

Overview of the BBNJ Agreement

(Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction)

Navigating the RFMO-BBNJ Interface Conference, 2 June 2026
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Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, UN Office of Legal Affairs

Outline

Overview of the Agreement

Next steps and latest developments

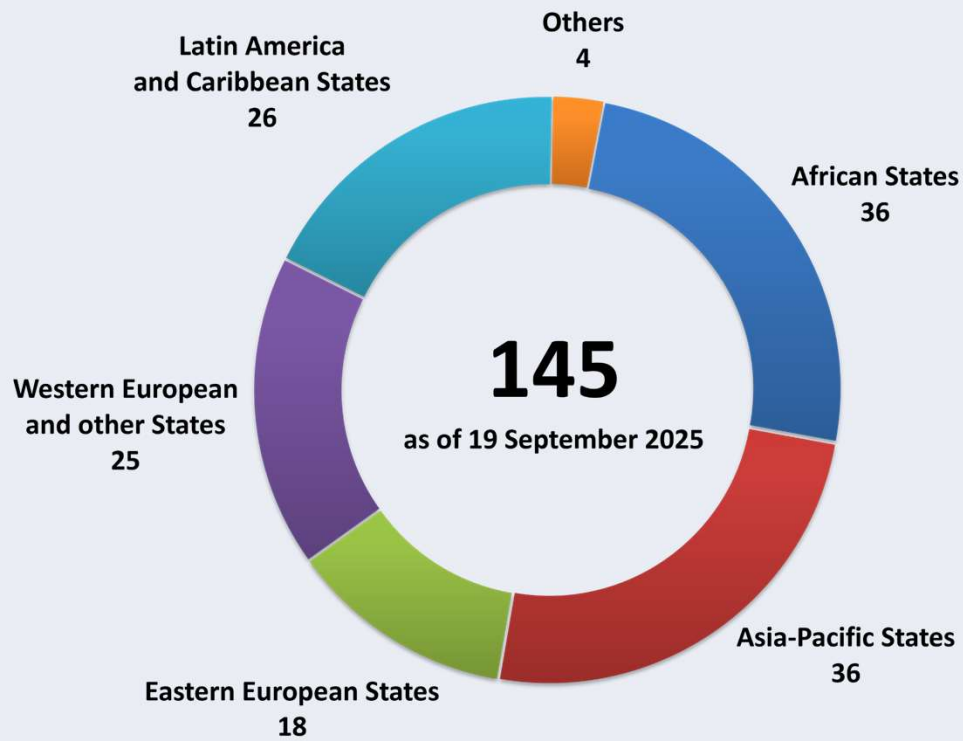


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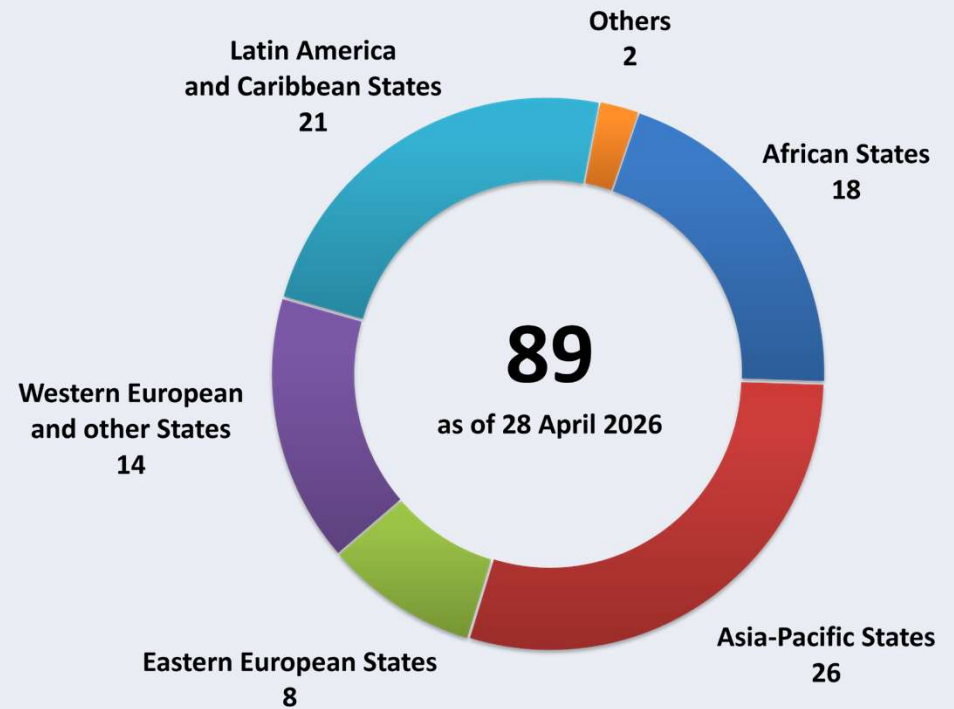


