



OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECMs) PROJECT

Recognising, assessing and reporting OECMs in the Western Cape

Recognising the good work being done for nature outside of the traditional conservation space.



What is an OECM?

Only officially defined by the CBD in 2018, an OECM is “a **geographically defined area** other than a Protected Area, which is **governed and managed** in ways that achieve **positive and sustained long-term outcomes** for the **in-situ conservation of biodiversity**, with associated **ecosystem functions and services** and where applicable, **cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values**”.

Essentially, OECMs are found outside of the formal protected areas network but provide conservation of biodiversity as an objective (even if it is not the primary objective) in addition to the site’s foremost land use objectives. OECMs can encompass a range of different approaches to governance and conservation management, including agreements signed through Biodiversity Stewardship.

What is the **REASON** for this Project?

Through Biodiversity Stewardship, South Africa has been highly effective at expanding the conservation estate (comprised of protected and conservation areas), particularly on privately and communally-owned land. Protected Areas are legislated under the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEMPAA) of 2003 and are reported nationally and internationally. Conservation areas, however, have not been well recognized and reported in South Africa. The result is that South Africa is under-reporting and falling short of national and international area-based conservation targets e.g. Aichi Target 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and more recently, the draft CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets. The new area-based target calls for 30% of the world’s marine, freshwater and terrestrial spaces to be well-protected and conserved by 2030 through an expanded, well-connected network of protected areas and ‘other effective area-based conservation measures’ (OECMs). This project aims to identify and assess Potential OECMs in the Western Cape, focussing initially on assessing and reporting existing, qualifying conservation areas. This project will also look to understand and quantify the capacity and resource requirements needed to assess OECMs in the province, and provide training to key stakeholders to support the assessment and reporting of OECMs in the Western Cape.



Want to know **MORE?**

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What's the **DIFFERENCE**:

Protected Areas, OECMs, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Biodiversity Stewardship?

Protected Areas are formally protected in terms of the Protected Areas Act (NEMPAA) and *have conservation as the primary management objective*, with the core function to secure and promote long term, in-situ conservation of biodiversity. They constitute Biodiversity Stewardship Category 1 and South Africa's Protected Area Estate.

Conservation Areas are not formally protected in terms of NEMPAA and do not always offer long term security; nevertheless, they are managed at least partly for biodiversity conservation. Conservation areas constitute Biodiversity Stewardship Category 2 and contribute towards the conservation estate, but not the Protected Area estate.

OECMs are situated *outside of Protected Areas* and achieve effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity, regardless of the primary management objectives. OECMs may include qualifying Conservation Areas within Biodiversity Stewardship, but may also comprise sites outside of Biodiversity Stewardship e.g. sites on military land, indigenous forests or botanical gardens.

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are *the most important places in the world for species and their habitats*. KBAs help safeguard biodiversity by identifying the most critical sites for nature on our planet, but have no consequent formal protection. KBAs lie within and outside of Protected Areas and OECMs. They provide an ideal starting point for prioritising Protected Area and OECM expansion, as well as assessing the biodiversity value of potential OECMs. *OECMs offer the opportunity to improve the conservation of the KBA network*.

Biodiversity Stewardship is an approach to conserving and managing biodiversity priority areas by entering into voluntary agreements with landowners and communities, led by conservation authorities and supported by NGOs. Biodiversity Stewardship comprises three categories: Protected Areas (Category 1 e.g.: Nature Reserves and Protected Environments), Conservation Areas (Category 2 e.g.: Biodiversity Agreements and Conservation Servitudes) and Biodiversity Partnership Areas (Category 3 e.g.: Conservancies). The latter categories will be interrogated as Potential OECMs, with an initial focus on Category 2 sites, as they are most likely to meet OECM criteria.



What will be **HAPPENING**?

