

Ref: DC48-2025
Wellington, 7 July 2025

To: Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS)
Office of Legal Affairs
United Nations
By E-mail: doalos@un.org

Subject: Contribution from SPRFMO to the BBNJ Preparatory Commission

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), I am pleased to transmit the attached contribution in response to your request for inputs to support the work of the Preparatory Commission under the BBNJ Agreement.

The attached note provides information on:

1. The SPRFMO mandate for cooperation with other instruments, frameworks and bodies; and
2. A summary of existing cooperative arrangements, including their nature, scope, and modalities, which may be of relevance to the BBNJ Preparatory Commission's deliberations.

We acknowledge that this submission is being provided after the requested deadline of 31 May 2025 and appreciate your consideration of this input for inclusion in the materials supporting the upcoming second session of the Preparatory Commission (18–29 August 2025).

Should you require any additional information or clarification, the SPRFMO Secretariat remains at your disposal.

Sincerely,

James Brown
Executive Secretary

Attachment: SPRFMO BBNJ Preparatory Commission Request SPRFMO Cooperation

BBNJ Preparatory Commission Request: SPRFMO Cooperation

SPRFMO Secretariat

July 2025

This note responds to a request from OLA/DOALOS, in support of the BBNJ Preparatory Commission on SPRFMO's international cooperation.

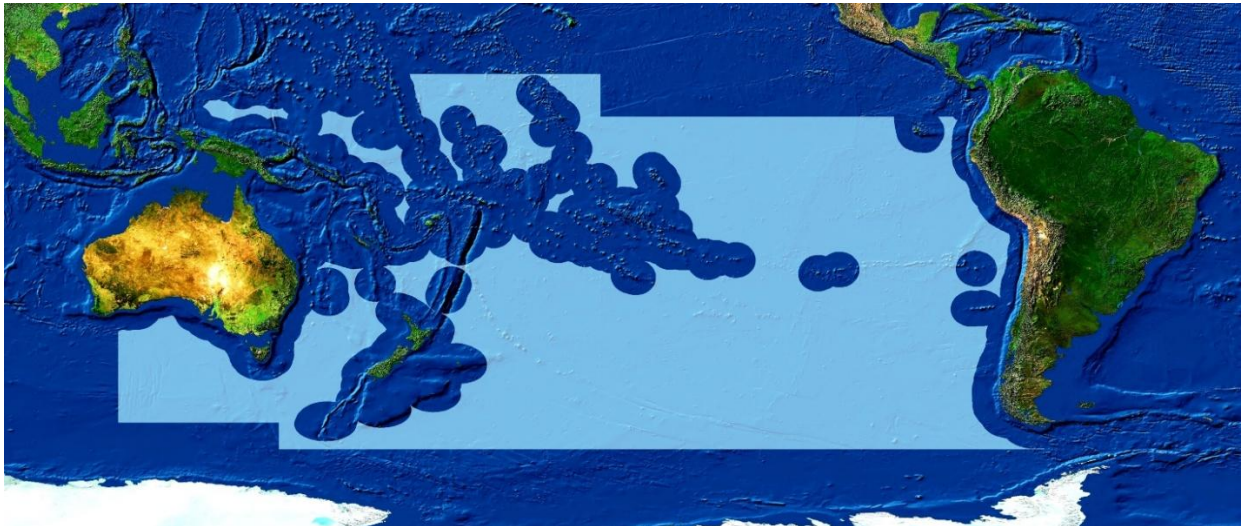


Figure 1. The SPRFMO Convention Area covers the high seas of the South Pacific Ocean.

1. Any relevant information concerning SPRFMO's (including any subsidiary body's) mandate for cooperation with other instruments, frameworks and bodies

Article 31 of the [Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean](#), establishes the mandate for SPRFMO's international cooperation. This includes a requirement to cooperate with relevant organisations; taking into account, and endeavouring to be compatible with, the measures of relevant organisations; and entering into cooperative arrangements especially in relation to IUU fishing.

Subsidiary bodies of the Commission are also required to take into consideration, as appropriate, the work of other fisheries management organisations and the work of other relevant technical and scientific bodies (Article 9(4)). In practice, this cooperation is operationalised through mutual observer status at meetings, sharing of data and best practices, and coordination on scientific assessments and compliance tools.

Of potential relevance to this OLA/DOALOS request is Article 33 Relation to Other Agreements.

Article 31 Cooperation with Other Organisations

1 The Commission shall cooperate, as appropriate, with other regional fisheries management organisations, the FAO, with other specialised agencies of the United Nations, and with other relevant organisations on matters of mutual interest.

2 The Commission shall take account of the conservation and management measures or recommendations adopted by other regional fisheries management organisations and other relevant intergovernmental organisations that have competency in relation to the Convention Area, or in relation to areas adjacent to the Convention Area or in respect of particular living marine resources including non-target and associated or dependent species, and that have objectives that are consistent with, and supportive of, the objective of this Convention. It shall endeavour to ensure that its own decisions are compatible with, and supportive of, such conservation and management measures or recommendations.

3 The Commission shall seek to make suitable arrangements for consultation, cooperation and collaboration with such other organisations. In particular it shall seek to cooperate with other relevant organisations with the aim of reducing and eventually eliminating IUU fishing.

