



**Management Effectiveness of Protected & Conserved Areas (MEPCA) Indicator
Workshop Report**

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1. Background

Enhancing the quality of protected areas (PAs) depends on effective management that delivers stated conservation objectives. As such, consideration of PA effectiveness is central to assessing the successful delivery of these conservation objectives. While the implementation of management measures is generally relatively straightforward to assess due to their 'action' focussed nature, the assessment of the actual effectiveness of these measures in achieving the conservation objectives of PAs are 'outcome' focussed and so are more difficult to assess.

The current proposed Headline Indicator for Target 3 (T3) of the CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework is "Coverage of protected areas and OECMs¹, by effectiveness, Key Biodiversity Areas & ecosystems". However, the existing component indicator for measuring effectiveness, which is based on the Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (PAME) framework and draws from the global database on PAME assessments, only records if management effectiveness assessments have *occurred* rather than if conservation outcomes have been *achieved*^{2,3}.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC); statutory advisor to UK Government on national and international conservation matters, put a team together to investigate and explore how PA effectiveness could be assessed and reported against in a meaningful way within the context of T3 of the evolving CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework. JNCC began work on this project in 2021 to support filling this gap through the development and trialling of a new management effectiveness indicator. The indicator is called MEPCA; Management Effectiveness of Conserved and Protected Areas and it aims to fill the current need for assessing the effectiveness of conservation outcomes resulting from PAs and OECMs.

To date, JNCC have trialled the development of the MEPCA indicator with Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Regional Sea Convention, UK Overseas Territories, Canada and Costa Rica. In 2022, we have been continuing the trialling with OECMs in Australia and Scotland. Currently the indicator is on version 5.2 (Figure 1) and has its core foundations in the OSPAR four-question approach to assessing MPA management effectiveness that has

¹ Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures

² <https://www.bipindicators.net/indicators/protected-area-management-effectiveness>

³ <https://www.protectedplanet.net/en/thematic-areas/protected-areas-management-effectiveness-pame?tab=About+%26+Manuals>

now been successfully applied for a number of years (example reporting in Chapter 3 of the report here⁴).

The Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas (MEPCA) indicator is currently proposed as a complimentary indicator of the T3 headline indicator in the Draft Decision for COP15 (CBD/COP/15/2)⁵. In approaching development of the MEPCA indicator, JNCC set out to ensure that:

- To be used in combination with indicators on spatial coverage of PAs and OCEMs to inform T3 headline indicator.
- The indicator is developed as a ‘framework’ indicator; capable of absorbing existing country and site-level assessments of all PAs/OCEMs to avoid countries having to re-run assessments.
- That the indicator is applicable across marine, coastal, freshwater and terrestrial areas.
- That the indicator produces quantitative outputs, which over time could be assessed to identify trends.
- That differences in how PAs and OCEMs are implemented and regulated are respected through the implementation of a weighted approach to some of the metrics assessed e.g. different PA governance types.
- It has a focus on the achievement of conservation outcomes.

To further development of the MEPCA indicator, JNCC worked with the CBD Secretariat to invite participants to a virtual workshop held twice at different times to maximise global attendance (31st October and 2nd November 2022). The purpose of the workshop was to provide participants with an overview of the work undertaken to date and to further discuss two key aspects of the indicator:

- 1) The supporting definitions associated with the different metrics that are used to measure effectiveness of PAs and OCEMs; and
- 2) The weightings applied to the different metrics associated with different types of conserved areas (namely in relation to different governance types of PAs).

The background presentation delivered on progress to date in developing the MEPCA indicator was recorded and is available [here](#). A total of 144 participants attended the workshops, including representatives from Africa, the America’s, Asia, the Pacific and Europe.

The purpose of this report is to summarise the key findings of the MEPCA Indicator workshops and outline the next steps in relation to further development of the indicator ahead of COP15 and beyond.

