



La Herman, La Ege, and La Ode Sidik Idzhan patrolling and monitoring the fish reserve along the coast of Pasi Kolaga, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.
Photo Credit: Jason Houston for Rare

Managed Access Areas with Reserves (MA+R): When is MA+R a potential OECEM?

Checklist for Implementers and Policymakers

Introduction

Local approaches to biodiversity protection coupled with community¹-led, climate-resilient management are vital components of global marine biodiversity protection efforts, given the critical role local communities and municipal governments play in protecting their coastal natural resources. Nearshore territorial seas are rich with biodiversity and economic value, with 100% of the world's mangroves and seagrass meadows and 83% of coral reefs contained there. Nearly 500 million people depend on the fish in these waters; coastal fisheries employ 60 million people and provide 40% of the global fish catch, including for local consumption. And yet, only 11% of territorial seas are protected to date and their conservation receives just 0.01% of global philanthropy. Local approaches, like Managed Access Areas with Reserves (MA+R), can integrate the needs of local communities by strengthening legal and functional access rights to fisheries resources while contributing to meeting targets in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including 30x30. These local approaches also support national commitments, particularly when designated as an Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure (OECM). OECMs recognize the need for flexibility around country and community-specific commitments and interventions that are important for sustainable use and local livelihoods while still acknowledging and monitoring the biodiversity benefits.

This resource will serve as a tool for implementers and policy makers to understand when certain local approaches, like MA+R, could be considered an OECM if legally designated as such. It will also outline the criteria needed to designate an MA+R area as an OECM in the future. It will further serve as a resource demonstrating the pathway for how local approaches, when designated as OECMs, could collectively significantly contribute towards achieving the global biodiversity targets while meeting the needs of people and nature.

Definitions

CBD definition of OECM, Decision 14/8: A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values (CBD, 2018).²

¹ In this document, "community" means the lowest level of governance and government, such as a village.

² "The IUCN definition of "protected area" is more elaborated: "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). It adds to the CBD definition: (i) the need for effective management; (ii) the requirement that conservation benefits be in the long term; (iii) it specifies that the conservation target is nature; and (iv) introduces the notions of ecosystem services and cultural values. Most of these additional specifications have been also identified as important for OECMs in Decision 14/8, except that the conservation target of OECMs is "in-situ biodiversity" and not "nature" which might be understood as a more broader, all-encompassing objective embracing geodiversity, landform and broader natural values (Dudley, 2008)." (Garcia, S.M., et al., 2021, p.17)

Candidate OECM: Geographically defined space that has been identified as a “potential OECM” and the governance authority has consented to it being assessed against the CBD criteria and is or will soon be submitted to the legitimate authority for a final decision. There are sub-types of candidate OECMs based on the overall purpose of the designated area: “primary conservation”, “secondary conservation”, and “ancillary conservation.”³

Potential OECM: Geographically defined space that has been identified as having OECM-like characteristics after an initial check and has the prerequisites for being fully assessed against the CBD definition, but where the governance authority has yet to consent to it becoming a “candidate OECM.”

Managed Access Area with Reserves (MA+R): Managed Access Area + Reserves (MA+R) links the protection of critical habitats through fully protected, no-take reserves with a community’s exclusive rights to fish in surrounding waters. Fish Forever’s goal is to transform the governance of territorial seas through delivery of effective community rights-based management to recover and sustain coastal fisheries. This transformation will help to secure livelihoods, alleviate poverty, ensure food supply, protect coastal ecosystems from chronic threats, and build resilience to climate change.

This resource is designed to define and outline select key indicators to understand what type of locally led protected areas and other community managed areas – such as MA+R as assessed in this paper – could be potential OECMs. To use this resource, an implementation manager or policymaker can align the respective managed area with the criteria table below. Those with responses in each category may be eligible to be defined as an OECM.



Placing buoy in a demarcation zone in Santa Fe, Honduras.

³ “Primary conservation” refers to areas that may meet all elements of the IUCN definition of a protected area, but which are not officially designated as such because the governance authority does not want the area to be recognized or reported as a protected area. “Secondary conservation” is achieved through the active management of an area where biodiversity outcomes are a secondary management objective. “Ancillary conservation” refers to areas that deliver in-situ conservation as a by-product of management activities, even though biodiversity conservation is not a management objective. MA+R areas are likely to be part of the secondary conservation approaches that deliver effective conservation in OECMs.