This two-year project (2021-2023) is a pilot project and one of the first in South Africa and the world. The initial step is to engage a broad range of stakeholders to identify sectors and land-use types that could qualify as Potential OECMs. A series of workshops and focal group meetings will take place with the key representatives from these sectors and land-use types, where training and information on OECMs will be provided and examples of case studies shared. Rapid assessments (using the OECM Screening Tool and on-the-ground case study assessments of selected sites will verify the list of Potential OECMs. The Potential OECMs will undergo full assessment, using the draft global assessment OECM methodology, producing a list of Candidate OECMs, for review by the Provincial Stewardship Review Committee and for subsequent reporting nationally and globally to the World Database on OECMs.

For more **INFORMATION** and **RESOURCES**

<https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/our-work/oecms>

<https://www.birdlife.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/OECM-Report-2020.pdf>

What are the **BENEFITS** of this project?

OECMs recognise existing efforts towards effective biodiversity conservation on the global stage.

OECMs build resilient, integrated, and connected landscapes, which help address issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

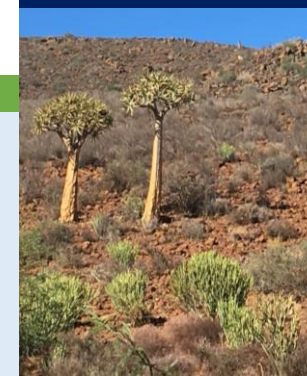
OECMs allow a range of stakeholders to be involved and empowered through the recognition of OECMs, including local communities, private landowners, government officials and conservation organizations.

OECMs will help South Africa reach their conservation estate targets within the next ten years.

OECMs provide tools to identify the strengths and weaknesses of conservation management of sites.

OECMs facilitate a more inclusive area-based conservation network by identifying and recognising alternative mechanisms to area-based conservation that are not currently being recognised through biodiversity stewardship, and by allowing the inclusion of previously excluded or marginalised groups of land use types.

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FAQs OECMs

What will a LANDOWNER need to do?

As a landowner, we value your input and support in the process of assessing and recognising OECMs in the Western Cape. Landowners will be asked to review and engage with us on the informational material provided, and if willing, participate in training on the OECM process, if required. Landowners are encouraged to engage with us on any aspects of the project going forward. We will rely on landowners to provide certain types of information, such as the geographic boundaries of a property that is a Potential OECM, governance structures and details on the management of the property; as well as information on its biodiversity value and the ecosystem services it provides, and any associated cultural/spiritual/socio-economic values. Landowners will need to provide consent for the sites to be assessed as OECMs and if successful, recognised nationally and globally as part of the OECM network.

1. How big does a site have to be to qualify as an OECM?

There are no size limits.

2. Will being an OECM affect whether a site can be developed or change the rights of the landowner?

No. OECMs do not require municipal re-zoning or place any additional restrictions on development, or other rights.

3. Will there be any restrictions placed on the property if it is recognised as an OECM?

No. OECMs recognise existing contributions to conservation. There is no requirement for municipal re-zoning or entering into new/additional agreements with conservation agencies.

4. Are there any costs (to the landowners) in sites being recognised as OECMs?

No. If a site qualifies as a Potential OECM, there will be no costs associated with its assessment, or, if successfully qualifying as an OECM, in its review and reporting.

5. Will CapeNature and/or the general public have unlimited access to the property if it is recognised as an OECM?

No. All access rights remain unchanged. The landowner will continue to determine the specific rules and access restrictions for the site.

6. Is there any administration involved in being recognised as an OECM?

No. The only exception will be a signed consent form from the landowner/ governance authority to undertake assessment of Candidate OECMs and to indicate permission for their regional/ national reporting, if successful. There are no other legal contracts/ agreements to be signed. Landowners/ managers will be asked to engage in the OECM process and provide information as required.

7. Is any additional formal conservation protection afforded to qualifying OECMs?

No. Existing protection measures will apply; although recognition of a site as part of a globally recognised conservation network will raise its conservation status and its importance with regard to the need for its protection.