⁴ <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/committee-assessments/biodiversity-committee/status-ospar-network-marine-protected-areas/assessment-reports-mpa/mpa-2021/#3-how-well-managed-are-ospar-mpas->

⁵ [Draft Decisions for the Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (cbd.int)

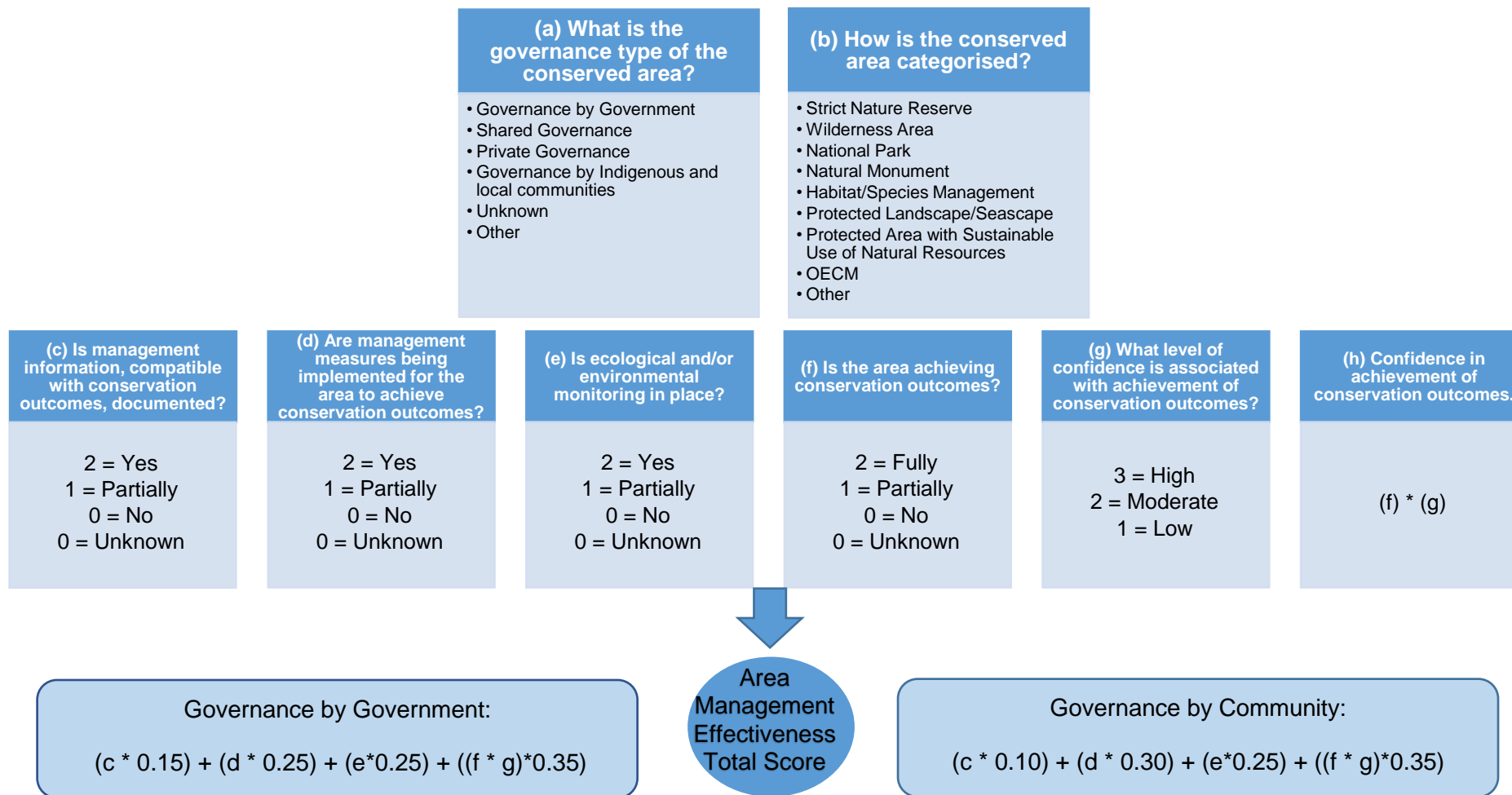


Figure 1: Schematic of the MEPCA Indicator v5.2, showing the different weightings of the metrics, depending on the type of governance.

