

Meeting Report: NEAMPAN Workshop on Marine and Coastal Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in North-East Asia

24-25 June 2026

Korea Maritime & Ocean University, Busan, Republic of Korea

Executive Summary

The NEAMPAN Workshop on Marine and Coastal Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in North-East Asia was held on 24-25 June 2026 in Busan, Republic of Korea. The workshop was co-organized by the ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, serving as the secretariat for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), the Korea Maritime & Ocean University (KMOU), and the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM), in partnership with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea. It brought together NEAMPAN Steering Committee members, government representatives, international and regional organizations, experts, practitioners, academia, and civil society to exchange experiences on marine and coastal OECMs in North-East Asia and beyond, and to explore opportunities for future collaboration. The workshop aimed to enhance shared understanding of marine and coastal OECMs and their relevance to Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), exchange national policies and practices, share lessons from other regions, and identify possible areas for continued technical exchange at the subregional level.

Key Outcomes

The sessions highlighted both successes and areas for improvement in advancing the implementation of OECMs in the North-East Asia region. Over the course of two days, participants discussed the status of OECMs in the region. In addition, experts from other regions, including Canada and Sweden, presented how marine and coastal OECMs are understood and applied and shared practical lessons of potential relevance to North-East Asia. The workshop included a Youth Perspectives session, during which students from KMOU presented their perspectives and research on marine area-based conservation.

By sharing the latest research findings and marine conservation practices among professionals, the workshop contributed to strengthening the governance basis for the long-term conservation of the marine ecosystem and progress toward the 30 by 30 goal under GBF Target 3. It also helped lay the foundation for future leadership and science-based conservation efforts across North-East Asia.

Looking ahead, NEASPEC will continue to build capacity for international cooperation, facilitate knowledge exchange, and foster collaboration among stakeholders.

Below are the key takeaways from the sessions.

1. Limited understanding and awareness of OECMs

OECMs are a relatively new concept, and OECMs and related initiatives are often fragmented. There is currently confusion between OECMs and protected areas, both at the national and international levels. OECMs are not to be considered as a replacement for MPAs but as complementary, since they both count equally towards GBF Target 3 and support biodiversity and environmental conservation.

2. Different understanding of OECMs between countries and within countries

Different countries have differing understandings of OECMs and use different reporting mechanisms. Even within countries, legal definitions, national guidance, and assessments are often fragmented, which can complicate regional dialogue and governance. As marine ecosystems are interconnected and species move across national boundaries, it is essential to clarify OECM definitions at both the national and international levels and to develop common assessment and measurement mechanisms that allow data comparison and support biodiversity conservation. As OECM frameworks develop, it is also important that they recognize indigenous and customary governance systems.

3. Lack of data and universal frameworks for measuring OECMs

Assessing whether a site delivers effective, long-term biodiversity outcomes requires adequate baseline information and ongoing monitoring, both of which are often lacking. Many sites already carrying out conservation-relevant management have limited data, making it difficult to demonstrate that they meet the criteria. The absence of common assessment and reporting frameworks can also constrain comparison across sites and countries and complicate reporting under the GBF. At the same time, monitoring approaches need to reflect differences in governance arrangements, management capacity and available resources across OECMs. Greater consistency in reporting and transparency on the methods used, while allowing flexibility in how monitoring is undertaken, could help improve comparability without imposing uniform monitoring requirements. Without adequate monitoring and reporting systems, there is a risk that recognition may not be accompanied by demonstrable conservation outcomes. Prioritizing quality over quantity and strengthening monitoring capacity, including through appropriate technical and financial support where needed, will therefore be important for credible and effective OECM recognition.

4. Transboundary cooperation

Countries in the region can benefit from greater collaboration and knowledge exchange on governance considerations and policy frameworks through learning workshops and joint projects. Regional cooperation can transform OECMs from isolated national conservation measures into connected regional networks of biodiversity stewardship.

Session Summary

1. Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head of the ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, delivered the opening remarks. He noted that the workshop took place at a critical moment for biodiversity, with

the GBF setting a renewed global commitment to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, including the 30 by 30 goal under Target 3. He observed that OECMs are gaining increasing attention as a complement to protected areas, offering a broader lens to recognize diverse governance systems, management practices, and sectoral approaches that contribute to biodiversity conservation. He pointed out that while countries in North-East Asia had long implemented marine management approaches, the connection between existing practices and OECM frameworks remained largely unexplored. He noted that the workshop aimed to foster an understanding of OECMs, identify practical considerations, and explore how OECMs might be relevant to different national contexts while respecting national circumstances.

