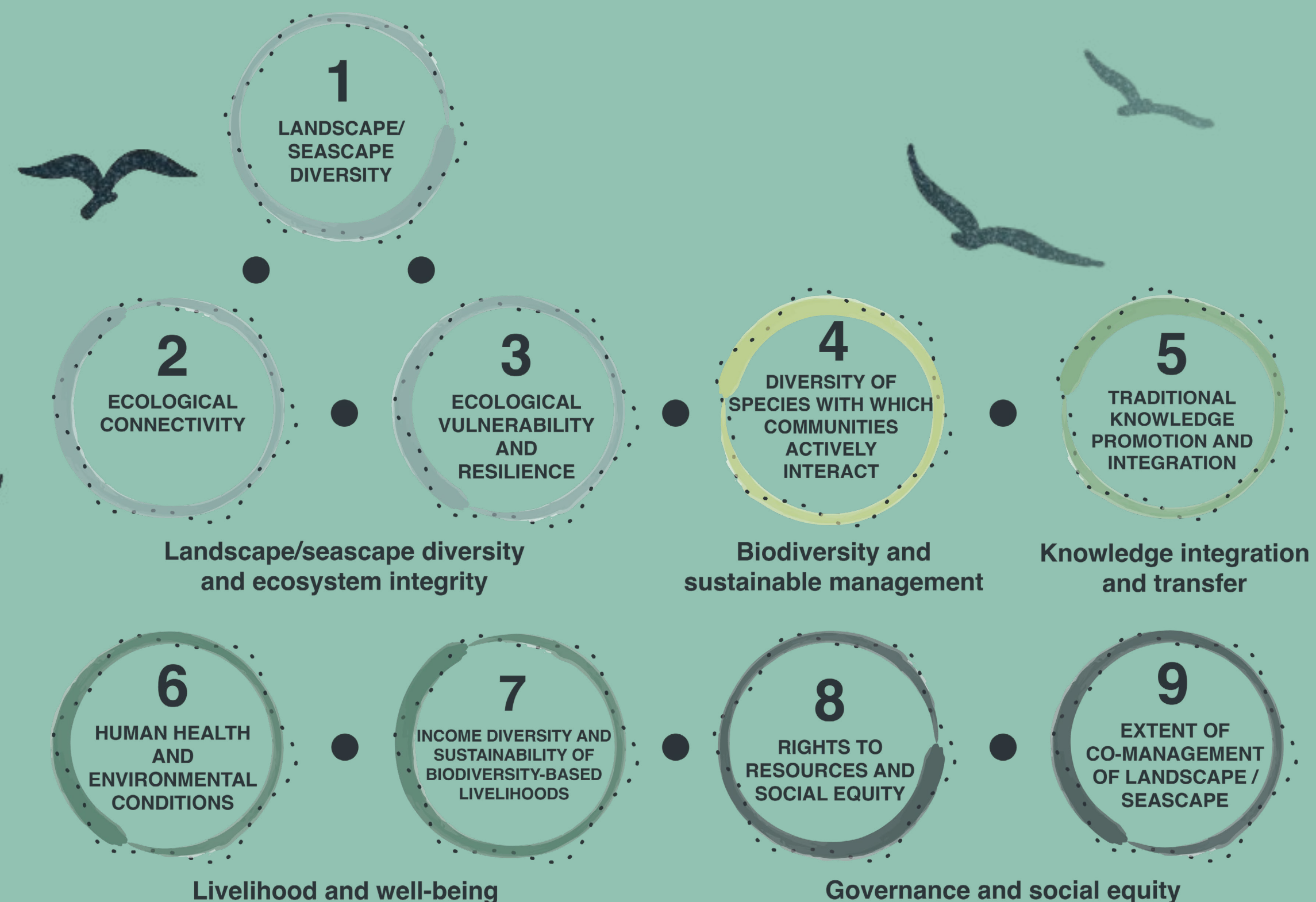


Figure 2. Resilience Indicators for assessing, planning and monitoring socio-ecological resilience of SEPLS.

Table 1. Summary of the Resilience Indicators (United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability [UNU-IAS] et al., 2024)

1. Landscape/seascape diversity
1.1 Does the land/seascape have a diverse set (mosaic) of ecosystems?
2. Ecological connectivity
2.1 Are different parts of the landscape/seascape managed in ways that allow for the integrity and good functioning of the different ecosystems (for example, connectivity between Protected Areas, other area-based conservation areas, and areas under productive sectors)?
3. Ecological vulnerability and resilience
3.1 Is the land/seascape prone to any natural calamities or shocks, including those caused by climate change and human activities?
3.2 Does the land/seascape have the capacity to cope, withstand, or recover from calamities or shocks?
4. Diversity of species with which communities actively interact
4.1 Has this diversity changed over the last 10 and 50 years? Use both timeframes and provide reasons.
4.2 How easily available are these diverse resources now?
5. Traditional knowledge promotion and integration
5.1 Are traditional and local knowledge and cultural traditions related to biodiversity (for example, agricultural practices, festivals, labour sharing, etc.) still practiced or integrated into production and management activities?
5.2 Are traditional knowledge and practices being documented and practiced to facilitate their transfer to future generations?
5.3 How accessible is education, taking into consideration affordability and the integration of experiential learning?
5.4 Are women’s knowledge, experiences and skills recognised and respected at the household, community and landscape level?

6. Human health and environmental conditions
6.1 How is the environmental quality (air quality, sanitation, water regulation, waste management, etc.)?
6.2 How is the quality of human health? This includes nutritional status, physical and mental health parameters and access to health care needs (hospitals, traditional medical experts).
6.3 How is the quality of animal health?
6.4 How is the quality of human-wildlife interactions?
7. Income diversity and sustainability of biodiveristy-based livelihoods
7.1 Are households and communities able to move around between different production activities and locations as necessary?
7.2 Do livelihoods based on biodiversity follow sustainable and equitable practices?
8. Rights to resources and social equity
8.1 Does the community have customary or formally recognised rights over land, pastures, waters and natural resources (e.g., ownership, use rights, cultural rights, rights of resources like rivers, etc.)?
8.2 Do all members of society in the landscape/seascape (specify across gender, social groups, youth, elderly, etc.) have fair and equitable access to opportunities and resources?
9. Extent of co-management of landscape/seascape
9.1 Is there coordination and communication between and within communities to manage natural resources and ecosystems within the land/seascape?
9.2 Is there a co-management system (joint management by different stakeholders sharing obligations, responsibilities and rights) for resources, ecosystems and development priorities within the land/seascape?

What are other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)?

Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) can be thought of as areas with important biodiversity values that achieve long-term biodiversity conservation outcomes in natural areas outside of protected areas.

The official definition of OECMs was adopted by the parties to the CBD in 2018 in [Decision 14/8](#) as:



Box 2. OECMs definition

“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.”

The Annex of the same Decision sets four criteria to identify OECMs (Table 2):

Table 2. CBD criteria for OECMs (Annex III, Decision 14/8)

CRITERION A - Area is not currently recognised as a protected area
• Not a protected area
CRITERION B - Area is governed and managed
• Geographically defined space • Legitimate governance authorities • Managed
CRITERION C - Achieves sustained and effective contribution to in situ conservation of biodiversity
• Effective • Sustained over long term • In situ conservation of biological diversity • Information and monitoring
CRITERION D - Associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values
• Ecosystem functions and services • Cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values

IUCN was invited by the CBD to assist Parties in identifying OECMs and providing scientific and technical advice. In response, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN WCPA) produced “[Guidance on other effective area-based conservation measures \(OECMs\)](#)” (Jonas et al., 2024) and developed a [site-level tool for identifying OECMs](#) (Jonas et al., 2023) to enable users to determine whether a site qualifies as an OECM. The tool introduces a three-step process of initial screening, securing consent and assessing the site against eight criteria (Table 3) that are aligned with the CBD criteria mentioned above.

According to the tool, a site must have at least one of the following “*important biodiversity values*”:

- a. Rare, threatened or endangered species and ecosystems
- b. Natural ecosystems that are under-represented in protected area networks
- c. High level of ecological integrity or intactness
- d. Significant populations/extent of endemic or range-restricted species or ecosystems
- e. Important species aggregations, such as spawning, breeding, or feeding areas
- f. Importance for ecological connectivity, as part of a network of sites in a larger area

Table 3. IUCN criteria and assessment process for identifying OECMs (Jonas et al., 2023)

STEP 1 - Screening	
Criterion 1	• The site is not a protected area.
Criterion 2	• There is a reasonable likelihood that the site supports important biodiversity values.
STEP 2 - Consent	
STEP 3 - Full Assessment	
Criterion 3	• The site is a geographically defined area.
Criterion 4	• The site is confirmed to support important biodiversity values.
Criterion 5	• Institutions or mechanisms exist to govern and manage the site.
Criterion 6	• Governance and management of the site achieve, or are expected to achieve, the in situ conservation of important biodiversity values.
Criterion 7	• In situ conservation of important biodiversity values is expected to be for the long term.
Criterion 8	• Governance and management arrangement address equity considerations.