2. Summary of workshop findings

The headline results to the questions posed during the two workshops are summarised below:

- **64% of respondents** said they **agreed that the MEPCA indicator is suitable for assessing the “by effectiveness” element of the Target 3 Headline Indicator**. An additional **32% of responses remained neutral** in response to this question; many of the attendees stated they were not PA managers and therefore they might have felt they could not confidently provide a strong opinion to this question.
- In relation to the **definitions** associated with the metrics that comprise the MEPCA component indicator - overall, respondents felt them to be **clear, logical and representative of different conservation scenarios**. The primary feedback was for **more detail in the supporting definitions**, including **clarified terminology, definitions and consistency of wording throughout the indicator and its supporting glossary**.
- In relation to the **weightings** associated with different PA types - respondents overall felt that **weightings should be used in the indicator**, though there were points made about **whether these should be altered to emphasise particular metrics**. Respondents felt **more clarity** was needed on the **different applications of weightings between Governance-by-Community versus Governance-by-Government areas**, and how instances of **shared governance and indigenous-governance areas fitted into the assessment**. **Additional metrics and weightings were suggested to assess conservation objectives such as cultural and socio-economic values**.
- It was noted that **including worked examples in the guidance documents would be useful tools to improve understanding of the indicator’s application** in different geo-political settings. There was a suggestion to consider social and economic outcomes in this indicator in addition to biodiversity outcomes.

3. Workshop approach

The objectives of the workshops were to:

- Socialise the indicator with international experts on management effectiveness
- Gather feedback on development, and
- Gain opinion on any updates required to the indicator metrics

A presentation was delivered to inform the participants on the background to the development of the MEPCA indicator. A video link to the MEPCA Indicator development presentation can be found here⁶, and the slide pack is available as an additional attachment in the workshop summary email. A plenary Q&A session followed the presentation. This time was used to help clarify any points and for participants to provide their initial remarks.

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pi8lxhKAYM>

During both days of the workshop, participants were divided into two focus groups led by facilitators. Each group had the opportunity to join both focus sessions, concentrating on the following two topics:

- 1) Metric Definitions, and
- 2) Metric Weightings.

The focus sessions aimed to gather feedback and suggestions to ensure that the metric questions, answers, supporting definitions and weightings used in the indicator were fit for purpose. During each focus session, workshop participants were asked to respond to a series of questions relating to the proposed metrics and their supporting definitions. Questions were presented using the website, 'Slido', and consisted of a mix of multiple choice and free-text questions. The feedback gained during the four sessions is summarised in the Key findings section of this report.

4. Key findings

There were 144 attendees across both workshops and 25% of those were active respondents of the Slido polls. The polls were based on the current version (v5.2) of the indicator (Figure 1). The key findings are split into two themes below: Definitions and Weightings, to follow the same format as the workshop agenda.

4.1 Metric Definitions

Overall, the Metric Definitions of the MEPCA indicator were considered to be clear, logical and representative of the conservation scenarios. The primary feedback was for more detail in the supporting definitions, including clarified terminology, definitions, and consistency of wording throughout the indicator and its supporting glossary. It was noted that including worked examples in the guidance documents would be useful tools to improve understanding of the indicator's useability and aid in-country use. There was a suggestion to consider social and economic outcomes in this indicator in addition to biodiversity outcomes.

Two questions were asked for each metric definition, then participants were given an open text question to provide context and suggestions to the responses provided, with results included below.

4.1.1 Metric A: What is the governance type of the conserved area?

78% of respondents agreed that the categories to choose from for Metric A sufficiently cover all governance types of PAs and OECMs.

45% of respondents considered that extra detail is needed to support the governance types definitions.

Metric A relates to the governance type of the conserved area. Most workshop participants considered that the answers sufficiently cover all conserved area governance types. Suggestions included **adding a category for areas governed by multiple governments and separating governance by indigenous peoples and local communities into**

distinct categories. Over half of respondents wanted to see more detail in the supporting definitions, including **an improved definition of ‘Shared Governance’.**

4.1.2 Metric B: How is the conserved area categorised?

67% of respondents agreed that the categories to choose from for Metric B sufficiently cover all types of PAs and OECMs.

83% of respondents agreed that the distinction between the different PA and OECMs types listed is clear.

Metric B relates to how the conserved area is categorised, based on IUCN protected area categories. Most workshop respondents considered that the answers sufficiently encompass the variety of types of conserved areas, but there were **various suggestions to add further categories, including for OECMs, Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and a range of marine area types.** Most respondents felt that the distinction between the answers was made clear, but **a clearer definition of ‘Other’ was requested,** and it was **noted that this category currently excluded OECMs.**

4.1.3 Metric C: Is management information, compatible with conservation outcomes, documented?

61% of respondents agreed that the metric question is clear and logical.

43% of respondents agreed that the supporting definitions for Metric C provide the correct amount of detail.

