ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS (EBSAs) IN SOUTH AFRICA

Recap: EBSA identification and updates

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environment, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

SANBI
Biodiversity for Life
South African National Biodiversity Institute

Benguela CURRENT CONVENTION

MARISMA
Enabling Sustainable Ocean Use in the Benguela Current Region

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

On behalf of:
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
of the Federal Republic of Germany

What are EBSAs and what are they meant for?

- EBSAs describe delineated features or areas of the ocean or coasts that have high ecological or biological importance and which may require enhanced management or conservation measures
- Must meet with (score highly in terms of) ≥ one of seven special criteria that were prescribed by the CBD
- "The description of marine areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs does not … have economic or legal implications, and is strictly a scientific and technical exercise"
- The CBD encourages parties to use EBSAs as a tool to progress towards implementation of ecosystem-based management

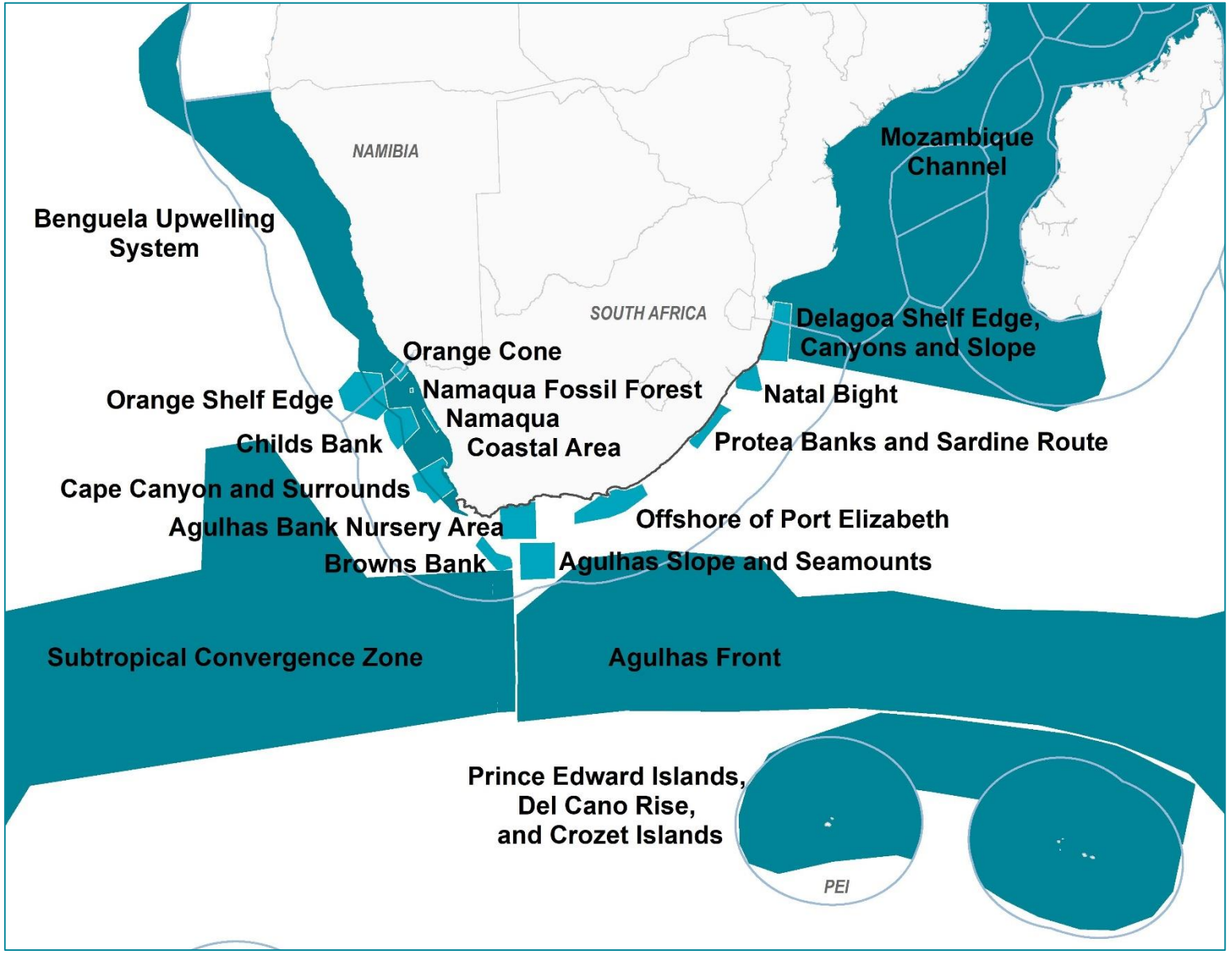
- **Uniqueness or rarity**
- **Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity or slow recovery**
- **Special importance for the life history stages of species**
- **Special importance for threatened, endangered or declining species or habitats**
- **Biological productivity**
- **Biological diversity**
- **Naturalness**