What does ‘long-term’ in the OECMs criteria and definition mean?

OECMs are expected to deliver ‘long-term’ ‘in situ’ conservation outcomes. Management that only results in short-term or temporary conservation outcomes does not constitute an OECM. The interpretation of long-term and its application will depend on national contexts. Some countries may require a longer up-front commitment while others apply expected renewal periods (see Annex A for examples of processes).

What does ‘in situ’ in the OECMs criteria and definition mean?

In situ conservation means protecting species, biodiversity and ecosystems within their natural habitats and original surroundings. It is an approach focused on maintaining viable populations, allowing for natural evolution, ecological interactions and adaptation. This is in contrast to ex situ conservation, for example, conservation that happens in zoos, aquaria and botanic gardens.

How are OECMs mentioned in GBF Target 3?

OECMs and protected areas are complementary pathways for achieving GBF Target 3. SEPLS can contribute to GBF Target 3 by containing areas which are either designated as protected areas or recognised as OECMs. GBF Target 3 calls for the effective conservation of at least 30% of land, waters, and seas by 2030; the full target reads:

Box 3. GBF Target 3

“Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.”

Which types of areas are likely to be OECMs?

There are many types of areas that could be suitable to be recognised as OECMs. Below are the three main management objectives for OECMs (Box 4) and examples of sites that could be OECMs (Figure 3).

Box 4. Management objectives of OECMs, identified by IUCN WCPA (Jonas et al., 2024)

PRIMARY

Conservation is the primary management objective of the site.

SECONDARY

Conservation is the secondary management objective of the site.

ANCILLARY

Conservation is not a management objective of the site, but it delivers in situ biodiversity conservation as a by-product of management activities.

A site where the primary management objective is biodiversity conservation, for example a privately conserved area or an Indigenous territory managed for conservation, could be a potential OECM, but as noted in the section below, also potentially a protected area. This will depend on national regulations and the preference of the governing authority, stakeholders and rightsholders.

Since OECMs can have conservation as secondary or ancillary management objectives, sites that hold important biodiversity values but are primarily managed for sustainable, low-impact production, such as traditional pastoral lands or artisanal fisheries, could also qualify as potential OECMs, provided they meet all the OECMs criteria. Likewise, sacred or archaeological sites with high biodiversity values, or areas managed to secure ecosystem services such as drinking water provisions, may also be recognised as OECMs. However, according to GBF Target 3, any sustainable use in OECMs must be “...fully consistent with conservation outcomes...” (CBD Decision 15/4).

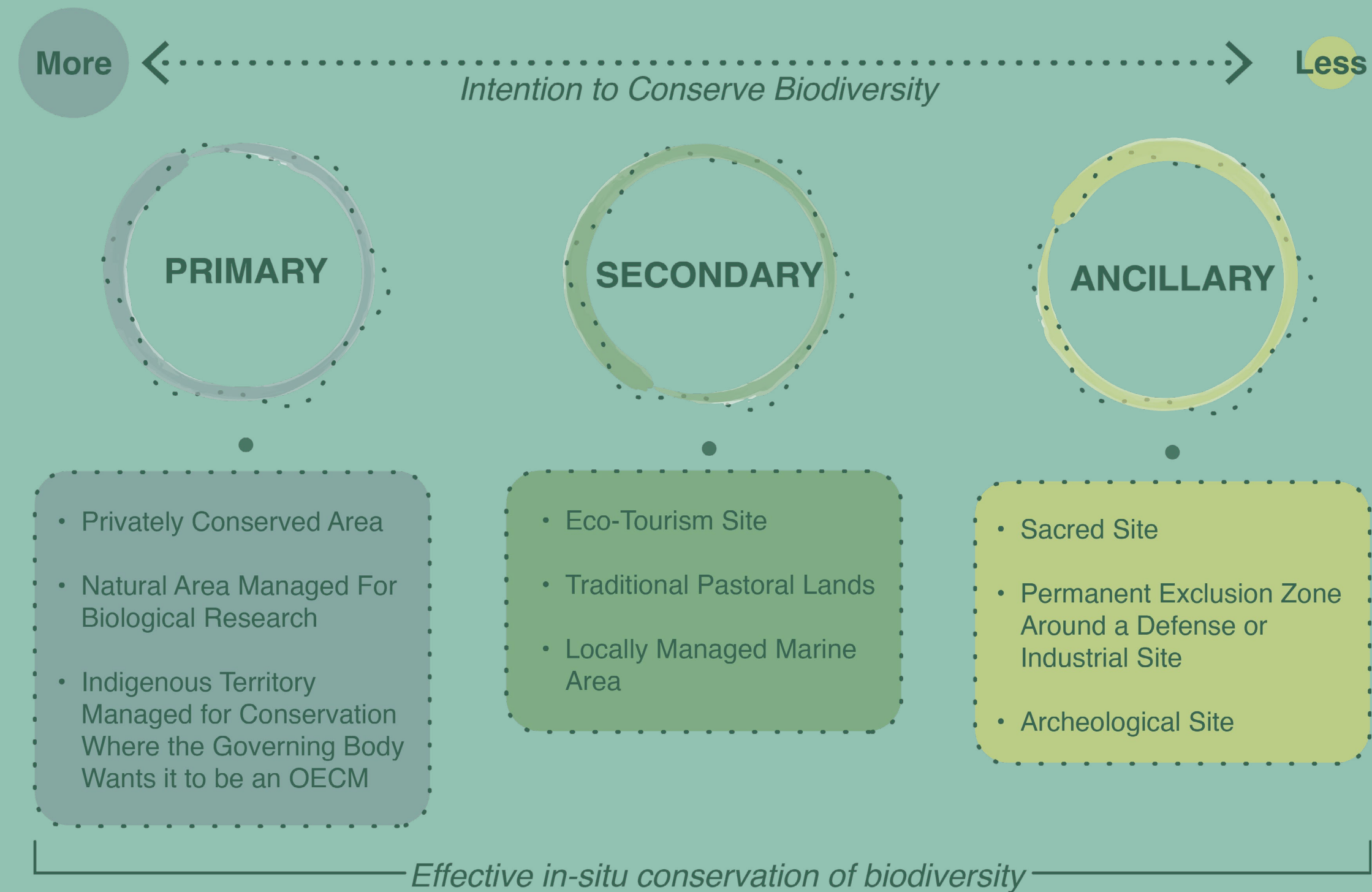


Figure 3. Management objectives of OECMs and examples of types of OECMs.
Source: Adapted from *IUCN WCPA* (2024).

What is the difference between protected areas and OECMs?

The main difference between protected areas and OECMs is that protected areas must have conservation as their primary management objective, whereas OECMs can have conservation as either a primary, secondary or ancillary objective but all must deliver conservation outcomes regardless of their management objectives.

Box 5. Definition of protected area

IUCN defines protected areas as, “a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.” (Dudley, 2008).

How can OECMs be governed?

Governance defines who holds authority, responsibility and accountability for decisions regarding, for example, management and conservation. IUCN classifies four main governance types for both protected areas and OECMs: governance by government, private governance, governance by Indigenous Peoples and local communities and shared governance between any of these actors. Equitable governance is crucial for effective conservation outcomes.

For instance, sites governed or co-governed by universities, religious institutions, businesses, local governments, NGOs and Indigenous Peoples and local communities could all be suitable OECMs if they meet the OECMs criteria.

How are OECMs being identified?

IUCN WCPA’s guidance provides practical information on how to apply the CBD decision, which sets out the overarching guiding principles, common characteristics and criteria for identifying OECMs across all ecosystems important for biodiversity. In addition, IUCN encourages the development of national frameworks for the implementation of OECMs to reflect national contexts. Several countries have developed their own national processes to identify OECMs. This can include national assessment tools and/or national certification systems with which OECM assessments are reviewed by groups of experts including, e.g., government, academia, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples and local community representatives (see Annex A).

What is the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas?

The World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA), or Protected Planet, provides global data on protected areas and OECMs. Data for the WDPCA is collected from international convention secretariats, governments, non-state actors and collaborating non-governmental organisations (NGOs). OECMs that have passed relevant national/internal assessments can be reported to WDPCA following the platform’s reporting requirements. Some countries may also have local/national databases to assess and track the status of protected areas and OECMs.

How should OECMs be monitored?

There is currently no international standard or method for how monitoring should be carried out in OECMs. Nevertheless, it is good practice to monitor OECMs regularly to assess whether biodiversity values are being conserved over the long term and to identify emerging pressures and threats. There are various tools and resources that can support monitoring (e.g., IUCN’s publication: “A framework for monitoring biodiversity in protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures” (Dalton et al., 2024)). Some national frameworks for OECMs also include specific considerations and guidance that can help sites with monitoring.

What are the main similarities and differences between SEPLS and OECMs?