2. Mr. Dong Keun Ryoo, President of the Korea Maritime & Ocean University, delivered welcoming remarks. He noted that the university specialized in ocean education and research and was located within a unique maritime cluster comprising numerous marine-related research, education, and public institutions. He expressed hope that the discussions on sustainable management and effective use of marine protected areas would contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of the seas of North-East Asia and the global ocean.
3. Mr. Young Nam Kim, Department Head of the Marine Protection and Restoration Department and MPA Management Team at the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM), delivered welcoming remarks. He emphasized that, with 2030 approaching, OECMs are a key concept for achieving the GBF targets and expressed hope that dialogue on OECMs in North-East Asia would continue given the interlinked nature of the subregion's seas.
4. **Session 1. Global and Regional Context of Marine and Coastal OECMs**, moderated by Mr. Inho Yang, Associate Professor, Ocean Science & Technology School, Korea Maritime & Ocean University (KMOU), provides an overview of marine and coastal OECMs and their role in supporting GBF Target 3, introducing global developments and regional perspectives.
5. Mr. Joseph Appiott, Coordinator for Marine, Coastal and Island Biodiversity, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), provided an overview of the OECM concept in a pre-recorded presentation. He explained that OECMs are areas outside protected areas that deliver effective, long-term in-situ conservation of biodiversity and are central to achieving GBF Target 3 alongside several related targets. Recalling the definition and criteria adopted under CBD Decision 14/8 (2018), he emphasized that protected areas and OECMs are complementary elements of a coherent system rather than alternatives, and that OECMs both recognize existing biodiversity outcomes and incentivize more sustainable practices. He cautioned that a single sectoral measure may not qualify where an area faces multiple pressures and highlighted the risks of greenwashing and double counting alongside the opportunity to broaden biodiversity stewardship. He noted the availability of emerging guidance and the OECM database within the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).
6. Ms. Mitali Sharma, Coordinator, Asia OECM Community of Practice, IUCN WCPA, presented technical guidance on marine OECMs developed by IUCN WCPA. She explained that marine OECMs, unlike MPAs, need not have conservation as their primary objective, allowing recognition of more diverse governance arrangements, and that both count equally toward GBF Target 3. She outlined the three WCPA management categories (primary, secondary, and ancillary), noting that each must

still deliver conservation outcomes, and cited marine examples such as permanent fisheries closures, coastal wetlands, historic shipwrecks, and artificial reefs. She described the WCPA site-level tool and its 2024 guidance, which screens a site against two criteria before a full assessment against the remaining six, with confirmed sites reported to the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas and addressed complex issues including vertical zoning and single-species measures, presenting Canada's glass-sponge reef closures as a reported example. She stressed the need to prioritize quality over quantity and to build robust systems early, citing a 2025 study finding that only 0.5% of reported sites provide evidence of evaluation against the criteria to avoid repeating the "paper parks" problem.

7. Mr. Romain Schumm, International Technical Expert, Ocean Governance, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP, presented regional perspectives on OECM implementation. He noted that GBF Target 3 calls for conserving 30% of marine areas by 2030, and that this is a collective global target requiring geographical balance and ecosystem representation rather than a uniform national quota. He set out why regional cooperation matters: marine ecosystems and species cross jurisdictions, OECMs can help connect fragmented MPAs, and shared methodologies and harmonized monitoring enable comparable reporting under the GBF while creating synergies with climate and ocean agendas, including blue carbon and the agreement on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). He identified several challenges, including uneven levels of OECM readiness, limited understanding of the concept, gaps in national guidance, fragmented governance, weak legal recognition of indigenous and customary systems, and financing constraints. He introduced two ESCAP initiatives: a 30-month project under the Kunming Biodiversity Fund worth USD 1.8 million benefiting the Maldives, the Philippines, and Cambodia together with COBSEA, and the Ocean-Based Climate Action Initiative adopted under Resolution 79/2 (2024) and invited participants to consider where regional cooperation should focus first.
8. **Session 2. National Policies and Practices Relevant to Marine and Coastal OECMs in North-East Asia**, moderated by Ms. Atty. Ma. Aleta C. Nuñez, OECM Consultant, UNEP-COBSEA, presents national policies, frameworks, and practices related to marine and coastal area-based management in North-East Asia and considers how these relate to OECM concepts.
9. Mr. Naohiro Maeda, Assistant Director, Biodiversity Policy Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment of Japan, presented Japan's policies for promoting OECMs through a whole-of-society approach. He reported that, as of August 2025, Japan covers 21.0% of its terrestrial and inland water areas and 13.3% of its marine and coastal areas, and that a national roadmap established in 2022 sets out two approaches to Target 3: expanding protected areas and promoting OECMs. He explained that Japan defines several existing legal designations, such as national parks and common fishing rights areas, as MPAs, and described four pillars underpinning its OECM efforts: a legislative framework, an implementation support scheme, a biodiversity database, and stakeholder engagement. He noted that since 2023 Japan has certified "Nationally Certified Sustainably Managed Natural Sites" (known as "*Kyosei Sites*"), reporting those outside protected areas to the World Database on OECMs, and that a new Act on Promoting Activities to Enhance Regional Biodiversity entered into force in April 2025. As of April 2026, 569 sites, including 27 marine sites, have been certified, with criteria adapted from the IUCN standard and subject to expert review and renewal roughly every five years. He added that the "30by30 Alliance for Biodiversity" now

counts 1,223 organizations. He concluded that the scheme's strengths include effective private sector engagement, a non-regulatory and incentive-based approach, and the practical operationalization of OECMs, while challenges remain in the application burden on applicants and the need to strengthen incentives and broaden participation.

