

# Maps as measurement: Marine Protected Areas and global conservation targets

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## SUMMARY

The marine protected areas (MPA) target (14.5) of the much broader UN ‘oceans’ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG14) is likely to be realized. This is in part because MPA expansion is relatively easy to measure and map, and there is opportunity for further expansion in the mostly unprotected global ocean. However, the evolution of MPA targets over time in organizations like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) illustrates the importance of other means for achieving conservation and of elements other than area coverage, including the need to ensure MPAs are effectively and equitably managed. By excluding these important, but contested, complex, and difficult to measure components, Target 14.5 may be met, but the meaning of this success will be limited. The paper explores the relationship between measurement, mapping, and MPAs as a conservation intervention.

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