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SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,  
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Sixteenth meeting  
Montreal, 30 April - 5 May 2012  
Item 6.1 of the provisional agenda\*

**MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY  
SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In paragraph 36 of its decision X/29, the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity established a global process involving a series of regional workshops, for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) through the application of scientific criteria for EBSAs (decision IX/20, annex I) as well as other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria, as well as the scientific guidance on the identification of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, which meet the scientific criteria for EBSAs.

Regional workshops on describing EBSAs have been convened by the Executive Secretary for the Western South Pacific and Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic regions, and by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity for the North-East Atlantic region. These workshops described areas that meet scientific criteria for EBSAs and other relevant criteria, and also identified future needs for scientific collaboration and capacity-building to further elaborate the description of EBSAs in each region. Additional workshops will be organized for other regions.

The collected scientific data and information on describing EBSAs will be compiled and collated through the prototype EBSA repository and information sharing mechanism, which will be further developed into fully functional system through a continued collaboration with relevant organizations that have similar initiatives (such as the work of FAO on developing a database on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs)).

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In support of these regional scientific efforts of describing EBSAs, a training manual and modules have been prepared in order to meet the capacity-building needs as identified in decision X/29 as well as those identified in the regional workshops.

A study report prepared by the Executive Secretary recognized a strong link between social conditions and the long-term biological success of conservation initiatives. The application of social and cultural criteria in addition to ecological criteria is an important part of the identification and eventual management, by States and intergovernmental competent organizations, of EBSAs particularly in areas with pre-existing human populations and uses.

### SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties adopts a decision along the following lines:

*The Conference of the Parties*

#### ***Description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)***

1. *Expresses its gratitude* to the Government of Japan for funding, to the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) for hosting and co-organizing, and to the Government of Australia for providing technical support through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to, the Western South Pacific Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSA, held in Nadi, Fiji, from 22-25 November 2011; to the European Commission for funding, the Government of Brazil for hosting, and the Caribbean Environment Programme for co-organizing, the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic Regional Workshop on EBSAs, held in Recife, Brazil, from 28 February to 2 March 2012; OSPAR and NEAFC for convening in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Joint OSPAR/NEAFC/CBD Scientific Workshop on EBSAs in the North-East Atlantic, held in Hyeres, France, on 8-9 September 2011);

2. *Welcomes* the reports of the regional workshops referred to in paragraph 1 above (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/5, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/6, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/7) which provide scientific and technical evaluation of information on the application of scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) in annex I of decision IX/20 and other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally scientific criteria;

3. *Commends* the transparent manner by which these regional workshops were convened, and the use of the best available scientific and technical information, which has provided a basis for the reports on the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its sixteenth meeting as contained in the draft summary report on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/5/Add.1);

4. *Noting* that the application of the ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) criteria is a scientific and technical exercise as in paragraph 26 of decision X/29, *endorses* the reports on the description of EBSAs prepared by the Subsidiary Body, at its sixteenth meeting, as contained in document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/5/Add.1, and supplemented by the annexes to UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/5, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/6, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/7), and *requests* the Executive Secretary to include these reports on the description of EBSAs in the repository described in paragraph 39 of decision X/29, and, in line with the procedures and purpose set out in paragraph 42 of decision X/29, to submit the reports to the United Nations General Assembly and particularly its Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction (the Ad Hoc

Open-ended Informal Working Group), as well as relevant international organizations, Parties and Other Governments;

5. *Takes note* of the need to promote additional research and monitoring to improve the ecological or biological information in each region with a view to facilitating the future description of other areas meeting the scientific criteria for EBSAs or other relevant criteria, as well as of the need to continue to build capacity within countries to further elaborate the description of EBSAs, particularly to determine mechanisms to assist in the more detailed scientific description of EBSAs at a national, subregional and regional scales;

6. *Notes* that scientific description of areas meeting scientific criteria for EBSAs and other relevant criteria is an open process that should be continued to allow ongoing improvement and updating as improved scientific and technical information becomes available in each region;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to further collaborate with Parties, other Governments and competent organizations and regional initiatives to facilitate the description of EBSAs, through the organization of regional or subregional workshops as appropriate, subject to the availability of financial resources and human resources at the Secretariat, and make the workshop reports available for the consideration by the Subsidiary Body and subsequent endorsement by the Conference of the Parties, with a view to including the reports in the repository in line with the procedures and purpose set out in paragraph 42 of decision X/29;

#### ***EBSAs repository and information sharing mechanism***

8. *Welcomes* the prototype EBSA repository and information sharing mechanism, which serves mainly as a web-based input tool and database to assist Parties, other Governments and competent organizations in providing scientific information and data to the regional workshops convened by the Executive Secretary, as called for in paragraph 36 of decision X/29, to describe areas meeting the scientific criteria for EBSAs and other relevant criteria

9. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to further develop, subject to availability of financial resources and human resources at the Secretariat, the prototype repository into a fully functional repository and information sharing mechanism so that it can fully serve the purpose called for in paragraph 39 of decision X/29, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO-IOC), in particular the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS), the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC), Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, and other competent organizations, *noting* an urgent need to strengthen the human resources of the Secretariat to maintain the system on a long-term basis, and report the progress of development to the future meetings of the Subsidiary Body prior to twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