- Enhanced management or conservation measures for EBSAs may be achieved through a variety of approaches, including through formal protection, MSP zoning, EIAs or other tools

- “The identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas and the selection of conservation and management measures is a matter for States and competent intergovernmental organizations.”

South Africa's EBSAs

- Areas meeting EBSA criteria have been previously identi-fied and described through CBD processes (regional workshops)
- Adopted by CBD-COP in 2014
- 12 EBSAs within EEZ, 7 shared with neighbouring countries or extending into ABNJ



South Africa example:

Namaqua Fossil Forest

- Small (2 km^2) seabed outcrop composed of fossilized yellow-wood trees.
- 136-140 m depth range on the middle shelf off the Namaqualand coast.
- Composed of laterally extensive slabs of rock of lengths greater than 5 m and usually less than 1 m in width.
- Colonized by fragile, habitat-forming scleractinian corals.

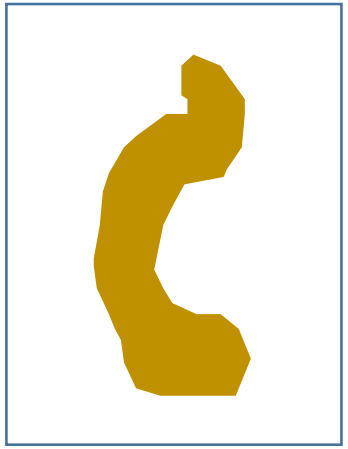
Criterion	Rank	Justification
Uniqueness or rarity	**H**	Only known in-situ fossilized yellowwood forest in region; One of the few confirmed localities of in-situ cold-water corals.
Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity, or slow recovery	**H**	The fossilized wood and accompanying cold-water coral colonies are considered vulnerable to any activities that could impact on the seabed.

MARISMA project (Benguela Current Marine Spatial Management and Governance Project, 2014-2020)

- Regional project involving Benguela Current states, supported by Benguela Current Commission and German government
- Supports national processes to achieve ecosystem-based management (especially MSP)
- For the environment/conservation sector, EBSA descriptions identified as a useful tool to put forward the “environmental ask” to planners
- EBSAs to be used to address MSP goal of identifying ecologically and biologically important areas and integrating biodiversity objectives into decision-making, to achieve ecosystem-based management.

Revising our EBSAs – why?

- We wanted to enhance the usefulness of EBSAs as a tool to inform MSP
- MSP requires detailed descriptions and delineations
  - Original delineations too coarse to be useful for integration into Spatial Management Plans that also need to include other sectors/stakeholders
  - More defined spatially explicit EBSAs are required to help identify the exact areas that should feed into MSP processes

