

Annex

Information on developments within the Convention on Biological Diversity relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea

Executive Summary

This note summarizes recent work under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) relevant to ocean affairs and the law of the sea that have taken place, or will take place, between September 2025 and August 2026.

During this period, the CBD Secretariat facilitated the modification of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and the description of new areas, developed draft voluntary guidelines on peer-review processes for the description of EBSAs, continued to cooperate with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat, including on scientific and technical work conducted under the CBD relevant to marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, prepared the global report on collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and developed draft guidelines by the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities pursuant to Tasks 1.1 and 1.2 of the programme of work on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention related to indigenous peoples and local communities.

The Secretariat has also continued its capacity-building and partnership efforts under the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI). This includes the convening of the fifth meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies, an initiative that provides an opportunity for regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies to share experiences and to identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration.

Finally, the Secretariat also continued to engage in various intergovernmental processes and events throughout this period, including the Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for 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).

INTRODUCTION

This note consists of brief descriptions of the work carried out under the CBD in the following areas related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea since the completion of the last report, in June 2025:

- Global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;
- Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), including the facilitating the description and modification of EBSAs, as well as development of draft voluntary guidelines on peer-review processes;
- Work related to biodiversity of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- Development of voluntary guidelines by the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities;
- Capacity-building and partnership activities (activities of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, including the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue); and
- Engagement in other intergovernmental processes and events.

GLOBAL REVIEW OF COLLECTIVE PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

To support the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to be undertaken by the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting (COP-17), the Executive Secretary has been preparing a global report on collective progress during this reporting period. The primary sources of information for the preparation of this report are national reports. One hundred and twenty-five Parties – representing nearly two-thirds of the 196 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity—submitted their 7th National Reports by the deadline of 28 February 2026, in time for their integration in the global report. The preparation of the global report is being overseen and guided by an Ad Hoc Scientific and Technical Advisory Group, established in April 2025, which has met five times during this reporting period.

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice was provided with an overview of the status of the global review process during its twenty-seventh meeting, in October 2025, at which time it approved the annotated outline of the global report contained in the annex to its recommendation 27/1. During its twenty-eighth meeting, 27 July–1 August 2026, the Subsidiary Body will consider an update on the preparation of the global report and key scientific and technical issues as well as a draft of the global report. The Subsidiary Body will be invited to review the technical aspects of the second draft of the global report and to adopt a recommendation containing elements of a draft decision for subsequent incorporation into the recommendation on the global review to be adopted by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its seventh meeting, to take place immediately following the twenty-eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting (19-30 October 2026).

ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS

Work under the CBD to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and the modification of EBSA descriptions

As noted in our previous input to the report of the Secretary-General, submitted for consideration of the United Nations General Assembly at its eightieth session, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted at its sixteenth meeting, held in Cali, Colombia, from 21 October to 1 November 2024, modalities for the modification of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and the description of new areas, contained in the annex to [decision 16/16](#) and requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate their implementation.

These new modalities operate on the basis of submissions provided by one or more State(s). As also noted in our previous input, notification [2025-034](#) was issued on 17 March 2025 to invite submissions of new EBSA descriptions and of modifications to existing EBSA descriptions, in line with the modalities contained in the annex to decision 16/6 for consideration at the twenty-eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 28) and the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17).

In response to this notification, 29 submissions from four Parties¹ were submitted during this reporting period and posted at <https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/ism/submissions/records>. All submissions relate to areas within national jurisdiction, with three of these being transboundary areas, shared by two Parties. Eleven of these submissions relate to the description of new areas and eighteen relate to the modification of existing areas. As all 29 submissions are proposed for inclusion in the [EBSA repository](#), they must be considered by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Conference of the Parties. The status of submissions of EBSA descriptions under the new modalities was one of the issues discussed by the Informal Advisory Group (IAG) on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas, which met online for its sixth time during this reporting period (7-8 October 2025). They also discussed such issues as potential means to catalyze further EBSA submissions, Voluntary guidelines on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria and other relevant compatible and complementary

¹ Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia and South Africa

scientific criteria (further discussed below); the terms of reference of the EBSA IAG and issues around the convening of future regional EBSA workshops.

In line with the modalities, the Secretariat issued notification [2025-138](#) on 1 November 2025 to invite comments on these submissions for a period of six months until 1 May 2026. Comments on 24 of these submissions were received by the deadline from one organization. Following revision, the descriptions were reposted and compiled in documents that will be considered by the Subsidiary Body at its twenty-eighth meeting, in July.

Development of Draft Voluntary Guidelines on Peer-Review Processes for the Description of Areas Meeting the Criteria for Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas and Other Relevant Compatible and Complementary Scientific Criteria

In response to a request in decision [16/16](#), the Secretariat developed draft voluntary guidelines on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria and other relevant compatible and complementary scientific criteria. The draft guidelines were discussed with the EBSA informal advisory group and further revised based on input received in response to notification [2026-011](#). They have been made available in the annex to a pre-session document that will be considered by the Subsidiary Body at its twenty-eighth meeting, as will a background document that will inform the deliberations of the Subsidiary Body on this issue.

SUBSIDIARY BODY ON ARTICLE 8(J) AND OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY RELATED TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

At its first meeting, held in October 2025, Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities prepared a set of draft voluntary guidelines to support the implementation of Targets 1 (plan and manage all areas to reduce biodiversity loss), 2 (restore 30% of all degraded ecosystems), 3 (conserve 30% of land, waters and seas) and 14 (integrate biodiversity in decision-making at every level) of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, for consideration and possible adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting, in October 2026. The draft guidelines, contained in the annex to recommendation 1/3 (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/recommendations/sb8j-01/sb8j-01-rec-03-en.pdf>), are intended to provide guidance, as appropriate, for spatial planning processes, ecosystem restoration, area-based conservation and environmental impact assessment. In the context of Target 3 of the Framework, they could support Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant actors in the recognition and respect for indigenous and traditional territories, in accordance with national legislation and international obligations.

