Law of the Sea Review No. 1

The BBNJ Agreement
Status, Functions, Prospects and China's Role

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Abstract

The 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 (hereinafter the "BBNJ Agreement" or the "Agreement") is the third implementing agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (hereinafter the "Convention" or "UNCLOS"). Following nearly two decades of negotiations, it was adopted by consensus on 19 June 2023 and entered into force on 17 January 2026. The Agreement represents a landmark achievement for multilateralism in global ocean governance and a major milestone in the development of the international law of the sea, addressing an institutional gap in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The Agreement applies to the high seas and the international seabed area (the Area), which together cover about two-thirds of the global ocean. It establishes a legal framework based on four pillars: marine genetic resources (hereinafter the "MGR"); measures such as area-based management tools(hereinafter the "ABMTs", including marine protected areas (hereinafter the "MPA"); environmental impact assessments (hereinafter the "EIA"); and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology. Conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity are its two overarching objectives. The Agreement upholds the status of UNCLOS as a comprehensive legal instrument while introducing institutional innovations to meet contemporary challenges in the governance of the global commons. It establishes a governance structure comprising the Conference of the Parties (hereinafter the "COP"), subsidiary bodies and a secretariat. It also provides a financial mechanism comprising several types of funds and a network for cooperation and coordination with relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional ,subregional and sectoral bodies (hereinafter the "IFBs"). With more than 100 Parties, the Agreement has entered a new phase in which its governance framework is being translated into operational arrangements.

China has contributed its expertise and proposals to the design and refinement of the relevant legal arrangements, helping bridge differences between developed and developing countries, and advancing the eventual conclusion of the Agreement. On MGR, China has advocated upholding the principle of the common heritage of mankind established in UNCLOS and creating a benefit-sharing mechanism encompassing both monetary and non-monetary benefits, thereby safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries. On ABMTs, China has supported an integrated approach to biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of marine resources, respect for the sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction of all States, clear implementation procedures, and stronger coordination with relevant IFBs to improve conservation effectiveness. On environmental impact assessments, China has upheld the basic legal framework of UNCLOS, promoted greater procedural transparency, advanced alignment with existing measures governing marine activities under international rules, guided the green and low-carbon transition of marine activities, and continued to enhance support for developing countries. On capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, China has advocated a country-driven and needs-based approach, diversified cooperation forms, and used the Clearing-House Mechanism to match needs with available support, strengthening developing countries' implementation capacity. These proposals and actions, which

address both equity and development needs, contribute to global marine biodiversity conservation and to the building of a maritime community with a shared future.

As one of the first signatories and Parties to the Agreement, China has taken practical steps to support its full and effective implementation. Through scientific research expeditions conducted using deep-sea submersibles such as Jiaolong and Fendouzhe (Striver), as well as research vessels such as Shenhai Yihao (Deep Sea No. 1), China has made its research platforms accessible to international partners and shared scientific results with them. Through voluntary fishing moratoriums on the high seas, participation in green shipping corridor initiatives, its presidency role in promoting the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and establishment of the Kunming Biodiversity Fund, China has pursued an approach to marine conservation that combines ambition with practical action. With established experience in environmental impact assessments for deep-sea mineral exploration, China is well-positioned to support developing countries in undertaking such assessments and to promote green and low-carbon marine activities. China has signed marine cooperation agreements with more than 50 countries and international organizations, jointly established more than 40 marine research centres and laboratories, and implemented numerous small-scale, high-impact marine conservation projects, strengthening the ocean-related capabilities of the Global South. By offering to host the Secretariat of the Agreement in Xiamen, China has undertaken further international responsibilities, addressing the absence of headquarters of United Nations ocean-related bodies in Asia.

The first meeting of the COP to the Agreement will be held on 11-22 January 2027 to decide, among other matters, the rules of procedure of the Conference and arrangements for the location and operation of the Secretariat. Looking ahead, China will further implement the Global Governance Initiative, deepen practical cooperation and promote the efficient operation of the Agreement's mechanisms, contributing to a more equitable and reasonable system of global ocean governance. Against this background, the China Institute for Marine Affairs of the Ministry of Natural Resources has brought together experts to assess the Agreement's status, roles and prospects and to examine China's constructive contributions to its conclusion and implementation.

Part I of this report provides an objective assessment of the Agreement's historical significance, its practical role in the current international context, and its implementation prospects. Part II reviews China's negotiating positions and its contributions to the conclusion of the Agreement. Part III examines China's achievements relevant to the implementation of the Agreement's substantive pillars, together with its practical measures and contributions to advancing implementation. The report concludes that China can play a greater role in implementing the Agreement and enable developing countries to benefit more from its development achievements.

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I Status, Functions and Prospects of the Agreement

The Agreement establishes rules and institutions for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (hereinafter the "ABNJ"). It represents a landmark development in the international law of the sea and a significant achievement for multilateralism.

1 Status

The Agreement is a historic achievement in global ocean governance. The challenges of governing the global commons exposed gaps in the existing legal framework of UNCLOS, creating an urgent need for an additional legally binding international instrument.[1] In 2004, United Nations General Assembly resolution 59/24 established an Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in ABNJ. Negotiations proceeded through three stages: the Working Group (2006–2015), the Preparatory Committee (2016–2017) and the Intergovernmental Conference (2018–2023), spanning nearly two decades. On 19 June 2023, the Agreement was adopted by consensus, an outcome United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres described as a "historic achievement". As the third implementing agreement under UNCLOS, it responds systematically to new and practical needs including benefit-sharing from utilization of MGR and the conservation of marine biological diversity in ABNJ. Through a dedicated international treaty adapted to contemporary conditions, it defines its relationship with relevant IFBs and establishes a framework for coordinated and mutually reinforcing action, addressing a critical institutional gap in global ocean governance.[2]

