



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

AT A GLANCE

BLUE  
TRANSFORMATION

# Partnering for sustainability and biodiversity in ABNJ

The marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) are those parts of the ocean for which no one nation has the specific or sole conservation and management responsibility. Instead, this responsibility in relation to living resources is shared by all interested States through subregional or regional organizations. Their complex ecosystems, which include the water column, seabed seamounts, hydrothermal vents, deep-sea trenches and submarine canyons, and oceanic ridges, support high biodiversity in some places, particularly in benthic environments. They are often a great distance from coasts, making the conservation and sustainable management of their natural resources and biodiversity challenging.

The Common Oceans Program, funded by the Global Environment Facility, is composed of five projects, bringing a broad range of partners to work on sustainable use and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ for:

- **Improving tuna and deep-sea fisheries management** through global partnerships, stronger regulatory frameworks and positive incentives for responsible fisheries management and biodiversity conservation.
- **Forming a network** that demonstrates how partnerships and cooperation can sustain and restore the productivity and health of the Sargasso Sea's ecosystem.
- **Developing capacity in regional and national organizations** for better collaboration on cross-sectoral issues such as pollution, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, seabed disturbances and climate change, among others.



## TUNA FISHERIES

Improves harvest strategies to ensure all major tuna stocks are fished at sustainable levels.

Decreases bycatch with innovative monitoring solutions and by generating and sharing knowledge on best practices.

## DEEP-SEA FISHERIES

Supports the adoption of long-term management plans for key deep-sea fisheries stocks.

Develops innovative solutions for data collection and reporting.

## SARGASSO SEA

Develops a first of its kind socio-ecosystem diagnostic analysis for the Sargasso Sea.

## CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION

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

Improve understanding of ABNJ-issues and governance in the Pacific Region.

## TUNA FISHERIES

Tuna fishing brings economic benefits, food and jobs to millions of people. For sustainable tuna fishing, a global partnership is mobilised in the ABNJ to:

- **Improve the management and governance of tuna fisheries** using harvest strategies to ensure sustainable fishing levels for all major tuna stocks. Strengthen the capacities of regional fisheries management organizations in applying the ecosystems approach to fisheries management.
- **Tackle IUU fishing** by promoting national implementation of regulations, providing training in innovative monitoring, control and surveillance systems, and supporting the effective enforcement of regional regulations.
- **Reduce impacts on the environment** by decreasing bycatch with science-based solutions and by generating and sharing knowledge on best practices in bycatch mitigation and alternative gear use.

## DEEP-SEA FISHERIES

Deep-sea fisheries (DSF) typically target bottom-dwelling species down to 1 500 meters. DSF are a source of employment and nutrition, but unsustainability and ecosystem impacts are a concern. Collaborative actions aim to ensure that DSF are managed under an ecosystem approach, such as:

- **Addressing gaps in the uptake of international obligations** like the adoption of long-term management plans for key DSF stocks.
- **Providing training and capacity building** opportunities through e-learning courses and observer training.
- **Improving scientific processes and advice**, through the development of innovative solutions for data collection and reporting, as well as stock assessment for data-limited stocks.
- **Reducing impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems and deep-sea sharks**, through the development of identification guides and adaptive measures.

## SARGASSO SEA

The Sargasso Sea is a unique high seas ecosystem that holds tremendous ecological and socio-economic value, and faces pressure from shipping, fishing, plastics and climate change. A governmental and scientific partnership will play a leading role in sustaining and restoring its productivity and health. It will:

- **Collect knowledge** – develop a socio-ecosystem diagnostic analysis for the Sargasso Sea – the first of its kind for a high seas System.
- **Set up a collaborative stewardship mechanism** for a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) to lay out how conservation aims can be achieved, and subsequently, a roadmap for implementing the SAP.
- **Capture lessons learned and share knowledge** gained during the project to strengthen stewardship in other areas beyond national jurisdiction.

## CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION

Human activities are set to increase in the ABNJ, so coordination among stakeholders is vital as set out in the new agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), which aims to strengthen the international framework on ABNJ governance. Regional and national capacity for sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination will be strengthened with emphasis on knowledge management and public awareness. It will:

- **Develop a training programme for key stakeholders** from regional and national organizations on cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination on ABNJ issues.
- **Improve understanding of the ABNJ in the Southeast Pacific and the Pacific Islands Region** by building up an effective knowledge exchange mechanism for well-informed decision-making on ABNJ issues and increase understanding of the new BBNJ agreement.

Find out more about Common Oceans:  
[www.fao.org/in-action/commonoceans/en/](http://www.fao.org/in-action/commonoceans/en/)



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