10. *Recalling* paragraph 41 of decision X/29, *further requests* Executive Secretary to collaborate with Parties, other Governments and intergovernmental agencies, subject to availability of financial resources and human resources at the Secretariat, to facilitate the development of regional data inventories that are linked to the global EBSAs Repository (paragraph 39 of decision X/29) and other relevant data sources, in order to track the location of datasets used in the description of EBSAs by the regional workshops and make the scientific information and data sets compiled for EBSAs by the regional workshops available to Parties, other Governments and intergovernmental agencies for their use according to their competencies, and report the progress of such collaboration to the future meetings of the Subsidiary Body prior to twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

11. *Recalling* paragraph 18 of decision IX/20 and paragraph 43 of decision X/29, *requests* Parties and other Governments to further provide for inclusion in the repository, scientific and technical information and experience relating to the application of the criteria in annex I to decision IX/20 or other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria to areas within national jurisdiction before the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

#### ***EBSAs capacity-building***

12. *Welcomes* EBSA training manual and modules as contained in an information document for the meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/9), *invites* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to use these training materials, as appropriate, and make necessary resources available for this purpose, in order to enhance the scientific and technical capacity within respective countries and regions with regard to identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs);

13. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to facilitate, subject to availability of financial and human resources at the Secretariat, the organization of training workshops using these training materials in support of future scientific description of EBSAs at national and regional levels as well as identification of EBSAs by States and competent organizations;

#### ***Social and cultural criteria for the description of EBSAs***

14. *Welcomes* the study (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/10) identifying specific elements for integrating the traditional, scientific, technical and technological knowledge of indigenous and local communities and social and cultural criteria for the identification of EBSAs and the establishment and management of marine protected areas;

15. *Invites* Parties, other Governments and competent intergovernmental organizations to make use of the study of social and cultural criteria for the description of EBSAs in developing and applying at national or regional level, as appropriate, the social and cultural criteria for their identification and future management of identified EBSAs, and report the progress in this regard to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

B. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may further wish to *request* the Executive Secretary to include the results of the regional workshops on describing ecologically or biologically significant areas convened by Executive Secretary after the completion of sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body and before the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in the reports, in the same format and details, prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its sixteenth meeting for its submission to eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, pursuant to paragraph 42 of decision X/29.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth meeting, established a global process, based on the organization of a series of regional workshops (paragraph 36, decision X/29), of describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas through the application of scientific criteria in annex I of decision IX/20 as well as other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria, as well as the scientific guidance on the identification of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, which meet the scientific criteria in annex I to decision IX/20.
2. In the same decision (paragraph 26), the Conference of Parties to the Convention noted that the application of the ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) criteria is a scientific and technical exercise, that areas found to meet the criteria may require enhanced conservation and management measures, and that this can be achieved through a variety of means, including marine protected areas and impact assessments, and emphasized that the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas and the selection of conservation and management measures is a matter for States and competent intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
3. Section II of this note provides a progress report on these workshops and highlights some key conclusions arising from each of them. The full reports of the workshops are provided in information documents (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/5, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/6, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/7).
4. In paragraph 42 of decision X/29, the Conference of Parties to the Convention requested the Subsidiary Body to prepare reports based on scientific and technical evaluation of information from the workshops (paragraph 36, decision X/29), setting out details of areas that meet the criteria in annex I to decision IX/20 for consideration and endorsement in a transparent manner by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, with a view to include the endorsed reports in the repository referred to in paragraph 39 of decision X/29 and to submit them to the United Nations General Assembly and particularly its Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group, as well as relevant international organizations, Parties and other Governments. Document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/5/Add.1, supplemented by the annexes to UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/5, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/6, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/7 provides a basis for the preparation of the report by the Subsidiary Body.
5. In paragraph 39 of decision X/29, the Conference of Parties to the Convention requested the Executive Secretary to establish a repository for scientific and technical information and experience related to the application of the scientific criteria on the identification of EBSAs in annex I to decision IX/20, as well as other relevant criteria. Section III of this note provides a progress report on collaboration to establish EBSAs repository and information sharing mechanism.
6. In paragraph 40 of decision X/29, the Conference of Parties to the Convention requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a training manual and modules, which can be used to meet the capacity-building needs for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas using the scientific criteria in annex I to decision IX/20. Section IV of this note provides a progress report on development of EBSAs training manual and modules. The full draft training manual is available in an information document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/9).
7. In paragraph 47 of decision X/29, the Conference of Parties to the Convention requested the Executive Secretary to undertake a study to identify specific elements for integrating the traditional, scientific, technical and technological knowledge of indigenous and local communities, and social and cultural criteria and other aspects for the application of scientific criteria in annex I to decision IX/20 for the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas as well as the establishment and

management of marine protected areas. Section V of this note provides a progress report on identification of specific elements for integrating the traditional, scientific, technical and technological knowledge of indigenous and local communities and social and cultural criteria for the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas as well as the establishment and management of marine protected areas. The full study is available in an information document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/10).

## **II. DESCRIPTION OF ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS (EBSAS) THROUGH A SERIES OF REGIONAL WORKSHOPS**

8. This section summarizes the results of regional workshops, called for by the Conference of Parties to the Convention in paragraph 36 of decision X/29, including: (i) Joint OSPAR/NEAFC/CBD Scientific Workshop on the Identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) in the North-East Atlantic (Hyères, France, from 8 to 9 September 2011); (ii) CBD Western South Pacific Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (Nadi, Fiji, from 22 to 25 November 2011); (iii) CBD Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Recife, Brazil, from 28 February to 2 March 2011). It also includes the report submitted by UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan on description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for EBSAs through its own scientific process.

### ***Joint OSPAR/NEAFC/CBD Scientific Workshop on the Identification of EBSAs in the North-East Atlantic (Hyères, France, from 8 to 9 September 2011)***

9. In light of the complementary competencies assigned to the OSPAR Commission and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and building upon the terms of the reference for the workshop as agreed by OSPAR and NEAFC (annex II to document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/5), these two organizations convened, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, a joint scientific workshop on the identification of EBSAs in the North-East Atlantic region.

10. In consultation with the Secretariat, the workshop participants and observers were invited from OSPAR/NEAFC Contracting Parties and relevant international/regional competent organizations and initiatives, respectively, on the basis of their scientific expertise and biogeography of the North-East Atlantic region. The geographic scope of the workshop covers the OSPAR Maritime Area and the Regulatory Area of NEAFC in areas beyond national jurisdictions of Contracting Parties (i.e. beyond 200 nautical miles).

11. Key conclusions of the workshop include:

(a) The workshop described 10 areas meeting the scientific criteria for EBSAs as well as other relevant criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 1 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/5/Add.1; and further details of description in annexes 8 – 17 of the workshop report contained in the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/5);

(b) A rigorous follow-up gap analysis is needed for areas that were not reviewed by the workshop due to lack of data/information. The workshop focused on areas beyond 200nm as guided by their governing bodies, and as such the workshop could not fully address ecological linkages between areas beyond national jurisdictions and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); and

(c) The workshop stands as an example of cooperation between a Regional Seas Convention (OSPAR) and a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (NEAFC), on this occasion delivering a coordinated regional contribution to a global process under the Convention on Biological Diversity. This has been made possible as a result of the revised RFMO mandate, the political will generated within

OSPAR towards biodiversity and ecosystems targets and the inclusion of experts nominated by both Contracting Parties and observer from international organizations.

12. The workshop also identified the following lessons learned on its scientific and technical deliberation:

(a) Determination of large areas meeting the EBSAs criteria that favors biogeographic assessments and brings together different scientific assessments provides a logical broader 'envelope' for future nested conservation and management measures;

(b) Further discussion is needed as to the most appropriate way to describe areas for the workshop assessment against EBSAs criteria: the use of straight lines vs. bathymetric contours, or on the basis of natural features vs. polygons to be identified/monitored;

(c) The workshop identified a number of outstanding issues and questions that need further consideration:

(i) Little is known about the connectivity of populations, what suffices as a reproducing population, the details of some life history characteristics and the relationship between natural change in communities as against changes resulting from human impacts;

(ii) Linking description of EBSAs within and outside EEZs – the benefit of describing separate benthic and pelagic EBSAs, interconnections between marine areas beyond national jurisdiction and surrounding shelf ecology;

(iii) Views on refinement of rationale as opposed to the application of a broad scope of EBSA criteria when science is working and sampling (taking observations) at a smaller scale than policy applications;

(iv) There are different approaches to geographically describing the areas meeting EBSAs criteria, and whether or not the boundaries of these areas should be fixed, or if this needs to be reviewed to create mobile boundaries, or boundary zone to account for resilience;

(d) The results of the workshop may have implications for the direction of future deep sea research.

***Western South Pacific Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Nadji, Fiji, from 22 to 25 November 2011)***

13. The Executive Secretary convened, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), this regional workshop with the financial support from the Government of Japan through the Japan Biodiversity Fund. The Government of Australia provided technical support, through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and SPREP in their scientific and technical preparation for the workshop.

14. The workshop participants were selected based on nominations submitted by Parties in the region of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme in response to notifications SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/77026 (2011-136, dated 22 July 2011); SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/rg/77026 (2011-160, dated 26 August 2011), based on the selection criteria provided in these notifications. In consultation with SPREP, observer participants were also selected based on nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations based on the same selection criteria in the notifications.

15. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberation of the workshop, the Secretariat issued a notification SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/JG/77026 (2011-198, dated 11 October 2011) to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled with the technical support from CSIRO, which covers the following data layers, *inter alia*:

(a) Biological data : Important bird areas; Seabird densities; interactions between tuna and seamounts; catches of commercial pelagic species (tuna, marlin, swordfish, others); patterns of turtle movements; predictions of deep sea corals; OBIS data (all species, shallow species, deep species, mammals, turtles, IUCN Red List Species); historical whale catches;

(b) Physical data : seamount locations; global seascapes; distribution of canyons; vents and seeps; physical ocean climatologies (temperature climatology (degrees C), salinity climatology (PSU), oxygen climatology (ml/l), nitrate climatology (uM), silicate climatology (uM), phosphate climatology (uM), sea surface altimetry, SeaWiFS chlorophyll A concentration, VGPM global ocean productivity, mixed layer depth climatology (m), frontal index, eddy kinetic energy, summary of currents)

16. Participants in the workshop agreed on the workshop geographic scope (refer to the map in annex VI to the workshop report contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/6), in consideration of the following:

(a) GOODS biogeographic classification system;

(b) Areas greater than 100 m water-depth contiguous to land as guidance for open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats; and

(c) Marine waters within and beyond national jurisdiction of SPREP member countries (except for Australia and New Zealand where separate national processes are underway) at the time the notifications for requesting nomination of experts were issued (SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/77026 (2011-136) dated 22 July 2011 and SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/rg/77026 (2011-160) dated 26 August 2011, respectively.

17. The workshop decided the following in describing the areas meeting EBSAs criteria:

(a) The boundaries of areas extending beyond the workshop's geographic scope (e.g. areas extending into EEZs of Australia and New Zealand) would be identified with dotted lines so that the integrity of the areas is not diminished;

(b) Areas where description of EBSAs were not being developed due to lack of sufficient local knowledge or time by workshop participants are included in annex IV to the workshop report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/6);

(c) Description of areas meeting EBSAs criteria in the area of Marquesas archipelago deep-sea waters would be also identified as dotted lines on the map for future consideration, as the representatives of French Polynesia were not present.

18. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 26 areas meeting EBSAs criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 2 of document UNEP/CBD/ SBSTTA/16/5/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the appendix of annex V to the workshop report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/6).

19. The workshop acknowledged the EBSAs description process through a regional workshop was based on an expert knowledge available at the meeting as well as data compilation prior to the workshop. It was recognized that this EBSAs description was a first cut at the process, and it is recommended that

the Convention on Biological Diversity considers ways in future workshops to supplement the expert approach.

20. Key conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSAs criteria include (further details in annex VII to the workshop report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/6)):

(a) There is still more data that exists, and the need for future work to contact these other data systems to include wherever possible for future regional, subregional or national efforts to further elaborate the description of additional areas meeting EBSAs criteria;

(b) The workshop emphasized that in data poor regions, efforts such as describing EBSAs could benefit from modelling distributions of selected species;

(c) The workshop identified an urgent need for the development of a regional data repository, including the data layers developed in efforts such as this workshop, available to all Parties, as well as regional partners and organizations;

(d) Establishing a regional data inventory of available data relevant to the EBSA process. SPREP should take a lead in formulating mechanisms to document data availability within the region;

(e) Providing links between the CBD EBSA Repository, and repositories of data underlying the scientific assessment on describing EBSAs;

(f) The workshop recognized the important need for additional research and capacity development to improve the biological information for the whole region to facilitate the description of other potential areas meeting EBSAs criteria;

(g) The workshop recognized that the process was based on a data-driven expert knowledge approach due to constraints related to data availability at multiple spatial scales;

(h) The workshop recognized that this is a first effort to describe EBSAs in the Western South Pacific, and that the list is not exhaustive and may not necessarily capture all of the most significant EBSAs within the Western South Pacific. Rather, the areas are justifiable in terms of meeting EBSA criteria, but can represent those areas that had sufficient data available or were well enough known to be described;

(i) Recognizing that the Conference of the Parties, at its tenth meeting requested the regional workshop to describe EBSAs in marine areas, both within and beyond national jurisdiction, the workshop noted the challenge of missing representations from some countries (due to lack of nominations or cancellation of trips), as there was uncertainty about the description of EBSAs within jurisdictions in the countries that were not represented by their experts;

(j) The workshop suggested that a summary table of EBSAs be created according to its classes and types of EBSAs, to clarify the diversity of areas and justifications;

(k) The workshop noted data gaps related to offshore fisheries in their consideration of describing EBSAs. The workshop requested that SPREP/SPC follow up on possible mechanisms to use fisheries data to further elaborate the description of EBSAs, which can be submitted collectively to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity by countries or the CROP secretariats;

(l) The meeting noted that data were sought from relevant sources on top ocean predators and cetaceans, but were not fully available for this workshop;

(m) There was a recognized need to continue to build capacity within countries to further elaborate the description of EBSAs, particularly to determine mechanisms to assist in the more detailed scientific assessment of EBSAs at a national scale, where requested, to assist in planning and management processes;

(n) In the light of recognized gaps and needs above, participants identified the need for additional regional workshops to describe potential additional areas meeting EBSAs criteria.

***Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Recife, Brazil, from 28 February to 2 March 2011)***

21. The Executive Secretary convened the workshop in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme-Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP). It was hosted by the Government of Brazil and organized with the financial support from the European Commission and the Government of Brazil. The Government of Japan through the Japan Biodiversity Fund supported the scientific and technical preparation for the workshop.

22. The workshop participants were selected from among nominations submitted by Parties in the region of the UNEP-CEP and the hosting country in response to notifications SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/rg/77432 (2011-166), dated 7 September 2011; SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/JG/77432 (2011-207), dated 2 November 2011, based on the selection criteria provided in these notifications. In consultation with the UNEP-CEP, observer participants were also selected from among nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations applying the selection criteria specified in the notifications.

23. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberation of the workshop, the Secretariat issued a notification SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/JG/78386 (2012-001), dated 13 January 2012 to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled by the technical support team commissioned by the Secretariat. Information provided covers the following data layers, *inter alia*:

(a) Biological data includes: distribution of coral reefs, seagrasses and mangroves; Historical whale captures; catches on commercial pelagic species; turtle tagging data aggregated by OBIS-SEAMAP; SWOT/WIDECASST nesting beaching; OBIS data (all species, mammals, turtles, shallow species, deep species and IUCN Red List species); predictions of deep sea corals; and Important Bird Areas; and

(b) Physical data includes: seamounts; vents and seeps; bathymetry (GEBCO); distribution of large submarine canyons; total sediment thickness of the world's oceans and marginal seas; global seascapes; physical ocean climatologies (temperature climatology, salinity climatology, oxygen climatology, nitrate climatology, silicate climatology, phosphate climatology, mixed layer depth climatology, sea surface height, VGPM global ocean productivity, SeaWiFS chlorophyll A concentration, eddy kinetic energy, sea surface temperature front probability, and summary of currents).

