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Strengthening site assessments and introducing a proposed verification process for other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)

In brief

Decision 14/8, adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), provided a definition and criteria for identifying Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures or OECMs (CBD 2018). As part of that decision, the IUCN was asked to provide additional guidance. Since then, Parties to the CBD have been interpreting that definition for their national contexts, supported by IUCN-WCPA guidance, and are developing national and subnational frameworks to support OECM recognition. It is important that these frameworks can demonstrate that they are consistent with the criteria set out in the CBD Decision, and that they enshrine well-established principles of transparency and credibility. As countries identify sites that can be recognised as OECMs, it is important that sites reported to the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA) demonstrate alignment with globally agreed criteria. This Technical Note therefore recommends the establishment of processes for independent verification of both national frameworks and individual sites, in order to ensure their alignment with CBD Decision 14/8, IUCN-WCPA guidance and Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) (CBD 2022).

With the goal of improving conservation outcomes in mind, verification processes could serve to identify sites that are deemed to: 1) clearly meet the CBD criteria (verified sites); 2) meet the criteria with some concerns (provisionally verified sites with conditions attached), 3) not currently meet the criteria but could with support (unverified with conditions to move toward verification); or 4) not be suitable for recognition (not OECMs).

Key messages

1. The credibility of OECMs could be underpinned by transparent processes to verify that sites meet the CBD criteria.
2. Verification processes should be consistent across countries to provide confidence that reported sites are robust and aligned with the CBD criteria.
3. Well-designed verification processes could facilitate improved conservation outcomes by clearly identifying where additional support could enable sites to achieve and maintain positive outcomes for biodiversity.

Background and justification

Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) hold great promise as a way to recognise places achieving effective biodiversity conservation outcomes outside of protected areas. There is optimism that OECMs can also play a role in improving and supporting biodiversity conservation outcomes, as well as engaging a wider range of actors in area-based conservation (Gurney et al. 2021). However, the huge diversity of different places and mechanisms through which sites can conserve biodiversity outside protected areas (Cook 2024a) means that the concept has proven difficult to interpret, communicate and implement (Cook 2024b; Fitzsimons et al. 2024, 2025; Petza et al. 2026). Confusion persists despite a formal definition and criteria for identification being adopted by the CBD (CBD 2018), and the publication of extended guidance (IUCN-WCPA 2019; Jonas et al. 2024) and the IUCN-WCPA site-level tool for identifying OECMs (Jonas et al. 2023).

Translating broad international guidance into national and/or subnational contexts has proven challenging (Sharma et al. 2023). Few countries have formally recognised and reported OECMs to the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA; UNEP-WCMC and IUCN 2026), but many are developing and implementing national frameworks to support

the recognition of sites (WWF and CISDL 2026). Some national and subnational frameworks closely follow the four CBD criteria with their respective descriptive elements (e.g., in Colombia, Peru, Maldives) or the eight adapted criteria in the IUCN-WCPA site-level tool[1] (e.g., in Cook Islands and Australia), while others have tailored OECMs to their national contexts (e.g., reporting Key Biodiversity Areas as OECMs in Bhutan). As Parties to the CBD consider how to move forward, there is a significant opportunity to support the development of a transparent, credible and coherent approach to OECMs across different contexts.

As momentum grows around OECMs, a key motivation for this technical note is the lack of consistency around how the concept of OECMs is being interpreted (Lemieux et al. 2019) and therefore implemented. The CBD Decision 14/8 and the IUCN-WCPA site-level tool (Jonas et al. 2023) both outline the broad principles to consider when assessing a potential OECM. However, the variation in national and subnational contexts means that countries must decide how to interpret and apply these principles in their jurisdictions. In some cases, countries have found that the term OECM does not translate to their language or context and have developed an equivalent OECM framework, but with a different nomenclature (e.g., Nationally Certified Sustainably Managed Natural Sites in Japan; Nature Coexistence Areas in Korea, Heo & Park 2023). While this flexibility is an important part of ensuring that OECMs can capture the diverse contexts in which biodiversity is being effectively conserved, it can also lead to different interpretations or misinterpretation of the broader principles.