The diagram below (Figure 4) shows the main similarities and differences between SEPLS and OECMs based on the key features of SEPLS and the OECMs criteria. As opposed to OECMs, SEPLS have no set criteria or global reporting process other than the [IPSI Secretariat’s case study collection](#) and are instead self-identified conceptually, including through the definition provided in the Charter ([see Box 1, p.8](#)), which may lead to variations in how they are interpreted.

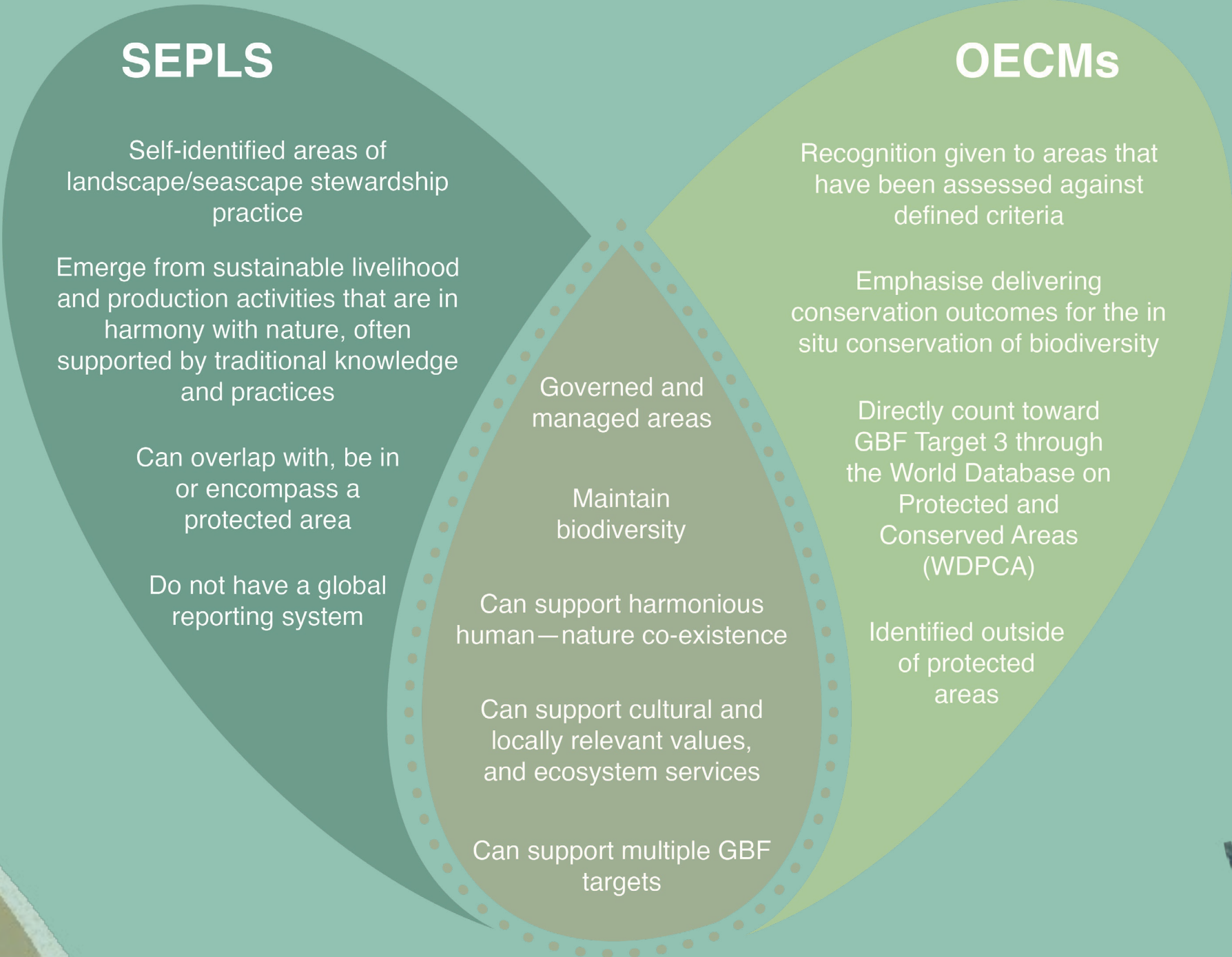


Figure 4. Comparison of the key features of SEPLS and the OECMs criteria.

Can a SEPLS be recognised as an OECM?

Yes, it is possible for SEPLS to be recognised as OECMs, but they need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis following the OECMs criteria. Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is also needed. Some SEPLS or parts of SEPLS may meet all the OECMs requirements, while some parts may not. It is, therefore, possible that smaller sections of SEPLS could be recognised as OECMs instead of the entire landscape or seascape. SEPLS could contain a mosaic of different areas, including, for example, protected areas and OECMs (contributing to [GBF Target 3](#)), restoration areas (contributing to [GBF Target 2](#)) and sustainably managed production areas (contributing to [GBF Target 10](#)), while also contributing to other non-area-based targets, for example [Target 4](#). The potential contribution from SEPLS and OECMs to multiple GBF targets signifies their relevance to global conservation efforts.

While identifying potential SEPLS that could be OECMs, it is important to focus on and prioritise areas that are particularly important for biodiversity. This could be done by overlaying SEPLS with global/regional/local areas recognised for biodiversity importance, such as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

[Annex B](#) provides three brief case studies of SEPLS that have been checked against the IUCN WCPA site-level assessment tool as part of a scoping exercise. It is important to note that these case studies were reviewed based on information submitted in a case study template. Thorough verification against the site-level tool criteria for OECMs and relevant processes is still needed for sites that have not already been formally recognised and reported.

Can the Resilience Indicators (RIs) be used to support OECM identification, recognition and monitoring?

Based on an analysis of the SEPLS RIs (UNU-IAS et al., 2024) and IUCN WCPA site-level assessment tool for OECMs (Jonas et al., 2023), using the RIs alone would be insufficient to support OECM identification (see [Annex C](#) for details), especially for providing evidence against Criterion C on achieving sustained and effective in situ conservation of biodiversity (see Table 2). However, multiple RIs are similar to the OECMs criteria and can help secure the information required for all or a part of SEPLS to be recognised as an OECM. In particular, the indicators related to the thematic areas listed below were linked to more than one criterion or step in the IUCN WCPA OECM’s assessment processes (see Table 1):

- Landscape/seascape diversity
- Ecological connectivity
- Diversity of species with which communities actively interact
- Rights to resources and social equity, and
- Extent of co-management of landscape/seascape

Performing recurring SEPLS resilience assessments across consistent time periods could be a way to support the monitoring of the OECM as well. However, additional information will still be needed, as the RIs do not include detailed considerations for biodiversity values and metrics (see [“How should OECMs be monitored?”](#)).

The use of the RIs to support both identification, recognition and monitoring will also depend on the national processes for OECMs in the country the site is located in (see [“How are OECMs being identified?”](#) above).

Prior use of the RIs has been found to provide valuable supporting information for the assessment of candidate OECMs in SEPLS (Karim & Lee, 2026). Use of RIs demonstrates:

- experience with monitoring management effectiveness in SEPLS,
- an established collaborative relationship with the relevant government agency
- the completion of a holistic assessment of the site’s ecological, production, cultural, social and economic values

In practice, RI assessment results mainly serve as baseline information, and applicants must still submit more detailed evidence on biodiversity values and ecosystem services. Nevertheless, the RI process remains valuable by providing socio-ecological insights and improving understanding of governance, management and key decision-making processes relevant to OECM applications.



What are the potential benefits and challenges of OECM recognition?

The following section outlines the potential benefits and challenges that communities may encounter if they choose to pursue OECM recognition. Whether or not to pursue OECM recognition should be a joint decision between all relevant local SEPLS actors (e.g., managers, stewards, rightsholders and other relevant stakeholders).

Importantly, having an area recognised as an OECM does not revoke the rights of the owners and/or governing and managing bodies. When recognised as an OECM, local SEPLS actors can continue to sustainably govern and manage their lands, waters and/or seas and carry out activities in ways that conserve biodiversity.

Benefits

What could be the benefits for local SEPLS actors in recognising their landscape and/or seascape as an OECM? There could be several, for example:

- **Increased national and international recognition:**
 - An OECMs status provides an opportunity for SEPLS actors to contribute to national and global biodiversity conservation targets and have recognition for their efforts, increasing legitimacy and visibility, which could empower the conservation of the site
- **Increased financial opportunities:**
 - Governments could develop national policies for OECMs that provide financial incentives and support
 - NGOs, businesses and other institutions may also be more likely to financially support a site that has national recognition and counts towards a global target
 - An OECMs status could increase the value of sustainably produced local products to consumers, as a product from a recognised conservation site
- **More partnership opportunities and on-the-ground support:**
 - Being recognised as an OECM could attract more interest from organisations to provide technical or other support on the ground

This additional funding or other type of on-the-ground support could help conserve or restore the site in the event of any natural disasters, for example, thereby increasing its resilience.

