



Early Operationalisation of the BBNJ Treaty: Regional Exercise for PrepCom2

30-31 July 2025 | UNESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand

Rationale

The adoption of the BBNJ Agreement¹, also known as the High Seas Treaty, in June 2019 by UN member states is a landmark feat for ocean governance. It promises to deliver equitable benefit sharing from the marine genetic resources and digital sequence information, a more robust environmental impact assessment to prevent harmful activities in the international waters, capacity-building and transfer of marine technology, and a legal framework to establish high seas marine protected areas through area-based management tools.

In September 2023, the Treaty was opened for signature and the Race for Ratification to become State Parties has gained momentum since then. Almost two years since the Treaty was adopted, the BBNJ Preparatory Commission (PrepCom) held its first substantive session to start the discussion and negotiation on building its institutions for the early operationalisation. The PrepCom1 offered a positive progress in discussing key issues ranging from governance, Clearing House Mechanism, and financial resources/mechanism.

Ahead of PrepCom2 and with the anticipation of notes from the Co-Chairs and the Secretariat in the next coming months, a regional workshop will be co-organised by the High Seas Alliance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand to unpack the remaining Program of Work and exchange initial views and ideas.

Objectives

The regional workshop aims to aid the Asia government delegates in PrepCom2 Meeting. Specifically, its aims to:

- Facilitate exchange of insights and available information on the PrepCom agenda items, and if available already, the organisation of work for PrepCom2;
- Hold scenario-based exercise on key issues and mechanisms of the Treaty to widen and deepen the context of understanding among delegates; and
- Exchange learnings on the domestic processes of ratification.

High-level overview

The two-day regional workshop will be delivered in the proposed modalities:

- **Sensitization on the context of the Treaty:** this session will cover institutional memory, i.e., collective knowledge and context on how the packaged issues were negotiated and

¹ Agreement under the United Nations on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)



the provisions were shaped. Revisiting the Treaty's negotiation can aid delegates in deeper understanding of its objectives.

- **Informative sessions on the key issues/PoW:** While the organisers will aim to cover all three issues from the PoW, focus will be given to a number of agenda items (e.g., Clearing House Mechanism) that will be identified through the survey that will be circulated among Asia government delegates
- **Scenario-based exercise:** On certain topics such as some elements of the Clearing House Mechanism, scenario-based exercise will be designed accordingly as a practical approach on how the Treaty will be operationalised when it enters into force.

Provisional Agenda

Day 1	
8:30 AM	Arrival and registration
9:00 AM	Official Opening <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand</i> <i>UNESCAP</i>
9:10 AM	Rationale and objectives of the regional workshop/exercise <i>Rebecca Hubbard</i> <i>Director, High Seas Alliance</i>
9:15 AM	Highlights of PrepCom1 <i>Bingzhuo Li</i> <i>UN DOALOS (invited)</i>
9:30 AM	BBNJ's North Star: Revisiting Institutional Knowledge and Objectives of BBNJ Agreement <i>(How the Agreement was shaped during the negotiations)</i> <i>Singapore Ambassador for International Law Rena Lee (invited)</i>
10:00 AM	Coffee break
10:15 AM	Clearing House Mechanism: Learning from existing platforms and practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The International Oceanographic Data and Exchange (including the Global Ocean Observing System, Ocean Biodiversity Information System) <i>Wenxi Zhu, Programme Specialist and head of IOC-UNESCO's Sub commission for Western Pacific</i> ● Process and considerations in establishing a knowledge management platform in the context of the BBNJ Agreement <i>TBD</i>
11:15 AM	Open forum
11:45 AM	Mapping or scenario-based exercise on Clearing House Mechanism



12:30 PM	Lunch break
1:30 PM	Plenary sharing (Clearing House Mechanism exercise)
2:00 PM	Coordination and cooperation with existing instruments, frameworks, and bodies: Identifying entry points and complementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergies between BBNJ Agreement and CBD <i>Daniel Kachelriess, Cross-cutting Coordinator</i> • The Role of UNEP Regional Seas Programme in achieving the objectives of the BBNJ Agreement <i>Mahesh Pradhan, COBSEA Coordinator (invited)</i> • The Role of RFMOs to support the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement <i>Paul de Bruyn, Executive Director of Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (invited)</i> • Perspective of Member State in harmonizing obligations and commitments with BBNJ Agreements and IFBs <i>Dr. Hussain Sinan, Director General for Fisheries Management, Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Maldives (invited)</i> • Preparing for BBNJ's entry into force: The case of South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation <i>Duncan Currie, International Legal Advisor of High Seas Alliance</i>
3:00 PM	Open forum
3:30 PM	Coffee break
3:45 PM	Scenario-based exercise on IFB coordination and cooperation
4:30 PM	Plenary sharing (coordination and cooperation with IFBs exercise)
5:00 PM	End of day 1
Day 2	
9:00 AM	Financial Mechanism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing GEF Early Action Support to BBNJ <i>Andrew Hume, Senior Manager for International Waters Portfolio, Global Environment Facility (invited)</i> • Case presentation of GEF fund approval and utilisation from a country - TBD • Components of Financial Mechanism of the BBNJ Agreement and Designing the Special Fund <i>Eliza Northrop, Co-Director of UNSW Center for Sustainable Development Reform (invited)</i>
9:45 AM	Open forum
10:00 AM	Coffee break



10:15 AM	Mapping exercise on finance mechanism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify vision (wish list) for an efficient and innovative finance mechanism, particularly the design of Special Fund ● Identify necessary steps/actions and elements required to achieve those visions.
11:15 AM	Plenary sharing on finance mechanism exercise
12:00 PM	Lunch break
1:00 PM	Ratification: Progress and Learnings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentations from select countries ● Open plenary – countries to share updates on ratification / implementation progress
3:00 PM	Coffee break
3:15 PM	Wrap-up / end of regional workshop/exercise
3:30 PM	Intersessional meeting - Asia group informal meeting for PrepCom2 (for government delegates only – to be confirmed)
5:00 PM	End