PROGRESS IN THE WORK RELATED TO BIODIVERSITY OF MARINE AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

Expert workshop on scientific and technical work conducted under the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, 2-5 December 2025, Bergen, Norway

The Expert workshop on scientific and technical work conducted under the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction was organized by the Executive Secretary in response to a request by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its decision 16/17. The workshop was organized in cooperation with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, as requested by the Conference of the Parties in the same decision, to continue the cooperation with the Division and organizations with competence in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. The workshop was made possible through the generous financial support of the Governments of Norway, Germany, Ireland and Sweden.

The workshop focused on opportunities for the scientific and technical work under the Convention on Biological Diversity to inform the work of Parties and competent intergovernmental organizations and processes, including global and regional sectoral authorities, and work under the 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 related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The workshop was attended by 47 experts, including 21 experts from Parties, three from indigenous peoples and local communities and major stakeholder groups, 11 from intergovernmental organizations and seven from other organizations and initiatives, in addition to one resource person and four local observers. The workshop comprised plenary sessions, including thematic presentations, panel discussions, question-and-answer sessions and moderated discussions, as well as breakout sessions. A complete list of workshop documents and presentations, as well as the workshop report, are available [here](#). A webinar to provide a briefing on the outcomes of the workshop was held on Teams on 17 March 2026 and attended by 250 people.

CAPACITY-BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Sustainable Ocean Initiative national capacity-building workshop for the Philippines, 4-6 March 2026, Manila, Philippines

In decision [16/17](#), the Conference of the Parties welcomed the activities facilitated by the Secretariat to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, and requested the Secretariat to continue this work.

Pursuant to this request, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity co-organized the Sustainable Ocean Initiative national capacity-building workshop for the Philippines in Manila, Philippines, from 4 to 6 March 2026., in partnerships with several partner organizations², with financial support from the Government of the Republic of Korea (through the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries). The workshop was convened pursuant a request from the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Government of the Philippines to strengthen coordination and dialogue in support of advancing marine spatial planning in the Philippines, contribute to the national blue economy agenda and advance implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The workshop was attended by 65 participants representing government agencies of the Philippines, intergovernmental organizations, academic institutions and other organizations and initiatives. It comprised plenary sessions, including thematic presentations, question-and-answer sessions and discussions, as well as breakout group work.

Fifth Meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies, 30 June to 3 July 2026, Seoul, Republic of Korea

The fifth meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies will be held 30 June to 3 July 2026 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. This process, which began in 2016, is coordinated by the CBD Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme. It focuses on sharing lessons and experiences across global and regional intergovernmental organizations that deal with biodiversity, environment and fisheries issues in the ocean and identifying opportunities and approaches to improve coordination and cooperation in support of achieving global objectives for the ocean. This meeting will have a major focus on analysing progress in the implementation of the KMGBF and on preparing for the first Conference of the Parties to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on

² The Secretariat of the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, the United Nations Environment Programme - Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia, and the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Government of the Philippines, with additional support provided by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management and Sound Seas.

the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). An account of the meeting will be provided in a subsequent report to the United Nations Secretary General.

TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE, 27 JULY TO 1 AUGUST, NAIROBI, KENYA

The twenty-eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will take place following the deadline for this report. However, preparations were well underway throughout this period, including through the preparation of the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the KMGBF, EBSA submissions and peer-review guidelines as well as the preparation of the documents for SBSTTA 28, to inform the Subsidiary Body of the progress made in these areas since COP 16. These activities are reported on above.

ENGAGEMENT IN OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES AND EVENTS

The Secretariat engages in a range of intergovernmental processes and events to facilitate the mainstreaming of biodiversity and to facilitate coherence and complementarity among various processes. In the period under focus, this included engagement in the following:

Third session of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the 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) and the Convening of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement, 23-27 March 2026, New York

The Secretariat supported the deliberations of the meeting by providing input and insights on relevant experiences under the CBD that can inform the important decisions to be taken at the first Conference of the Parties to the BBNJ Agreement, as well as reporting on the outcomes of the expert workshop on scientific and technical work conducted under the CBD relevant to marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, which is reported on above.

The Eighteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and the Thirteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, 13-16 October 2025, Kingston Jamaica

The Secretariat contributed to this meeting by providing invited presentations and submitting technical documents regarding the process of planning, monitoring, reporting and review of the KMGBF, as well as on work related to ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies.

52nd session of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), 15-19 September 2025, London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Secretariat contributed to this meeting by providing a presentation regarding the process of planning, monitoring, reporting and review of the KMGBF, as well as on the range of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity on marine and coastal biodiversity.

In addition to the above-noted processes, the Secretariat contributed to the following workshops and events, among others:

- IUCN High Seas Workshop on Area-based Management Tools in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, 27-29 January 2026, Gland, Switzerland
- Economist World Ocean Summit, 4-5 March 2026, Montreal, Canada
- IOC-UNESCO workshop on linking biodiversity data and data on ocean acidification, 20-21 April 2026, Copenhagen, Denmark

- Joint ICES/EBCD/IUCN/CEM FEG Workshop on Assessing Management Effectiveness of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in Marine Capture Fisheries, 5–7 May 2026. Copenhagen, Denmark
- 25th Large Marine Ecosystems Consultation Meeting, 7-8 July 2026, Paris, France