**Key Messages**

**Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas**

**WWF highly appreciates** the substantial progress that has been made since 2010 by Parties, supported by the CBD Secretariat, on the description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) throughout the world’s oceans.

**WWF strongly believes** that the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria provides a very valuable scientific tool for Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations for guiding national as well as international, including transboundary efforts to protect and sustainably use marine and coastal biodiversity within their respective mandates.

**WWF commends and supports** the draft decision on EBSAs as recommended by SBSTTA at its twentieth meeting (SBSTTA XX/3).

Along these lines, **WWF welcomes** the summary reports prepared by SBSTTA-20 on areas that have been found to meet the EBSA criteria in the North-East Indian Ocean, North-West Indian Ocean and the Seas of East Asia **and supports** inclusion of the reports in the EBSA repository and forwarding the reports to all Parties, other Governments, the UNGA and all relevant international organizations.

Further, **WWF urges Parties** in the North-East Atlantic region to finalize the ongoing process for the description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in this region **and encourages Parties** to continue the process to describe areas meeting the EBSA criteria in those regions where EBSA workshops have not yet been held.

With a view to ensure that the repository containing the descriptions of marine areas meeting the EBSA criteria is up-to-date and fit-for-purpose, **WWF welcomes** the practical options for further enhancing scientific methodologies and approaches, including collaborative arrangements, for the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs, as contained in Annex I to the present draft decision, **and supports** the inclusion in Annex I of the options regarding procedures for modifying the description of EBSAs or facilitating the process of making descriptions of new areas, as set out in UNEP/CBD/COP/13/18.

Consequently, **WWF urges** **Parties** to provide a mandate to the Executive Secretary to facilitate implementation of these options and to establish an informal advisory group for EBSAs, in accordance with the terms of reference provided in Annex II to the respective draft decision, as well as to make available the necessary financial resources to this end.

In this context, **WWF urges Parties** to lift the square brackets currently contained in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the draft decision.

Finally, with a view to ensure that areas found to meet the EBSA criteria receive the required attention by ocean management decision-makers, **WWF urgently calls on all Parties**, other Governments and intergovernmental organizations to report back to the CBD on progress made and challenges encountered in establishing appropriate management measures to safeguard the identified values in areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

**WWF believes** that the work within the Convention on describing areas meeting the EBSA criteria and on facilitating ecosystem-based management of these areas will directly contribute to achieving the Aichi Targets 2, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, among others, as well as the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 and related SDGs.

**Specific Work plan on Biodiversity and Acidification in Cold-Water Areas**

Considering the importance of species, habitats and ecological processes in cold-water areas and the multiple stressors that are increasingly impacting upon them, **WWF urges Parties** to adopt the draft decision as recommended by SBSTTA-20 (SBSTTA XX/4), including the “Voluntary specific work plan on biodiversity in cold-water areas within the jurisdictional scope of the Convention” as contained in Annex II to this draft decision **and further urges Parties** and as well as other Governments to comprehensively implement the work plan. As ocean acidification is a direct result of CO2 emissions, **WWF further urges all concerned Parties** to fully implement their respective commitments under the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and take immediate actions to reduce CO2 emissions.

**Impacts of Marine Debris and Anthropogenic Underwater Noise**

**WWF remains deeply concerned** about the increasing extent of adverse impacts of both marine debris and anthropogenic underwater noise on coastal and marine biodiversity.

**WWF therefore welcomes** the efforts that have been undertaken by the Executive Secretary to address these issues through various means **and appreciates** the draft decision on these issues as recommended by SBSTTA-20 (SBSTTA XX/5).

Considering the wealth of information and evidence available on the manifold adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, as compiled e.g. in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/8, **WWF urges Parties and other Governments** to direct their respective efforts without any further delay towards taking adequate measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate such impacts.

**WWF suggests** to COP-13 to request the Executive Secretary to develop, based on available experience, voluntary practical guidance, including best practices, on avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, for consideration by SBSTTA and approval by COP-14.

**WWF further calls** on COP-13 to request relevant industry actors to do their utmost to avoid, minimize and mitigate the adverse impacts of underwater noise resulting from their activities and to invite them to voluntarily present reports on measures taken to the CBD Executive Secretary for being shared through the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention.

With a view to support addressing the adverse impacts of marine debris, **WWF commends** the “Voluntary Practical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats” as contained in the Annex to the draft decision.

**WWF urges Parties and other Governments** to take all necessary means without any further delay to avoid further debris entering the marine environment and to address the issue of liability and compensation and consider extended producer responsibility for providing appropriate response measures where there is damage or sufficient likelihood of damage to marine and coastal biodiversity.

**Marine Spatial Planning and Training Initiatives**

**WWF strongly believes** in the manifold benefits of marine spatial planning (MSP) approaches for ensuring a balance between the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity and resources across all relevant sectors with a stake in coastal and marine environments.

Therefore, **WWF appreciates** the range of activities that have been organized and undertaken by the Executive Secretary and the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) with regards to facilitating marine spatial planning approaches and urges Parties to adopt the draft decision as recommended by SBSTTA-20 (SBSTTA XX/6).

**WWF welcomes** the report of the “Expert Workshop to Provide Consolidated Practical Guidance and a Toolkit for Marine Spatial Planning” (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/6) and the guidance contained therein on aspects related to the application of MSP approaches, and encourages Parties to make use of that guidance in any future MSP activities.

Considering the inherent linkages between marine spatial planning and area-based management tools, **WWF calls upon Parties** to make use of MSP in the identification of suitable management measures for the long-term protection of coastal and marine areas, including in particular ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs).

Finally, **WWF strongly encourages Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations** to cooperate and collaborate for the timely and effective implementation of relevant and adequate capacity development activities, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, that are required to enable all Parties to fulfil the mandate of the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity.

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**For more information, contact:**

Tim Packeiser

Policy Advisor Ocean Governance

International WWF Centre for Marine Conservation, WWF Germany

[tim.packeiser@wwf.de](tim.packeiser%40wwf.de)

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