24. In addition to the above compilation of scientific information, the workshop considered the scientific information on areas meeting EBSA criteria submitted by the workshop participants, using the template of the prototype EBSA repository provided in the notification SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/JG/78386 (2012-001), dated 13 January 2012, prior to and during the workshop as well as other relevant scientific documents/reports submitted by the workshop participants prior to the workshop.

25. The workshop participants agreed on the workshop geographic scope (refer to the map in annex VI to the report of the workshop (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/7)), in consideration of the following:

(a) GOODS biogeographic classification system;

(b) Unique oceanographic and geological characteristics in the Wider Caribbean region, which require the consideration of coastal waters;

(c) Ecological connectivity between coastal waters and open-/deep-ocean habitats;

(d) Marine waters within and beyond national jurisdiction of the UNEP-CEP member countries (except for United States of America, where separate national processes are underway) and Brazil.

26. Workshop participants decided the following in describing the areas meeting EBSAs criteria:

(a) Areas where description against EBSA criteria was not provided due to lack of sufficient scientific data or analysis, but discussed by the workshop participants for future consideration are included in annex V to the workshop report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/7);

(b) Nesting smaller EBSAs within larger regional EBSAs is acceptable;

(c) Categorization of EBSAs into different types can be useful for future description of EBSAs;

(d) Improved connections between EBSA descriptions with surrounding regions outside of the study area are necessary;

(e) Development of transboundary proposals in consideration of the integrity of ecological and biological features;

27. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 22 areas meeting EBSA criteria (refer to the summary description of these areas in table 3 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/5/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the appendix of annex IV to the workshop report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/7).

28. Some conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSAs criteria include (further details in annex VI to the workshop report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/7):

(a) For the western and eastern Caribbean subregion, the following scientific gaps were considered as priorities for more research and information gathering: (i) deep-sea biology and oceanography in the Eastern Caribbean, including deep-sea corals; (ii) further biological and oceanographic connectivity studies for better understanding of larval recruitment and dispersal; (iii) targeted research on key large species and their routes and habitats such as sharks and marine mammals; (iv) how habitats contribute to the different life stages of different taxa, in particular migratory species (for example mating, feeding and flying routes); and (v) to further study remote areas, such as the Rosalinda Bank, remote atolls in the Seaflower Marine Protected Area and the Cayman Trench;

(b) It was noted this workshop was the first attempt for the description of areas meeting EBSA criteria based on the available information. Participants recognized that there could be additional scientific approaches for describing areas meeting EBSA criteria, for example based on grouping those with the greatest rarity or most unique features;

(c) For southern Caribbean and Brazil region, further scientific information on species diversity (benthic, pelagic and fisheries etc.) is needed in some areas, as well as information on species ecology, abundance, seasonality and reason of presence (e.g. for feeding, breeding, migration). Other gaps include hydrodynamics and geomorphological information for some areas, with some areas generally understudied. It was noted that in some areas, there were not enough marine scientists (see also capacity gaps). Regarding deep-water biota, understanding is generally poor (e.g. diversity patterns, community

structure and distribution of deep fauna) and less comprehensive than that of the overlaying pelagic system. Increasing sampling effort on the ridge and fracture zone habitats is critical to ensure a better description of the area for EBSA description. There is a major lack of information in the southern Caribbean on the continental break and deep sea;

(d) Connectivity is poorly understood, and since it influences many of the ecosystems discussed, it is important to acquire information about ecological connectivity at different levels (e.g., oceanographic, genetic). This will allow better description of the boundaries of the areas meeting EBSA criteria or suggest new areas that could be incorporated or defined for EBSAs description;

(e) Multi-national scientific collaboration and scientific capacity, including sampling platforms and technology, for deep water research in the Atlantic have greatly improved during the development of the Census of Marine Life field projects. Today most of these research initiatives are still active but limited by the lack of funding opportunities, which are required to maintain their collaborative network and support the expansion of sampling efforts;

(f) To address the issue of regional under-capacity, training at regional level should be promoted in the areas of deep-sea oceanographic exploration, open-sea biology, oceanographic and geographic data analysis methods and tools. Further expertise is required in taxonomy, which has been a particular constraint in deep water diversity studies. Capacity to sample the deep sea (e.g., research vessels, modern sampling equipment) and to apply new technological approaches, such as genetic and tracking studies is needed. The group encouraged the promotion, use and development of open and free data analysis tools.

***UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan Synthesis report on the work carried out regarding EBSAs identification in the Mediterranean***

29. During their 17<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting (Paris, from 8-10 February 2012), the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols adopted decision IG.20/7 regarding the conservation of sites of particular interest in the Mediterranean and requested the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention to contact the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to present the work carried out regarding the identification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in the Mediterranean and make the Synthesis Report available for the participants at the sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body for their consideration.

30. As such, this report, as contained in document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/8), described 10 areas for EBSAs, based on available information, including: Alboran Sea, Balearic Islands area, Gulf of Lions area, Tyrrhenian Sea, Tunisian Plateau, Adratic Sea, Ionian Sea, Aegean Sea, Levantine Sea, and Nile Delta sea area (refer to summary description of these areas in table 4 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/5/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/8).

**III. PROGRESS REPORT ON COLLABORATION TO ESTABLISH EBSA REPOSITORY AND INFORMATION-SHARING MECHANISM**

31. Pursuant to paragraph 44 of decision X/29, this section summarizes the progress made in the collaboration to establish the prototype EBSAs repository and information sharing mechanism (as referred to in paragraph 39 of the same decision).

