




# COMMON OCEANS

GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT  
AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN AREAS  
BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION



Oceans make up 70 percent of our planet and are a source of health and wealth for millions of people around the world. They serve as waterways for trade and contain rich, valuable and diverse ecosystems. Oceans and coastal areas provide a vital source of nutritious food, employment, recreation, commerce and socio-economic benefits as well as other crucial goods and services. All in all, over one in ten people depend on fisheries for their livelihoods and well-being. Travel and tourism, ports and associated infrastructures, mining activities and energy production also use oceans and seas to create jobs and other opportunities. Yet, numerous threats are compromising the ability of the oceans to continue providing vital ecosystem services and essential food resources. Despite noteworthy progress, there is a clear need to address the remaining obstacles.

## Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

The marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) are those areas of ocean for which no one nation has the specific or sole responsibility for management. They are the common oceans that make up 40 percent of the surface of our planet, comprising 64 percent of the surface of the oceans and nearly 95 percent of their volume.

The ABNJ consist of the high seas and the seabed beyond the (extended) continental shelf of coastal States and include complex ecosystems at vast distances from coasts, making sustainable management of fisheries

resources and biodiversity conservation in those areas difficult and challenging. These ecosystems are subject to impacts from a variety of sectors including shipping, pollution, deep-sea mining and fishing. Addressing such impacts can be compounded by problems in coordinating, disseminating and building capacity for best practices and in capitalizing on successful experiences – especially those related to the management of fisheries in ABNJ. Without urgent action, marine biodiversity and socio-economic well-being will decline and the value and benefits of these resources for current and future generations dependant on fisheries resources will diminish.

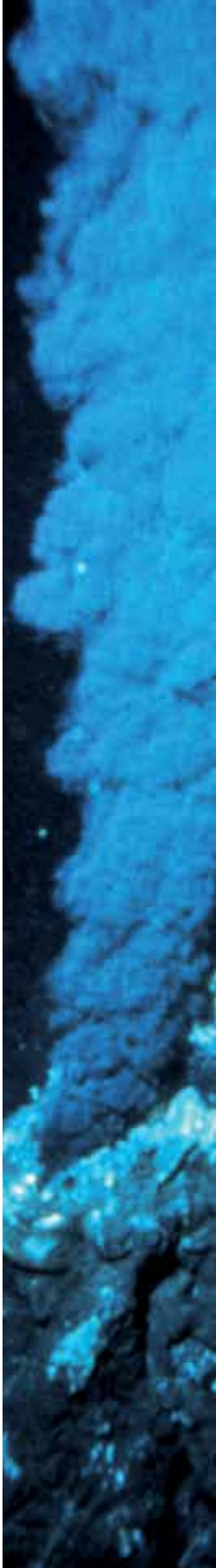
## ABNJ Program – Protecting vulnerable and important ecosystems and species

Seeking to generate a catalytic change the *Global sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Program*, was approved by the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in November 2011. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is the coordinating agency in close collaboration with two other GEF implementing agencies, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Bank, as well as other partners. and executing partners, including RFMOs, industry, and NGOs.

Focusing on tuna and deep-sea fisheries, in parallel with the conservation of biodiversity,

the ABNJ Program aims to promote efficient and sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in ABNJ to achieve the global targets agreed in international fora.

The five-year ABNJ Program is an innovative, unique and comprehensive initiative working with a variety of partners. It is made of four projects which bring together governments, regional management bodies, civil society, the private sector, academia and industry to work towards ensuring the sustainable use and conservation of ABNJ biodiversity and ecosystem services.



## Who will benefit from the ABNJ Program?

**F**isheries in ABNJ contribute to employment, nutrition and trade. At the same time healthy ecosystems are vitally important for marine biodiversity and for maintaining the resources we depend on for food and other ecosystem services.

Although the benefits vary greatly among areas, millions of families in both developing and developed countries depend on fishing jobs and associated activities – from boat construction to harvesting and marketing seafood. The ABNJ Program is intended to help ensure their food and livelihoods security through the long-term management and sustainability of ABNJ fisheries and the ecosystems on which they depend. Improved fisheries management and conservation of biodiversity will lead to global economic

benefits, related to both use and non-use values, due to the increased health and potential for long-term use of these important natural resources.