Challenges

There are two main challenges that local SEPLS actors may encounter with having their landscape and/or seascape recognised as an OECM:

1. Firstly, even before recognition, they may encounter challenges with navigating national processes for OECMs. For instance, some national processes may require submission of detailed site information and to fully assess its biodiversity values. They may also require technical information such as Geographic Information System (GIS) data (needed for the WDPCA). This could be time-consuming, resource-intensive and difficult for local actors and Indigenous Peoples and local communities to obtain without additional support from technical partners. Hence, governments should aim to simplify the process as much as possible, without losing quality, and provide support for this, including support from other non-state actors, if they would like more SEPLS to be recognised as OECMs.
2. Secondly, OECMs are intended to deliver long-term conservation outcomes. Hence, SEPLS actors may need to have additional considerations for managing and monitoring the biodiversity values in their sites (applies to all actors and OECMs). The frequency will likely depend on national requirements (see [“How should OECMs be monitored?”](#)). This may be time-consuming and difficult for SEPLS actors, depending on what the monitoring requirements and processes are nationally. Governments should aim to make their national processes inclusive for local actors and help with reporting/documentation. This could include the use of the RIs, which some SEPLS actors would be more familiar with (see [“Can the Resilience Indicators \(RIs\) be used to support OECM identification, recognition and monitoring?”](#)). If national processes require additional technical information that cannot be collected by local actors themselves, governments and other partners should find a way to provide additional support for this.

SHORT QUIZ

Test your knowledge with this short quiz. The answers are on [page 21](#).

1. It is not possible for any part of SEPLS to be recognised as OECMs.

- a. True, SEPLS cannot be recognised as OECMs
- b. False, it is possible for SEPLS or part of SEPLS to be recognised as OECMs if they meet the criteria

2. What is the main difference between a protected area and OECM?

- a. A protected area has to deliver conservation outcomes regardless of its management objectives, whereas an OECM must have conservation as its primary management objective
- b. An OECM has to deliver conservation outcomes regardless of its management objectives, whereas a protected area must have conservation as its primary management objective
- c. OECMs count towards GBF Target 3 but protected areas do not
- d. Protected areas count towards GBF Target 3 but OECMs do not

3. Which types of areas are likely to have the potential to be recognised as OECMs?

- a. Eco-tourism sites
- b. Privately conserved areas
- c. Traditional pastoral lands
- d. Sacred sites
- e. All of the above

4. What are some of the similarities between SEPLS and OECMs?

- a. Both are governed and managed areas
- b. Both maintain biodiversity
- c. Both can support human-nature co-existence
- d. Both can support cultural and locally relevant values, and ecosystem services
- e. All of the above

5. The Resilience Indicators can be used to support the identification and/or monitoring of OECMs.

- a. True, Resilience Indicators are valuable for assessing and monitoring OECMs; however, additional information, especially on biodiversity values, will still be needed to identify and monitor OECMs
- b. False, Resilience Indicators cannot be used to support identification and/or monitoring of OECMs

6. What are the potential benefits for local SEPLS actors in recognising their landscape/seascape as OECMs?

- a. Increased national and international recognition
- b. More partnership opportunities and on-the-ground support
- c. Increased financial opportunities
- d. All of the above

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Quiz Answers

- 1: b

2: b

3: e
- 4: e

5: a

6: d

ANNEX A

Examples of National OECMs processes

AUSTRALIA

A new report (World Wildlife Fund [WWF] & Centre for International Sustainable Development Law [CISDL], 2026) shows how at least 29 countries have developed or are in the process of developing national frameworks for OECMs (globally). Most of them are aligned with the CBD criteria. Below are examples of national OECMs processes from Australia, the Maldives, and Japan.

National Criteria

Australia finalised their national framework for OECMs in June 2024 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2024), which enables terrestrial OECMs (referred to as Conserved Areas) to be recognised nationally.

Australia developed a national [site assessment tool](#) to help individuals assess whether their site meets the requirements for recognition. The completed assessment must be submitted to the

Australian government for review and approval at a specified email address. If the site meets all the requirements and has obtained consent from the landholder to formally recognize the site, the site can be recorded as part of the Conserved Area Network of Australia.



More information can be found [here](#).

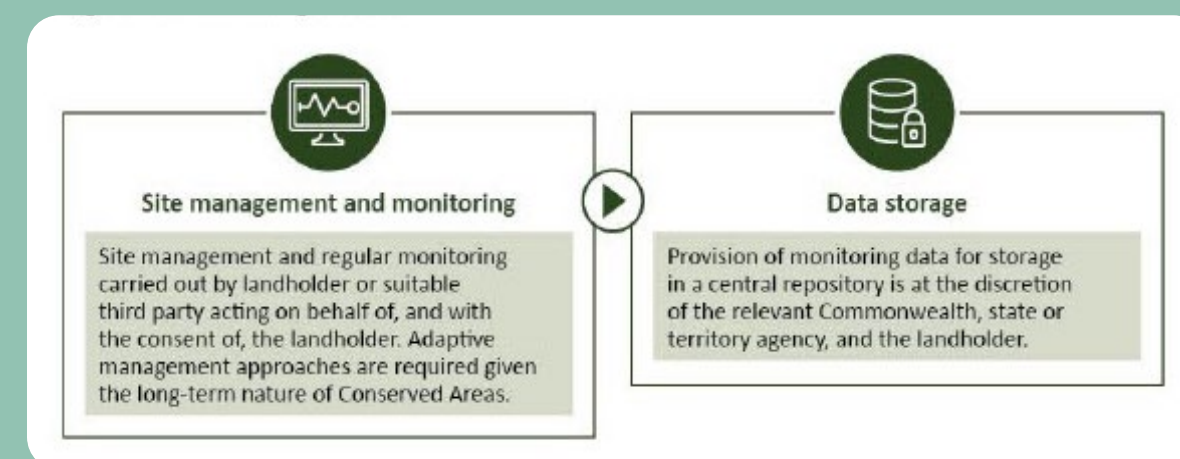
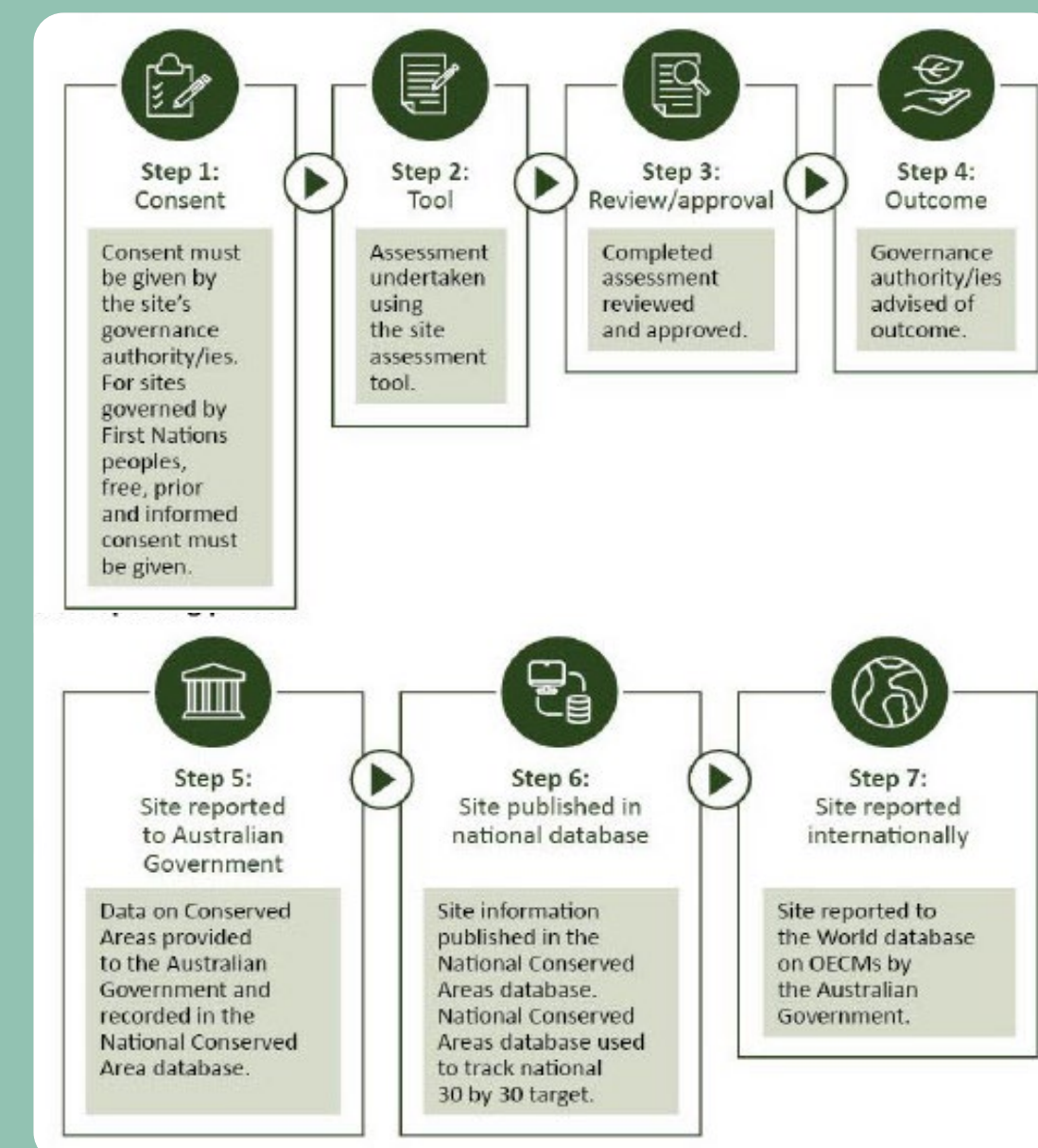


Figure A1a (Left): National process for OECMs in Australia.