What will an OECM PRACTITIONER need to do?

As OECM practitioners, we will undergo extensive training on the OECM process. We will identify Potential OECMs for assessment, and with the consent of the landowner(s), undertake these assessments in collaboration with them. This will include assessment of the biodiversity and greater ecosystem services value of your property, as well as its management and governance structure. We will provide landowners with informational material on the OECM process, and training, if required or requested. We will also provide feedback on all assessments, whether the site qualifies as an OECM or not, and be available to answer questions at every stage of the process. If the property qualifies as an OECM, we will facilitate its reporting on the national and global stage.





Global Context for OECMs in South Africa
 In order for South Africa to meet their Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) commitments on reporting the country's area-based conservation targets (Aichi Target 11 and its inheritor Post-2020), we need to identify any OECMs which can be reported on in addition to the Protected Area network.



Protected Areas

- National Parks
- Nature Reserves
- Protected Environments

Formally declared conservation areas

Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)

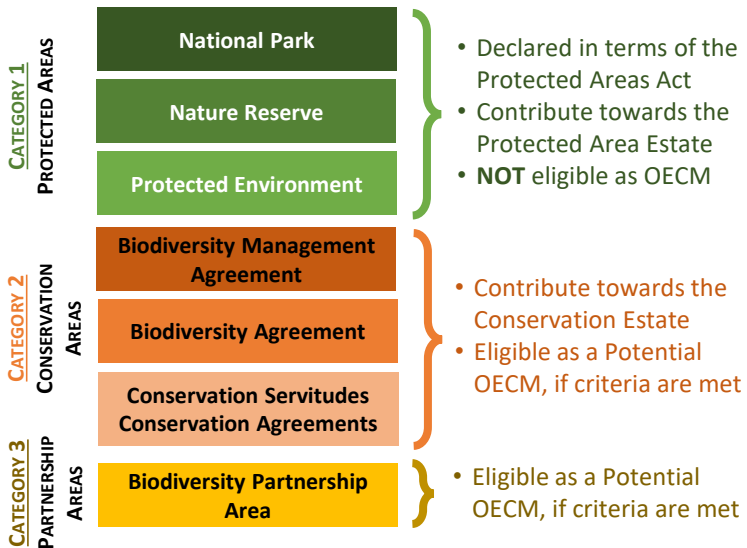
Sites achieving secondary conservation benefits