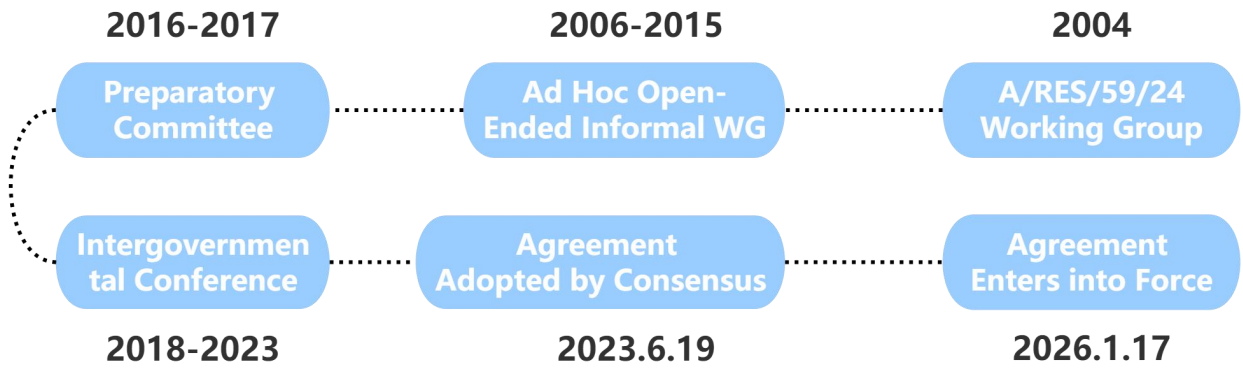


Figure 1 Negotiation and entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement

[1] Joyner, Christopher C., and Elizabeth A. Martell. "Looking back to see ahead: UNCLOS III and lessons for global commons law." Ocean Development & International Law 27.1-2 (1996): 73-95; Kittichaisaree, Kriangsak. "Roles and Future Developments of UNCLOS." Viability of UNCLOS amid Emerging Global Maritime Challenges. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2024. 3-14.

[2] De Lucia, Vito. "The integration of the ecosystem approach in the BBNJ agreement—an initial assessment of limits and opportunities." Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law 33.3 (2024): 554-564.

The Agreement marks a major milestone in the development of the international law of the sea. It incorporates the principles of the common heritage of humankind and the freedom of the high seas, respects the rights, obligations and interests of States under UNCLOS, and upholds the Convention's foundational legal status. Building on UNCLOS, the Agreement further develops and elaborates the rules on environmental impact assessments, establishes a Capacity-Building and Transfer of Marine Technology Committee and a special fund, and strengthens developing countries' capacity to participate in global ocean governance. It also makes several major institutional breakthroughs. For the first time, it establishes a benefit-sharing mechanism for MGR in the ABNJ and their digital sequence information, including a clear obligation for developed countries to make initial financial contributions. It also provides a legal basis for establishing marine protected areas on the high seas and the Area at the global level.[3] By maintaining continuity with UNCLOS while further developing and innovating upon its framework, the Agreement establishes rules and institutions for the conservation and sustainable use marine biodiversity in these areas, opening a new chapter in global ocean governance.

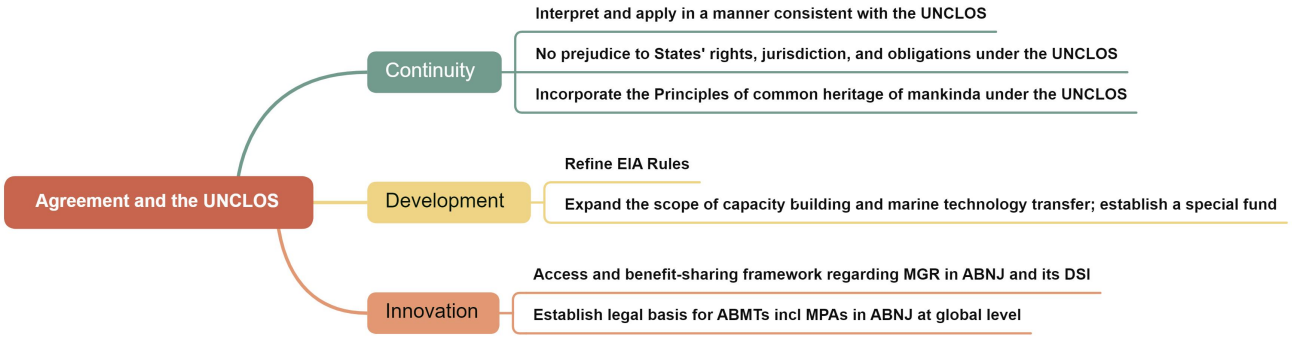


Figure 2 Continuity, development and innovation: the relationship between the BBNJ Agreement and UNCLOS

The Agreement is a significant symbol of the victory of multilateralism. During negotiations, substantial differences arose over benefit-sharing for MGR, the establishment of ABMTs, including marine protected areas, and the transparency of environmental impact assessments. At times, the negotiations reached an impasse. Yet challenges in the ocean commons are global and transcend national boundaries, while the interests of all countries in the oceans are closely intertwined. To protect the common interests of humankind, the negotiating parties maintained flexibility and sought the broadest possible common ground, ultimately securing agreement on the text. In an international environment marked by rising unilateralism and geopolitical competition, the Agreement addresses the challenges of global commons governance through institutional arrangements, upholds the international order based on international law and strengthens the international community's confidence in multilateralism, demonstrating a major victory for multilateralism.[4]

[3] Dalaker, Kristine Elfrida. "A Commentary on the BBNJ Agreement Using the History of the Making of UNCLOS and Its Implementation Agreements." Ocean Yearbook Online 38.1 (2024): 125-160.

[4] Kim, Rakhyun E. "The likely impact of the BBNJ Agreement on the architecture of ocean governance." Marine Policy 165 (2024): 106190.