Figure A1b (top): National process for monitoring OECMs in Australia.

Source: Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (2024).

MALDIVES

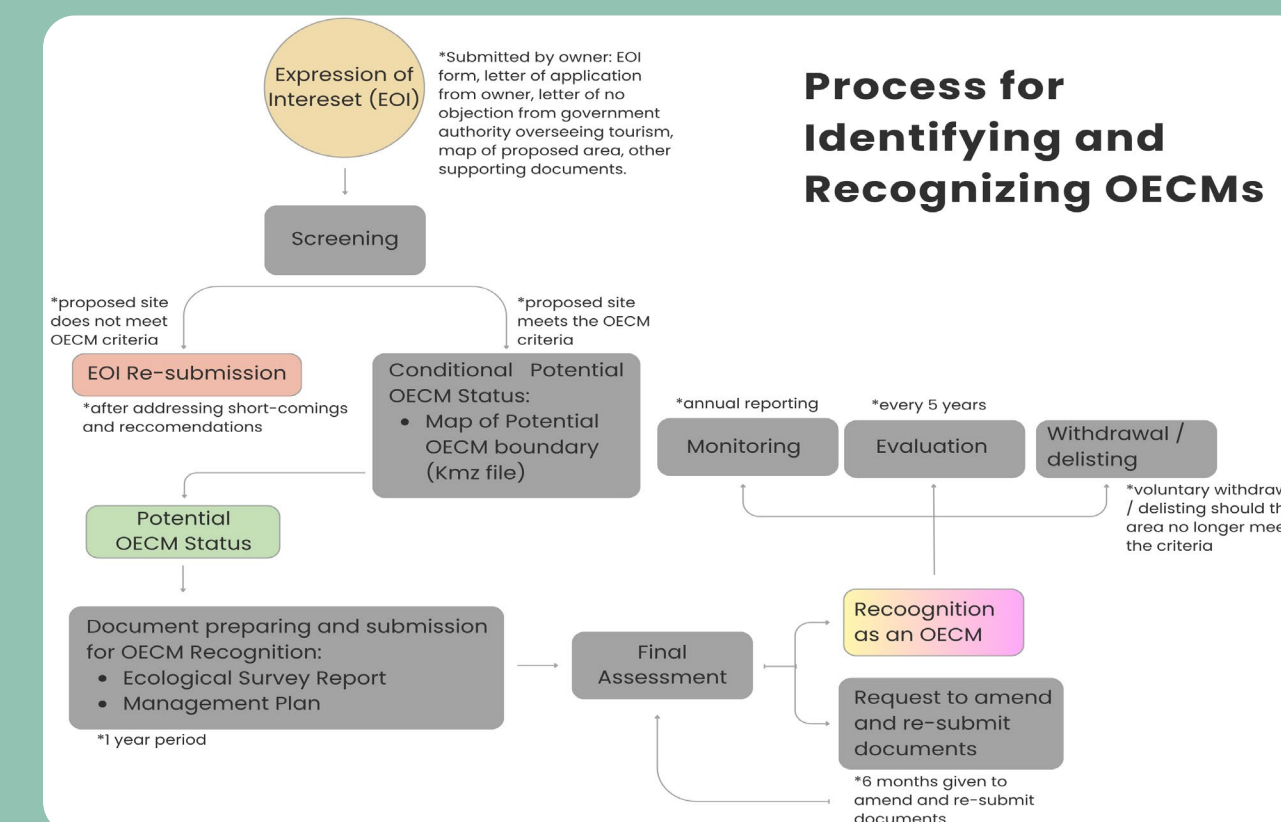
The Maldives established a process to identify and formally recognise OECMs in September 2022, following 4 years of development (2018–2022). The process was subsequently revised in 2025. The current process is applicable to areas leased for tourism operations, but the Maldives is considering expanding the types of OECMs to fisheries and community managed OECMs (Sharma & Pasha, 2024).

National Criteria

- The proposed area is not a protected area pursuant to Law no. 4/93 (Environment Protection and Preservation Act) or any regulation formulated pursuant to this.
- The proposed area is an area with rich biodiversity and an area that is managed.
- All activities in the proposed area ensures conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- The proposed area where applicable, supports provision of cultural, economic, social and other values
- Activities in the proposed area shall not have any negative impact on the biodiversity and ecosystem services.



More information can be found in the the publication [here](#).



FigureA2: National process for OECMs in the Maldives (revised; 2025).

Source: Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy (Maldives)

JAPAN

Japan launched a national system that certifies “Nationally Certified Sustainably Managed Natural Sites” in 2023 for sites that contribute to biodiversity conservation through initiatives by various stakeholders, including private companies. The criteria and process for the certification scheme are based on guidance from the IUCN WCPA site-level assessment tool (based on an earlier draft published in 2022). These were adjusted to fit Japan’s national context through expert meetings.

The scheme was given a legal basis through legislation in April 2025, shifting the basis for certification for sites to site-linked conservation activities. Aside from activities aimed at maintaining biodiversity, those focused on restoration and creation are also considered important for achieving biodiversity conservation outcomes and were, therefore, included within the scope of certification. All certified sites are publicly available via a dedicated website.



More information and references can be found [here](#).

National Certification Process

1. Optional **prior consultation** with the agency or the regional centre of the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MoEJ)
2. **Application** by the authority of the conservation activity
3. **Preliminary screening review** conducted by the agency
4. *If necessary, a site survey will be conducted.*
5. **Expert review by the group of experts** in various fields related to biodiversity.
6. **Final confirmation** by the Competent Minister
7. **Certification by the Competent Ministers**
8. **Renewal procedure** is envisaged approximately **5 years** after certification, to guarantee nature conservation. Additionally, the results of biodiversity monitoring are to be submitted approximately every 5 years after certification

National Criteria:

1. Geographically defined

- Area is clearly defined and appropriate for conservation activities
- Size of the area is calculated
- Protected area status under laws or ordinances is confirmed

2. Governance and management

Implementation structure

- Certainty and continuity of conservation activity implementation is ensured
- Agreement from the governance authorities
- Appropriate communication methods for stakeholders are in place
- No planned dissolution of the authorities
- No risk of creating doubts about the equity of the activities

Planning period

- Appropriate planning period is set to achieve the conservation objectives

3. Biodiversity conservation value

List of biodiversity conservation value*

- Important habitats identified government etc.
- Sites with wilderness status
- Valuable secondary nature
- Ecosystem consisting of native species with associated ecosystem services
- Sites providing materials for traditional craftworks
- Habitats of endangered species etc.
- Habitats of range-restricted species etc.
- Important areas for migratory species
- Areas contributing to buffering and connectivity for protected areas

**Biodiversity values are required to be certified for activities aimed at maintaining biodiversity.*

4. Contribution to in-situ conservation

Effectiveness of management

- Conservation activities substantially contribute to biodiversity conservation
- Appropriate timeframe for implementing activities is defined
- No planned developments affecting the conservation activities
- Consent has been obtained from the relevant public asset managers

Monitoring and assessment

- Appropriate monitoring is planned, and the results can be submitted approximately every five years

Conservation objectives

- Specific, appropriate, and feasible conservation objectives and appropriate timeframe are set based on the status and issues

Figure A3. Criteria for nationally certified sustainably managed natural sites in Japan. 24

References - Annex A

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ANNEX B

**Case studies of SEPLS (or parts of SEPLS) that are/
could be recognised as OECMs**

***The full version of these case studies can be found in a separate case study compendium*



Biodiversity-focused spatial planning of SEPLS as OECMs and a case study from New Taipei City



Spatial insights: identifying island-wide biodiversity priorities and SEPLS overlap

The Taiwan Ecological Network (TEN) provides a critical spatial analysis framework underpinning the identification and prioritisation of area-based conservation measures across the island. Located at the convergence of the Philippine Sea Plate and the Eurasian Plate, the steep environmental gradients, from sea level to 3,952 m within less than 100 km, combined with its subtropical–tropical climate, have generated exceptional biodiversity (over 60,000 species, or 3.4% of the global total) and high endemism (Chung & Shao, 2022). These conditions, together with long-standing human–nature interactions, have also shaped diverse SEPLS (Karim et al., 2026).