Alignment of national and subnational frameworks

Irrespective of the approaches or nomenclature being adopted in countries, it seems support is needed to determine whether proposed national and subnational frameworks align with the definition, principles and criteria of OECMs agreed to by the Parties to the CBD (CBD 2018). The establishment of a third party whose role is to consider whether national frameworks follow globally agreed standards, is an approach used in other contexts, such as sustainable forest product certification (McDermott et al. 2008) and Key Biodiversity Areas (IUCN 2022), where confidence in a consistent process is critical to success. Third-party verification is therefore recommended to ensure national frameworks, and the OECMs they recognise, align with the CBD Decision. This process of alignment would identify areas of discrepancy at a systemic level, supporting consistency in the interpretation of OECMs across countries. It would also support countries to embed robust site-level verification processes that would serve to strengthen the transparency and credibility of site-level OECM recognition.

Site-level verification

Another motivation for this Technical Note is the lack of clarity and consistency around how sites are being evaluated for potential OECM recognition (Cook et al. 2024; Cook et al. 2025). Only 0.5% of sites currently recognised in the WDPCA include evidence that they have been assessed against the criteria to be OECMs and only 2.4% provide supporting information (Cook et al. 2025). While the lack of evidence at the WDPCA-level does not mean that sites have not been assessed, there is evidence for deviation from the CBD Decision (e.g., some OECMs overlap existing protected areas; Cook et al. 2025). Furthermore, hundreds of recognised OECMs were previously reported as protected areas and have been partially or fully converted to OECMs without the reasons for the recategorization being reported (Cook et al. 2024). Converted sites may meet the OECM criteria, but the lack of transparency, in the form of documentation to show conversions were justified, has amplified concerns about the credibility of OECMs (Claudet et al. 2022; Lemieux et al. 2022; Robinson et al. 2024). While the WDPCA is a valuable tool to inform Target 3 of the GBF, it does not currently reflect whether sites reported as OECMs meet the CBD criteria and therefore should be counted towards Target 3. Work is underway by the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to support more transparent reporting against Target 3. New fields were created in the WDPCA to capture the type of assessment used to identify that a site meets the OECM definition, and to support more detailed reporting on the effectiveness of protected areas and OECMs, including the quality of governance, management and biodiversity outcomes. While these fields are optional, those reporting OECMs are strongly encouraged to populate these fields for all sites reported to the WDPCA, and site-level verification could inform this.

Principles to support national and site-level OECM verification

There is growing support from within individual countries (e.g., Colombia (Box 1), Japan, Canada, Korea[2]) for processes to independently verify that their sites meet the necessary criteria to be recognised as OECMs. This momentum offers an opportunity to propose principles that could be used by all Parties to the CBD to underpin robust verification processes for OECMs within their national frameworks, informed by best practices in existing verification systems (e.g., ISEAL Alliance 2026). Below we outline how integrating the principles of consistency, transparency and credibility into the design of national frameworks can increase confidence in OECMs.

BOX 1. OECM verification in Colombia – supporting consistent application of the criteria across sites

In 2020, Colombia was one of the first countries to implement national guidelines to recognise and report OECMs (i.e., OMECs in Spanish). As part of this process, information about how sites meet the four CBD criteria is compiled and provided to a 'facilitating group' comprised of participants from the Colombian Government, national research institutes and non-government organisations who are responsible for technical coordination of the site review process. The 'facilitating group' selects 'external verifiers' for each nominated site who have knowledge of the site's geographic location, governance type and conservation strategy, as well as expertise in applying the OECM criteria. The 'external verifiers' conduct a technical assessment of the evidence that nominated sites meet the national guidelines, and can request additional information if needed. The 'facilitating group' is responsible for recommending whether a site should be recognised as an OECM, and are responsible for reviewing the monitoring reports provided when approved sites are reviewed every five years. External verifiers do not participate in the five-yearly review.