Figure 3 Adoption of the BBNJ Agreement on 19 June 2023

2 Functions

The Agreement establishes a legal framework for access to MGR in ABNJ and digital sequence information, as well as for benefit-sharing, addressing an institutional gap in UNCLOS.[5] Parties are required to provide information to the Clearing-House Mechanism before collecting MGR, including the timing and location of planned collection activities, creating opportunities of participation for developing countries. The Agreement provides for the assignment of standardized batch identifiers to collection activities, facilitating the monitoring of the origin and utilization of MGR and associated digital sequence information, enhancing transparency and promoting the sharing of benefits arising from their utilization. It respects and protects the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities associated with MGR and gives effect to prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms. Its framework for non-monetary benefit-sharing encourages the facilitated transfer of samples, public availability of digital sequence information, capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology to developing countries. Developed countries also contribute to the special fund established under the Agreement, enabling monetary benefit-sharing to support capacity and technology development in developing countries.

[5] Liu Yang and Shi Yubing, "Institutional Innovations of the BBNJ Agreement in the International Law of the Sea", Pacific Journal, N o. 5, 2024, pp. 90–105.

The Agreement creates a legal basis for establishing ABMTs in ABNJ at global level, giving practical effect to the Convention's framework for responsible use of the ocean. According to the Agreement, establishing ABMTs, including marine protected areas,shall not prejudice the sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction, including in respect of any disputes relating thereto. The COP shall not consider for decision proposals for the establishment of ABMTs involving areas under national jurisdiction or disputed areas. Parties may submit proposals for ABMTs. Following review by the Scientific and Technical Body (hereinafter the "STB"), stakeholder consultations and assessment by that STB, the COP may adopt decisions or recommendations on the proposed measures. Parties are required to comply with management measures adopted by the Conference, protect areas requiring conservation, including those important for the conservation of rare and endangered species, and maintain the health of marine ecosystems. In the event of serious or irreversible harm to marine biodiversity in the ABNJ, the Conference may adopt emergency measures. The Conference is also to deepen cooperation with relevant IFBs on ABMTs to promote coordinated and mutually reinforcing action.

The Agreement develops and elaborates the EIA regime under UNCLOS and promotes the green and low-carbon transition in marine activities. Parties are required to undertake screening and EIA of planned marine activities in accordance with the Agreement and use the results to determine whether those activities may be authorized. Parties are to adopt laws, regulations and policy measures requiring assessments of marine activities that may cause significant harmful environmental impacts, the preparation of environmental management plans, public notification and consultation with stakeholders, and the monitoring and reporting of the environmental impacts of authorized activities, in order to protect and preserve the marine environment. Marine activities regulated by relevant IFBs are not neccessary to be assessed under the Agreement where equivalent assessments have been conducted or effective management measures are in place, thereby avoiding duplication. The Agreement also requires consideration of cumulative impacts and introduces initial arrangements for strategic environmental assessments, broadening the scope of environmental assessment.[6]

The Agreement extends the scope of capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, helping to narrow the ocean governance capacity gap between developed and developing countries. Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology are extended to cover access to MGR and benefit-sharing, the establishment and operation of ABMTs, and EIA of marine activities. It strengthens institutional support for capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries and identifies specific modalities for implementation. The Agreement establishes the Capacity-Building and Transfer of Marine Technology Committee, which responds to developing countries' practical needs, facilitates the dissemination and sharing of knowledge on marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and improves access to marine scientific and technological capabilities, contributing to a fairer and more equitable ocean order.[7]

[6] BBNJ Agreement, Articles 30 and 39.

[7] BBNJ Agreement, Articles 40–46.

Table 1 Principal pillars of the BBNJ Agreement and their practical roles

Core pillar	Main provisions	Practical role
MGR, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefit	Prior notification of collection activities and assignment of standardized batch identifiers; Protection of traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities associated with MGR; Non-monetary benefit-sharing through transfer of samples and sharing of digital sequence information; Contributions by developed countries to the special fund.	Addresses the institutional gap in benefit-sharing from MGR and their digital sequence information; improves transparency in resource collection and utilization; and expands developing countries' opportunities to participate and benefit.
Measures such as ABMTs including MPAs	Scope of application and procedures for proposals, scientific review, consultation, assessment and decision-making; Implementation of relevant management measures; Emergency measures mechanism; Cooperation and coordination with relevant IFBs.	Provides a legal basis for ABMTs, including marine protected areas; protects important habitats and ecological corridors; and conserves marine biodiversity.
Environmental impact assessments	Detailed procedures for screening, assessment, public consultation, authorization, monitoring and reporting; Exemption from duplicate assessments where the specified conditions are met; Consideration of cumulative impacts and initial arrangements for strategic environmental assessments.	Develops the UNCLOS assessment regime, strengthens prevention of environmental risks from marine activities, and promotes coordination with management arrangements of relevant IFBs.
Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology	Defined modalities and types of support; Regular monitoring and review.	Strengthens developing countries' implementation capacity, narrows gaps in marine science, technology and governance capacity, and promotes a fairer and more equitable ocean order.

3 Prospects

Establishing the institutional arrangements for implementation. As the Agreement's decision-making body, the COP is to review and evaluate implementation responsibly, make every effort to reach consensus in adopting decisions and recommendations, and promote cooperation and coordination with relevant IFBs.

As a permanent institution, the Secretariat is to operate transparently, efficiently and independently, providing administrative, logistical and meeting services to the Conference and its subsidiary bodies and managing the Clearing-House Mechanism. Subsidiary bodies include the Access and Benefit-Sharing Committee, the STB, the Capacity-Building and Transfer of Marine Technology Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Implementation and Compliance Committee. Their functions include providing advice and recommendations, promoting best practices, developing and elaborating standards and guidelines, assessing capacity-building and technology needs, improving the allocation of financial resources, and enhancing transparency. Together, they support sound decision-making by the Conference and the effective implementation of the Agreement.