10. Mr. Young Nam Kim, Department Head, Marine Protection and Restoration Department and MPA Management Team, Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM), presented the status of OECMs in the Republic of Korea. He explained that the country is at an early stage and follows a government-led approach, with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries responsible for marine OECM identification. He noted that the Republic of Korea has designated numerous small MPAs along its coast over the past two decades under a "sustainable use" concept and now has around 39 MPAs covering approximately 2.49% of its waters against the 30 by 30 goal. Recent policy has shifted toward larger MPAs and toward considering OECMs in connection with blue carbon and ecological connectivity. He reported that a marine OECM guideline was developed in December 2025 but awaits a revision of the Marine Ecosystem Conservation Act, which will define OECMs and set out identification, management, and financial support provisions. He described an institutional framework under which institutions report potential sites to the Ministry through a national protected area forum, with KOEM serving as secretariat for screening, stakeholder consultation, and biodiversity assessment, and noted that around 15 potential sites, often adjacent to existing MPAs or unprotected tidal flats, have been screened during the year. He emphasized that OECMs can serve as a strong tool to reinforce the national "marine ecological axis" and enhance connectivity between MPAs.
11. Mr. Anatolii Kachur, Head of International Projects, Pacific Geographical Institute, Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, presented national policies and practices relevant to marine and coastal OECMs in the Russian Federation. He explained that, under the Constitution, internal marine resources, territorial waters, the exclusive economic zone, and the continental shelf fall under federal jurisdiction, and that the development of marine and coastal specially protected natural areas is guided by the country's obligations under the CBD to expand marine protected coverage to 10 to 15% in the future. He reported that the existing system of 35 federal-level marine protected areas covers over 24 million hectares along a coastline adjacent to more than 20% of the planet's continental shelf, and that such areas remain unevenly and unrepresentatively distributed compared with their terrestrial counterparts. He outlined possible directions for further development, including expanding marine sites on biocentric and physical-geographical principles, establishing deep-sea as well as coastal and island reserves, and developing marine ecological networks. He noted that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has presented a draft strategy for the development of the system of specially protected natural areas through 2036, under which the Russian Federation, which currently has over 12,000 such areas of federal, regional, and local significance covering approximately 245 million hectares (about 13% of its territory), would raise the protected share of land to 17% and of waters to 5%. He emphasized that the approach aims not only to create new protection territories but also to support the existing network through management and financial support.
12. Ms. Chang Zhao, Associate Researcher, China Institute for Marine Affairs, Ministry of Natural Resources, presented China's experience with marine OECMs in a virtual presentation. She

observed that intensifying use of the ocean, from fisheries and shipping to offshore energy, places growing pressure on marine ecosystems, and that MPAs alone cannot meet the spatial conservation demand of GBF Target 3. She explained that OECMs reframe conservation around measurable biodiversity outcomes rather than legal designation and are governance neutral. She presented three existing Chinese governance instruments that deliver biodiversity outcomes. The marine ecological red line system sets strict, state-enforced boundaries that restrict or prohibit development across some 150,000 square kilometers of ecologically important habitats, including mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs. A network of 53 national-level aquatic germplasm resource reserves protects the spawning, feeding, and overwintering habitats of 67 commercially or ecologically important species through zoning, seasonal closures, and fishing restrictions, integrated with fisheries management. Marine emission control areas, designated primarily to reduce shipping air pollution, deliver indirect benefits to coastal and marine habitats. She concluded that, rather than creating a new designation, China achieves biodiversity outcomes through the convergence of existing instruments into a functionally integrated network, and that this experience suggests OECMs need not require an entirely new management system, that conservation can be achieved through multiple governance pathways of particular relevance to countries facing financial constraints, and that effective marine conservation depends on governance effectiveness rather than designation labels alone.