UN World Oceans Day 2023 Photo Competition
@andy.schmid

Current status of the BBNJ Agreement: entered into force on 17 January 2026



Signatories



Ratifications, approvals, acceptances or accessions

The “UNCLOS family”

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Agreement relating to the
Implementation of Part XI
of the United Nations
Convention on the Law of
the Sea of 10 December
1982

Part XI Agreement

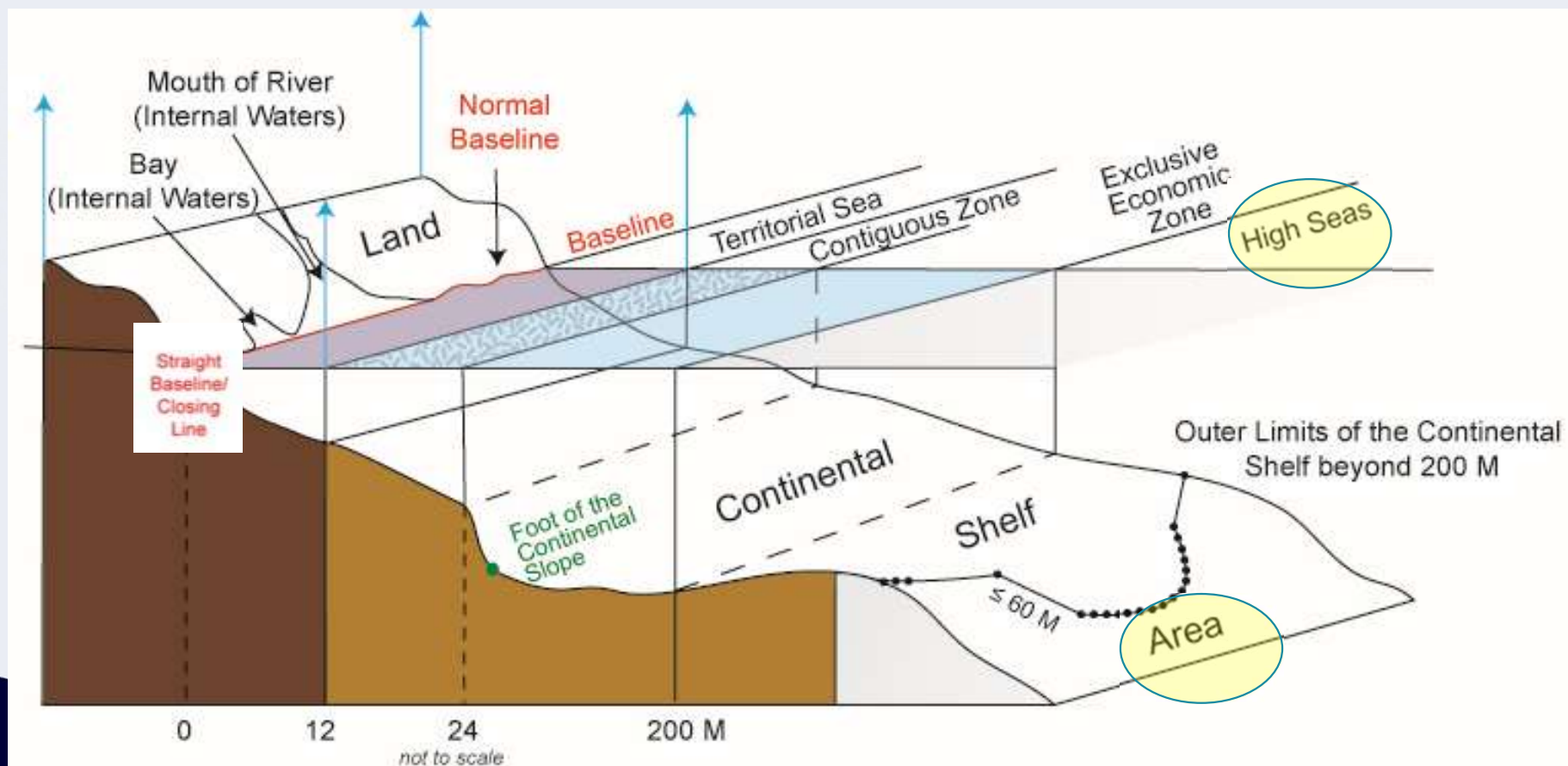
Agreement for the
Implementation of the
Provisions of the United Nations
Convention on the Law of the
Sea of 10 December 1982
relating to the Conservation and
Management of Straddling Fish
Stocks and Highly Migratory
Fish Stocks