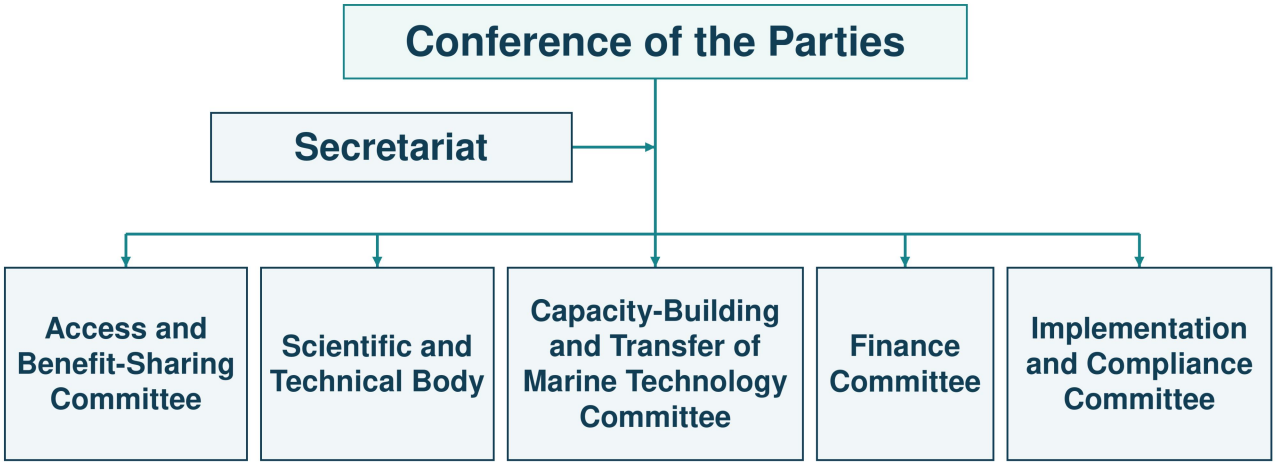


Figure 4 Institutional structure of the BBNJ Agreement

Defining pathways for implementation. To ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of MGR, the Agreement will establish a mechanism for monetary benefit-sharing from MGR and mobilize funding to support marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in developing countries. To make ABMTs operational and effective, modalities for application of indicative criteria for identifying areas in need of protection, guidelines for consultation and review of proposals for such tools, and procedures for emergency measures addressing serious or irreversible harm will be developed. These will support the scientifically sound and efficient establishment of ABMTs, including marine protected areas. To guide Parties in conducting EIA, standards and guidelines will address thresholds for screening or assessment, cumulative impacts, stakeholder consultations, monitoring and reporting of the environmental impacts of authorized activities, and strategic environmental assessments. These arrangements will provide a clear framework for countries to manage the environmental impacts of marine activities. Capacity-building and marine technology transfer arrangements will be further refined to respond to developing countries' practical needs, mobilizing human resources, technology, institutions and research facilities to strengthen their implementation capacity.[8]

[8] BBNJ Agreement, Articles 12–15, 19, 26, 38 and 42–46.

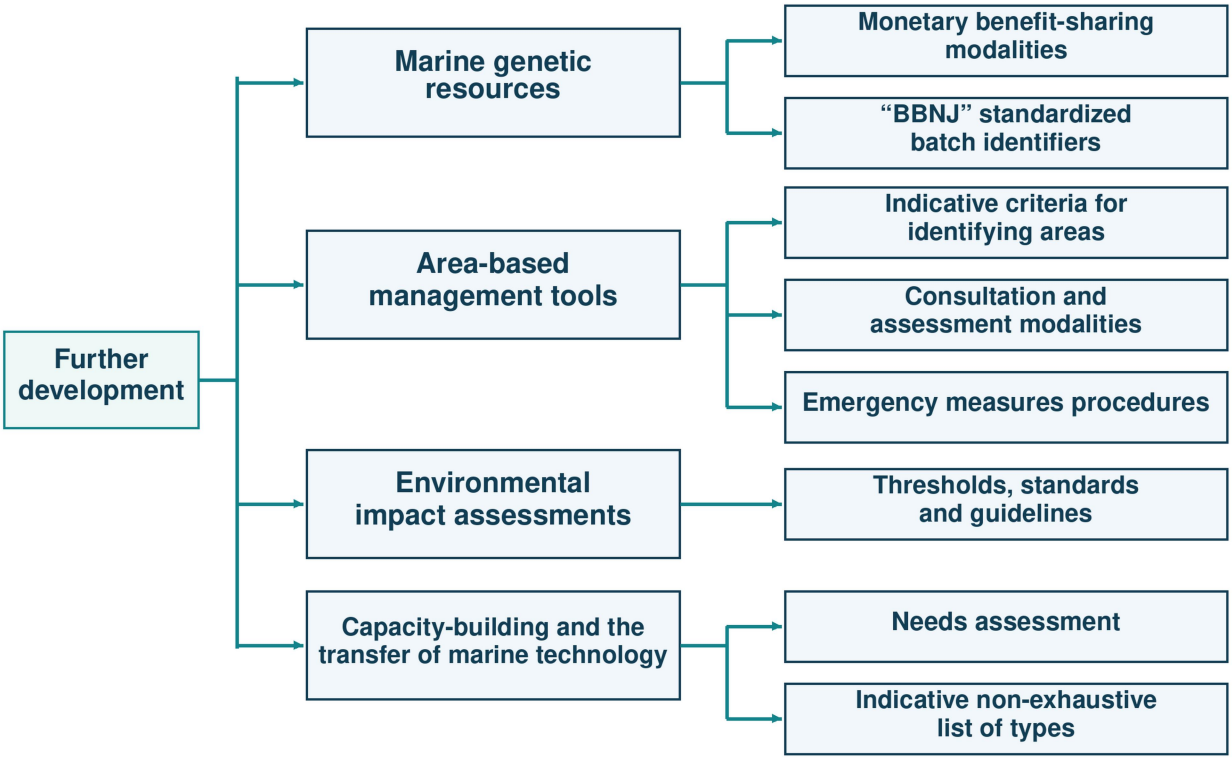


Figure 5 Priorities for further development of the BBNJ Agreement's substantive pillars