32. This activity was undertaken, through the financial support from the Government of Germany, in collaboration with Parties and other Governments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

Nations (FAO), United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) -Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), in particular the Ocean Biogeographic Information System, and other competent organizations such as UN DOALOS, International Seabed Authority, International Maritime Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) and the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), through organizing a teleconference call inviting all the relevant organizations (10 January 2011) and consultation meetings with FAO (3 & 4 Feb 2011) as well as side events at FAO COFI meeting (3 February 2011) and UNGA Regular Process meeting (17 February 2011).

33. Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations were also invited for peer-review of the prototype EBSA repository system through notification SCBD/STTM/JM/JLe/JG/77653 (2011-194, dated 7 October 2011). Submitted comments were considered in refining the prototype system within the limit of the available financial resources, staff time and technical capability at the Secretariat.

34. The user manual for this prototype EBSA repository was prepared as part of EBSA training manual and modules, which is described in the following section. Below is the summary of the prototype EBSA repository that is currently available at <http://ebsa.cbd.int/> (figure 1):

- (a) The prototype EBSA repository was developed as a web-based input tool and database to assist countries and competent organizations to submit information and experiences relevant to the description of EBSAs, allowing users to share data, information, tools and lessons learned;
- (b) It provides for a place for adding, storing and modifying data and information, with varying degrees of access, visibility, and editing. Information can be contributed at any time, without being made available to the general public or even other site members. All information will undergo an initial review for spam and nonsense by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure that the submission is legitimate and potentially of interest. The formal review process will take place at regional workshops. The repository can be a central place for both collection and review, and eventually for distributing relevant and approved information to the public, through the set process of consideration by the Subsidiary Body and endorsement by the Conference of the Parties, as called for by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in paragraph 39 of decision X/29. As information progresses through these quality control and assurance stages, it can be revised and improved. Figure 2 shows the different layers of information visibility, including (i) data/information private to author; (ii) information submitted to the website; (iii) information submitted to a regional process; (iv) EBSA reports produced by regional workshops; (v) EBSA reports recommended by the Subsidiary Body; and (vi) EBSA reports endorsed by the Conference of the Parties;
- (c) The repository can hold many different types of information, but there are two main types: (i) Reports on description of areas meeting EBSAs criteria; and (ii) documents and data supporting description of areas meeting EBSAs criteria;
- (d) The database and repository use technical standards that are well-recognized, open and designed to allow for dynamic links to other databases, as required. Currently, the prototype can link to the OBIS (Ocean Biogeographic Information System) to load biodiversity indices and to search for data on species.

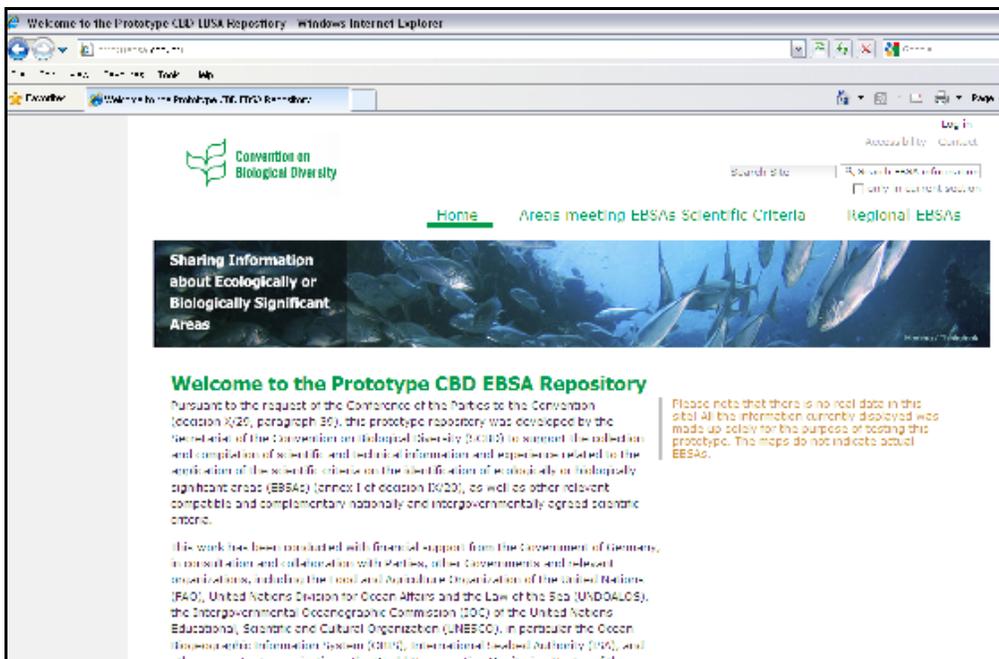


Figure 1. Webpage of the Prototype EBSA Repository (<http://ebsa.cbd.int/>)

