

WCPFC & the BBNJ Agreement

WCPFC22, Side Event

1st December 2025

Dr. Ina Tessnow-von Wysocki (ANCORS)

1. Why a new BBNJ Agreement?

Context

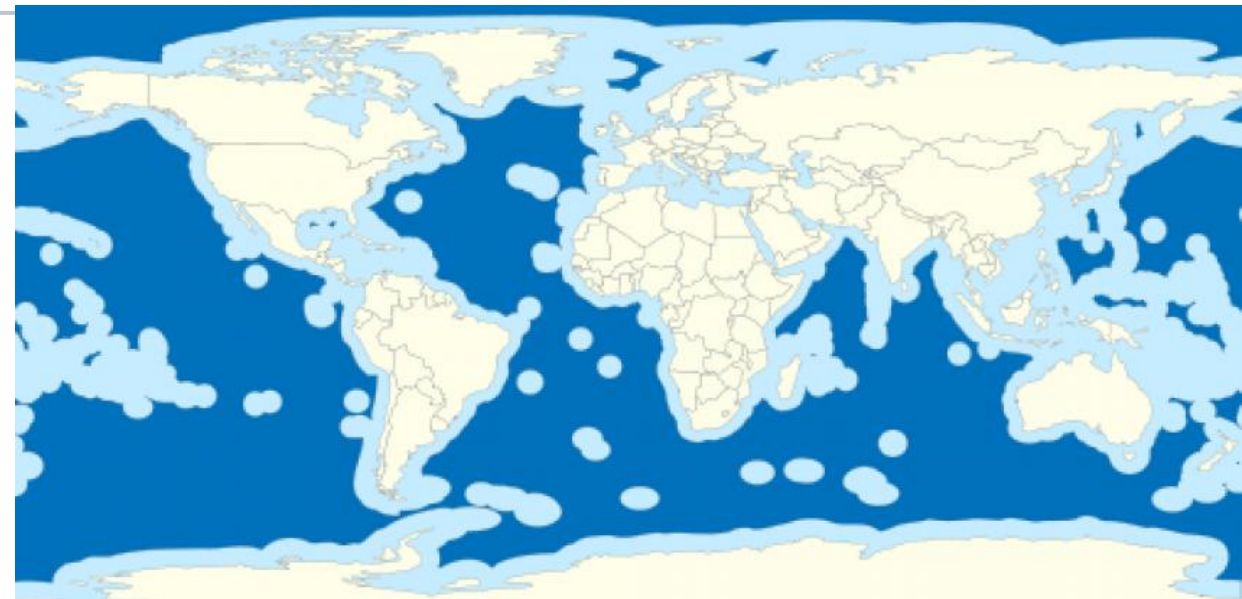
Imbalance of global ocean science & capacities

Unregulated use of Marine Genetic Resources in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

Marine Biodiversity loss



Need for:
Comprehensive framework for the
conservation and sustainable use of marine biological
diversity
of Areas beyond national jurisdiction



Geographic coverage for BBNJ: Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)

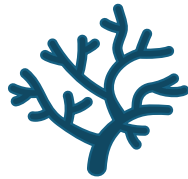
2. The Package Deal

Marine Genetic
Resources

Area-Based
Management Tools
(ABMTs), including
Marine protected
Areas (MPAs)

Environmental Impact
Assessments (EIAs)

Capacity Building and
the Transfer of Marine
Technology (CBTMT)



Crosscutting Issues

- Institutional Arrangements (Scientific & Technical Body; Secretariat; Clearing-House Mechanism)
- Financial Resources & Mechanism
- Implementation and Compliance Committee
- Dispute Settlement

2.1 Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs)



Marine Genetic Resources

The fair and equitable sharing of benefits from activities with respect to **MGRs and digital sequence information (DSI)** on MGRs of ABNJ (monetary & non-monetary)

Access and Benefit-Sharing Committee for guidelines

The **building and development of the capacity of Parties**, to carry out activities with respect to MGRs and DSI

The **generation of knowledge, scientific understanding and technological innovation**

Transfer of marine technology

- **Pre-collection**: notify the clearinghouse mechanism prior to the collection of MGRs of ABNJ (“BBNJ” standardized batch identifier)
- **Post-collection**: more info, e.g. where the MGR or DSI will be deposited; utilization, including commercialization (publications, patents, products)

2.1 WCPFC & Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs)

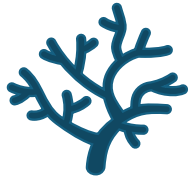


Marine Genetic Resources

- Fishing and fishing-related activities are excluded (BBNJ, Art. 10 2a)
 - Exception: where such fish or other living marine resources are regulated as “utilization” (BBNJ, Art 10 2b)
- when fish is taken as a **means to conduct research and development on the genetic or biochemical composition** it becomes relevant to the BBNJ Agreement and will need to be registered, and information will need to be shared.
- Helpful to engage with the BBNJ Clearinghouse mechanism (BBNJ, Art.12)

2.2. Area-based Management Tools (ABMTs), including Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Area-Based
Management Tools
(ABMTs), including
Marine protected
Areas (MPAs)