Mobilizing financial resources for implementation. The Agreement reached the threshold of 60 ratifications required for entry into force within two years of opening for signature. By October 2026, the number of Parties had exceeded 100, demonstrating strong political commitment to marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.[9] The Agreement establishes a financial mechanism comprising a voluntary trust fund, a special fund and the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund. Parties including China[10] and Norway[11] have pledged contributions to the voluntary trust fund and the special fund to support developing countries' participation in meetings and strengthen their implementation capacity. The Global Environment Facility has provided funding to support ratification by developing countries and incorporated implementation of the Agreement into its funding strategy for 2026–2030.[12] As implementation of the Agreement gets underway and Parties translate ambition into practical action, public and private funding at national and international levels can be mobilized more effectively to provide adequate and accessible financial resources for developing countries.

[9] IUCN. IUCN Celebrates 100 Ratifications and Growing Momentum for BBNJ Implementation, 24 September 2026.

[10] Hua Chunying, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, presentation on China's offer to host the Secretariat at the third session of the Preparatory Commission for the first meeting of the COP to the Agreement, https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1v/k1vrotehhh (accessed 13 October 2026).

[11] Government of Norway, "Norway Ratifies the BBNJ Agreement – 'On duty for the Ocean'", https://www.regjeringen.no/en/whats-new/norway-ratifies-the-bbnj-agreement-on-duty-for-the-ocean/id3107617/ (accessed 13 October 2026).

[12] Global Environment Facility, Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, information on GEF-8 funding arrangements and the GEF-9 programming strategy.

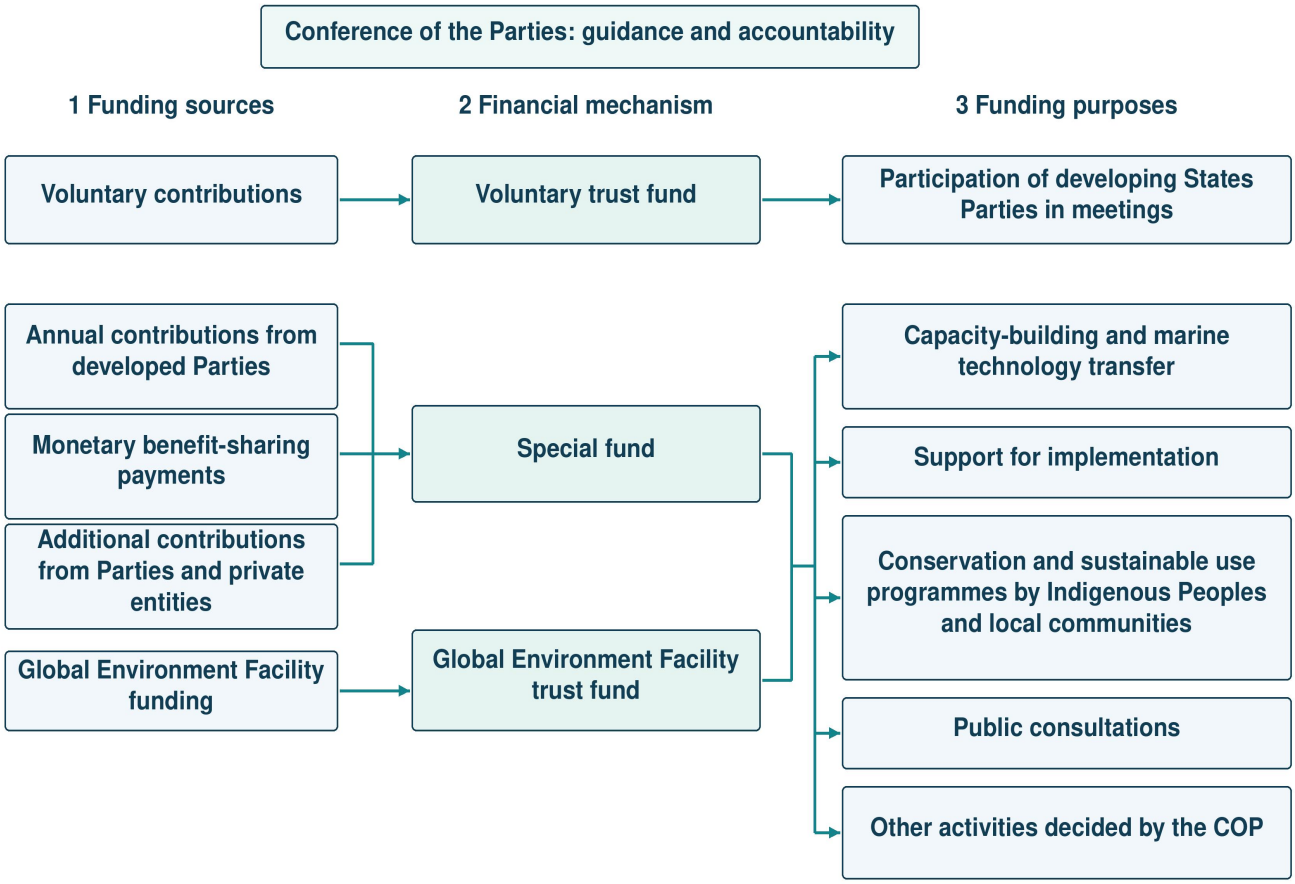


Figure 6 Financial mechanism of the BBNJ Agreement

Building a cooperation network for implementation. Effective coordination with relevant IFBs is essential to the Agreement's operation. The Agreement is to be interpreted and applied in a manner that does not undermine relevant IFBs. Cooperation at all levels through the COP, the Secretariat and subsidiary bodies should promote coherence and coordination, avoid conflicts or overlaps in competence, and support mutually reinforcing global ocean governance. The COP is to establish arrangements for regular consultation and coordination procedures to strengthen complementarity with other IFBs and their existing measures. Subsidiary bodies, including the Access and Benefit-Sharing Committee, are to consult relevant IFBs to facilitate information exchange and the sharing of experience. The Secretariat may establish communication channels with the secretariats of relevant IFBs and exchange information on implementation matters relevant to the Agreement, enabling it to discharge its functions promptly and efficiently.

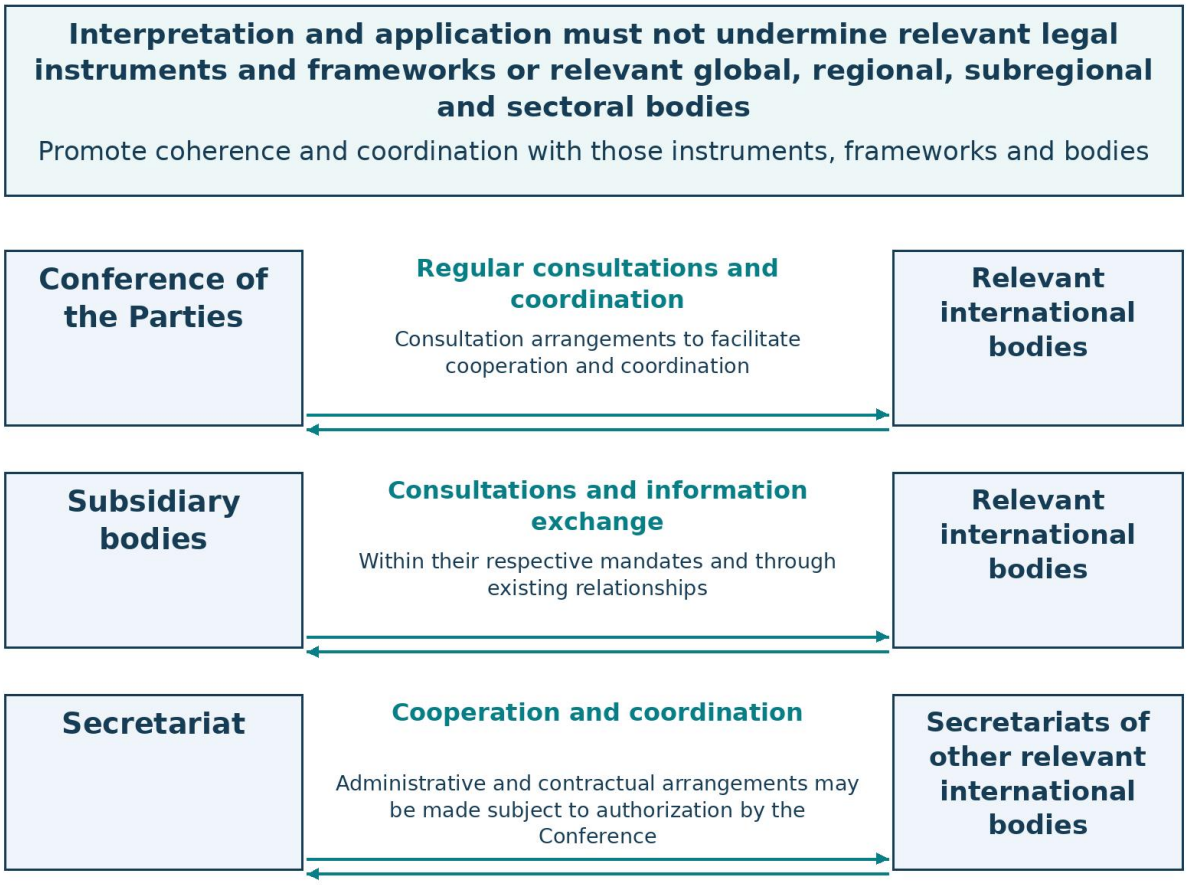


Figure 7 Cooperation and coordination between the BBNJ Agreement and relevant IFBs

II China's Active Contributions to the Conclusion of the Agreement

China participated in, helped shape and advanced the negotiations on the Agreement throughout the process. It upheld the collective interests of the international community, gave full consideration to the practical needs of developing countries, and made sustained efforts to bridge differences between developed and developing countries, contributing expertise and proposals to the conclusion of the Agreement.

1 Advancing arrangements for marine genetic resources and benefit-sharing

China consistently supported developing countries and emphasized that benefits arising from the utilization of MGR should be shared fairly and equitably to advance the common well-being of humankind. As a core pillar of the Agreement, the MGR regime needed to be negotiated alongside the other issues as a single package, with balanced progress across all components. This approach helped move the negotiations forward. The specific arrangements should facilitate scientific research, encourage innovation, and ensure that developing countries broadly benefit from the utilization of MGR.[13]

China maintained that the collection of MGR, as the starting point for benefit-sharing, should be encouraged and facilitated without introducing unnecessary regulatory barriers.[14] Parties are responsible for managing collection activities under their jurisdiction. Using standardized batch identifiers assigned to collection activities, they should make every effort to disclose collected MGR and stored digital sequence information, as well as information on utilization such as patents and product development and sales. This approach addressed developing countries' practical concerns regarding the monitoring of the utilization of MGR.[15]

China advocated application of the UNCLOS principle of the common heritage of mankind under the Agreement, with monetary and non-monetary benefit-sharing implemented in parallel and full consideration given to developing countries' concerns. The mechanism should facilitate the transfer of marine genetic material, make stored digital sequence information publicly available, and provide researchers from developing countries with opportunities to participate in research projects. China called on developed countries to make initial contributions to the special fund to strengthen developing countries' capacity to utilize MGR. As implementation of the Agreement proceeds, Parties should continue discussing specific monetary benefit-sharing modalities, including options based on a percentage of product revenue or profits, to ensure that developing countries receive a fair share of the benefits arising from utilization.