Table 1: Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM) key functional criteria, potential indicators, and evidence

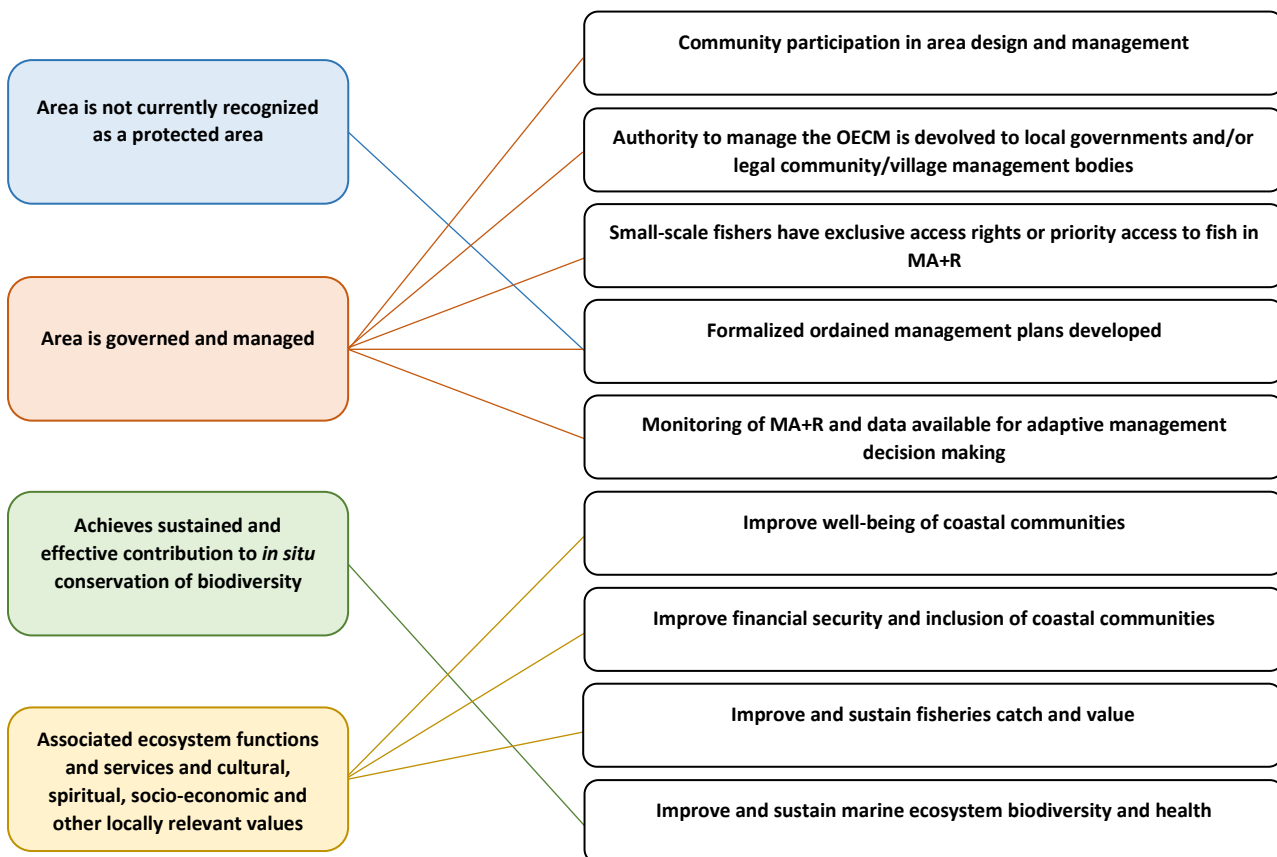
OECM Criteria	Indicators	Evidence
Area is not currently recognized as a protected area	N/A	Map of legally protected areas; Legislation
Area is governed and managed	Community/village members and/or sub-national/national governments have authority to govern and manage (single authority or co-management structure)	Legislation, including regulation, decrees, and other formal ordainment documentation
	A management system is in place that includes relevant stakeholders and authorities and clearly defines expected outcomes that contribute to sustaining biodiversity	Management plan that defines boundaries, use of marine space (i.e., fishing areas, wind turbines, transit corridors, etc.), participating stakeholders, rules and regulations consistent with an ecosystem approach, expected short term and long-term outcomes, and process for adaptive management; Legislation approving management plan
Achieves sustained and effective contribution to <i>in-situ</i> conservation of biodiversity	Monitoring system in place to measure biodiversity trends	Management plan that includes actions to reduce or eliminate threats to biodiversity, clearly identifies marine biota that will benefit from the managed area and why they are important for sustaining biodiversity, and describes specific indicators to measure biodiversity trends
	Biodiversity is sustained or improved	Consistent collection of field data over appropriate spatial areas that measure trends in habitat quality (i.e., coral cover, coral reef complexity, mangrove cover, mangrove diameter and base height, seagrass cover, and diversity); Field data that measures trends in marine fauna population health (i.e., biomass, density, size, diversity); Legislation that establishes the area for the long term (>10 years)
Associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values	OCEM provides a source of income and financial security that can improve livelihoods of community members	Description of source of income and expected livelihood outcomes
	OCEM protects areas that are culturally and/or spiritually important to adjacent communities	Map of OECM with important areas identified and mapped
	OCEM protects critical habitat that support key ecological and commercial species	Map of OECM and specification of habitat type and quantification of habitat area
	OCEM improves well-being of community members	Trends in food security, financial security, job security, access to financial services, formal fisher recognition, gender equity; SDG indicators