Introduced in 2018 by the Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency, TEN is the first island-wide, biodiversity-focused spatial planning strategy. It integrates ecological data, land-use information and cross-sectoral collaboration to support conservation planning across mountains, plains, wetlands and coastal systems. TEN aims to

- (i) maintain and restore resilient, biodiverse and ecologically connected ecosystems, and
- (ii) promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within SEPLS, strengthening community resilience.

As a spatial planning backbone, TEN has enabled the large-scale identification of 44 priority biodiversity areas and the delineation of 45 conservation corridors. These outputs emphasise ecological connectivity through linear, landscape and stepping-stone linkages, facilitating species movement, genetic exchange and ecosystem functionality across fragmented habitats. Spatial analyses further reveal a high degree of overlap between these priority areas and corridors and existing SEPLS (Figure B1a).

This spatial evidence is supported by findings that approximately 55% of protected animal species and 64% of threatened plant species occur within SEPLS (Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency, 2026a). Together, these insights demonstrate that SEPLS are not only production landscapes but also key spaces of effective in situ biodiversity conservation, often governed and managed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In this context, TEN provides a robust, spatially explicit foundation for identifying and justifying SEPLS as potential OECMs.

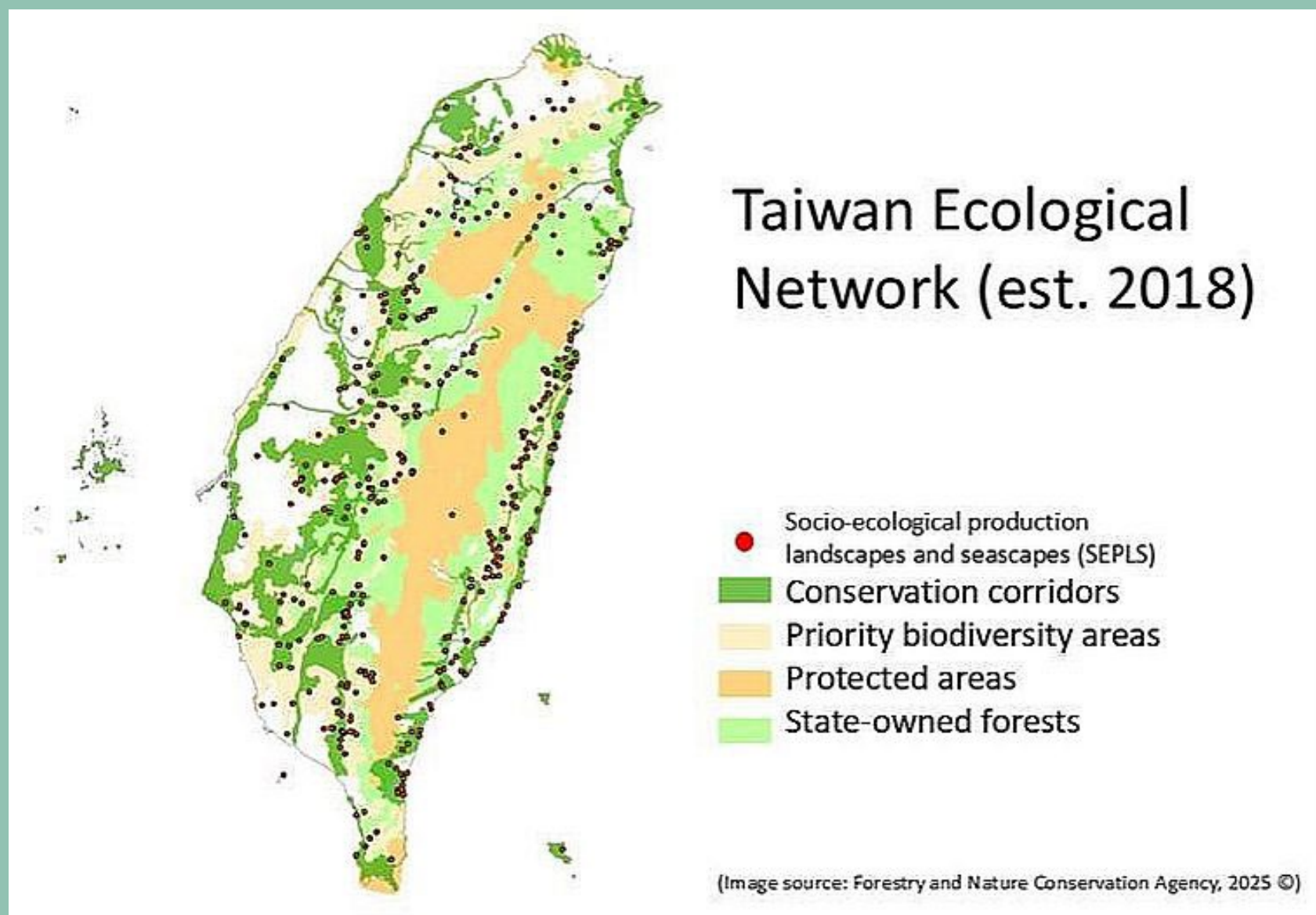


Figure B1a. Spatial analysis of the Taiwan Ecological Network (TEN) reveals a high degree of overlap among priority biodiversity areas, conservation corridors, and SEPLS.
Credit: Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency (FANCA).

Case illustration: operationalising SEPLS as OECMs in Gongliao, New Taipei City

The Gongliao Water Terraces, located in the mountainous areas of New Taipei City within the Northeast Coast Stream Conservation Corridor of TEN, illustrate how these spatial priorities are translated into practice (Figure B1b). As a representative SEPL (380 ha in area size), the site has been shaped by generations of terrace rice and water bamboo cultivation, integrating traditional ecological knowledge with biodiversity-friendly farming.

Its landscape mosaic—comprising paddy fields, vegetable gardens, bamboo groves, streams, irrigation channels, ponds and secondary forests—supports 1,018 species, including several threatened taxa, while contributing to watershed regulation and ecological connectivity. Conservation outcomes are embedded within local production systems and strengthened through Payments for Ecosystem Services, ecological monitoring, wetland restoration and community-based stewardship.

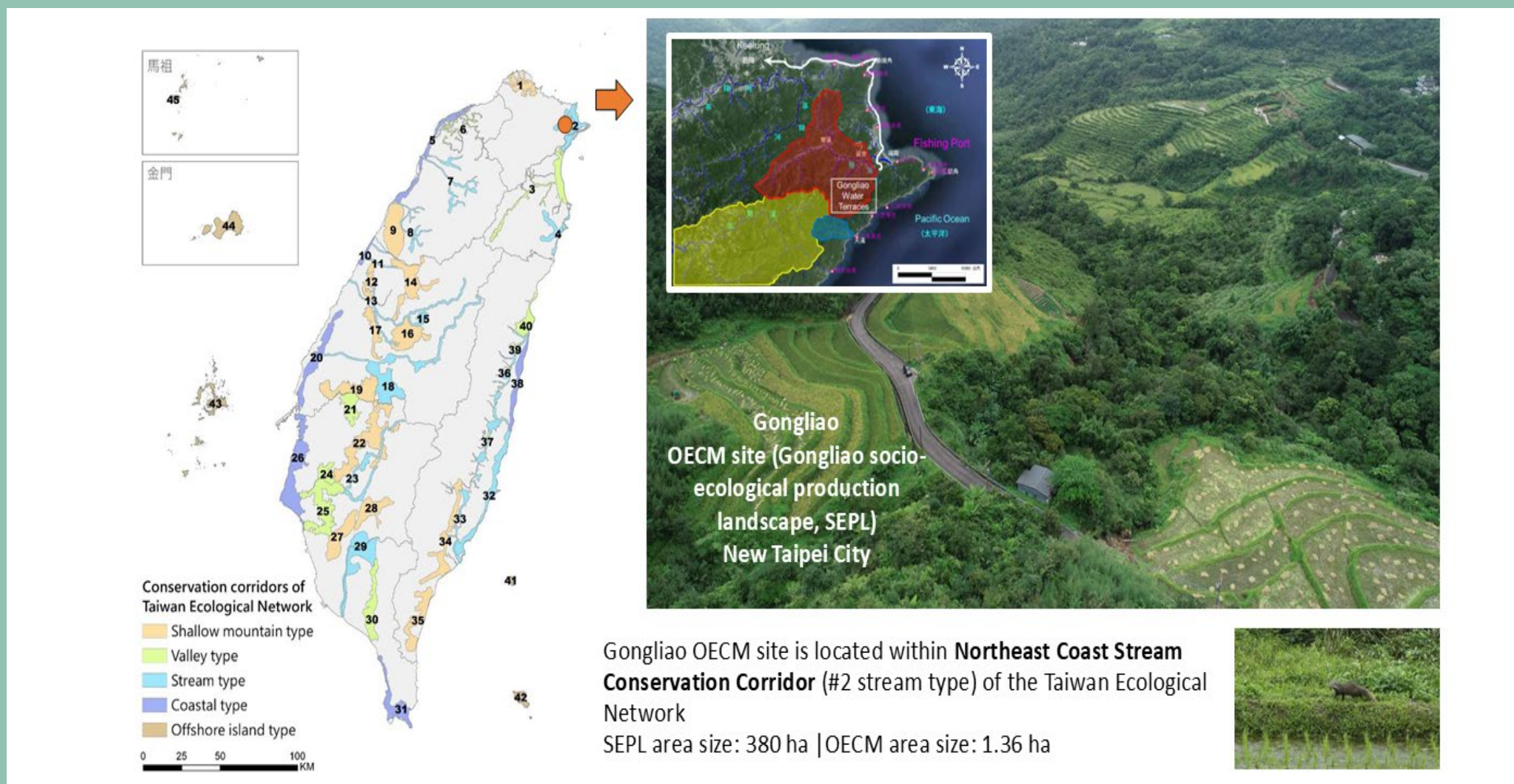


Figure B1b. Maps of the Taiwan Ecological Network (left) and Gongliao Water Terraces OECM site (right).
Credit: Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency (FANCA).

