Overview

The WDPA and OECM database are compiled in collaboration with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental organizations which submit protected area data to UNEP-WCMC. All data are provided by the entity with the intellectual property (IP) rights in the data and this is not conferred to UNEP-WCMC, IUCN or any third-party user of the databases. Data-providers are strongly encouraged to provide data with the consent of the relevant governance actors, including indigenous peoples, local communities and private actors.

All data included in the databases must meet the Protected Planet data standards. The process of formatting and validating the data to include them in the WDPA can take from a few days to several weeks, after which the WDPA is made available through Protected Planet: www.protectedplanet.net.

There are four key requirements that need to be met to comply with the Protected Planet data standards:

(1) All sites must meet the IUCN definition of a protected area or CBD definition of an 'other effective area-based conservation measure'

(2) Spatial data from Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and an associated list of attributes must be provided

(3) Source of information must be provided

(4) The WDPA Data Contributor Agreement must be signed

In addition to these requirements, when reporting data on protected areas or OECMs under the governance of indigenous peoples, local communities, or private actors, data-providers are encouraged to do so with the consent of these stakeholders.

Step 1: Define and Sort Data as either Protected Areas or OECMs

All sites must meet the IUCN definition of a Protected Area or CBD definition of an 'other effective area-based conservation measure' and be separated accordingly. Protected Planet maintains a separate database for each classification. Whether data you are submitting is defined as Protected Areas or as an OECM will change the requirements for how it is submitted, making it imperative that they are organized and segregated from the start.

Definitions of Protected Areas and OECMs: (*sections 1.1 to 2.4 of the User Manual*)

- **Protected Areas:** The WDPA accepts data on protected areas as defined by IUCN and the CBD

  o **IUCN definition**: International Union for Conservation of Nature

    ▪ "A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values." (Dudley 2008)

  o **CBD definition**: The Convention on Biological Diversity

    ▪ "A geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives" (Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity). This definition is further expanded upon under Article 8 of the same convention.

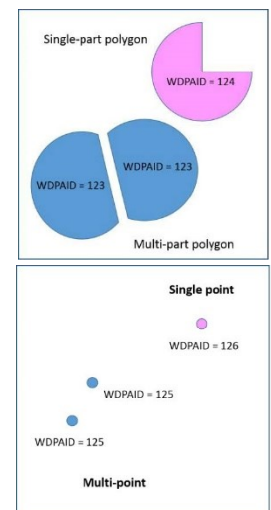- **Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECM):** OECMs were formally defined in 2018 by CBD

- o A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio–economic, and other locally relevant values.

- o OECMs also encompass areas that meet the definition of a protected area, in cases where the governance authority prefers the area to be considered an OECM.

- **NOTE:** Protected areas and OECMs have many similarities, such as the requirement of a geographically-defined boundary and a long-term commitment. But while protected areas are places designated to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes, the term 'OECM' applies to areas designated for any purpose, where positive biodiversity outcomes occur regardless of the original management objectives. In a protected area, conservation must be the primary, or joint-primary, objective. In an OECM, it may be a secondary objective or not an explicit objective at all.

Step 2: Format all Spatial Data and Attributes to meet Data Standards

All data must meet Protected Planet's Data Standards, to include its standardized schema and attribute list.

Spatial Data Standards: *(section 3.1 of the User Manual)*

- **File Type:** File Geodatabase

- **Geographic Coordinate System:** World Geodetic Survey (WGS) 1984

- Each record is either represented as a polygon boundary, or if unavailable, a point location. A maximum of two feature classes should be submitted – one containing all the polygon data and the other all the point data for any protected areas or OECMs without boundary data
    - **Polygon data** represent the boundary of the protected area or OECM as submitted by the data provider. A polygon may be single-part, or multi-part, where there are multiple non-connecting parts associated with the same protected area or OECM. Each part of a multi-part polygon will share the same WDPA ID in the attribute table but will have a different WDPA PID.
    - **Point Data:** Where boundary data are unavailable, the latitude and longitude of the centermost point of the site is requested as a reference point for the protected area or OECM instead. However, it should not be assumed that all points in the WDPA represent a central point of a given site. If the protected area is made up of multiple parts, multi-points associated with the central locations of each part of the protected area may be stored instead.

Attribute Data Standards: (*section 3.2 in the User Manual*)

The WDPA stores up to 29 descriptors, referred to as data attributes, which describe each record in the WDPA. The OECM database stores 31. With this document **I have included an Excel Worksheet titled 'ProtectedPlanet_DataReferenceSheet' that summarizes each attribute and provides a template for the standardized schema. This can be found under the 'Fields Lists' tab of the Excel Worksheet.** Reformatting your data into this schema will likely be the longest step to complete. More detailed information of each field and its accepted attributes can be found in Appendix 1 of the User Manual.

The attributes have been classified as *minimum* and *complete* attributes:

- A 'minimum' attribute represents information that is mandatory for any protected area or OECM to be included in either database
- A 'complete' attribute represents any information that is considered a priority for analysis and reporting on protected areas but is not a mandatory requirement. The complete fields significantly improve the capacity to conduct thorough analysis on protected areas. **Data providers are encouraged to submit this information in addition to the minimum required attributes**.

Step 3: Provide Source Information (*section 3.3 of the User Manual*)

Both the WDPA and OECM database have a source table. Source information includes details on the data provider and when the data were last updated. This information is stored in the WDPA and OECM database Source Tables and linked to the attribute data by the 'Metadata ID'. **A data submission will only be accepted if the source information is provided**. The Source Tables conform to the minimum geographic information and services standards for metadata as described by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Guidance and definitions on the source information requirements can be found in Appendix 1 of the User Manual.

Additionally, **within the '*ProtectedPlanet_DataReferenceSheet*' Excel Workbook, I have included the requirements and template for the source table under the '*Source Table*' tab**.

Step 4: Sign the WDPA Data Contributor Agreement (*section 3.4 of the User Manual*)

Data contributors who provide data for inclusion in either database are requested to sign the WDPA Data Contributor Agreement. This ensures that there is a written record of the data provider agreeing for their intellectual property (IP) to be included in the databases and the terms for which it is made available. The agreement specifically states how the data provided will be used and that redistribution or use of the data by third parties will be subject to the WDPA Terms of Use.

There are two versions of the data contributor agreement: one for government data-providers and one for all other data-providers. Templates for both are found in Appendix 2 of the User manual. A data submission will only be accepted if the WDPA Data Contributor Agreement is signed.

Step 5: Quality Check (*section 4.2.2* and *appendix 3 of the User Manual*)

The Protected Planet team performs a series of basic quality checks on the datasets received from data providers. This is to ensure that datasets comply with the Protected Planet Data Standards described above. This phase can take between a few days and several weeks depending on the quality of the data received.

A basic quality check before submitting you data with ensure that the verification process moves along quicker and smoothly. **I have included a guide to quality check you data within the '*ProtectedPlanet_DataReferenceSheet*' Excel Worksheet under the '*Quality Check*' tab.**