13. In the discussion that followed Session 2, participants explored the respective roles of the private sector and national governments in OECM identification, with Japan noting that its certified sites remained small in scale and that a complementary top-down scheme, focused on offshore areas, was under consideration to help achieve the 30% target. Participants discussed managing eco-tourism in coastal and tidal-flat areas through rules and guidelines that minimize ecological disturbance while generating benefits and income for local communities, and the role of environmental education and international communication, including youth engagement. In response to a question on the potential for transboundary OECMs given the ecological connectivity of North-East Asian seas, speakers considered this a valuable but early-stage prospect, drawing an analogy to the CBD's Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) process and suggesting that a regional organization such as ESCAP could convene a workshop to share views, recognizing that OECM candidates located in border areas might eventually need to be connected.
14. **Session 3. Experiences from Other Regions**, moderated by Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, shares experiences from other regions on how marine and coastal OECMs are understood and applied in practice, focusing on policy approaches, governance models, and practical lessons of relevance to North-East Asia.
15. Ms. Jenny Hertzman, Senior Analyst, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM), presented on OECMs from both a transboundary and a Swedish national perspective in a virtual presentation. She described HELCOM as the regional seas convention for the Baltic Sea, comprising the nine surrounding countries and the European Union, and explained that a regional common understanding of the OECM criteria was developed under the Baltic Sea Action Plan in 2022, together with a step-by-step decision support tool for identifying potential OECMs in a harmonized way. She emphasized that HELCOM facilitates cross-border dialogue but has no mandate to designate sites itself, and that the aim is to harmonize goals and ambitions rather than laws, given

differing legal frameworks and even differing national definitions of an MPA. She set out Sweden's national process of proposal, review, decision, and monitoring, supported by assessment tools such as a nature value scoring method and a sensitivity matrix used to determine the net biodiversity effect of a measure, case by case. She stressed that OECMs concern existing rather than future measures, that monitoring is essential to avoid greenwashing, and that Sweden defines long-term governance as a minimum of 12 years, with OECM status subject to withdrawal if the criteria are no longer met. In discussion, she clarified that sectors such as offshore wind and mussel farming are listed in guidance for transparency but do not automatically qualify, and that Sweden has no dedicated OECM fund, so support to actors lacking monitoring capacity is limited.

16. Ms. Andrea Mast and Ms. Victoria Winslow, Policy Analysts, Marine Planning and Conservation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), presented Canada's approach to recognizing marine OECMs in a pre-recorded presentation. They reported that Canada has 61 marine OECMs covering 244,787 square kilometers, contributing 4.11% to its marine conservation targets, and that all are currently fisheries area closures that prohibit specific gears and activities while delivering biodiversity benefits to habitats and species such as corals, sponges, and commercially important fish. They traced Canada's path from interim operational guidance, through the 2018 CBD international guidance, to a 2019 protection standard for federal marine OECMs and the December 2022 Marine OECM guidance, which sets mandatory criteria based on the international definition and requires each site to deliver a minimum of three biodiversity outcomes, supported by a standardized assessment template. They explained that OECMs may be established for non-conservation reasons under a range of laws but must be managed to deliver biodiversity outcomes, which distinguishes them from MPAs. They shared lessons learned, including the value of leveraging existing measures to avoid new legislation, engaging indigenous peoples and stakeholders early, and using a standardized assessment framework, and noted ongoing work to explore new types of marine OECMs, such as critical habitat protections for species at risk combined with vessel slowdowns, and the protection of underwater structures such as shipwrecks.
17. Ms. Atty. Ma. Aleta C. Nuñez, OECM Consultant, UNEP-COBSEA, presented COBSEA's work supporting OECMs in the East Asian Seas region. She explained that COBSEA brings together nine participating countries and that its work on OECMs falls under the thematic area of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, with COBSEA's role being to provide non-prescriptive regional guidance aligned with CBD criteria, in contrast to a harmonized common standard approach. She described a joint COBSEA and ACB workshop and learning exchange held in 2025, which included a field visit to two potential OECMs, a community-managed mangrove area and a local government-supported mangrove area, and a desktop exercise simulating OECM identification. She summarized the accelerating factors identified by participating countries, including the 30 by 30 commitment, regional cooperation and academic partnerships, existing national biodiversity laws, engagement of non-traditional sectors such as port and military authorities, and national consensus around culturally resonant concepts of coexistence. She also set out common challenges, including limited understanding of OECMs within governments, stakeholder engagement and consent, the complexity of coastal and marine areas, data gaps, political commitment, and resource-intensive processes. She concluded that participating countries see COBSEA as a platform for learning and mentoring, and that COBSEA is finalizing a short, non-

prescriptive guidance document and explainer videos, and is providing support to two countries in the region.

