

Stakeholder statement: David Johnson
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Thank you Chair, I am speaking on behalf of the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative – an international partnership of more than 40 institutions committed to advancing the scientific basis for conserving biological diversity in the marine environment.

The GOBI-IKI project is an endorsed Decade Action funded by the German government. This project exemplifies actionable science. Results emerging from our work inform and support the agendas of CBD, CMS and other UN Agencies. They include ocean basin biogeographies to inform systematic conservation planning; species specific initiatives describing and applying tracking data and applied research information on Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas and Important Marine Mammal Areas; expanding knowledge of deep-sea hydrothermal vents informing the International Seabed Authority; migratory connectivity visualization through an innovative tool call MiCO; and promoting models of high seas governance such as the Costa Rica Thermal Dome.

Central to our mission is enabling the uptake of science in marine policy making. This involves sharing information and building research capacity, especially for the deep-sea and open ocean. It has particularly applied to contributions to the CBD's efforts to describe and identify Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs). These areas meet set criteria. They represent a portfolio of special places in the ocean that may need intervention and management measures to retain their inherent biodiversity value: fundamentally addressing SDG 14.5. The EBSA process has been highly collaborative. It is science and data rich, catalyzing new partnerships and building national capacities.

A recent EBSA impact study (authored by GOBI and available on the CBD website) acknowledges the need to remain open to updating scientific and technical information. In particular the EBSA process should recognise climate change impacts: incorporating scientific knowledge on climate refugia and ecosystem functioning. Agreeing appropriate modalities to ensure currency and best available science is a challenge for Parties at the forthcoming CBD COP15. GOBI is working to inform implementation of the CBDs post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; contributing to the emerging BBNJ Implementing Agreement; and providing scientific input to the International Seabed Authority's Regional Environmental Management Plans.

Our partners are authoritative scientific voices in their own right. Together we provide a scientific consensus and objective impartial advice.

Thank you for this opportunity to highlight our work.