In 2022, a large number of sites had been reported but some did not comply with all of the previously defined steps in the assessment. Therefore, in 2023, the Government established an additional review process and a new verification format, where site documentation was subject to a more in-depth analysis by the 'facilitating group', particularly around governance structures. Additional evidence was requested from sites to demonstrate compliance with the criteria. Following the review, some sites were removed from the list of recognised sites, either at the request of the governing authority or the 'facilitating group'. The process of reflection enabled Colombia to learn from the initial experience and identify where new analyses and tools could make the assessments conducted by both the 'facilitating group' and the 'external verifiers' more robust and ensure each step of the verification process is better documented. The inclusion of both a 'facilitating group' within government and 'external verifiers' has proven valuable in ensuring recognised sites align with the national guidelines and the CBD criteria, and that guidance is applied more consistently. Members of the 'facilitating group' and 'external verifiers' volunteer their time, which can be challenging as the number of nominated OECMs increases and existing sites require review (starting in 2026). The Colombian Government is working to put resources in place to ensure the verification model is sustainable.

Principle 1: Consistency

The principle of consistency points to the need for countries to apply the same interpretation of OECMs, such that a site would be recognised as an OECM regardless of which country framework was used. Parties to the CBD are creating national and subnational frameworks and methods to recognise OECMs based on the CBD definition, criteria and principles (CBD 2018) and associated guidance documents (IUCN-WCPA 2019; Jonas et al. 2023; Jonas et al. 2024). A process to align frameworks and methods with the CBD Decision would enable Parties to interpret OECMs for their context, while promoting a consistent interpretation of OECM criteria and identification processes. To promote consistency in the identification of OECMs, WCPA recommends that Parties integrate a verification system into site assessments as a core step in the identification process. Robust verification processes draw on the principles of transparency and credibility discussed below. As mentioned above, establishing a mechanism (e.g., an independent body) to consider whether national and subnational OECM frameworks and screening tools align with the CBD definition, criteria and principles, and also include robust site verification processes, could help promote consistent application of the CBD Decision on OECMs.

Principle 2: Transparency

Transparency in the recognition of OECMs is founded on the public accessibility of information related to OECM identification, assessment, verification, and status over time. Implementing a transparent process could include a publicly accessible national register of sites, differentiating between sites that have undergone verification and those that have not. With provisions to protect sensitive information, the outcomes of site-level assessments should be made publicly available. This could involve a minimum set of information that is accessible through the public register, such as the biodiversity values for which the site is important, recognised threats to the site, nature of the arrangements to ensure long-term maintenance of biodiversity, any management measures in place and the types of evidence used for the assessment. Currently, Japan has an online list of Nationally Certified Sustainably Managed Natural Sites, with factsheets about each site (MOEJ 2026). Ideally, the group that conducts the verification would also be publicly reported. Similar to the appeals process used for Key Biodiversity Areas (IUCN 2022), a transparent process could include a procedure that enables stakeholders (e.g., local communities) to have input into, comment on, or challenge the recognition of sites, with a process for conflict resolution (e.g., a site review is triggered). This

would provide a clear role for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to participate in the verification process.

Principle 3: Credibility

Credibility in the recognition of OECMs rests on the existence of clear, well-defined, and consistently applied processes that establish whether sites meet the agreed OECM criteria. A credible system is characterised by guidance that specifies the information required at the site level, and how that information should be used to verify sites meet the CBD OECM criteria. Below are some steps that could support credible verification processes.

1. Verifying free prior and informed consent (FPIC)

The IUCN-WCPA site-level tool for identifying OECMs (Jonas et al. 2023) includes a specific step for gaining free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) from the site's governing authority or from the Indigenous Peoples or local communities a site is used, owned or claimed by, before an assessment takes place (Jonas et al. 2023). Similarly, FPIC is required for identifying and reporting a site as an OECM. This process is conducted in addition to consulting other landowners, right-holders, stakeholders and the public (Jonas et al. 2023). Given the central role of securing FPIC in the identification of OECMs, an independent review of the evidence for robust FPIC (e.g., how it was conducted, who was consulted, etc.), including documentation, could be included as a step in the verification process. In this way, verification could be used to support the goal of recognising and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities set out in Target 3 of the GBF and prevent weak FPIC processes from undermining the long-term durability of OECMs. If there is evidence of disagreements regarding FPIC, dispute resolution, similar to the appeals process used for KBAs (IUCN 2022) could be implemented.