18. Mr. Benjamin Belton, Regional Senior Fisheries Officer at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO RAP), described the recent surge of interest in OECMs, particularly linked to marine capture fisheries. However, he emphasized that most marine OECMs in the region remain at an exploratory stage or lack of governance to fully qualify. According to the OECM database, only the Philippines has reported marine OECMs, though many lack clear boundaries and documentation. He identified Indonesia as most advanced in preparation, having adopted a national definition, mapped close to 10 million hectares of potential OECM areas, and recognized existing customary and traditional marine management systems as a basis for OECMs. He concluded that investment in policy frameworks, data collection, and monitoring systems is needed to facilitate OECM recognition based on established criteria.
19. Ms. Estradivari Sant, Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) and Coordinator of the IUCN WCPA Asia OECM Community of Practice, explained that Indonesia has built its marine OECM framework and tested it at more than 10 sites, though the country has not yet formally recognized any OECMs. She shared key implementation challenges: embedding the framework in national law takes time; global criteria must be translated into local language and evidence; sites hold very different amounts of data and capacity; and questions of authority and consent are demanding. Among the key lessons, she highlighted starting with sites that already have strong community engagement, working through a multi-funder consortium, investing in inclusive processes, and differentiating data requirements by the type of manager, while keeping the national framework general and developing more detailed guidelines at the local level. She noted that communities supported OECM recognition once they understood that it could convert limited use of rights into more secure rights to manage their areas and strengthen conservation mechanisms already in place.
20. **Session 4. Practical Experiences and Local Perspectives**, moderated by Ms. Mitali Sharma, Coordinator, Asia OECM Community of Practice, IUCN WCPA, explored site-level experiences and local perspectives on marine and coastal area-based management practices relevant to OECMs, focusing on governance arrangements, stakeholder engagement, implementation challenges, and lessons learned.
21. Mr. Yan Zhang, Director of the IUCN China Country Office, presented on assessing OECMs in China and IUCN China's contributions through a virtual presentation. OECMs have been identified as a priority in China's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. IUCN China has proposed a framework to help stakeholders understand where OECMs might occur. He described 11 criteria adapted from the four international criteria to the Chinese context and added a criterion: requiring a responsible focal entity to act as a catalyst and facilitate the governance process. He presented a coastal wetland in Yancheng on the Yellow Sea as a potential OECM, and explained the "Yancheng approach", involving collaborative efforts and initiatives to map and expand the managed area. He outlined challenges, including the difficulty of determining biodiversity values for birds and fish, assessing the quality of governance or conservation outcomes, and the unresolved question of whether the 11 criteria are an "entry test" or a "graduation test" for OECMs, and identified future

priorities of clear guidance, capacity building, incentive mechanisms, an official recognition mechanism, knowledge platforms, and data repositories.

22. Ms. Yun Hong, Executive Director at China Blue Sustainability Institute, presented key lessons learned from Beigang Island, a complex ecosystem with a history of gleaning. She described the organization's work in three stages: mapping the community's ecological assets; establishing a long-term monitoring mechanism, in partnership with research institutes and community volunteers; and empowering the community through training, exchange visits to other provinces, and support for sustainable industries. From 2024, they are exploring how OECMs could support sustainable development, convening multiple stakeholders, zoning the area for different uses, and strengthening species conservation while seeking legal and institutional recognition that would allow the community to use and manage customary areas. She emphasized the importance of science-based monitoring, accessible data tools for local people, and community leadership, while noting challenges such as unclear coastal management standards, difficulties in marine boundary demarcation, overlapping responsibilities among stakeholders, and limited access to use permissions.
23. Ms. Satoquo Seino, Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Engineering and Vice-director of the Research Center for Korean Studies at Kyushu University, presented on the path from protection to OECMs through nature conservation steps in Japan. The COP10 to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Aichi, Japan, in 2010 promoted the Aichi Targets and marine protected area (MPA) policies under the slogan "Life in harmony". She spoke about Tsushima Island, where fishing villages face challenges like the loss of coastal marine vegetation, and the erosion of cultural traditions. Tsushima produced a graphic book of local fish to enhance community knowledge and adopted a 20-year conservation plan in 2018. She explained Japan's "Kyosei Site" policy, which empowers nature-oriented fishing villages and can integrate traditional fishing with tourism and education. Key lessons include the importance of local communities and youth involvement. Networking among governments and international partners is crucial for sustaining conservation and offering hope to isolated communities. She highlighted that international collaboration in the North-East Asia region can strengthen local marine biodiversity initiatives, given the similarity of marine and coastal environments.
24. Ms. Miju Kim, a Senior Researcher in the Marine Policy Research Department at the Korea Maritime Institute (KMI), presented findings from a 2022 study on potential marine OECMs in the ROK. The research identified 14 types of potential OECMs. Candidate sites include tidal flats not designated as MPAs, fisheries, and the habitats and migration routes of migratory marine protected species. Self-managed fishery areas stood out as the most aligned with OECM principles, while seagrass habitats are considered less suitable for OECM status as they are classified as MPAs, which in this case provide a stronger protection tool. OECMs implementation challenges include educating fishers to build consensus and clearly defining spatial boundaries. Key takeaways include the need for prioritizing the clarification of the MPA–OECM hierarchy, recognizing that fisheries- based categories align closely with OECM goals, and the need to advance quantitative data-based evaluation.
25. Mr. Ivan Rakov-Naumets, Head of Public Relations at the FSBI "Land of the Leopard," presented on the Far Eastern Marine Biosphere Reserve through a virtual presentation. The reserve is the first Russian marine reserve and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2003, and it's managed by the Land