Article 9 Subsidiary Bodies

4 In carrying out their functions, all subsidiary bodies shall take into consideration the relevant work of other subsidiary bodies established by the Commission, and as appropriate the work of other fisheries management organisations and the work of other relevant technical and scientific bodies.

Article 33 Relation to Other Agreements

1 Nothing in this Convention shall prejudice the rights, jurisdiction and duties of Contracting Parties under relevant provisions of international law as reflected in the 1982 Convention or the 1995 Agreement.

2 This Convention shall not alter the rights and obligations of Contracting Parties that arise from other agreements compatible with this Convention and that do not affect the enjoyment by other Contracting Parties of their rights or the performance of their obligations under this Convention.

2. A summary of cooperative arrangements with such instruments, frameworks and bodies, including their nature, scope, modalities, and other information that may be of interest to the BBNJ Preparatory Commission.

As an organisation, SPRFMO has entered into 9 Arrangements and/or Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), and the Secretariat has entered into 3 separate agreements to promote cooperation and ensure the effective functioning of the Secretariat. These Memoranda of Understanding and Arrangements are publicly available on the SPRFMO website (<https://sprfmo.int/cooperation/mous/>) and recalled below for convenience. The Secretariat also reports annually to the Commission on their implementation, most recently in [COMM13-Doc07](#).

This information may inform the BBNJ Preparatory Commission's consideration of mechanisms for international cooperation, particularly in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). SPRFMO's legal framework and practice provide examples of how a regional fisheries body can coordinate with other organisations to support the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity.

Memoranda of Understanding and Arrangements of the Secretariat

The following agreements were entered into by the Secretariat under its administrative authority and serve to support specific technical or operational aspects of SPRFMO's mandate.

Participants	Date	Objective
Secretariat-USA NOAA	16/09/20	MoU to strengthen the implementation of MCS measures.
Secretariat-RMIT University	25/05/20	Agreement to translate documents such as the SPRFMO Convention and other relevant documents into languages other than English.
Secretariat-ACAP	28/10/14	MoU to facilitate cooperation between both Secretariats, with a view to supporting efforts to minimise incidental catches of seabirds listed in Annex 1 of the ACAP.

Memoranda of Understanding and Arrangements of the Organisation

The following cooperative arrangements have been formally adopted or endorsed by the Commission. These reflect SPRFMO's institutional-level commitments to consultation, cooperation, and coordination with other regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), regional fisheries bodies (RFBs), and relevant global networks. Such instruments are intended to support the implementation of the SPRFMO Convention and to promote consistent, effective, and complementary management of shared resources and cross-cutting issues such as monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), compliance, and conservation of associated and dependent species.

These arrangements often provide the framework for practical collaboration through mutual observer participation in meetings, data sharing, scientific exchange, joint capacity-building initiatives, and cooperation in addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Participants	Date	Objective
SPRFMO-WCPFC	22/05/24	MoU aimed at facilitating, where appropriate, cooperation between SPRFMO and WCPFC, in order to advance their respective objectives, particularly with respect to stocks or species which are within the mutual interest of both Organisations.
SPRFMO-NPFC	12/07/23	MoU to facilitate, where appropriate, consultation, cooperation, and collaboration between SPRFMO and NPFC, in order to advance their respective objectives, particularly with respect to matters of common interest.
SPRFMO-CCAMLR	17/02/22	Arrangement to facilitate cooperation to advance objectives, particularly with regard to stocks and species of mutual interest.
SPRFMO-CPPS	18/03/22	MoU to establish a consultation and cooperation framework between CPPS and SPRFMO on matters of mutual interest.
SPRFMO-IMCS Network	01/03/22	Network to promote and facilitate cooperation and coordination among Members through information exchange, capacity development and collaboration in order to achieve the improved effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring, control and surveillance activities.
SPRFMO-IATTC	27/01/22	MoU to facilitate, where appropriate, consultation, cooperation and collaboration between SPRFMO and IATTC in order to advance their respective objectives, particularly with respect to matters of common interest.
SPRFMO-FIRMS	14/05/19	Partnership of international organizations and regional fishery bodies aiming to provide access to a wide range of high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources
SPRFMO-RedLAC INDNR	27/01/19	MoU to facilitate, where appropriate, cooperation and coordination between the participants in order to advance their respective objectives, particularly with respect to IUU fishing.

SPRFMO's cooperation with other organisations is further supported through the use of shared data platforms and reciprocal access to information systems. Notably, SPRFMO maintains a secure observer database and a register of authorised vessels, both of which are accessible to cooperating organisations through appropriate agreements. These tools facilitate the exchange of compliance and scientific data, enhance transparency, and contribute to coordinated efforts to combat IUU fishing and monitor fishery resources in overlapping or adjacent areas.

Through its Convention provisions and network of cooperative arrangements, SPRFMO demonstrates a strong commitment to international collaboration. These practices can serve as useful models for future cooperative mechanisms under the BBNJ Agreement. The SPRFMO Secretariat remains available to support further dialogue with the Preparatory Commission, as appropriate.