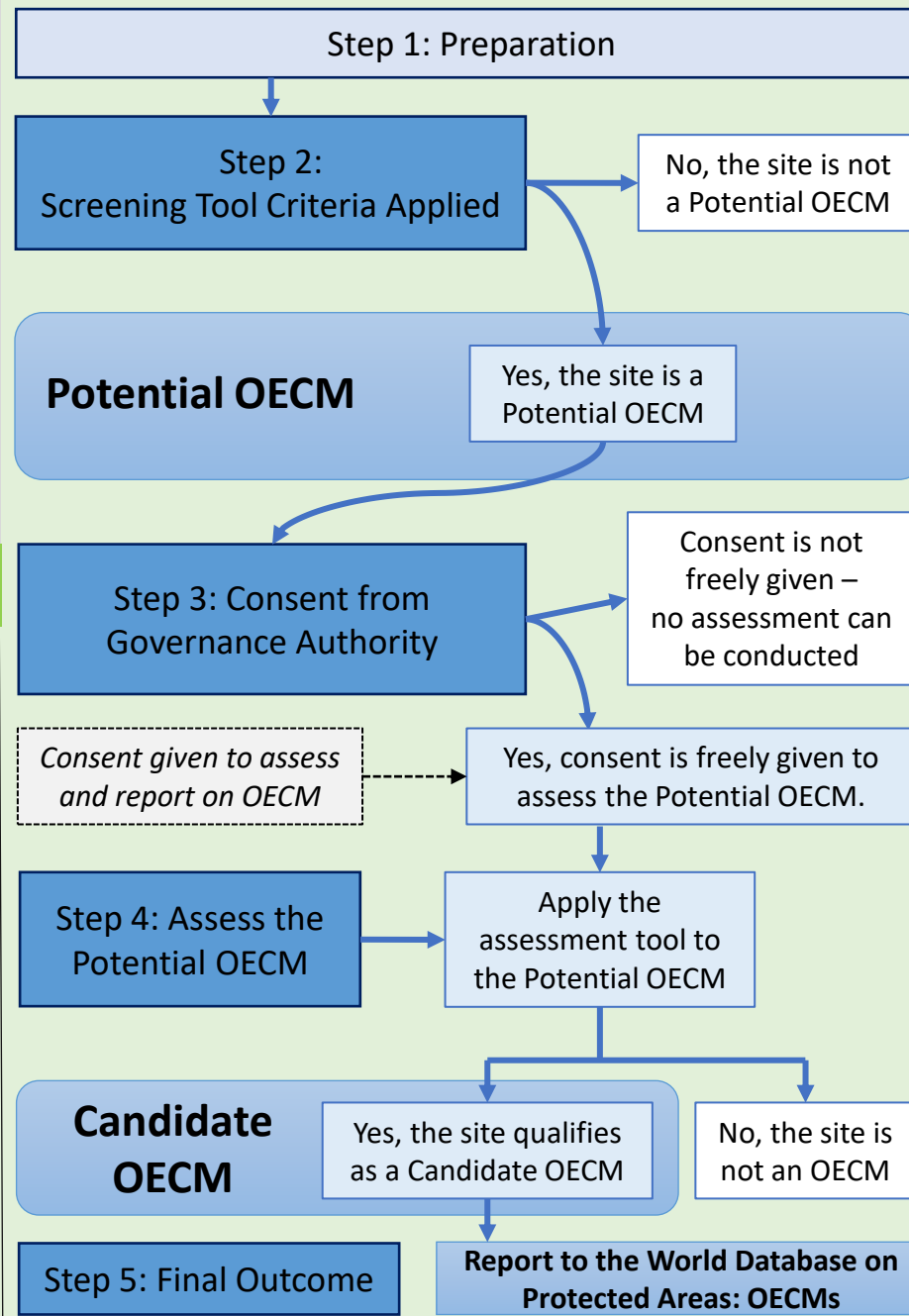
South Africa's Conservation Estate

OECMs & Biodiversity Stewardship

Biodiversity Stewardship presents a strong framework to align current conservation practices with OECM reporting requirements. Category 2 & 3 sites **outside** of the Protected Area Estate are eligible for assessment as Potential OECMs.



OECM Process



Criteria A

Criteria B

Criteria C

Criteria D

What are the POTENTIAL OECM Screening Tool Criteria

- Is the whole site, or a part of it being assessed as an OECM, **outside** of a Protected Area?
- Is it **geographically defined** with agreed and delineated boundaries?
- Is the site under the **governance authority/ies** of a specified entity or an agreed upon combination of entities?
- Is the site subject to a **management system** with clear objectives and measures that achieve in-situ biodiversity conservation and manage threats?
- Is the governance and management '**sustained**', i.e. expected to continue for the foreseeable future?
- Is there a strong likelihood that the area contains **important biodiversity values**?
- Is there a strong likelihood that the governance and management of the site achieves or is expected to achieve **long-term positive and effective in-situ conservation** of biodiversity, through legal or other effective means?
- Is there a strong likelihood that governance and management measures identify, respect and uphold the associated **cultural, spiritual, socioeconomic, and other locally relevant values** of the area, where such values exist, as well as respect and uphold the knowledge, practices and institutions that are fundamental for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity.
- Is there a strong likelihood that the governance and management of the site supports associated ecosystem functions and services, and that the enhancement of any of these services do not negatively impact the sites' biodiversity?