of the Leopard directorate since 2021. The collaboration exemplifies OECM principles by protecting marine areas while managing terrestrial activities. Using Astafyev Bay as a case study, he described a transparent tourism management system that includes a 500-meter coastal buffer zone where construction is prohibited, and swimming is regulated on scientific guidance. Although monitoring over four years indicated excellent water quality, it emerged that lower benthic species diversity was linked to soil erosion from informal roads. Key lessons learned from site management include that marine conservation requires integrated territorial management, science reveals what limiting visitors cannot, strict protection measures support species recovery, and community engagement in volunteering and private funding multiplies impact.

26. Ms. Kyle Esperanza Zuleta, Programme Officer at the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), presented on the relationship between the Flyway Site Network and OECMs. She described the Flyway Site Network as a chain of habitats managed and conserved for migratory waterbirds. She explained that existing and potential Flyway Network Sites without protected-area status could be strong OECM candidates because they already offer high biodiversity value and, where available, have defined boundaries, long-term monitoring evidence through the 40-year Asian Waterbird Census, and established management systems that further support OECM recognition. She cited the ROK's Cheorwon Basin, the first flyway network site recognized as an OECM supporting cranes alongside local farming. She concluded that OECM recognition could strengthen flyway conservation, demonstrate contributions to national biodiversity goals and CBD reporting, connect expertise and technical support, and enhance ecological, institutional, and social connectivity.
27. **Session 5. Special Session: Youth Perspectives on Marine Area-Based Conservation.** The session aimed at encouraging youth engagement on marine area-based conservation was moderated by Mr. Jungho Nam, Senior Research Fellow at the Korea Maritime Institute (KMI). Students and young researchers shared their research and perspectives relevant to marine and coastal conservation.
28. Ms. Gunasinghe Vishmi Saumya, Department of Marine Bioscience and Environment, KMOU, presented a video-based assessment of shipwrecks as artificial reef habitats in Sri Lanka. Analyzing archival footage from 8 wreck sites (depths of 6–45 m, ages ranging from decades to over 2,000 years), she recorded 156 fish species across 36 families, including 14 commercially important families and juveniles from 10 families, as well as reef-like ecological interactions. She found that wreck size and structural complexity, rather than depth or age, were the strongest drivers of fish richness and abundance, and concluded that shipwrecks function as biologically active habitats warranting recognition in area-based marine conservation, while noting that younger wrecks often fall outside cultural-heritage protection frameworks.
29. Mr. Hayuningrat Sastra Jendra, Department of Marine Bioscience and Environment, KMOU, presented on the morphological and molecular diversity of marine sponges (Porifera) in reef and mangrove ecosystems in Bali, Indonesia. Noting the absence of a dedicated sponge inventory and the limits of traditional taxonomy, he combined morphological and DNA-based methods across 6 sites to document species and identify candidate new records. He found that reef and mangrove assemblages are distinct and non-interchangeable and argued that sponges are reliable biodiversity indicators and that the two habitats should be treated as separate units in area-based conservation. He emphasized that DNA-based methods can strengthen long-term biodiversity monitoring and provide a stronger scientific basis for OECM identification.

30. Ms. Gennevy Omaira Saavedra Camaño, Department of Marine Bioscience and Environment, KMOU, presented a literature synthesis of coastal macrozoobenthos on the Caribbean and Pacific coasts of Panama, separated by the Isthmus of Panama. Reviewing 82 studies spanning about 50 years, she compiled 1,212 unique species (668 Caribbean, 470 Pacific, 74 intercoastal), with molluscs dominant on both coasts. She highlighted that research effort is geographically uneven, cautioned that taxonomic inconsistencies can inflate apparent endemism, and noted that fewer than 3% of the species were included in any conservation framework, reflecting the underrepresentation of marine invertebrates in global assessments. She explained that synthesis can be a baseline for future biodiversity monitoring and conservation planning.
31. Ms. Souleima Dhahbi and Ms. Erin Karissa, Department of Convergence Studies on Ocean Science and Technology, KMOU, presented a comparative study of marine biodiversity governance models under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Using five CBD articles as indicators, they compared the Republic of Korea's centralized model, Indonesia's multi-level model, and Japan's integrated model. They found that the centralized model offers strong coordination but could overlook local conditions; the multi-level model suits Indonesia's archipelagic geography but faces uneven implementation capacity; and the integrated model is well coordinated but could generate tension between ministries with differing priorities. They found that conservation outcomes depend less on institutional form than on effective coordination among agencies and on the use of scientific knowledge in policy.
32. **Session 6. Subregional Dialogue: Ways Forward & Closing.** This session facilitated an informal exchange of views among participants on possible areas for continued exchange and knowledge-sharing related to marine and coastal OECMs in North-East Asia. Participants agreed that some of the future challenges for advancing OECMs in the North-East Asia region are financial constraints, lack of public awareness and community engagement, lack of baseline data, and insufficient cross-border cooperation. To address these challenges, they suggested that NEAMPAN can take several actions, including organizing additional knowledge-sharing workshops, joint projects, promoting regional collaborations, and engaging youth and universities to facilitate inter-regional dialogues aimed at supporting marine and coastal OECMs in the region.
33. In his closing remarks, Mr. Riccardo Mesiano expressed his appreciation to all participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions, as well as to KMOU for its hospitality. He concluded by expressing his hope that the knowledge shared and collaborations fostered during the meeting will continue to grow in the years ahead. He also encouraged experts to maintain their cooperation through both NEASPEC and other informal networks.
34. Following the workshop, participants visited the Korea Maritime & Ocean University's state-of-the-art training ship and the National Maritime Museum of Korea located near the university. The field visit offered a first-hand look at the Republic of Korea's marine education and research infrastructure and provided an opportunity to extend the workshop's policy discussions into an education- and practice-based context.