Governance is shared among local communities, civil society organisations, and public agencies, and is further supported by innovative partnerships such as youth engagement and corporate ESG contributions. These arrangements enable inclusive decision-making, equitable benefit-sharing and sustained conservation outcomes.

The site meets the IUCN WCPA criteria for OECMs, with 1.36 ha formally recognised under the “Terrestrial OECMs Certification Program” of the Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency as an OECM site (March 2026) and additional areas under consideration (Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency, 2026b).

Aligned with TEN, the Gongliao Water Terraces demonstrate how SEPLS identified through biodiversity-focused spatial planning can function as OECMs in practice—delivering long-term conservation of biodiversity while sustaining cultural landscapes and adaptive, community-based governance systems.



Left: The Gongliao Water Terraces OECM site has been shaped by generations of terrace rice and water bamboo cultivation, integrating traditional ecological knowledge with biodiversity-friendly farming.

Right: Meeting of the newly established Forest–River–Village–Ocean Cooperative.

Image Credits: Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency.

OECM assessment status: The Gongliao Water Terraces SEPL is 380 ha in size. Since March 2026, 1.36 ha has been formally recognised as an OECM, while additional areas remain under consideration for formal recognition and reporting.

Type of area: Terrestrial/inland water (paddy fields, vegetable gardens, bamboo groves, streams, irrigation channels, ponds and secondary forests).

Main biodiversity values: Supports 1,018 species, including threatened and rare plants and protected animals (e.g., Yellow pond turtle (*Mauremys mutica*; CR) and Chinese stripe-necked turtle (*Ocadia sinensis*; CR)

Governance and management mechanism: Shared governance and management by the

Environmental Ethics Foundation of Taiwan, Hehe Community, Li and He Small Granary and the Forest–River–Village–Ocean Cooperative, with support from the Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency and National Development Council.

Main management purpose: Sustaining terrace agriculture and landscape management while ensuring long-term conservation of habitats for rare species and watershed ecosystem services (combination of primary and secondary conservation).

Comparing the site against the OECM criteria from the IUCN WCPA site-assessment tool (Jonas et al., 2023):

Table B1. Assessing the Gongliao Water Terraces against the IUCN WCPA OECM criteria based on the information submitted. Note that the official assessment of the site was carried out based on the “Terrestrial OECMs Certification Programme” of the Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency.

Screening assessment	Yes/no
The site is not a protected area.	Yes
There is a reasonable likelihood that the site supports important biodiversity values.	Yes
Full assessment	
The site is a geographically defined area.	Yes
The site is confirmed to support important biodiversity values.	Yes
Institutions or mechanisms exist to govern and manage the site.	Yes
Governance and management of the site achieve, or are expected to achieve, the in situ conservation of important biodiversity values.	Yes
In situ conservation of important biodiversity values is expected to be for the long term.	Yes
Governance and management arrangement address equity considerations.	Yes

***Case study submitted by the Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency.*

Satoyama forests, terraced rice paddies and reservoirs, Kobe City



OECM assessment status: Part of the SEPLS site has already been formally recognised as an OECM by the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MoEJ). It has also been reported in the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA); thus it counts towards Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Type of area: Terrestrial/inland water (traditional satoyama landscape of forests, terraced rice fields and ponds).

Main biodiversity values: Recognised as a nationally identified “Important Satoyama Area for Biodiversity Conservation” in the national database of Japan. It provides an important habitat for rare and threatened species listed in the regional Red Data Book, including the Japanese forest green tree frog (*Zhangixalus arboreus*) and Schlegel’s green tree frog (*Zhangixalus schlegelii*).

Governance and management mechanism: Governed and managed by the Kobe City Government and other private landowners in collaboration with local citizen groups, academic researchers and student organisations. The Satoyama Conservation Promotion Council, a citizen organisation, leads these efforts.

Main management purpose: Conservation and management of the traditional satoyama landscape that has been restored after degradation (primary conservation).

Comparing the site against the OECM criteria from the IUCN WCPA site-assessment tool (Jonas et al., 2023):

Table B2. Comparing the Satoyama Forests, Terraced Rice Paddies and Reservoirs site against the IUCN WCPA OECM criteria based on the information submitted. Note that this is not an official assessment. This site has already been evaluated and recognised as an OECM through a national process.

Screening assessment	Yes/no	Full assessment	Yes/no
The site is not a protected area.	Yes	Institutions or mechanisms exist to govern and manage the site.	Yes
There is a reasonable likelihood that the site supports important biodiversity values.	Yes	Governance and management of the site achieve, or are expected to achieve, the in situ conservation of important biodiversity values.	Yes
Full assessment		In situ conservation of important biodiversity values is expected to be for the long term.	Yes
The site is a geographically defined area.	Yes	Governance and management arrangement address equity considerations.	Yes
The site is confirmed to support important biodiversity values.	Yes		

***Case study submitted by the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MoEJ).*



Rice cultivation in terraced rice fields.
© City of Kobe

Shabunda socio-ecological production landscape, South Kivu



OECM assessment status: The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has not yet reported any OECMs sites. This case study provided by Groupe d’Intervention Pour l’Encadrement Et La Rehabilitation Integrale/ Intervention Group for Farming and Integral Rehabilitation (GIERI) illustrates a SEPLS that has the potential to meet the OECMs criteria.

Type of area: Terrestrial/inland water (mosaic of tropical lowland forests, agroforestry zones, smallholder agricultural fields, riparian ecosystems and inland water bodies).

Main biodiversity values: Supports rare and threatened species in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, such as African forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*; CR) and eastern chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes ssp. schweinfurthii*; EN). It also contains key breeding habitats in wetlands and riparian forests. Additionally, it forms an important ecological corridor linking major forest blocks in the eastern part of the DRC.

Governance and management mechanism: Governed through a hybrid community-based governance system that combines customary authorities, local government structures and community forestry mechanisms recognised under national law. Provided by the non-governmental organisation GIERI acts as a technical facilitator.

Main management purpose: Long-term in situ conservation while maintaining livelihoods through sustainable use practices (combination of primary and secondary conservation).

Comparing the site against the OECM criteria from the IUCN WCPA [site-assessment tool](#) (Jonas et al., 2023):

Table B3. Comparing the Shabunda Socio-Ecological Production Landscape against the IUCN WCPA OECM criteria based on the information submitted. Note that this is not an official assessment and does not formally qualify the site to be an OECM — that will need to be done through a separate process.

Screening assessment	Yes/no	Full assessment	Yes/no
The site is not a protected area.	Yes	Institutions or mechanisms exist to govern and manage the site.	Yes
There is a reasonable likelihood that the site supports important biodiversity values.	Yes	Governance and management of the site achieve, or are expected to achieve, the in situ conservation of important biodiversity values.	Yes
Full assessment		In situ conservation of important biodiversity values is expected to be for the long term.	Yes
The site is a geographically defined area.	Yes	Governance and management arrangement address equity considerations.	Yes
The site is confirmed to support important biodiversity values.	Yes		

****Case study submitted by GIERI (Groupe d’Intervention Pour l’Encadrement Et La Rehabilitation Integrale, or, Intervention Group for Farming and Integral Rehabilitation), DRC.**

Aerial view of the Shabunda Project conservation area.
© Groupe d’Intervention Pour l’Encadrement Et La Rehabilitation Integrale, or, Intervention Group for Farming and Integral Rehabilitation (GIERI).

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ANNEX C

Assessment of which RIs (UNU-IAS et al., 2024) can be used to support OECM identification, based on the IUCN WCPA site-level assessment tool criteria and process (Jonas et al., 2023)

OECMs Criteria	Related RIs		Additional description
Step 1. Screening: identifying a potential OECM			
1 The site is not a protected area.	None.	• Clarification on the legal and other recognition of the SEPLS is required. Some SEPLS or part of SEPLS may already be designated as protected areas. • Note, if the SEPLS area is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives, the area may also have the potential to be designated as a protected area.	
2 There is a reasonable likelihood that the site supports important biodiversity values.	1. Landscape/seascape diversity: 1.1. Does the land/seascape have a diverse set (mosaic) of ecosystems? 2. Ecological connectivity: 2.1. Are different parts of the landscape/seascape managed in ways that allow for the integrity and good functioning of the different ecosystems (for example, connectivity between Protected Areas, other area-based conservation areas, and areas under productive sectors)? 4. Diversity of species with which communities actively interact: 4.1. Has this diversity changed over the last 10 and 50 years? Use both timeframes and provide reasons. 4.2. How easily available are these diverse resources now?	• Biodiversity in SEPLS should be maintained through long-term efforts by the local actors. • During this screening process, confirmation of “reasonable likelihood” is required. However, to meet Criterion 4 in Step 3 of the process, additional evaluation is necessary to confirm that the site supports important biodiversity values.	