UN Fish Stocks Agreement

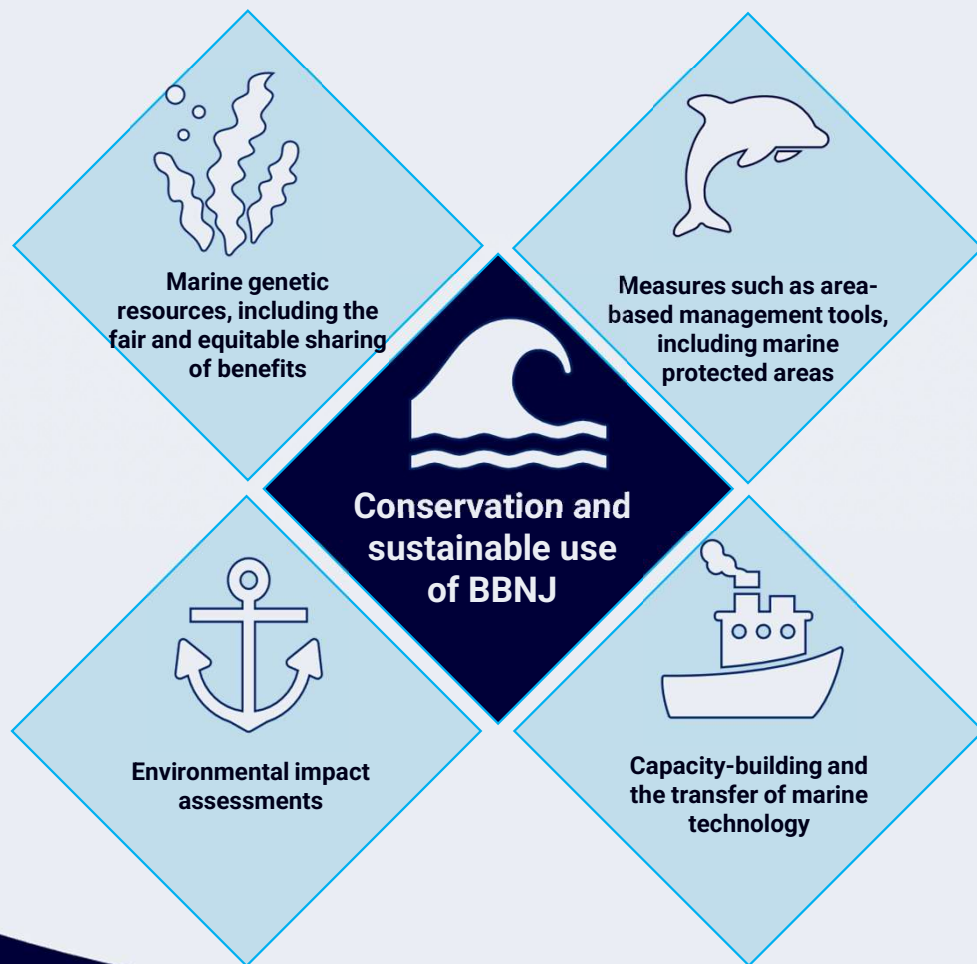
Agreement under the United
Nations Convention on the Law
of the Sea on the Conservation
and Sustainable Use of Marine
Biological Diversity of Areas
beyond National Jurisdiction

BBNJ Agreement

Maritime zones – overview



What is in the Agreement?



❖ **A package of issues**

❖ **Cross-cutting/enabling provisions**

Coordination and cooperation under the Agreement

Relationship with other relevant IFBs (art. 5):

- Not undermine relevant IFBs
- Promote coherence and coordination with relevant IFBs

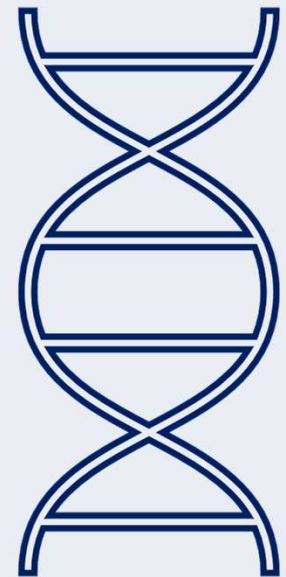
International cooperation (art. 8):

- Strengthen and enhance cooperation with and among IFBs
- Endeavour to promote the objectives of the Agreement when participating in decision-making under relevant IFBs



Marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits

- Sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits
- Activities with respect to marine genetic resources (MGRs) and digital sequence information (DSI) on MGRs
- Notification
- Fish-related “carve-outs”
- Access and benefit-sharing Committee



Area-based management tools, including marine protected areas



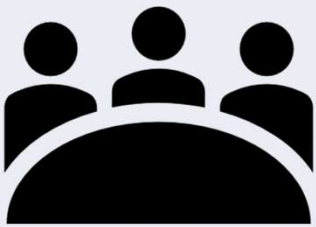
Parties to cooperate and consult with relevant stakeholders, including relevant IFBs, in the **development of proposals**