Metric C asks whether management information, compatible with conservation outcomes, has been documented. Whilst most respondents considered this question clear, over half thought that **insufficient detail was provided by the supporting definition.** Respondents requested **further definitions for several parts of the terminology used in the metric responses, including ‘biodiversity appropriate management information’, ‘conservation outcomes’, and ‘documented’.** It was noted that it would be useful to **provide examples of relevant types of management information, such as management plans.** There were queries around **whether the range of scores available for this metric were able to capture sufficient variation in the level of use of management information.** It was noted that this metric does not account for differences in the quality of documented information, nor whether it is up to date. Furthermore, it was noted that **diverse knowledge systems and worldviews should be considered.**

4.1.4 Metric D: Are management measures being implemented for the area to achieve conservation outcomes?

74% of respondents agreed that the metric question is clear and logical.

57% of respondents agreed that the supporting definitions for Metric D provide the correct amount of detail.

Metric D asks whether measures are being implemented for the area to achieve conservation outcomes. Most respondents considered this metric to be clear and logical and over half thought that the supporting definitions provided sufficient detail. There were requests to **improve the consistency of wording in relation to ‘management measures’, to define what they are, to provide some examples, and to clarify where and by whom they are defined.** There were suggestions to **better define ‘implemented’, and ‘conservation outcomes’, and to provide examples of both.** There was a desire among some respondents to **better reflect the degree of implementation within the scoring system.** It was noted that it may be difficult for new conserved areas to score highly under this metric, and that sometimes no active management is required for conservation outcomes to be achieved.

4.1.5 Metric E: Is ecological and/or environmental monitoring in place?

86% of respondents agreed that the metric question is clear and logical.

68% of respondents agreed that the supporting definitions for Metric E provide the correct level of detail.

Metric E asks whether ecological and/or environmental monitoring is in place. Most respondents considered that the question was clear and logical, and that the supporting definitions provided the correct level of detail. Respondents requested **greater clarity on the definitions of ecological and environmental monitoring and examples of the types of monitoring that would qualify. Further definitions were requested for ‘recurring’, ‘irregular’ and ‘partial’ monitoring.** It was noted that the **terminology used in the supporting definitions is quite complex for non-English speakers.** It was suggested that **a scoring system could better reflect the degree of partial monitoring.** It was noted that **direct monitoring may be extremely challenging for some ecosystems, that ecological outcomes may be difficult to detect, and that it may be more useful to monitor reductions in threat. Suggestions were made to include monitoring of social aspects and to consult Indigenous peoples and local communities.**

4.1.6 Metric F: Is the area achieving its conservation outcomes?

75% of respondents agreed that the metric question is clear and logical.

55% of respondents agreed that the supporting definitions for Metric F provide the correct amount of detail.

Metric F relates to whether the area is achieving its conservation outcomes. Most respondents agreed that the question is clear and logical and over half agreed that the supporting definitions provide the correct amount of detail. Respondents **wanted further definition and examples of ‘conservation outcomes’ and additional guidance on how to assess whether they are being achieved.** There was feedback that **the scoring system could better reflect the degree of outcomes being achieved, with the current system attributing a score of one to a very broad range of conservation outcomes.** It was noted that different worldviews may produce different definitions of conservation outcomes and that consultation with various stakeholders may be needed. Respondents highlighted that some conservation outcomes may have a considerable time lag, which may result in recently established areas or countries with less monitoring capacity being disadvantaged in the scoring for this metric. It was suggested that this issue may be

addressed by instead **focussing on threat mitigation**. The inclusion of external assessments of conservation outcomes such as those based on remote sensing may provide a more standardised and unbiased measure of outcomes than site-level monitoring. It was further noted that sites with limited documented conservation objectives may score highly under this metric despite limited conservation gains, and that outcomes may be dependent on external factors unrelated to management measures.

4.1.7 Metric G: What level of confidence is associated with achievement of conservation outcomes?

82% of respondents agreed that the metric question is clear and logical.

73% of respondents agreed that the supporting definitions for Metric G provide the correct amount of detail.

Metric G relates to the level of confidence associated with the achievement of conservation outcomes. Most respondents considered that the question is clear and logical and that the supporting definitions provide the correct amount of detail. Respondents commented that **the definitions are too long and that the responses are very subjective**. There were suggestions to **clarify 'sufficient' and 'some' data**. It was noted that **ecological monitoring is not always necessary in order to have a high level of confidence that conservation outcomes are being met, and that some well-managed sites with good biodiversity outcomes may gain low scores under this metric for this reason**. It was further noted that the **supporting definitions may conflict data availability with data confidence, when all data have an associated level of confidence**.

