



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

UN  
environment  
programme



# COMMON OCEANS PROGRAM



PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY  
IN THE OCEAN AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

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## Cross-sectoral cooperation

**Cross-sectoral management and governance** is a major challenge to biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). The **Common Oceans Cross-sectoral project** is committed to building and strengthening regional and national capacity for sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination, knowledge management and public awareness of ABNJ.



### WHAT WE DO

#### Strengthen capacity for sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination

Develop a training program for officials from regional and national organizations on cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination on ABNJ issues.

#### Work with partners in Southeast Pacific and Pacific Islands pilot regions to improve understanding of ABNJ issues and governance

Establish effective knowledge exchange mechanisms for well-informed decision-making on ABNJ issues.

Increase understanding on the new international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

The areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) harbour unique and vulnerable marine ecosystems, many yet to be discovered. They provide crucial goods and services, but challenges as climate change, pollution and overuse put increasing pressure on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Ninety percent of world trade and submarine telecommunications cables pass through the ABNJ. With human activities set to increase, coordination among stakeholders is vital to preserve this common good for future generations. A new treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction - the 'BBNJ Agreement' - is underway and will strengthen ABNJ governance. The project aims to raise awareness of the

BBNJ Agreement and improve cooperation on ABNJ governance in two pilot regions: the Southeast Pacific region and the Pacific Islands Region, working with the Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur, the Pacific Islands Forum Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, Universidad Católica del Norte, and the University of the South Pacific.

Together with 23 partners, including global, regional, and national organizations, donor agencies, academic institutions, the project will exchange experiences and improve cross-sectoral collaboration on key issues such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, seabed disturbance, marine and land-based pollution, and climate change.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Sectors operating in ABNJ include fisheries, shipping, tourism, marine scientific research, and emerging sectors, such as geoengineering.

Activities in ABNJ are governed under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), together with specialized international agreements on activities like fishing and shipping.

Regional arrangements for ABNJ governance include:

**18**  
Regional Seas Programmes and  
**23**  
Large Marine Ecosystem Projects,  
as well as regional political and  
economic communities driven by  
the interests of Member States.



The Common Oceans Program is a global partnership funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), promoting sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) with a particular focus on tuna and deep-sea fisheries, the Sargasso Sea and cross-sectoral cooperation. Led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Program brings together the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), regional fisheries management organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia.

### COMMON OCEANS | Cross-sectoral project

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