



SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Twenty-Second SPREP Meeting

Apia, Samoa
13 – 15 September 2011



Information Paper 9:

**Current Status of the Identification of
Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA's)**

Purpose of Paper

1. A progress report to the Meeting on the Status of identifying Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA's) in the Region.

Background

2. In 2008, the Parties to the CBD, in its ninth meeting, adopted a set of seven scientific criteria to identify ecologically or biologically significant areas in need of protection in the open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats (CBD Decision IX/20, Annex 1):

- Uniqueness or rarity
- Special importance for life history of species
- Importance for life-history stages of species
- Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats
- Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity, or slow recovery
- Biological productivity
- Biological diversity
- Naturalness

3. In 2010, the Parties to the CBD, in its tenth meeting, requested the Executive Secretary to work with Parties and other Governments as well as competent organizations and regional initiatives, to organize a series of regional workshops, before a future meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) prior to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, with a primary objective to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (paragraph 36, decision X/29).

4. The identification of EBSA's is a core target within the SPREP Strategic Plan, to reach the goal of developing regional knowledge, and considering regional action on oceanic ecosystems in areas within and beyond national jurisdictions, in concert with competent regional and international organizations and initiatives.

Current activities underway

5. SPREP is acting as the Pacific hosting organization for the CBD Secretariat, in convening, through the financial support from the Government of Japan, a regional workshop (from 22-25th November, 2011 and nominations from countries are currently requested to CBD) to describe Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas for the western South Pacific region. Additional support will be provided by the Australian Government, via technical support from The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) in Australia as well as technical support from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) through their Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI).