



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

**The oceans are essential to life on earth.** Yet, marine life is at risk from increasing pressure caused by overfishing, pollution and climate change. The **Common Oceans Program** is a global alliance for action in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), supporting efforts to keep the oceans healthy through the sustainable management of marine resources and the conservation of biodiversity.



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### WHAT WE DO



#### Tuna fisheries

Promoting responsible management and biodiversity conservation to ensure more sustainable tuna fishing.



#### Deep-sea fisheries

Improving stock management and reducing environmental impacts through better scientific advice, monitoring and enforcement.



#### Sargasso Sea

Forming collaborative stewardship approach to sustain and restore productivity and health of Sargasso Sea ecosystem.



#### Cross-sectoral cooperation

Develop capacity to improve cross-sectoral collaboration on biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction.



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET



We need the oceans. They help regulate our climate and produce oxygen for us to breathe. They provide food, jobs, energy and transport for millions of people around the world. To keep the oceans healthy, we need to manage the marine environment responsibly, as overfishing, pollution and climate change are putting pressure on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Over 60 percent of the oceans' surface lies beyond territorial waters and exclusive economic zones. Although far away, these so-called areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) are no free-for-all. They are covered by the UN Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which establishes the rules governing all uses of the oceans and the protection of the marine environment.



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 | Global coordination project

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
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IN COLLABORATION WITH:



Since 2014, a global alliance of stakeholders and partners – including regional fisheries management organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector – has come together in the Common Oceans Program to bolster the sustainable use of marine resources and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ.

The Common Oceans Program has a key role in preparing the ground for the new treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), known as the “BBNJ Agreement”. It could be a game changer for invigorated cooperation in the management of shared marine waters.

#### FACTS & FIGURES

The areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) cover:

**42%**  
of the planet's surface

**60%**  
of the oceans' surface

The ABNJ hold  
**95%**  
of the oceans' water

Negotiations are underway for a new international treaty under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), known as the “BBNJ Agreement”

The Common Oceans Program contributes to **Blue Transformation** – FAO's vision for sustainable aquatic food systems



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