Protect, preserve, restore and maintain biological diversity and ecosystems

Support **food security** and other socioeconomic objectives

Comprehensive system of ABMTs, with ecologically representative and well-connected **networks of MPAs**

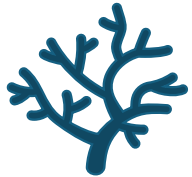
Strengthen **cooperation and coordination** in the use of ABMTs/MPAs among States, relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies;

Support developing States Parties in developing, implementing, monitoring, managing and enforcing ABMTs/MPAs

- Proposals by Parties to Secretariat
- Publicly available
- Consultations
- Decision by consensus – otherwise 3/4 majority vote
- Emergency measures

2.2. WCPFC & Area-based Management Tools (ABMTs), including Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Area-Based
Management Tools
(ABMTs), including
Marine protected
Areas (MPAs)



WCPFC will play an important role

- due to its vast knowledge about the Pacific Ocean and marine species
- sharing experiences of already established ABMTs in ABNJ & the joint development of new management tools
- in the development of proposals for new ABMTs, including MPAs, and their implementation
- The WCPFC is invited to submit views on the proposal in the development stage

2.3. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)



Obligation to conduct EIAs (if activity may cause substantial pollution of or significant and harmful changes to the marine environment)

Ensure that activities are assessed and conducted to prevent, mitigate and manage significant adverse impacts

Consider cumulative impacts and impacts in areas within national jurisdiction

Build and strengthen the capacity of Parties to prepare, conduct and evaluate EIAs and strategic environmental assessments

- Parties shall promote the use of EIAs and the standards and/or guidelines in other fora
- Equivalent EIAs
- Monitoring & Review
- Public notification and consultation

2.3. WCPFC & Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)



- BBNJ Parties are required to promote the use of EIAs and the adoption and implementation of standards/guidelines of BBNJ in other fora, e.g. in WCPFC
- The part on EIAs is relevant for WCPFC
 - in the cases of planned fishing activity in new ocean regions/depths or for new target species
 - for the *ways* in which future EIAs are conducted, regarding the process of (scoping, screening and assessments, transparency and reporting)
 - continuous monitoring of impacts of authorised activities
 - Data sharing for assessing cumulative impacts in ABNJ, and conducting Strategic environmental assessments (SEAs)

2.4 Capacity Building and Transfer of Marine Technology

Capacity Building and the Transfer of Marine Technology (CBTMT)



Assist Parties in implementing the Agreement; **support developing States Parties** across package elements

Inclusive, equitable and effective cooperation and participation

Increase, disseminate and share **knowledge**

Support the human, financial management, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and other **resource capabilities of Parties**

Capacity-building and transfer of marine technology committee

2.4 WCPFC& Capacity Building and Transfer of Marine Technology

Capacity Building and the Transfer of Marine Technology (CBTMT)



Relevance for WCPFC

- seeks to enhance the sharing and use of data in ABNJ
- the development and strengthening of relevant infrastructure, institutional capacity and technological tools for effective monitoring, control and surveillance of activities
- Facilitation of international cooperation on CBTMT & prevention of duplication of initiatives

2.4 WCPFC & cross cutting

The BBNJ Agreement will **strengthen cooperation and coordination with and among other IFBs**

Interaction between BBNJ and WCPFC

- Secretariats
- their scientific advisory bodies
- their other subsidiary bodies
- the Member States

Member States of the BBNJ treaty need to promote BBNJ objectives in other fora (e.g. RFMO meetings and decisions) (BBNJ, Art. 8.2)

6. References & Further Information

BBNJ Agreement (2023). 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.. A/CONF.232/2023/4. <https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/en/bbnj-agreement/text-bbnj-agreement>

Publications:

Harden-Davies, H., & Snelgrove, P. (2020). Science Collaboration for Capacity Building: Advancing Technology Transfer Through a Treaty for Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2020.00040>

Tessnow-von Wysocki, I., & Vadrot, A. B. M. (2024). Pathways of scientific input into intergovernmental negotiations: a new agreement on marine biodiversity. *International Environmental Agreements : Politics, Law and Economics*, 24(2–3), 325–348. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-024-09642-0>

Tessnow-von Wysocki, I. (2023). Science-policy interfaces for ocean protection: The case of the international negotiations for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). *Doctoral Thesis*. <https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/detail/o:1978693>

Tessnow-von Wysocki, I., & Vadrot, A. B. M. (2022). Governing a Divided Ocean: The Transformative Power of Ecological Connectivity in the BBNJ Negotiations. *Politics and Governance*, 10(3), 14–28. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v10i3.5428>

Tessnow-von Wysocki, I., & Vadrot, A. B. M. (2020). The Voice of Science on Marine Biodiversity Negotiations: A Systematic Literature Review. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2020.614282>

Official documents in preparation for the First Preparatory Commission Meeting:

United Nations Website: <https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/en/meetings/preparatory-commission/documents/first-session>

ANCORS Podcast: Negotiating the Ocean

WCPFC 22 ANCORS Observer Paper: WCPFC & the BBNJ Agreement :



Dr. Ina Tessnow-von Wysocki
Australian National Centre for Ocean
Resources and Security (ANCORS)
inatvw@uow.edu.au