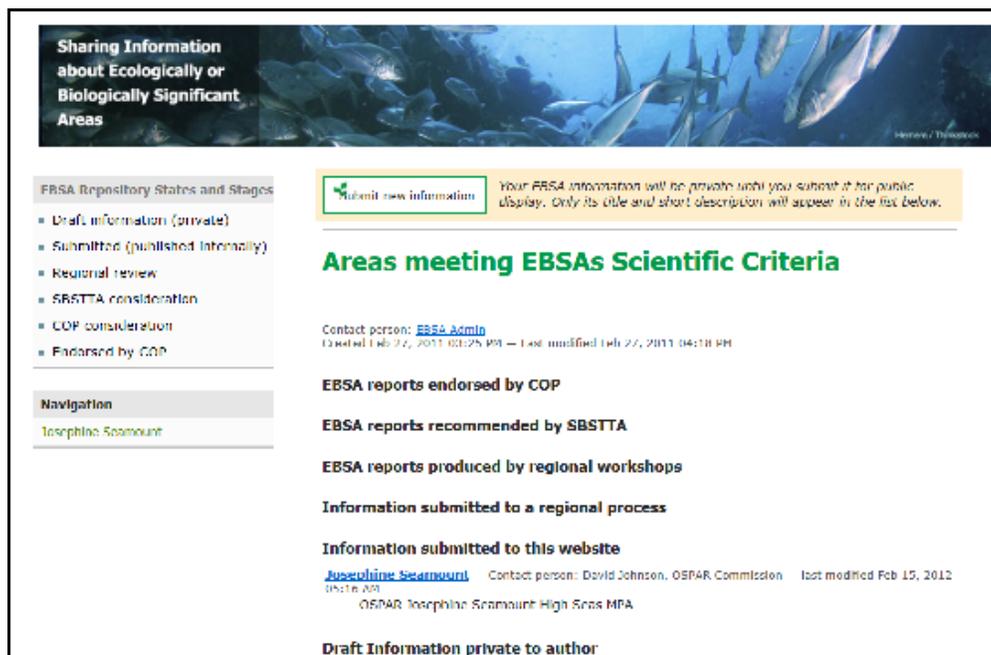


Figure 2. Different layers of information visibility in the prototype repository (<http://ebsa.cbd.int/>)

35. The prototype EBSA repository needs to be further developed into a fully functional repository and information-sharing mechanism, and it should be emphasized that such development would require, among others, formalization of collaboration with relevant organizations such as FAO (e.g. VMEs database) in terms of sharing data/information, investment of necessary financial resources, and

strengthening of technical capability and human resources at the Secretariat in order to ensure a long-term maintenance of the system and its associated information linkages as well as provision of necessary information services to Parties and relevant organizations. Characteristics of a fully functional repository and information sharing mechanism are described below:

(a) **The EBSA repository:** The fully functional repository is envisioned to be a multi-media database housed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, containing scientific and technical information relevant to the description of areas meeting EBSAs criteria and other relevant criteria, both within and beyond national jurisdiction, as appropriate. In order to maximize sharing of information on the experiences of describing EBSAs and applying other relevant criteria, the database will use open and inter-operational architecture that can link with other databases as required. A stable technical platform will be essential. Due to the varied nature of information available, the repository will be designed to accept scientific papers, data including GIS files, and various common media files. Its structure and fields will be organized according to the seven EBSA criteria, as well as other relevant criteria. Care will be taken to avoid duplication with other existing databases; inter-linking of databases will be the preferred approach, when practical. Data would, whenever possible, reside with the original host institutions, to ensure the most up-to-date information available;

(b) **The information-sharing mechanism:** In order for users to share information, and for that information to be further shared with others, the repository will require an information-sharing mechanism consisting of two elements: 1) an input interface that is open and self-explanatory in its usage, inviting the broad participation of Parties, experts, and civil society; and 2) an output interface that allows for directed queries and reports, as well as the possibility to respond to queries coming from other information-sharing sites. Although the user would just see the compiled results displayed on a single map or report, these products may include information from a variety of inter-linked databases. The prototype will be in English; however, to encourage broad international participation, translation into other United Nations official languages may be required once the prototype transitions to a fully functional version.

#### **IV. PROGRESS REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT OF EBSA TRAINING MANUAL AND MODULES**

36. Pursuant to paragraph 40 of decision X/29, EBSA training manual and modules, as contained in the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/9, were developed to facilitate the capacity development with regard to the scientific description of areas meeting EBSAs criteria. This manual also includes the user manual for the use of the EBSA prototype repository and information-sharing mechanism, as explained in the above section.

37. In early stages substantial time may be needed for learning how to apply the scientific criteria for describing EBSAs (annex I to decision IX/20), including considerations related to data, analyses and tools. Given the technical nature of the process of applying the criteria, it is expected that those participating in the EBSA training workshops have previous experience with analysing and manipulating data related to marine areas, and have some level of knowledge about geographic information systems (GIS).

38. The training manual consists of:

##### ***Module 1: Scientific description of areas meeting EBSAs criteria***

*1(a) General approaches for each EBSA criterion*

*1(b) The role of expert opinion*

*1(c) Common analytical approaches*

*1(d) Data considerations*

*1(e) Considerations when using multiple EBSA criteria*

*1(f) Systematic planning approach***Module 2: Using the prototype EBSA repository***2(a) Introduction to the user interface**2(b) Relative ranking of areas**2(c) Other relevant criteria*

39. The training manual is accompanied by a set of slides, which can be used as a learning tool during the workshops.

## V. PROGRESS REPORT ON UNDERTAKING A STUDY ON SOCIO-CULTURAL CRITERIA FOR EBSAS

40. Pursuant to paragraph 47 of decision X/29, Executive Secretary undertook a study to identify specific elements for integrating the traditional, scientific, technical and technological knowledge of indigenous and local communities and social and cultural criteria and other aspects for the application of scientific criteria for identifying EBSAs as well as the establishment and management of marine protected areas. The draft report is contained in the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/10, and circulated for peer-review together with other meeting documents for the sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body.

41. Followings are the key messages from the draft report.

(a) Social conditions often determine the long-term biological viability of conservation initiatives. Because humans and their needs, including the needs of future generations, are important for the conservation and management of marine resources, the application of social and cultural criteria in addition to ecological criteria is an essential part of the identification and eventual management of EBSAs by States and competent intergovernmental organizations, particularly in areas with pre-existing human populations and uses.