Relevant IFBs invited to submit the following on **final proposals**:

- views on the merits of the proposal;
- information regarding any existing measures adopted by that IFB;
- views on any aspects of the measures and other elements for a draft management plan identified in the proposal that fall within the competence of that IFB;
- Views on any relevant additional measures that fall within the competence of that IFB

Area-based management tools, including marine protected areas



The Conference of the Parties

- May take **decisions** on measures **compatible** with those adopted by relevant IFBs, in cooperation and coordination with those IFBs
- May make **recommendations** to **Parties** and to **IFBs** to promote the adoption of relevant measures, in accordance with their respective mandates
- ABMTs or MPAs established by the COP that subsequently fall within the competence of a new or existing IFB: shall **review and decide, in close cooperation and coordination with the relevant IFB**, to maintain, amend or revoke
- May consider and may decide to develop a **mechanism regarding existing ABMTs, including MPAs**, adopted by IFBs

Environmental impact assessments

Participation by stakeholders in the EIA process, incl. through the submission of comments

Stakeholders may be consulted in the monitoring, reporting and review processes in respect of an activity authorized

IFBs

Environmental impact assessments

Not necessary to conduct a screening or an EIA under the Agreement if:

- Planned activity has been assessed in accordance with the requirements of other relevant IFBs;
- Assessment already undertaken is equivalent to the one required under the Agreement; or the regulations or standards of the relevant IFBs arising from the assessment were designed to prevent, mitigate or manage potential impacts below the threshold for EIAs under the Agreement

Parties to promote the use of EIAs and the adoption and implementation of the standards and/or guidelines developed under the Agreement in relevant IFBs

Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology



Parties to cooperate in CB&TMT

- directly or through relevant IFBs
- At all levels and in all forms, including through strengthening cooperation and coordination between relevant IFBs



Parties' reports to the CB&TMT Committee must take into account input from regional and subregional bodies

Cross-cutting/Enabling provisions



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General provisions

Institutional arrangements

Funding

Implementation and compliance

Settlement of disputes

Non-parties to the Agreement

Good faith and abuse of rights

Final provisions

Institutional arrangements



Conference of the Parties (COP)



Secretariat



**Scientific and
Technical Body**



**Access and Benefit-
Sharing Committee**



**Clearing-
House
Mechanism**



**Implementation
and Compliance
Committee**



**Capacity-Building
and Transfer of
Marine Technology
Committee**



**Finance
Committee**

Next steps and latest developments...



First meeting of the Conference of the Parties: **11-22 January 2027** (i.e. no later than one year after the entry into force of the Agreement)



DOALOS to perform interim secretariat functions under the secretariat commences its functions

BBNJ Preparatory Commission

Organization meeting (24-26 June 2025)

First session (14-25 April 2025)

Second session (18-29 August 2025)

Third session (23 March – 2 April 2026)

Considered:

- *Governance matters*
- *Issues pertaining to the operation of the CHM*
- *Financial rules, and financial resources and mechanism*

BBNJ Preparatory Commission



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- Draft rules of procedure for the COP
- Draft terms of reference and modalities for the operation of, and rules of procedure for, the subsidiary bodies
- Draft COP decision concerning arrangements for the secretariat
- Draft COP decision on the modalities for the selection of the seat of the secretariat
- Draft financial rules
- Draft MOU between the COP and the Council of the Global Environment Facility
- Draft COP decision on arrangements to enhance cooperation with relevant IFBs
- Draft COP decision on the operationalization of the special fund
- Draft terms of reference for the voluntary trust fund
- Key points on reporting requirements

**Report of the Preparatory Commission:
adopted at the third session** (*advance, unedited
version*)

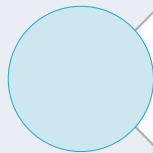
Contains, in annexes, recommendations for
consideration by COP-1



Draft COP decision concerning arrangements for cooperation with relevant IFBs



Provides guidance to the Parties and the institutions established under the Agreement regarding cooperation and coordination with relevant IFBs



Elements of guidance: regular consultations, gradual approach, mandate complementarity, continuity, flexibility, reciprocity and mutual support, cost-effectiveness and monitoring and review of effectiveness



Invites IFBs to cooperate with the institutions and bodies established under the Agreement and encourages their participation as observers in the meetings of the COP and the subsidiary bodies



Requests the secretariat to take a set of actions



Decides to include a standing item on cooperation with IFBs on the agenda of the COP

Take aways

Fisheries are not generally excluded from the scope of the Agreement

The Agreement may impact fisheries management

RFMOs have opportunities to play a role in the implementation of the Agreement





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Thank You



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