Concept Note

NEAMPAN Workshop on Marine and Coastal OECMs in North-East Asia

24-25 June 2026

National Korea Maritime & Ocean University, Busan, Republic of Korea

*Co-organized by ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office (NEASPEC secretariat), Korea Maritime & Ocean University, Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM),
in partnership with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea*

1. Background

The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted in 2022, calls for the effective conservation and management of at least 30 percent of terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal areas by 2030 (Target 3), including through protected areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs). In this context, OECMs are increasingly recognized as a complementary approach to protected areas, encompassing a wider range of governance and management practices that can contribute to biodiversity conservation.

While global progress on marine protected areas (MPAs) has been significant, the identification and recognition of OECMs, particularly in marine and coastal areas, remain at an early stage in many regions, including North-East Asia. In practice, countries in the region already implement various forms of area-based marine and coastal management, such as integrated coastal zoning, marine spatial planning, fisheries-related measures, and other sector-led management approaches. However, how these existing systems may relate to OECM concepts is not yet fully explored.

China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation each maintain diverse systems of area-based marine management. At the same time, discussion of OECMs in marine and coastal contexts remains relatively new in the subregion, and technical exchange among countries has so far been limited. Recent discussions in other regions have highlighted both progress and continuing challenges related to marine and coastal OECMs. These include questions related to the interpretation of criteria, practical guidance, governance considerations, biodiversity outcome monitoring, and alignment with existing policy frameworks. At the same time, OECMs may offer a valuable pathway to recognize and validate existing conservation-relevant practices, contributing to GBF Target 3 without necessarily requiring the designation of new protected areas.

Against this backdrop, the NEAMPAN workshop serves as a timely subregional dialogue to enhance shared understanding of marine and coastal OECMs. It provides an opportunity to exchange information on existing policies and practices, learn from experiences within and beyond the subregion, and reflect on practical considerations relevant to the subregional context. The workshop supports dialogue and mutual learning in a policy-relevant manner, while fully respecting national circumstances and existing policy frameworks.

2. Objectives

The workshop aims to:

- Enhance shared understanding of marine and coastal OECMs, including their relevance to GBF Target 3 and their relationship to existing area-based conservation approaches;
- Provide a platform for countries in North-East Asia to exchange national policies, practices, and ongoing discussions relevant to marine and coastal area-based management;
- Share lessons and practical experiences from other regions and stakeholders, including governance, monitoring, and policy considerations; and
- Explore possible areas for continued technical exchange and knowledge-sharing at the subregional level, including through NEAMPAN, as appropriate.

3. Expected participants

The workshop is expected to bring together NEAMPAN Steering Committee members, representatives from government (central/local), regional and international organizations, experts and practitioners, academia and research communities, and civil society organizations.

4. Venue

National Korea Maritime & Ocean University (KMOU), Busan, Republic of Korea

5. Language

English

Programme

[Day 1]	
08:30-09:00	Registration
09:00-09:20	Opening session - Opening Remarks - Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head, Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia / NEASPEC secretariat - Welcoming Remarks - Mr. Dong Keun Ryoo, President, Korea Maritime and Ocean University - Mr. Young Nam Kim, Department Head, Marine Protection and Restoration Department & MPA Management Team, Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM) Group Photo
09:20-10:20	Session 1. Global and Regional Context of Marine and Coastal OECMs The session will provide an overview of OECMs in marine and coastal areas, including their role in supporting GBF Target 3. It will introduce global development and regional perspectives, while clarifying key concepts in a practical and accessible manner. Moderator: Mr. Inho Yang, Associate Professor, Ocean Science & Technology School, Korea Maritime and Ocean University Presentations - Mr. Joseph Appiott, Coordinator for Marine, Coastal and Island Biodiversity, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - Ms. Mitali Sharma, Coordinator, OECM Community of Practice, IUCN WCPA Asia - Mr. Romain Schumm, International Technical Expert - Ocean governance, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP
10:20-10:40	Break
10:40-12:00	Session 2. National Policies and Practices Relevant to Marine and Coastal OECMs in North-East Asia The session will present national policies, frameworks, implementation progress, and practices related to marine and coastal area-based management in North-East Asia and consider how these may be relevant to OECM concepts. Moderator: Ms. Atty. Ma. Aleta C. Nuñez, OECM Consultant, UNEP-COBSEA