OECMs Criteria	Related RIs	Additional description
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Step 2. Consent for full assessment

Not a listed Criterion.	8. Rights to resources and social equity: 8.1. Does the community have customary or formally recognised rights over land, pastures, waters and natural resources (e.g., ownership, use rights, cultural rights, rights of resources like rivers etc.)? 9. Extent of co-management of landscape/seascape: 9.1. Is there coordination and communication between and within communities to manage natural resources and ecosystems within the land/seascape? 9.2. Is there a co-management system (joint management by different stakeholders sharing obligations, responsibilities and rights) for resources, ecosystems and development priorities within the land/seascape?	• To proceed with the OECMs assessment and further recognition, relevant stakeholders and rightsholders should be identified and consulted. Consent* is required from the governing authority before conducting the full OECMs assessment and reporting the site (*Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)) for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. • In contrast, the RIs were developed as a voluntary tool that communities can use for their own assessment, planning and related purposes; hence, the same concept of obtaining FPIC does not apply for using the RIs. • It is important to note that OECM recognition is one of the many options available to a community, and a community’s choice not to pursue OECM recognition does not imply a lack of biodiversity. Even in such cases, the community would still be able to achieve its objectives as SEPLS.
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Step 3. Full assessment: identifying an OECM

3 The site is geographically defined.	None.	• The boundaries of the area that aims to be identified as an OECM need to be defined. If appropriate, a limited part of the SEPLS can be identified as an OECM instead of the whole area.
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OECMs Criteria	Related RIs	Additional description
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Step 3. Full assessment: identifying an OECM

4 The site is confirmed to support important biodiversity values.	1. Landscape/seascape diversity: 1.1. Does the land/seascape have a diverse set (mosaic) of ecosystems? 2. Ecological connectivity: 2.1. Are different parts of the landscape/seascape managed in ways that allow for the integrity and good functioning of the different ecosystems (for example, connectivity between Protected Areas, other area-based conservation areas and areas under productive sectors)? 4. Diversity of species with which communities actively interact: 4.1. Has this diversity changed over the last 10 and 50 years? Use both timeframes and provide reasons. 4.2. How easily available are these diverse resources now?	• Criterion 4 of the tool for identifying OECMs requires confirmation that the site supports at least one of the following important biodiversity values: a. Rare, threatened or endangered species and ecosystems b. Natural ecosystems that are under-represented in protected area networks c. High level of ecological integrity or intactness d. Significant populations/extent of endemic or range-restricted species or ecosystems e. Important species aggregations, such as spawning, breeding or feeding areas f. Importance for ecological connectivity, as part of a network of sites in a larger area • SEPLS maintain biodiversity through harmonious human–nature relationships. However, the RIs focus on “species with which communities actively interact”, and this may not capture key OECM values related to biodiversity, which include rare, threatened, endangered, endemic species or species aggregations, regardless of community interaction. • In case information is not sufficient or documented, additional assessments will be required to confirm how the area supports its important biodiversity value(s).
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OECMs Criteria	Related RIs	Additional description
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Step 3. Full assessment: identifying an OECM

5 Institutions or mechanisms exist to govern and manage the site.	2. Ecological connectivity: 2.1. Are different parts of the landscape/seascape managed in ways that allow for the integrity and good functioning of the different ecosystems (for example, connectivity between Protected Areas, other area-based conservation areas and areas under productive sectors)? 5. Traditional knowledge promotion and integration: 5.1. Are traditional and local knowledge and cultural traditions related to biodiversity (for example, agricultural practices, festivals, labour sharing etc.) still practiced or integrated into production and management activities? 8. Rights to resources and social equity: 8.1. Does the community have customary or formally recognised rights over land, pastures, waters and natural resources (e.g., ownership, use rights, cultural rights, rights of resources like rivers etc.)? 9. Extent of co-management of landscape/seascape: 9.1. Is there coordination and communication between and within communities to manage natural resources and ecosystems within the land/seascape? 9.2. Is there a co-management system (joint management by different stakeholders sharing obligations, responsibilities and rights) for resources, ecosystems and development priorities within the land/seascape?	The biodiversity of SEPLS is maintained through harmonious interactions between people and the landscape and/or seascape. This indicates that some mechanisms exist to govern and manage the site. However, there may be sites where the institutions or mechanisms are not clearly defined or documented. In this case, additional clarification on the governance and management body is required.
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OECMs Criteria	Related RIs	Additional description
Step 3. Full assessment: identifying an OECM		
6 Governance and management of the site achieve, or are expected to achieve, the in situ conservation of important biodiversity values.	1. Landscape/seascape diversity: 1.1. Does the land/seascape have a diverse set (mosaic) of ecosystems? 2. Ecological connectivity: 2.1. Are different parts of the landscape/seascape managed in ways that allow for the integrity and good functioning of the different ecosystems (for example, connectivity between Protected Areas, other area-based conservation areas and areas under productive sectors)? 3. Ecological vulnerability and resilience: 3.1. Does the land/seascape have the capacity to cope, withstand or recover from calamities or shocks? 4. Diversity of species with which communities actively interact: 4.1. Has this diversity changed over the last 10 and 50 years? Use both timeframes and provide reasons. 4.2. How easily available are these diverse resources now?	• Same as in Criterion 5, the biodiversity of SEPLS is maintained through harmonious interactions between people and the landscape. • In case documentation is insufficient, additional assessments and documentation on whether the governance and management achieve the in situ conservation of important biodiversity values is required.
7 In situ conservation of important biodiversity values is expected to be for the long term.	4. Diversity of species with which communities actively interact: 4.1. Has this diversity changed over the last 10 and 50 years? Use both timeframes and provide reasons.	• In general, SEPLS are created through local communities' efforts over many years to adapt to the surrounding environment and enjoy their benefits for the long term. However, there is no requirement for SEPLS actors to explicitly reaffirm their future long-term commitment to biodiversity conservation. • In such cases, documentation of the mechanisms that contribute to long-term biodiversity conservation (such as mutual agreements) may be required.

OECMs Criteria	Related RIs	Additional description
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Step 3. Full assessment: identifying an OECM

8 Governance and management arrangements address equity considerations.	5. Traditional knowledge promotion and integration: 5.1. Are traditional and local knowledge and cultural traditions related to biodiversity (for example, agricultural practices, festivals, labour sharing, etc.) still practiced or integrated into production and management activities? 5.2. Are traditional knowledge and practices being documented and practiced to facilitate their transfer to future generations? 5.4. Are women’s knowledge, experiences and skills recognised and respected at the household, community and landscape level? 7.Income diversity and sustainability of biodiversity-based livelihoods: 7.1. Do livelihoods based on biodiversity follow sustainable and equitable practices? 8. Rights to resources and social equity: 8.1. Does the community have customary or formally recognised rights over land, pastures, waters and natural resources (e.g., ownership, use rights, cultural rights, rights of resources like rivers, etc.)? 8.2. Do all members of society in the landscape/seascape (specify across gender, social groups, youth, elderly, etc.) have fair and equitable access to opportunities and resources?	• The three dimensions of equity are defined in Annex II (I/B) of CBD Decision 14/8, namely, Recognition, Procedure and Distribution. • As noted in the IUCN WCPA site-level assessment tool (Jonas et al., 2023), the site should meet three conditions for this criterion: • “1. Governance and management of the site include efforts to address equity (recognition, procedure and distribution–see above) for example through policies, mechanisms or actions • 2. There is, in the judgement of stakeholders and the assessor, a reasonable likelihood of increasingly equitable outcomes in the future • 3. There are no reports of ongoing or recent (and likely to recur) abuses of the individual or collective human rights of any stakeholders associated with the governance and management of the site”.
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It is evident that there are synergies between the RIs and OECMs criteria, although they are not yet perfectly aligned. Future versions could, therefore, seek further alignment by developing an adapted version for use in SEPLS, or parts of SEPLS, that aspire to be or have already been recognised as OECMs. Such alignment could help support both the identification process and monitoring of OECMs in SEPLS.

References - Annex C

Jonas, H. D., MacKinnon, K., Marnewick, D., & Wood, P. (2023). *Site-level tool for identifying other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs): first edition*. IUCN. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/51296>

United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, United Nations Development Programme Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, & Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. (2024) *Indicators of Resilience in Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS): 2024 Edition*. https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:9685/Indicators_of_Resilience_in_SEPLS_2024_Edition_V2.pdf