2. Distinguish the degree to which sites meet the criteria

If the emphasis of recognising OECMs is on supporting sites to achieve conservation outcomes, then verification processes could also function as capacity-building exercises by helping sites that already deliver positive biodiversity outcomes to sustain them and identifying where additional support could improve effectiveness (Cook et al. 2026). With the goal of improving conservation outcomes in mind, verification processes could serve to identify sites that are deemed to: 1) clearly meet the CBD criteria (verified sites); 2) meet the criteria with some concerns (provisionally verified sites with conditions attached), 3) not currently meet the criteria but could with support (unverified with conditions to move toward verification); or 4) not be suitable for recognition (not OECMs).

In making a detailed assessment of sites, the elements of the CBD criteria would ideally be considered individually (e.g., considering effective governance separately from effective management, considering what would be deemed positive outcomes for each individual site attribute and whether they have been achieved, etc.), to clearly determine which aspects of the criteria are limiting site recognition. This is particularly important as a companion to the IUCN site-level tool[1] (Jonas et al. 2023). A detailed site assessment could be a valuable, standardised way to report the outcomes of the completed assessments, where multiple lines of evidence have been aggregated into clear classifications (i.e., yes, no, partially/uncertain) for detailed criteria (e.g., Criterion 6 – Governance and management of the site achieve or are expected to achieve the *in situ* conservation of important biodiversity values; Jonas et al. 2023). This detailed assessment could draw on the WCPA Outcome-Based Effectiveness Assessments of Protected and Conserved Areas (Salafsky et al. 2026), which captures details about the individual site values, management objectives and the degree to which desired outcomes are met. Figure 1 provides an example of three related questions about natural values and how these questions are structured to capture a spectrum of responses. However, the full assessment includes questions relating to all aspects of the OECM CBD criteria. This could form the underlying evidence for expert verifiers to consider, which could then be reported to the World Database through the IUCN site-level tool (Jonas et al. 2023).

3. Be specific about what values, indicators and evidence sites are assessed against

National frameworks may specify that, during the assessment process of a potential OECM site, only key values or attributes, rather than a comprehensive list, are used to measure biodiversity conservation outcomes. A wider list of other associated values may be part of the site description, with no obligation for monitoring or reporting. For example, a forested site may have high species richness and high ecological integrity. Individually listing each species as an important site value could create a huge burden of monitoring and reporting to demonstrate each species is effectively conserved, and fluctuations in any one species would not necessarily reflect poor outcomes for the forest overall. However, the site could instead list the ecological integrity of the forest as a value; which if maintained, is likely to support biodiversity and could be defined to include species richness, capturing the importance of the site without the need to assess each species' population. By limiting the assessment

to key attributes, a site can then describe how it will determine if outcomes have been successfully achieved (e.g., using a threshold - Table 1), and what monitoring methods will be used (Salafsky et al. 2026). If endorsed as appropriate, the threshold could then be used by independent reviewers (e.g., by 'expert verifiers', Box 1 or 'expert panels' as used in Japan) to determine if the site is effectively conserving its values.

4. Include independent verification following site assessment

As initially outlined in this Technical Note, site verification would promote consistency, transparency and credibility in reported OECMs. To enable such verification, national OECM frameworks would provide the greatest credibility where they include an independent review of sites. Independent knowledge holders and/or specialists could be tasked with examining the available evidence from a site assessment to determine whether the information provided sufficiently demonstrates that sites meet the OECM criteria, including any thresholds established. To be credible, independent reviewers would need relevant knowledge about the CBD criteria and should be familiar with the national and local contexts. Ideally, multiple reviewers would consider a site. For the verification process to be independent, reviewers should not have a conflict of interest in seeing sites recognised.

Importantly, the review process should not be adversarial. In cases where verification indicates that further work should be conducted to facilitate an assessment and/or on the site itself before recognition, these results could be used to identify areas for improvement, and have the ability to trigger additional actions if sites are found to be at risk (e.g., threats are increasing, biodiversity outcomes are declining, etc.). Where risks are identified, there could be an agreed-upon timeframe for improving performance to avoid losing verified status, and sites that continue to perform below the required standard could be moved back to provisional status before having their verified status removed.