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[13] Written Submission of the Government of the People's Republic of China on Elements of a Draft Text of an International Legally Binding Instrument 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 (As revised on April 20th, 2017) https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

[14] Written Submission of the Government of the People's Republic of China on Elements of a Draft Text of an International Legally Binding Instrument 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 (As revised on April 20th, 2017) https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

[15] Richard Tur de la Concepción, "Negotiating fair and equitable sharing of benefits in the BBNJ Agreement: Role of the Group of 77 and China", Marine Policy, Vol. 163, 2024, 106085.

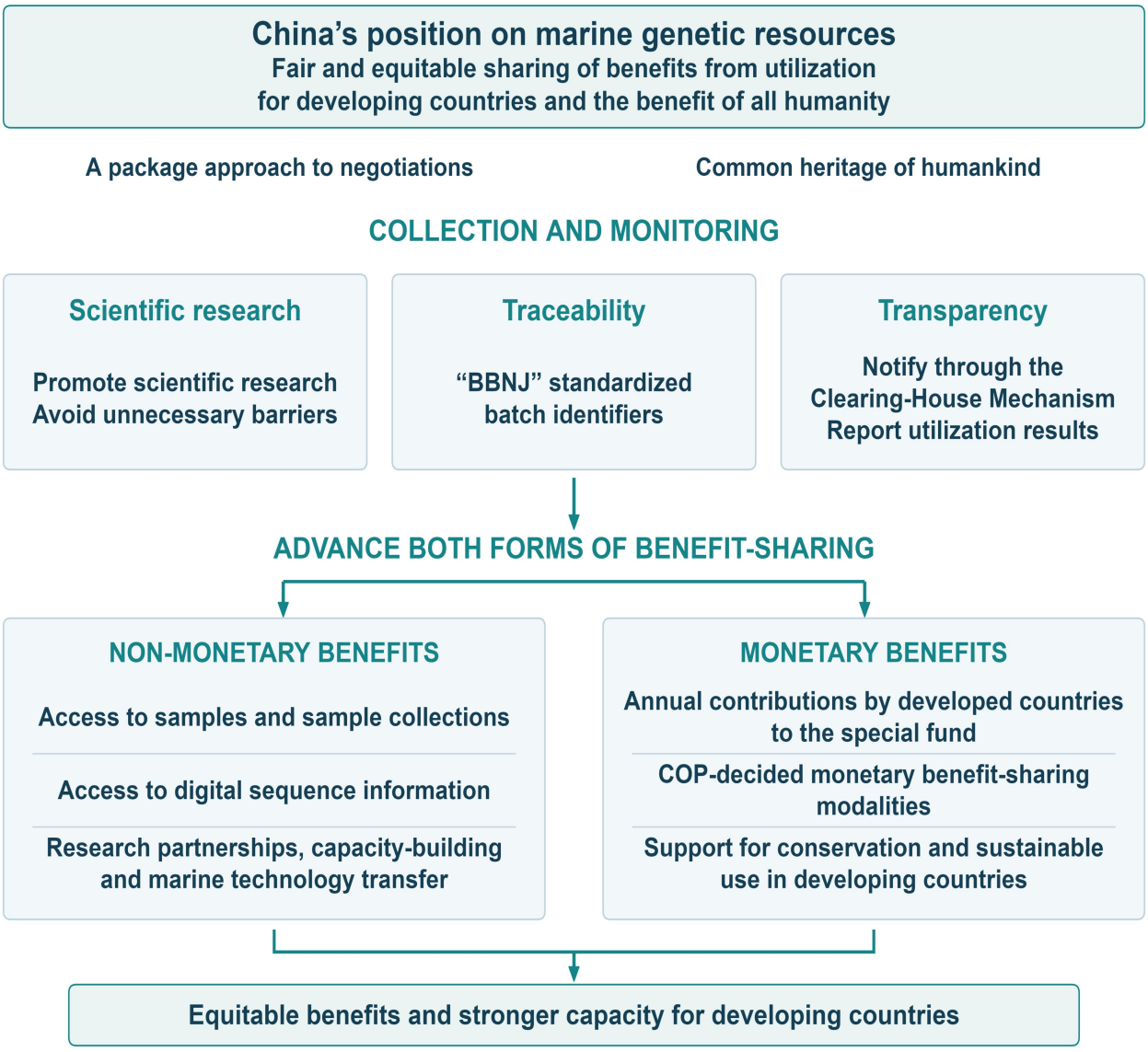


Figure 8 China's positions and contributions on MGR

2 Supporting area-based management tools for marine biodiversity conservation

China attaches great importance to marine biodiversity conservation and regards biodiversity as a foundation, objective and means of sustainable development. It advocates a reasonable balance between conservation and sustainable use,[16] with neither objective neglected. Measures such as ABMTs should be designed and implemented to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity, reflect the ecological

[16] Written Submission of the Government of the People's Republic of China on Elements of a Draft Text of an International Legally Binding Instrument 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 (As revised on April 20th, 2017) https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

characteristics of the areas concerned, take account of socioeconomic development needs,[17] and contribute to the ocean-related goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

China maintained that the Agreement should respect the sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction of States and should not extend to areas under national jurisdiction, including exclusive economic zones and those parts of the continental shelf lying within or beyond 200 nautical miles.[18] Proposals for ABMTs should be submitted by Parties and include clear conservation objectives, identified conservation features, defined geographical boundaries, appropriate management measures, and suitable scientific research and monitoring plans. Reasonable conservation time frames may also be specified to avoid "paper parks". Proposals should have a sound scientific basis, with adequate opportunities for stakeholder consultation and incorporation of stakeholder recommendations. ABMTs should not be static: periodic assessments of conservation outcomes should inform adjustments to management measures as circumstances change.[19]