4.2 Metric Weightings

The overall summary outputs from respondents during the Weighting focus sessions were that weightings should be used in the indicator, though some responses suggested that values currently used should be altered to increase the impact of particular metrics. The focus on conservation outcomes was received positively by attendees. Respondents felt **more clarity was needed on the different applications of weightings between Governance-by-Community versus Governance-by-Government areas, and how instances of shared governance and indigenous-governance areas fitted into the assessment**. Additional metrics and weightings were suggested to assess conservation objectives such as **cultural and socio-economic values**. **Worked examples, clear guidance documents and infographics were highlighted as helpful tools to clarify the indicator process in future versions**.

4.2.1 Do the metrics cover all that you would expect for a management effectiveness indicator?

69% of respondents agreed that the metrics covered all that they would expect for a management effectiveness indicator.

The majority of respondents agreed that the metrics covered most aspects needed for a management effectiveness indicator. Additional features that were suggested are the

inclusion of SMART objectives and sub-metrics that measure compliance of management over time. There were other comments around the **inclusion of socio-economic and cultural values**, such as newly established sites may not yet provide biodiversity benefits but have socio-economic values. There was a query around **whether management effectiveness can lead to conservation outcomes without the need for ecological monitoring.** Not all conserved areas need active management or monitoring to achieve conservation benefits. It was noted that **consideration of threats to conservation both within and outside of the area boundary should be factored in the metrics.** An **OECM specific suggestion was to include cross-sectoral measures to account for multiple authorities and/or threats.**

4.2.2 Do you agree with the way the weightings have been applied for the Governance types?

61% of respondents agreed with how the weightings had been applied for the Governance by Government category.

48% of respondents agreed with how the weightings had been applied for the Governance by Community category.

The variety of responses on governance weightings indicated that there was a **general confusion on the “whys and how’s” for the weighting approach on Governed-by-Community versus Governed-by-Government areas;** worked examples and infographics were highlighted as methods to provide clarity moving forward. Some attendees worried that **the weightings system values community-led PAs and OECMs lower than government-led PAs.** The **necessity of applying different weightings was also questioned** as the variations between governance types was seen as quite small. It was noted that **the weightings “imply” community-led areas may lack capacity to report (Metric C), when they potentially are better managed and have more data than government-led areas, particularly if community-led PAs operate with external groups and Non-Governmental Organizations.** It was noted that **Governance-by-Government areas are often complex, such as sites being categorised as Government-led by their definition but still constituting of Indigenous Peoples and local community residents, making scoring/categorisation choices more difficult.** It was felt that **achievement of conservation outcomes (Metric E) should receive higher weighting for both governance types (suggestion of 0.5), and that implementation (Metric D) should also receive a higher weighting.**

4.2.3 Do you agree with the way the weightings have been applied for Metric F*G: achievement of conservation outcomes?

83% of respondents agreed with how the weightings have been applied for the achievement of conservation outcomes.

Most respondents agreed with the weighting of the achievement of conservation outcomes metric. Comments included that it **should be a focus of the indicator or even that it should be given a higher weighting as it is one of the primary goals.** It was noted that **a high degree of confidence for average success should be valued higher than a very low confidence for a high degree of conservation success.** There were suggestions that

confidence could be a supplementary indicator and that clarity is needed between the achievement of conservation outcomes and progress towards them.

4.3 Summary Questions

64% of respondents said they **agreed** that the **MEPCA indicator is suitable for assessing the “by effectiveness” element of the Target 3 Headline Indicator**. An additional **32% of responses remained neutral** in response to this question; many of the attendees stated they were not PA managers and therefore they might have felt they could not confidently provide a strong opinion to this question. 4% responded that they disagreed that the MEPCA indicator was suitable (Figure 2).

To provide context behind the results from both the Definitions and the Weightings poll results, demographical questions were asked. There were no respondents from the Arab States or the Commonwealth of Independent States but there were representatives from other regions of the globe (Figure 3). When asked about in-country use of **management effectiveness evaluation tools**, **60% of respondents** stated their country uses them, 12% said their country does not use them, 28% said they did not know whether their country used such tools. Methods that have been listed include, but were not limited to, the **Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)**⁷, **Ramsar Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (R-METT)**⁸, and **Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management (RAPPAM)**⁹. When asked about their individual management responsibilities for different types of conserved areas, respondents stated that 25% were responsible for Marine Protected Areas, 20% for terrestrial PAs, 20% for OECMs, 1% for ‘Other’, and 33% stated they did not have management responsibilities¹⁰.