A)	
Have values for the site been identified?	
Natural values (ecosystems and/or species)	Yes, values are representative of the overall biodiversity of the site
	Yes, values are based on statutory obligations or non-systemically selected
	No, but we can identify them retroactively
	No, not yet
	Don't know

B)	
Have credible goals and objectives been set?	
Short-term and long-goals for the management of all identified natural values (ecosystems and/or species)	Yes, SMART goals for nominated natural values
	Yes, conceptual or directional goals for nominated natural values
	No, but we can develop them retroactively
	No, not yet
	Don't know

C)	
Did you achieve your goals for the natural values (ecosystems and/or species) for the assessment period?	
Outcomes for natural values (ecosystems and/or species)	All goals are achieved or on track
	All goals are achieved or on track but there are some concerns
	One or more goals achieved but with some issues
	One of more goals with major issues
	One or more goals not set
	One or more goals not assessed

objectives, including a baseline status and the desired outcome. Outcomes are judged against responses to questions about the current status and the current trend for each value identified and aggregated across goals. SMART = *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound. Separate questions address the associated ecosystem services and cultural values of the site.*

Ideally, a site visit would take place by independent reviewers to help verify conditions and confirm that free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) was given (see below). Identifying the financial resources to support these processes is challenging (Box 1), but the social confidence provided by verification may incentivise some actors or funders to support credible processes.

To ensure equity in the review process, an independent review could be used to differentiate assessments in ways that account for the site context. For example, quantitative monitoring approaches and procedures may be differentiated for sites managed by Indigenous Peoples or local communities with limited resources but increased for sites that could gain financially from OECM status (e.g., if used as offsets or within certification schemes). There are many factors worth considering to design an equitable and credible way to differentiate assessments, including to accommodate the needs of Indigenous-led sites, but these processes would also need to be clearly articulated and transparently reported (Marnewick et al. 2021).

Potential Models for Verification

While verification could take many forms, what is proposed in this Technical Note is a tripartite arrangement. First, an independent, third-party could be established, whose role is to determine whether, and to what degree, national and

Table 1. *Example of potential thresholds that could be applied to determine if a key biodiversity attribute at a site has been effectively conserved. SMART objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound. The details are highly site and context specific and examples here are for illustrative purposes only.*

Condition metric	Good (Criterion is clearly met)	Good with some concern (Criterion is met but additional actions are recommended)	Significant concern (Criterion is not met and additional actions are recommended before being considered again)	Poor (Criterion is not met and the site is unlikely to be suitable to be considered an OECM)
A measure of the status of the biodiversity value, ideally defined using SMART objectives.	The natural value falls within the normal range for a healthy ecosystem	The natural value is partially degraded and sites outside the range of natural variability for a healthy ecosystem	The value is at levels that are negatively impacting on the health of the ecosystem	The value is significantly degraded and at risk of collapse
Forest cover (%)	Greater than 90% of forest cover retained No evidence of illegal logging	Between 80-90% of forest cover retained Little evidence of illegal logging	Between 60-79% of forest cover retained Evidence of illegal logging	<60% of forest cover retained Evidence of illegal logging
Jaguar population	Jaguars are seen multiple times a year, along with their offspring. No evidence of poaching observed	Jaguars are seen in at least four of the last five years, along with their offspring. Little to no evidence of poaching observed	Jaguars are seen in at least three of the past five years, but offspring are rarely seen. Some evidence of poaching observed	Jaguars have been seen in fewer than three of the past five years and offspring are rarely, if ever, seen. Clear evidence of poaching observed

subnational frameworks align with the global CBD definition and criteria for identifying OECMs, and incorporate the principles of consistency, transparency and credibility (Figure 2). Then, we suggest that to be credible, national frameworks institute a

process for site verification, whereby: 1) national governments undertake a technical coordination and screening role to support sites preparing to seek verified status; and 2) independent knowledge holders and/or specialists conduct the site assessment (Figure 2). When the site verification results attest a site should be recognised, a report on the verified outcome could be recorded in publicly accessible national databases and verified OECMs could be reported to the WDPCA (Figure 2). Verified status of OECMs in the WDPCA could be demonstrated by including supporting information, such as site summaries using the IUCN site-level tool (Jonas et al. 2023) to provide a consistent format. When verification processes identify challenges that prevent sites being recognised as verified OECMs, the reported outcome would include recommendations for how management processes and outcomes could be improved (Figure 2).