	Presentations - Ms. Chang Zhao, Associate Researcher, China Institute for Marine Affairs, Ministry of Natural Resources - Mr. Naohiro Maeda, Assistant Director, Biodiversity Policy Division, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, Japan - Mr. Young Nam Kim, Department Head, Marine Protection and Restoration Department & MPA Management Team, Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM) - Mr. Anatolii Kachur, International Project Manager, Pacific Geographical Institute Far Eastern Branch Russian Academy of Sciences
12:00-13:30	Lunch (<i>hosted by KOEM</i>)
13:30-15:10	Session 3. Experiences from Other Regions This session will share experiences from other regions on how marine and coastal OECMs have been understood and considered in practice. The focus will be on policy approaches, governance models, and practical lessons that may be useful for North-East Asia. Moderator: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head, Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia Presentations - Ms. Jenny Hertzman, Senior Analyst, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) - Ms. Andrea Mast and Ms. Victoria Winslow, Policy Analyst, Marine Planning and Conservation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) - Ms. Atty. Ma. Aleta C. Nuñez, OECM Consultant, UNEP-COBSEA - Mr. Benjamin Belton, Regional Senior Fisheries Officer, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO RAP) - Ms. Estradivari Sant, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) & Coordinator, IUCN Asian OECM CoP
15:10-15:30	Break
15:30-17:20	Session 4. Practical Experiences and Local Perspectives This session will explore site-level experiences and local perspectives on marine and coastal area-based management practices that may be relevant to OECMs. The focus will be on governance arrangements, stakeholder engagement, implementation challenges, and lessons learned. Moderator: Ms. Mitali Sharma, Coordinator, OECM Community of Practice, IUCN WCPA Asia Presentations Mr. Yan Zhang, Director, IUCN China Country Office

	• Ms. Yun Hong, Executive Director, China Blue Sustainability Institute • Ms. Satoquo Seino, Associate Professor, Ecological Engineering Laboratory, Department of Civil Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering, Kyushu University • Ms. Miju Kim, Senior Researcher, Marine Policy Research Department, Korea Maritime Institute (KMI) • Mr. Ivan Rakov-Naumets, Head of Public Relations, FSBI “Land of the Leopard” • Ms. Kyle Esperanza Zuleta, Programme Officer, East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)
18:00 -	Dinner (hosted by ESCAP/NEASPEC) - depart for the dinner venue at 17:40 - return shuttle to the hotel at 19:20
[Day 2]	
09:00 – 10:30	Session 5. Special Session: Youth Perspectives on Marine Area-Based Conservation This session will provide a platform for students and young researchers to share their perspectives and research on marine and coastal conservation, encouraging youth engagement as well as contributing to broader discussions of area-based conservation. Moderator: Mr. Jungho Nam, Senior Research Fellow, Korea Maritime Institute (KMI) Presentations • Ms. Gunasinghe Vishmi Saumya, Department of Marine Bioscience and Environment, KMOU: “Ecological role of shipwrecks as artificial reef habitats for fish assemblages in Sri Lanka: A video-based assessment” • Mr. Hayuningrat Sastra Jendra, Department of Marine Bioscience and Environment, KMOU: “Morphological and molecular diversity of marine sponges (<i>Porifera</i>) from reef and mangrove ecosystems in Bali, Indonesia” • Ms. Saavedra Camano Gennevay Omaisra, Department of Marine Bioscience and Environment, KMOU: “A study of coastal macrozoobenthos of Caribbean and Pacific coasts of Panama” • Ms. Souleima Dhahbi & Erin Karissa, Department of Convergence Studies on Ocean Science and Technology, KMOU: “Comparative governance models for marine biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) framework”
10:30-10:50	Break
10:50-12:00	Session 6. Subregional Dialogue: Ways Forward & Closing This session will facilitate an open and informal exchange of views among participants to exchange views on possible areas for continued exchange and knowledge-sharing related to marine and coastal OECMs in North-East Asia.

	Moderator: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head, Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia
12:00-13:00	Lunch (<i>hosted by KMOU</i>)
13:00-	Field Visit Visit to KMOU's Training Ship & (Optional) National Maritime Museum of Korea