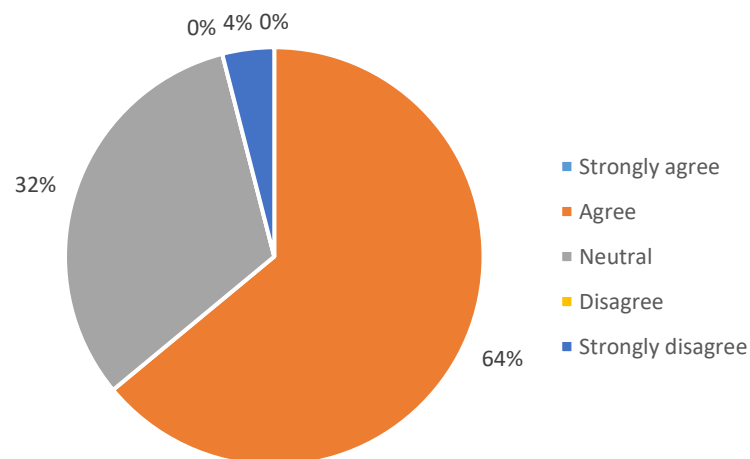


Figure 2: Results from the statement “Do you agree that the MEPCA indicator will be suitable for assessing the ‘by effectiveness’ element of Target 3 Headline Indicator, ‘Coverage of protected areas and OECMs, by effectiveness, KBAs and ecosystems’?”

⁷ <https://www.protectedplanet.net/en/thematic-areas/protected-areas-management-effectiveness-pame?tab=METT>

⁸ <https://rris.biopama.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/RAPPAM2003.pdf>

⁹ <https://rris.biopama.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/RAPPAM2003.pdf>

¹⁰ Note that participants could select more than one conserved area category for this question.

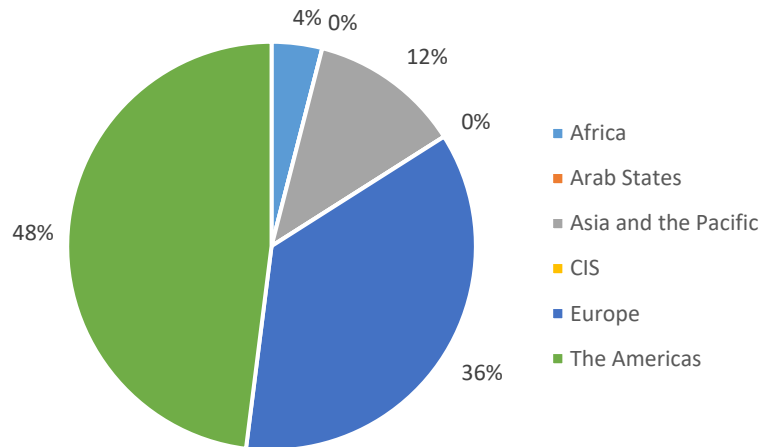


Figure 3: Summary of regional participation of attendees from the two workshops.

5. Next steps

The feedback provided in the workshops highlighted above is vitally important to the continued development and trialling of the MEPCA framework indicator and the information will be used to create the next version of the indicator.

COP15 is taking place in December where the wording for T3 will be negotiated and agreed, as well as the Monitoring Framework. The development of the MEPCA Indicator has previously been presented in a UK Submission to CBD¹¹ (March 2022), however a significant development has since taken place and so an updated version of this report will be submitted ahead of COP15 in December 2022 on the CBD webpage. A joint paper¹² has also been published with the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) entitled 'Recommended indicators for reporting on the effectiveness of area-based conservation measures – protected areas and other effective conservation measures'.

During COP15 the MEPCA indicator will be further socialised via bilateral meetings and side-events. It has been presented as a complimentary indicator in the Draft decision for further consideration at COP15. Pending the COP15 progress it is anticipated that the indicator will continue its development.

Thanks to those who joined and participated.

If anyone would like to provide additional comments, or for those who were unable to attend and wish to contribute, please contact Gemma Singleton and Hannah Hood at Gemma.Singleton@jncc.gov.uk and Hannah.Hood@jncc.gov.uk.

¹¹ [2a0375a6e1c82aaeb8b6f5a24195de2c](#)

¹² [416705076b58135c0d1b27b6dfbaa907](#)