Understanding both the CBD provisions, IUCN guidance and the national and local contexts will be important for verification. There are several examples of verification processes developed by countries that involve two bodies, one with the role of technical coordination and one with the role of independent verification. In Colombia, there is a 'facilitating group' within government who offer technical support to sites in relation to what they need to do to meet the national framework, then 'external verifiers' are identified who are familiar with the site context and undergo training in applying the CBD criteria and make recommendations about whether sites should be recognised as OECMs (Box 1). In Japan, an expert committee selects qualified panel members to assess sites in accordance with clearly defined terms of reference, with the government providing a pre-screening role to ensure only sites with a good likelihood of success are put forward for certification.

Key considerations for the implementation of verification system

A key element of credible verification bodies would involve knowledge holders and stakeholders who are independent of national governments, and span diverse domains, including traditional and formalised scientific ecological knowledge, relevant cultural contexts, governance structures, and more. There are some existing groups that could serve as models when creating a verification body to provide independent assessments and ensure alignment with an overall standard that is modified for local contexts. These include the IUCN Green List Assessment Groups (Hockings et al. 2019), Forest Stewardship Council Regional Accredited Certification Bodies (McDermott et al 2008) and Key Biodiversity Area National Coordination Groups and

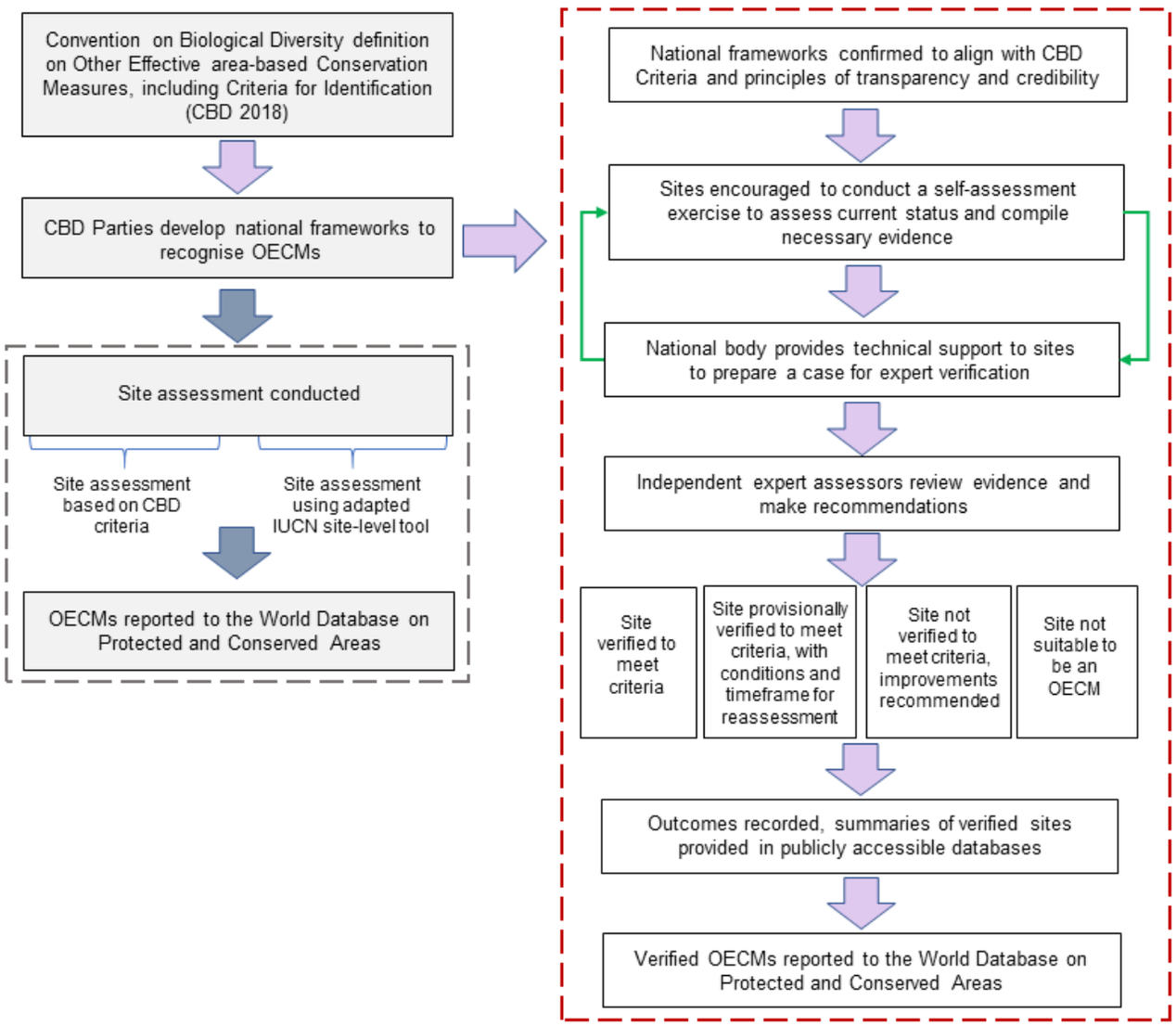

Figure 2. *The recommended OECM recognition with a verification process contrasted with the existing OECM recognition process. The grey boxes represent existing steps in the OECM recognition process and the white boxes represent a pathway to consistent and transparent verification that supports credible OECMs. Steps contained in the dashed grey box, where the site assessment approach varies widely between countries, and any site reported to the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA) is recognised as an OECM, would be replaced with steps in the dashed red box, where only verified OECMs are reported to the WDPCA. Purple arrows show the workflow for verification. The green arrows represent an iterative process to enable sites to provide the necessary information to support verification.*

Regional Focal Points (IUCN 2022), all of which provide independent assessments of sites, ensuring alignment with an overall standard that can be adjusted for local contexts. While the composition and configuration of groups involved in verification may vary across countries, their core function will be to elaborate recommendations about whether sites meet the necessary criteria to be recognised as OECMs, providing relevant evidence to an overarching body, to be decided by each country according to their national circumstances and structure. The proposed processes are designed to support rather than override national decision-making, with transparency being key to enable decisions to be understood when they deviate from the recommendations of verification bodies.