The Program can also help States better fulfill their obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, particularly regarding the conservation and management of living resources and ecosystems in the high seas and the Convention of Biodiversity, especially Aichi Targets 6 & 11. It will further promote the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and relevant UN General Assembly resolution and other international instruments. It will also respond to global calls to reduce specific issues such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing presently and encourage sustainable ecosystem-based practices.

**Fish are a primary source of protein for 17% of the world's population – and nearly 25% in low-income food deficit countries. Capture fisheries and aquaculture contribute, either directly or indirectly, to over 200 million jobs globally. Fish products are one of the most traded food commodities worldwide.**

## What difference can the ABNJ Program make?

**T**he ABNJ Program offers an opportunity to move further – and to move together with all partners – by leveraging resources, knowledge and experience from partners to bring about transformational changes. By providing leadership in making the sustainability of ABNJ a priority, ultimately, the Program will lead to improved global sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in ABNJ. The Program concentrates on short-term milestones as part of a long-term plan to establish the strong networks, best management practices and facilitated information sharing needed to make a transformational impact towards responsible and sustainable use of ABNJ resources. It aims to:

- move towards the ecosystem approach and rights-based systems and away from the race to fish
- increase our ability to protect fragile ecosystems
- foster international and cross-sectoral coordination and sharing of information

By effectively managing fisheries and conservation of marine biodiversity in ABNJ, the promise of sustaining the oceans and its benefits for future generations can be fulfilled.

## OBJECTIVE:

Achieve sustainable and efficient tuna fisheries production and biodiversity conservation through the systematic application of an ecosystem approach

## PARTNERS:

Tuna Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs)<sup>1</sup>, Bird Life International, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (United States of America) and the World Wide Fund for Nature

## FINANCING:

US\$30 million in GEF grants leveraged by over US\$150.8 million in co-financing

## Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in ABNJ

This project focuses on three areas:

- Supporting implementation of sustainable and efficient fisheries management and fishing practices
- Reducing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through strengthened and harmonized Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS)
- Reducing ecosystem impacts from tuna fishing, including bycatch and associated species

Highly migratory tuna species account for about 20% of the value of all marine capture fisheries and their management is the direct responsibility of the five t-RFMOs. Over 85 countries harvest tuna – among the most commercially-valuable marine resources – in commercial quantities with yearly exports about 8% of all internationally traded seafood. The value of the most important tunas is estimated at over US\$10 billion annually.

With the strong demand for tuna, combined with overcapacity of fishing fleets, the status of existing tuna stocks is likely to deteriorate further if fisheries management is not improved. With collective action and partnering by all stakeholders at global, national and regional levels – especially t-RFMOs, their member

<sup>1</sup> The five tuna RFMOs: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) which is an intergovernmental organization established under Article XIV of the FAO constitution, Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) – see also [www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/search/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/search/en)



countries and the tuna industry – ABNJ fisheries and ecosystems will be able to contribute effectively to the socio-economic development and food and livelihoods security of the millions of people involved in these fisheries for generations to come.

Working with key stakeholders, this project strives for efficiency and sustainability in tuna production and biodiversity conservation, through the application of an ecosystem approach. This unique project draws together a large and diverse group of stakeholders – from consumers and industry to t-RFMOs, NGOs and international organizations – who play important roles in tuna fisheries. They will build on existing collaborations to facilitate optimal use of scarce capacity and resources in order to achieve the global goals for sustainable fishing and biodiversity conservation. Certain aspects will focus on all RFMOs, including Member countries, while other elements will concentrate on priority countries, regions and fisheries with a view towards capacity development.



## OBJECTIVE:

Achieve efficient and sustainable use of deep-sea living resources and improving biodiversity conservation in ABNJ through the systematic application of an ecosystem approach

## EXECUTING PARTNERS:

UNEP-WCMC, The Nairobi Convention, the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA), the Southern Indian Ocean Deepsea Fishers Association (SIODFA), the Sealord Group, IUCN, NOAA, deep-sea RFMO/As (GFCM, CCAMLR, Interim NPFC, NAFO, NEAFC, SPRFMO, SEAFO)<sup>2</sup>, the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), and others

## FINANCING:

US\$8.4 million in GEF grants leveraged with US\$79 million in co-financing

## Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep-sea Living Resources and Ecosystems in ABNJ

Deep-sea fisheries in the high seas occur in waters beyond national jurisdiction on continental slopes or isolated oceanic topographic structures such as seamounts, ridge systems and banks.