This resource uses MA+R as an example of locally led protected and managed areas and demonstrates how principles and requirements around most MA+R align with the key OECM criteria.

The main principles around a successful and robust MA+R include the following:

1. Ensures a high degree of community participation in area design and management;
2. Ensures that the legal authority to manage the OECM is devolved to the local governments and/or the legal community or village management bodies;
3. Has government and community leadership support for the MA+R at local, subnational, and potentially national levels;
4. Small-scale fishers have exclusive access rights and/or priority access to fish in MA+R (which can lead to improved management);
5. Formalized ordained management plans are developed;
6. Monitoring and enforcement protocols are defined and supported, with the most up-to-date data available for adaptive management decision making;
7. Prioritizes the well-being of coastal communities;
8. Aims to improve financial security and increase inclusion of coastal communities;
9. Mainstreams gender inclusion in MA+R management;
10. Improves and sustains fisheries’ catch and value; and
11. Improves and sustains marine ecosystem biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Figure 1: Diagram linking the OECM criteria with MA+R principles and criteria



What to do now?

Local approaches can contribute towards achieving national and global goals like the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and related 30x30 commitments. To support a common approach to identifying that contribution towards global goals, one first needs to align on a designation process. OECMs balance the needs of people and nature by protecting biodiversity while also allowing for sustainable use of the coastal ecosystem to ensure food and livelihood security for local communities.

If the managed area in question meets the criteria above, it could be temporarily designated as an eligible OECM which would enable the formal designation process to commence and for the national government to start counting that area towards its biodiversity targets.

To submit an MA+R area as a formally designated OECM, a submission to the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is required to be added to the World Database on Protected Areas. However, other national processes may be required in the interim depending on national legislation.

If the MA+R area is not eligible as an OECM, it might still be eligible for other designations that could demonstrate the contribution towards national biodiversity targets, such as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). The KBA list is accessible through the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas and is a requirement for many Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding proposals related to OECMs. However, the legal designation process is lengthy for KBAs.

Conclusion

Well managed coastal waters, including locally led areas such as MA+R and other potential OECMs, are vital for the livelihoods, food security, and climate resilience of coastal communities. In addition to strong climate-resilient fisheries and marine resource management, marine conservation is a critical piece of the equation. Coastal areas contribute significantly to marine biodiversity, and thus should be prioritized for conservation through decision-making that is locally designed and led. Given the duality of the importance of these coastal areas and territorial seas for people and nature, it is imperative that they are responsibly included in the implementation of 30x30 commitments and as part of the national targets to meet the goals outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

References:

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