A critical consideration for implementing a verification process is how this can be resourced and institutionalised. Some countries have found the credibility associated with verifying OECMs can attract resources and increase engagement (e.g., in Japan), while others have seen organisations step in to support governments who are pursuing robust verification processes (e.g., in Colombia, Box 1).

Unanswered questions

The requirement that OECMs achieve positive and sustained outcomes for biodiversity raises the question of whether a

periodic review of sites should be part of a verification system to ensure outcomes are maintained. A number of countries are including a period review of sites in their national frameworks but the question of what action should be taken if sites no longer meet the criteria to be OECMs, and if verification should play a role in this process, has not been answered. When this and other questions are addressed, embedding the principle of transparency could ensure actors are held accountable for decisions. Finally, there is the question of if verification processes are adopted for OECMs, whether they would also be appropriate for protected areas.

Next steps

While the process we propose offers a pathway to the initial verification of sites, we recognise that important questions remain unanswered. The principles outlined above offer an approach that countries should strive to implement to support the verification of OECMs. Robust verification offers many benefits for global conservation, including: 1) supporting the credibility of OECMs; 2) promoting the consistent application of the CBD criteria in order to avoid the recognition of sites with little benefit to biodiversity conservation; and 3) offering the potential to strengthen conservation outcomes by clarifying expectations of sites, strengthening monitoring systems and promoting active management if conditions within sites decline. Our hope is that, in consultation with the Parties to the CBD and other implementing bodies, these recommendations could be endorsed under the CBD as part of a commitment to verify OECMs. It will be important to seek input from country representatives, and other relevant experts, into the principles and verification process, including the governance mechanisms that could be used to ensure that the frameworks developed by Parties are aligned with the CBD Criteria. If agreed to, verification would offer the CBD Parties a mechanism to ensure sites can achieve a verified status that demonstrates alignment with the OECM definition that is agreed to as part of Target 3 of the GBF.

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Footnotes:

[1] The IUCN site-level tool was produced to guide site-assessment as part of identifying OECMs. It builds on the CBD Criteria by providing eight high-level criteria, two for initial screening to determine if sites are potential OECMs, and six criteria in the assessment phase to determine if a site should be considered an OECM. Sites must fully meet all of the eight criteria to be considered OECMs (Jonas et al 2023).

[2] The inclusion of country examples in this technical note does not imply that the authors have assessed or validated the design, quality, or functioning of these processes, but rather that they may offer potentially useful examples.

Further Reading

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