

Online resources

Table S1. List of Potential OECMs that were identified and screened against the OECM characteristics during the stakeholder workshops, and potential landscapes in which to identify Potential OECMs.

Biodiversity Stewardship Category	OECM type	Description	Legislation/ Policy	OECM Screening Result
BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP CATEGORY 2: CONSERVATION AREAS	Biodiversity Management Agreement (BMA)	A Biodiversity Management Agreement (BMA) is enabled by NEMBA and is an agreement entered into between the Environmental Minister or Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) and organisation, person or organ of state which is willing to be responsible for the implementation of a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP). A BMA requires a BMP or an aspect of a BMP to be in place before it may be concluded. BMAs should be concluded for at least five years and may be renewed in five-year increments per NEMBA.	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (No. 10 of 2004), Section 44. (NEMBA)	Green: Meets all the OECM characteristics.
	Biodiversity Agreement	A Biodiversity Agreement is concluded in terms of contract law and is not recognised in terms of either NEMPAA or NEMBA. These agreements are typically concluded for a defined period of between five and fifteen years and can be concluded for longer durations at the voluntary election of the landowner or community. These contractual agreements are generally signed between landowners or communities and provincial conservation agencies, or possibly an NGO. They are more flexible in nature than the mechanisms listed under biodiversity stewardship category 1. A Biodiversity Agreement is considered a conservation area and contributes to the conservation estate but not the protected area estate. A management plan is required.	Contract Law	Green: Meets all the OECM characteristics.
	Conservation Servitude	A conservation servitude is an agreement between a landholder and a third party, most typically a conservation NGO, in terms of which the landowner undertakes to set aside a section of his or her land for conservation purposes in favour of the third party. A conservation servitude differs from an ordinary biodiversity agreement in that the agreement is registered against the title deed of the relevant property and is therefore not only binding on the parties that entered into the agreement, but also on the landowner's successors in title. Servitudes are not provided for in legislation but founded in South African common law. They are legally complex, and it is therefore recommended that they are drafted with the assistance of a notary public. Practitioners should also refer to any further guidance on the matter as provided by SANBI or the National Biodiversity Stewardship Technical Working Group.	Property/Contract Law	Green: Meets all the OECM characteristics.

	Conservation Agreements	Conservation agreements offer direct incentives for conservation through a negotiated benefit package in return for conservation actions by communities. Thus, a conservation agreement, typically signed for a 3-year duration (with the option for renewal), links conservation funders such as governments, bilateral agencies, private sector companies, foundations, individuals, etc. to people or communities who own and use natural resources. Benefits typically include investments in social services like health and education as well as investments in livelihoods, often in the agricultural or fisheries sectors. Benefits can also include direct payments and wages. The size of these benefit packages depends on the cost of changes in resource use, as well as conservation performance. Rigorous monitoring verifies both conservation and socio-economic results. This mechanism has been championed by Conservation South Africa.	Contractual agreement	Orange: Meets most of the OECM characteristics. Characteristic requiring additional focus: The duration of agreements is limiting. These either need to be extended or linked to market driven incentive schemes (e.g. Meat Naturally).
	Conservation Champions [Business / Industry and Biodiversity Initiatives]	These are predominantly conservation initiatives within specific industries or sectors, such as the wine growing, sugar and dairy industries. Landowners in these industries voluntarily participate and commit to biodiversity-friendly farming practices, conserving specific natural areas within the agricultural landscape and continually improve their water and energy efficiencies. These initiatives are driven by specific conservation organisations, such as national conservation NGOs, supporting these farms in their environmental efforts by co-developing detailed environmental management plans, setting tangible targets and helping them to prioritise actions to address their most pressing environmental risks. Examples are the Conservation Champions programme and Sustainable Sugarcane Farming programme coordinated by WWF.	Contractual agreement	Orange: Meets most of the OECM characteristics. Characteristic requiring additional focus: The extent of natural habitat being conserved in situ may be limiting. Need to distinguish between area-based conservation and sustainable agriculture.
BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP CATEGORY 3: PARTNERSHIP AREAS A Biodiversity Partnership Area is an informal catch-all for the lowest category of biodiversity stewardship and	Conservancies	These are voluntary associations of environmentally conscious landowners and land-users who choose to cooperatively manage their natural resources in an environmentally sustainable manner without necessarily changing the land use of their properties. For a cooperative to constitute a conservancy, it must be registered with the provincial conservation authority and operate as a <i>bona fide</i> conservancy as per the requirements of the relevant provincial conservation agency. Many provincial conservancy associations have integrated with the provincial biodiversity stewardship programmes, such as in the Western Cape and Gauteng.	Conservancies Certificate	Red: Fails to adequately meet one or more characteristic(s). Characteristic requiring additional focus: Currently the list of conservancies is out of date and the registered sites are not being regularly reviewed. Therefore, there is great uncertainty across the sector as to the state of most conservancies. The National Conservancies and Stewardship Association has indicated their willingness to improve the national