*Social and cultural criteria for the identification ecologically or biologically significant areas as well as the establishment and management of marine protected areas*

(b) A review of existing sets of social, cultural and economic criteria used internationally, regionally, nationally and sub-nationally was undertaken, and a consideration of these can provide a basis for further debate and for the eventual development of socio-cultural criteria for EBSAs to be used alongside the already-existing scientific criteria.

(c) Common cultural criteria currently in use incorporate the following aspects:

- **Current cultural and traditional use:** This category includes areas that have traditional uses by indigenous and local communities, as well as areas that are important for maintaining or restoring productivity, diversity and/or integrity of resources and places used for traditional and cultural activities, including sustainable economic uses.
- **Current customary management areas and systems:** This category includes areas and resources being managed by indigenous or local communities using their local and/or traditional knowledge.
- **Cultural value other than direct use:** This category includes sacred sites, and areas that have religious, historic, artistic or other cultural value.
- **Cultural heritage:** This category includes areas that have important historical and archaeological sites.

(d) Common socio-economic criteria currently in use incorporate the following aspects:

- **Social, human or economic dependency:** This category includes areas that provide important ecosystem services for individuals and communities, and upon which the survival,

- livelihoods and well-being of people are dependent on. Providing for access to, and sustainable uses of, such areas for fishing, recreation and traditional subsistence or food production activities is important.
- **Social importance:** This category includes areas that have existing or potential value to local or international communities because of cultural, educational, aesthetic or recreational qualities. The maintenance or restoration of these values through management is important.
  - **Economic importance:** This category includes areas that have existing or potential economic value and/or uses, and may provide economic benefits for communities through opportunities to engage in small-scale fishing, tourism or other economic activity. This category may also include areas whose protection, maintenance or restoration makes a direct economic contribution to fisheries (breeding or nursery areas, or an areas that are the source of economically important species) or to recreation, tourism or other economic activity.
  - **Social acceptability:** This category includes areas that have a high degree of support from indigenous and local communities, as well as from stakeholders.
  - **Compatibility:** This category includes areas that have existing uses and management regimes that are generally compatible with the goals of the proposed conservation/management action. The category may also include areas that may help resolve conflicts between natural resource values and human activities, or which may provide for resolution of conflicts between users.
  - **Conflicts of interest:** This category considers the degree to which the proposed conservation or management action would affect the activities of local residents, and cause social or economic hardship on communities.

*Experiences in applying social and cultural criteria*

(e) In applying scientific, social and cultural criteria, the following considerations should be kept in mind:

- Positive experience in co-management and/or community-driven marine management can be found in many cases where communities' rights to their resources have been recognized, and where marine managed areas provide for sustainable uses that benefit community livelihoods and well-being.
- Recognition of the importance of local and traditional knowledge and the need for building on pre-existing systems of traditional resource management is likely to increase community ownership of conservation and management initiatives, and thus their sustainability in the long term.
- There is a need to build meaningful and equal partnerships between scientists, managers and members of indigenous and local communities in research leading to identification of EBSAs and in monitoring and managing such areas. These partnerships should seek to apply both science and traditional ecological knowledge.
- While all efforts must be undertaken to protect and conserve resources, it is important to also take into account the livelihoods and well-being of communities that have traditionally depended on those resources, and to ensure that socio-cultural benefits of EBSAs (and not only the costs) flow back to communities.

*Traditional, scientific, technical and technological knowledge of indigenous and local communities on marine and coastal biodiversity*

(f) Indigenous and local communities possess traditional knowledge, innovations and practices that have global importance for conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and resources. Thus, the argument could be made that traditional knowledge has an important role to play in identifying EBSAs, both inshore and offshore. In particular, traditional ecological knowledge can provide:

- **Location-specific knowledge** about species, habitats and ecological interactions, including knowledge about migratory species in support of CBD EBSA criteria 2 and 3, as well as information about important habitats such as juvenile habitats or spawning aggregations. Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) can also be used to validate regional or global models of species distribution or climate change.
- **Increased knowledge of environmental linkages** between various ecological processes, multiple species and abiotic factors that influence species biology, including trophic structures, migration movements, as well as the behaviour of species.
- **Local capacity-building and power sharing** through creation of research programmes where indigenous peoples and/or community members are equal partners with scientists.

(g) Where traditional knowledge is collected for the purpose of applying either ecological or socio-cultural criteria, the prior informed consent of the knowledge holders should be obtained, and the knowledge utilized through mutually agreed terms.

(h) The knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities are not only important for identifying areas that meet EBSAs criteria, but have also resulted in traditional marine management systems and strategies that have significance for considering how biodiversity in the world ocean, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, is managed. The concepts of significance include:

- The recognition of the interconnectedness of all things, including the understanding that people are integral parts of natural systems and that management must be undertaken in a holistic manner.
- The concepts of stewardship and intergenerational responsibility in providing for sustainable use of marine resources, while recognizing that providing benefits for people is vital for conservation success.
- The need for marine resources management to employ multiple tools and approaches, and to be sustainable, adaptive and to enhance community resilience and self-sufficiency in a time of change.

(i) It should also be kept in mind that enhancing and building upon traditional marine management strategies in the context of national and international policies relating to biodiversity conservation, marine protected areas and fisheries management is likely to provide benefits for both communities and biodiversity.

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