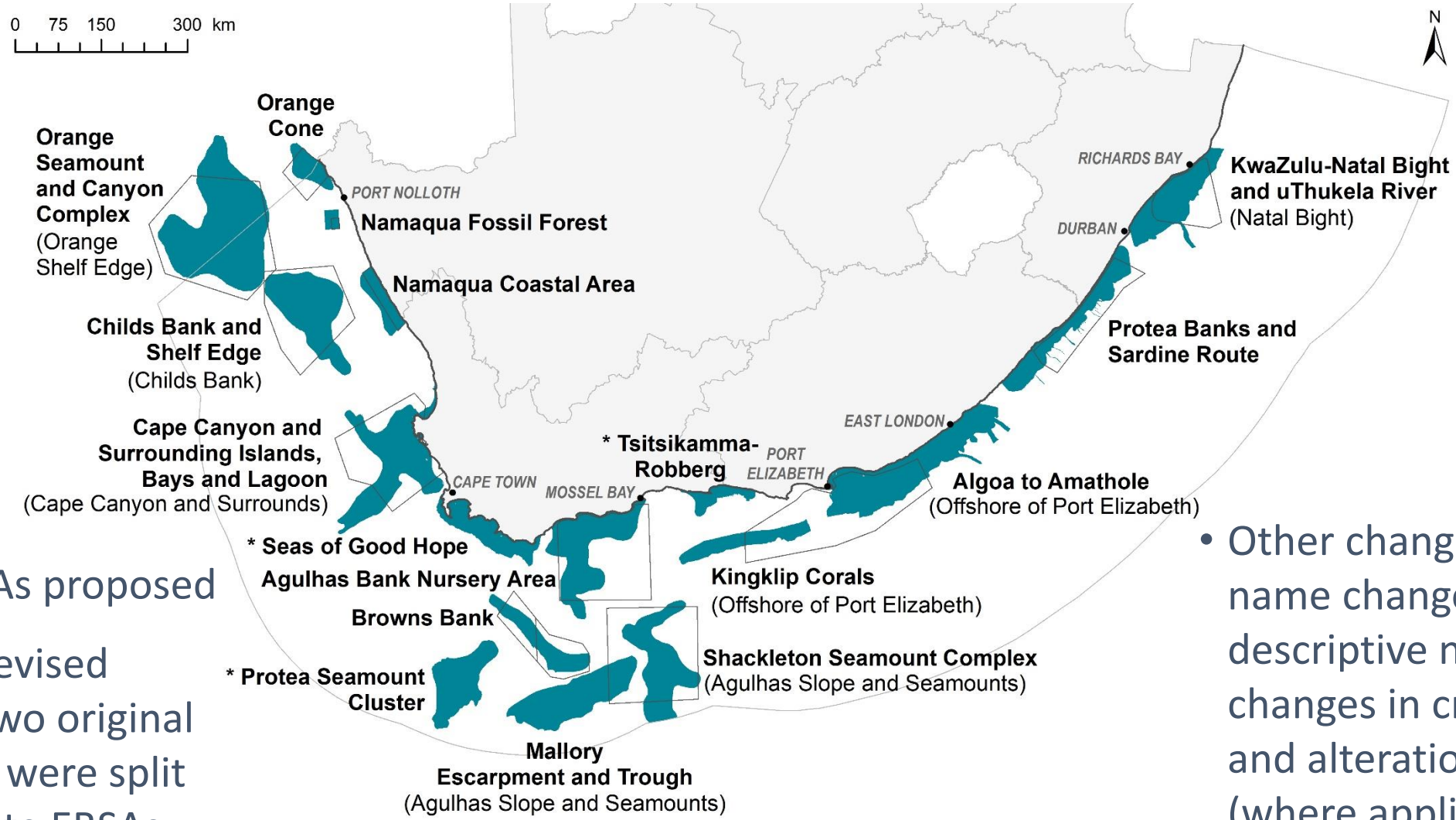


- New scientific information
- Availability of expertise and analytical methods for more systematic evaluation and delineation of EBSAs
- The need for a more robust and cross-sectorally inclusive EBSA process

Revising our EBSAs – how?

- Used updated marine ecosystem map
- Systematic biodiversity planning approach to identify new potential areas to be assessed against EBSA criteria
- National workshops (4) and online interactive EBSA information repository https://cmr.mandela.ac.za/EBSA-Portal for wide consultation with stakeholders and experts on required changes and new potential EBSAs
- Sophisticated spatial analytical techniques to delineate or revise boundaries
- Regular engagement on process and progress with DEFF's National Marine Biodiversity SWG
- Regional workshops and review (especially for BCLME transboundary EBSAs)
- International review facilitated by BCC and GIZ

What modifications have been made?