				norms and standards of conservancies.
	Community Conservation Areas (CCAs)	Community conservation areas (CCAs) are natural and/or modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity, providing ecological services or having cultural significance and which are voluntarily conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities, both sedentary and mobile, through customary laws or other effective means. CCAs can include ecosystems with minimum to substantial human influence as well as cases of continuation, revival or modification of traditional practices or new initiatives taken up by communities in the face of new threats or opportunities. Several of them are inviolate zones ranging from very small to large stretches of land and waterscapes.	Customary Law/ Unknown/ No. 28 Of 1996: Communal Property Associations Act, 1996/ Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 Of 2003	Red: Fails to adequately meet one or more characteristic. Characteristic requiring additional focus: Requires improved governance and/or management effectiveness. However, if coupled with a Biodiversity Agreement, these sites could meet the OECM characteristics.
DOES NOT FALL IN A BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP CATEGORY	Indigenous/ Natural Forests	Gazetted natural/national forests or a group of trees, woodland or species declared to be protected, under section 12(1) or 14(2) of National Forests Act (84 of 1998).	National Forests Act (84 of 1998) (Forests Act)	Green: Meets all the OECM characteristics. Protected forests fall under the Forest Act but are not recognised as protected areas.
	National Botanical Gardens	Land declared or regarded as having been declared as a national botanical garden in terms of section 33 of NEMBA. 'Conservation Gardens' is the international term for botanical gardens that include both landscaped and natural areas within their boundaries.	(NEMBA)	Green: Meets all the OECM characteristics. The only caveat is that there needs to be biodiversity value.
	Military Land	State owned tracts of land used by the Department of Defence for testing and training purposes.	State Land Disposal Act (No. 48 of 1961); Government Immovable Asset Management Act (No. 19 of 2007).	Green: Meets all the OECM characteristics. The only caveat is that there needs to be biodiversity value.
	National/ Provincial Heritage Sites	A place declared to be a national heritage site by South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), or a place declared to be a provincial heritage site by a provincial heritage resources authority. Historic site or Heritage site is an official location where pieces of political, military, cultural or social history have been preserved due to their cultural heritage value.	The National Heritage Resource Act (No. 25 of 1999)	Orange: These sites could meet the OECM characteristics, but given the variability across sites, they would need to be assessed on their own merit. (No assessment(s) to date.)
	Eco Tourism Establishments	Properties that operate sustainable tourism operations that encourage outdoor activities and the appreciation of nature through activities such as hiking, bird watching, kayaking, scuba diving, etc.	Companies Act, 2008	Orange: Meets most of the OECM characteristics. Characteristic requiring additional focus: The sustained governance and management needs to be stipulated in the governance framework

				or in a third party agreement, such as a biodiversity agreement. Given the variability across sites, they would need to be assessed on their own merit. The site would be contingent on the strength of the governance and management.
	Wildlife Ranches (Extensive)	Extensive wildlife ranching involves the extensive management of wildlife in their natural and intact habitat, which can be compatible with maintaining ecosystems in fair or good ecological condition. This definition does not include intensive game farming and breeding.	NEMBA (permitting for protected species & alien invasive species).	Red: Fails to adequately meet one or more characteristic. The variability across the sector means that each site needs to be assessed on its own merit. Potential certification scheme currently under investigation by SANB and DFFE.
	Ramsar Sites (outside existing protected areas)	A wetland site designated of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands – 1975 & NEMA.	Red: Fails to adequately meet one or more characteristic. The variability across these sites means that each site needs to be assessed on its own merit. No OECM assessment(s) to date.

Table S2. List of target areas where Potential OECMs could easily be identified and assessed against the OECM characteristics.

Target Areas for Assessing OECMs: While the below are not Potential OECMs in and of themselves, given their purpose, they would be effective and efficient landscapes to target for assessing Potential OECMs.			
Biosphere Reserves: Buffer Zone	A biosphere reserve is an ecosystem with plants and animals of unusual scientific and natural interest. The UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) covers internationally designated areas that are meant to demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature (e.g. encourage sustainable development). Biosphere reserves have three interrelated zones that aim to fulfil three complementary and mutually reinforcing functions. The buffer zone surrounds or adjoins the core areas and is used for activities compatible with sound ecological practices that can reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education. However, the buffer zones of BRs would not qualify in their entirety and still requires each site to be assessed on its own merits. BRs do, however, provide a first go-to in order to find Potential OECMs.	UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Programme. MoU with UNESCO.	Orange: The variety of the types of sites in Biosphere Reserve buffer zones means that each site needs to be assessed on its own merit. However, buffer zones should be prioritised for assessing Potential OECMs.
Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA): Buffer Zones	An area that straddles the boundaries of two or more countries where the natural and cultural resources are collaboratively managed by the Governments and/or Authorities involved. The area may include one or more protected areas as well as multiple resource use areas. The unprotected sites within TFCAs are often referred to as buffer zones or conservation areas.	The legal foundation for the establishment, development and management of TFCAs is the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Wildlife and Law Enforcement Article 4, 2 (f): “to promote the conservation of shared wildlife resources through the establishment of TFCAs”.	Orange: The variety of the types of sites in TFCA buffer zones means that each site needs to be assessed on its own merit. However, buffer zones should be prioritised for assessing Potential OECMs.