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# OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECMs) A Compendium of OECMs in India



## Acknowledgement

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**BHUPENDER YADAV**



### MESSAGE

India is home to nearly eight percent of the globally known floral and faunal species, and recognizes that the country's rich biodiversity heritage is vital to its social and economic development. It is continuously striving to achieve the objective and commitment embodied in global and National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs).

As a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, India has effectively conserved around 27 percent of its geographical area with approximately 22 percent under terrestrial coverage and 5 percent under coastal and marine coverage. This is substantially above the area-based conservation requirements envisaged under the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and its corresponding National Biodiversity Target 6.

As a part of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), India is expanding conservation areas outside the traditional Protected Area network that offer in-situ conservation of biodiversity. Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) have emerged as an innovative tool for effective conservation of biodiversity.

In addition to supporting the achievement of global biodiversity commitments, OECMs also underpin global efforts to prevent ecosystem degradation and zoonotic diseases. They encourage diverse groups including individuals, private sector, communities, and government agencies to participate in conservation.

India is amongst the select countries to identify and recognise OECMs. I commend the National Biodiversity Authority and the United Nations Development Programme for their support to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to promote OECMs in India.

This publication documents some of the best practices of biodiversity conservation in areas ranging from unique agricultural systems to individual green lands to industrial estates. These diverse models of conservation will inspire and encourage more people to conserve our rich biological heritage and thereby help in expanding our conservation estate by designating more OECMs.

Date: 16.06.2022

  
(Bhupender Yadav)

लीना नन्दन  
LEENA NANDAN

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सत्यमेव जयते

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FOREWORD

Biodiversity is the bedrock upon which ecosystems function and provide services that are essential for human health and wellbeing. However, unsustainable pressures upon natural resources have led to an unprecedented decline in biodiversity. Biodiversity loss threatens the lives and livelihood of millions of people, especially the poor and vulnerable sections of society.

India is committed towards achieving the targets pertaining to conservation of the country's rich biodiversity. In affirmation of these commitments, India has successfully conserved about 22 percent of its geographical area, and is undertaking many initiatives to expand the conserved areas through the identification and recognition of Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), that are not covered by environmental and forest laws. OECMs are also an important part of the new targets being set under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

People's participation has been the corner-store of all efforts towards environmental protection, as also biodiversity and wildlife conservation. OECMs recognize the collective conservation efforts of a range of stakeholders and are an innovative mechanism for encouraging sustainable conservation and management practices.

I congratulate the MoEFCC, NBA and UNDP teams for developing this publication which shares guidelines to identify OECMs in India and also highlights India's first set of OECMs. I am confident that these collective efforts would give an impetus to other stakeholders for taking similar actions to protect nature and biodiversity.

  
[ Leena Nandan ]

New Delhi, June 15, 2022



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Government of India

## FOREWORD



India is one of the 17 megadiverse countries in the world, with over 45,000 species of flora and 91,000 species of fauna. India's economy and the livelihoods of millions of people are dependent on the conservation and sustainable use of these biological resources.

Building on the governance and management paradigms, India has a range of biodiversity conservation models. Besides state-driven conservation in the form of legally designated Protected Areas, people's strong belief in protecting trees, animals, their habitats and associated religious and cultural traditions have prompted the adoption of conservation models led by communities and traditional institutions.

The Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures or OECMs facilitate the recognition of these diverse models of biodiversity conservation and contribute to the effective *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. In our efforts to recognise champions of biodiversity conservation at the grassroots level, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the National Biodiversity Authority, with support from the United Nations Development Programme, engaged national agencies and stakeholders to identify the first set of OECMs in India.

The recognition of OECMs provides opportunities to support a variety of stakeholders and to promote more equitable partnerships in global conservation efforts, highlighting the diversity of contributions to conservation globally. Maintaining the full value of OECMs in promoting effective conservation is likely to require substantial efforts to build capacity at national and regional levels to identify, monitor and maintain their biodiversity values.

I would like to compliment UNDP India and NBA teams for bringing out this important publication on OECMs and it is my sincere hope that the recognition of these will inspire many to come forward and take proactive measures for conserving and preserving our rich bio-cultural heritage.

  
Dr. V. B. Mathur  
Chairperson

May, 2022  
Chennai

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# Preface



**Shoko Noda**  
Resident Representative,  
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India has a long tradition of conservation spanning centuries, which is deeply embedded in its cultural ethos. We have several inspiring stories from many parts of the country, which highlight how human beings can co-exist with nature. This is not a surprise because India is very rich in biodiversity: it holds nearly 8% of the world's biodiversity in only 2.5% of the world's total geographical area, and four of the thirty-six global biodiversity hotspots. Protecting these important ecosystems and their biodiversity requires collaboration and innovation.

The Convention on Biological Diversity has identified Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) as one such mechanism to increase the area under sustainable conservation.

By recognising conservation practices outside the boundaries of government designated protected areas as OECMs, we can enhance awareness to inspire and encourage more people and institutions to protect the environment. It will also contribute to the national and global conservation priorities and help achieve the vision of 'living in harmony with nature by 2050'.

UNDP India has supported the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and the National Biodiversity Authority in identifying and documenting 14 OECMs in India. This compendium highlights conservation practices being undertaken by a diverse set of people, including private actors, local communities, individuals and government agencies.

I hope this publication inspires more people to join the conservation movement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shoko Noda'.

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# Abbreviations

<b>BMC</b>	Biodiversity Management Committees
<b>BNHS</b>	Bombay Natural History Society
<b>CBT</b>	Community-based Tourism
<b>CEPF</b>	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
<b>CPRs</b>	Common Pool Resources
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>EDC</b>	Eco-Development Committee
<b>EGREE</b>	East Godavari River Estuarine Ecosystem Foundation
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GIAHs</b>	Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems
<b>HDFC</b>	Haryana Forest Development Corporation
<b>IAG</b>	iamgurgaon
<b>IBA</b>	Important Bird Area
<b>IBBAs</b>	Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas
<b>MCG</b>	Municipal Corporation of Gurugram
<b>MEE</b>	Monitoring Effectiveness and Evaluation
<b>MNC</b>	Mandar Nature Club
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MSS</b>	Maharogi Sewa Samiti
<b>NSS</b>	National Service Scheme
<b>NTFPs</b>	Non-timber Forest Product
<b>OECMs</b>	Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures
<b>PA</b>	Protected Areas
<b>PAME</b>	Protected Area Management Effective
<b>PPAs</b>	Privately Protected Areas
<b>RFA</b>	Recorded Forest Area
<b>SAI</b>	Save the Animals Initiative
<b>SPGF</b>	Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation
<b>SPGME</b>	Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Marine Ecology Centre
<b>SSB</b>	Sashastra Seema Bal

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