These deep-sea fisheries comprise a valuable part of ABNJ activities – FAO estimates that the total global catch in 2006 of approximately 60 deep-sea species was around 250 000 tonnes worth more than US\$400 million and involved at least 27 flag states. From a biodiversity viewpoint, the ecosystems in which these fisheries take place are unique – the seamounts and the water column above them serve as habitats for many benthic organisms and marine mammals. The potential negative impact of fishing on these critical habitats that support globally significant biodiversity, has become an issue of international concern. In response, concerted efforts by many organizations, such as the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMO/As) responsible for the management of fish stocks in ABNJ, have been undertaken. This project seeks to build on such efforts, make use of best practices and address other key issues necessary for the global sustainable use and conservation of these marine resources.

<sup>2</sup> General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), Commission on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Interim Secretariat for the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (Interim NPFC), Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO), North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)





This project focuses on four areas:

- Improved implementation of existing policy and legal frameworks
- Reduced adverse impacts on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) and enhanced conservation and management of components of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs)
- Improved planning and adaptive management for deep-sea fisheries in ABNJ
- Development and testing of a methodology for area-based planning

It will contribute to improving deep-sea fisheries management and biodiversity conservation, through the harmonization of conservation and sustainable use following the principles of the ecosystem approach while testing innovative and appropriate management tools. The successful implementation of this Project would represent a significant step towards the sustainable use of deep-sea fish stocks as well as protection of associated bycatch species, ecosystems, habitats and biodiversity in ABNJ.



## Ocean Partnerships for Sustainable Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation – Models for Innovation and Reform

This project aims to support pilot public and private sector investment in better managed fisheries based on migratory stocks that straddle developing countries' coastal jurisdictions (Exclusive Economic Zones<sup>3</sup>) and ABNJ. More specifically, it will identify and help develop four pilot investments with high potential to deliver enhanced economic, social and environmental benefits from living marine resources. Such benefits will be achieved through reforms in the ways fisheries are managed. The project will contribute directly to the objectives of both the ABNJ Program and the recently convened Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO). Co-financing will be available through GPO partners and includes existing and planned World Bank IDA/IBRD<sup>4</sup> investments.

The project will be implemented by the World Bank through regional execution agencies and focuses on three areas:

- Definition and development of business plans for long-term transformational pilots for sustainable fisheries in priority ocean areas
- An innovation fund supporting the business plans
- Monitoring and evaluation of pilots and lesson learning

The project aims to develop business plans for investment in long-term, sustainable management of several different fisheries each spanning areas within and beyond national jurisdiction. Business plans will incorporate the economic, technical and financial rationale and feasibility to attract investment in pilot implementation (2013-16) by public or private capital markets. Once implemented, pilots will contribute to increasing sustainable, net economic benefits to coastal and island developing countries while enhancing ocean biodiversity conservation.

<sup>3</sup> Exclusive economic zone (EEZ) refers to those areas over which a state has special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources, stretching from the seaward edge of the state's territorial sea to 200 nautical miles from its coast.

<sup>4</sup> International Development Association/ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

### OBJECTIVE:

Develop business plans for investment in long-term, sustainable management of several different fisheries each spanning areas within and beyond national jurisdiction

### PARTNERS:

Conservation International; other executing partners will be identified respective to potential project locations

### FINANCING:

US\$10 million in GEF grants leveraged with at least US\$40 million in co-financing





## Strengthening Global Capacity to Effectively Manage ABNJ

This project will play a key role in building and improving cross-sectoral dialogue, engagement of high-level decision-makers, public outreach and knowledge management to strengthen capacity to effectively manage ABNJ.