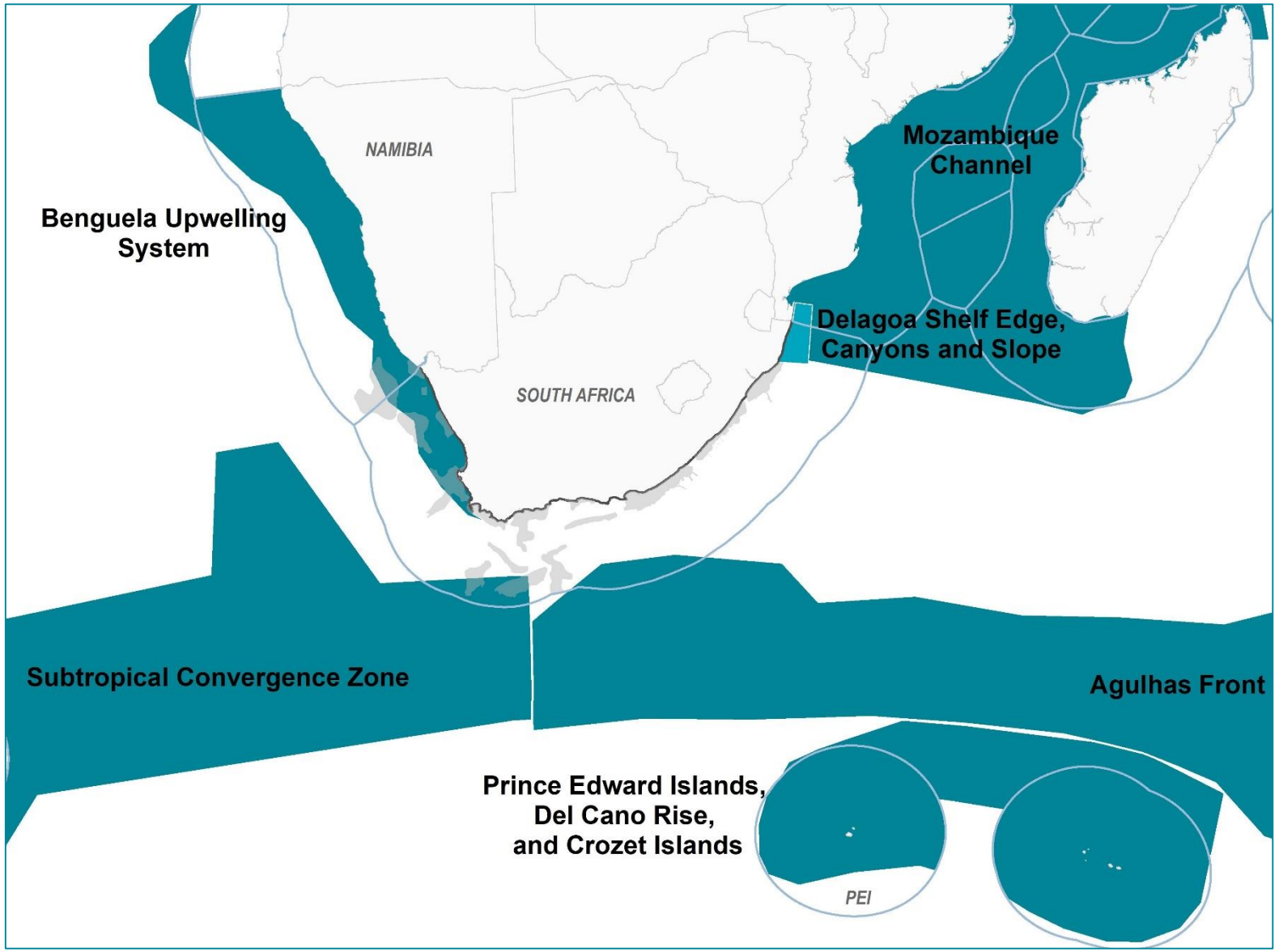
- 3 new EBSAs proposed
- 14 EBSAs revised including two original EBSAs that were split into separate EBSAs
- Other changes include name changes (more descriptive names) , some changes in criteria scoring and alteration to text (where applicable)
- Changes in boundary delineations (new and improved information; attempt to have greater alignment of EBSA with feature of importance)

What EBSAs haven't changed and why?

- EBSAs extending into ABNJ excluded (premature to pre-empt decision by CBD on the review processes for these EBSAs beyond national jurisdiction)

- Transboundary EBSAs shared with countries outside of the BCLME (Mozambique, France): beyond scope of project

- These are mainly "Type 3" or "Type 4" EBSAs (e.g. not spatially fixed) - of less relevance for informing MSP



- New and revised descriptions approved by Minister
- Submitted to CBD and will be reviewed once they clarify process

Thank you…….