Building on the efforts of the other projects and partners, this project focuses on three areas:

- Global and Regional Cross-Sectoral Dialogues, through:
  - Establishing linkages for improved information-sharing and understanding on ABNJ across sectors and between global and regional levels.
  - High-level information sessions and events held at major relevant meetings to raise the awareness of decision makers on ABNJ issues, solicit their input on key ABNJ issues related to fisheries and biodiversity conservation and encourage their involvement in future ABNJ policy discussions at various levels.
- Capacity Development, through:
  - Communities of Practice in key ABNJ issue-areas, made up of expert practitioners from academia, governments, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and industry with relevant experience and knowledge in ABNJ issues to share and exchange information.
  - *Regional ABNJ Leaders Fellowship Program* supporting the participation of regional leaders from developing countries in global ABNJ processes.
- Knowledge Management and Outreach, through:
  - Public outreach network partnering with journalists and media specialists to improve and expand efforts to raise awareness on important ABNJ issues.
  - The *Common Oceans* web portal designed to provide information, data and best practices on related ABNJ issues generated across all these program projects.

### OBJECTIVE:

Promote effective global and regional coordination on ABNJ, including exchange of information by:

- strengthening and broadening cross-sectoral dialogue and policy coordination in ABNJ
- increasing decision-makers' capability to participate in processes for management and coordination of ABNJ activities
- broadening public understanding of the ecosystem threats to ABNJ

### PARTNERS:

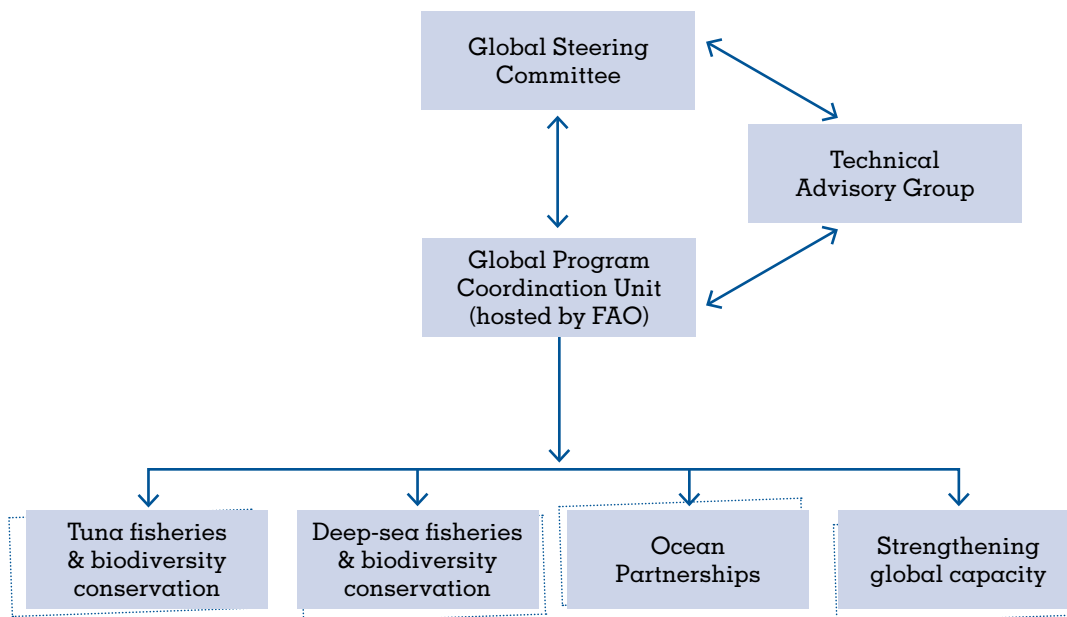
Global Ocean Forum (co-executing Agency), French Marine Protected Areas agency, Institute for International Relations and Sustainable Development (IDDRI), Nausicaä Centre National de la Mer (France), World Ocean Network, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Vietnam National University, SeaOrbiter and others

### FINANCING:

US\$1.09 million in GEF grants leveraged with US\$4.6 million in co-financing

## Overall ABNJ Program structure – bringing it all together

FAO, serving as the Global Program Coordination Unit, will be supported by a Global Steering Committee comprised of representation from key partners and a Technical Advisory Group made of scientific and technical experts working to ensure participation and full involvement of key partners from the policy, technical and scientific communities as well as industry.











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12943E/04.14