China emphasized that the establishment and implementation of ABMTs under the Agreement should involve substantive consultation with relevant IFBs, fully leveraging their specialized functions and role. Through cooperation, we should adopt management measures tailored to the areas requiring protection and work together to achieve marine biodiversity conservation objectives.[20] Institutional arrangements should take full account of differences in countries' capacity to implement their commitments. They should both strengthen ecosystem resilience and ensure the orderly conduct of marine activities without imposing additional obligations and responsibilities beyond the capacities of States, particularly developing countries, thereby preventing the governance capacity gap between developed and developing countries widening further.[21]

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[17] Head of the Chinese Delegation, statement at the first session of the Intergovernmental Conference, Item 7: Measures Such as ABM Ts, Including Marine Protected Areas, 7–10 September 2018, p. 5, https://www.un.org/bbnj/sites/default/files/china-item-7-abmts-including-mpas-chinese-statement-en.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026). China, written proposals on measures such as ABMTs, including marine protected areas, submitted at the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Conference, https://www.un.org/bbnj/en/igc-5th-proposals (accessed 15 October 2026).

[18] Written Submission of the Government of the People's Republic of China on Elements of a Draft Text of an International Legally Binding Instrument 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 (As revised on April 20th, 2017) https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

[19] Written Submission of the Government of the People's Republic of China on Elements of a Draft Text of an International Legally Binding Instrument 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 (As revised on April 20th, 2017) https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026). Head of the Chinese Delegation, statement at the first session of the Intergovernmental Conference on the negotiation of an international instrument on BBNJ, Item 7: Measures such as ABMTs, including marine protected areas, 7–10 September 2018, p. 7, https://www.un.org/bbnj/sites/default/files/china-item-7-abmts-including-mpas-chinese-statement-en.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

[20] China, written proposals on measures such as ABMTs, including marine protected areas, submitted at the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Conference, https://www.un.org/bbnj/en/igc-5th-proposals (accessed 15 October 2026).

[21] Zheng Miaozhuang and Zhao Chang, "A New Chapter in Global Ocean Governance", China Natural Resources News, 24 April 2023. China's Written Submission on the Elements of a Draft International Instrument on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, 20 April 2017, https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).



Figure 9 China's positions and contributions on ABMTs

3 Improving environmental impact assessments and its transparency

China supports further elaboration, improvement and development of the EIA regime within the legal framework established by UNCLOS.[22] Parties should make public EIA decision reports and environmental monitoring reports for authorized activities, give full play to the advisory role of the scientific and technical bodies, broaden channels for stakeholder participation, enhance the transparency of EIA for marine activities, ensure the prevention, mitigation and management of the environmental impacts of marine activities, and promote the green and low-carbon transition.

China also supported introducing screening procedures additional to the UNCLOS framework for marine activities that may have more than a minor or transitory impact, strengthening their regulation.[23] For activities managed by other relevant IFBs, where the relevant rules and standards have achieved an effect

[22] China's Written Submission on the Elements of a Draft International Instrument on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, revised 20 April 2017, p. 7, para. 22, https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

[23] Ibid.

equivalent to that of conducting environmental impact assessments, the existing norms should be followed so as to avoid duplication.[24] Assessment arrangements should fully consider developing countries' circumstances and provide data, funding and expert support for the preparation of assessment reports, strengthening their capacity to fulfil EIA obligations.[25]

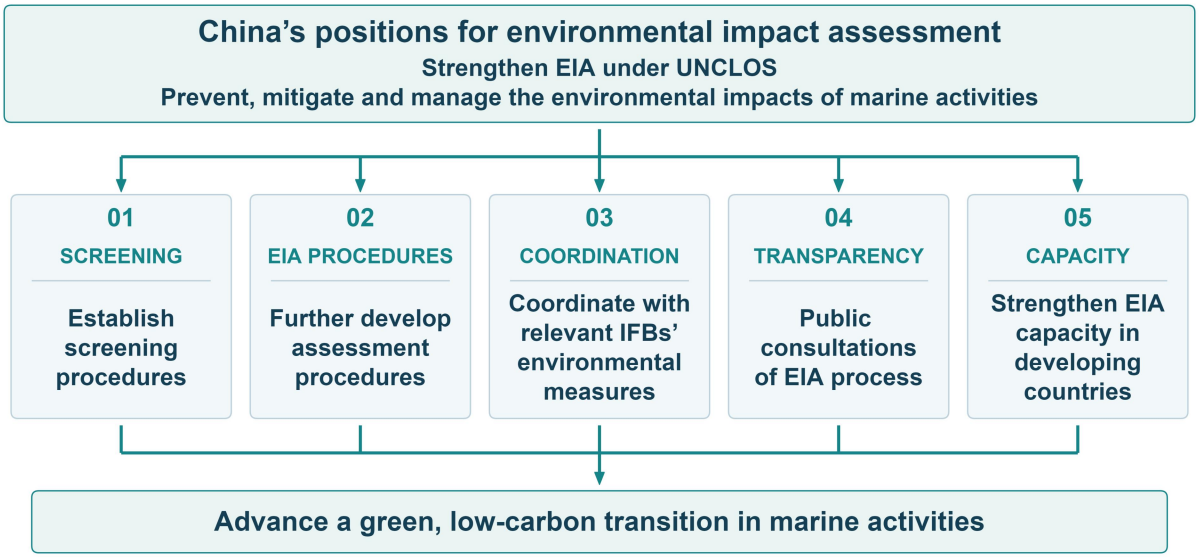


Figure 10 China's positions and contributions on environmental impact assessments

4 Strengthening practical support for capacity-building and marine technology transfer

China is deeply aware that capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology are indispensable to developing countries' equitable and effective participation in the Agreement. Support should meet immediate needs while also building lasting capabilities. Building on Part XIV of UNCLOS, institutional arrangements should strengthen the practical implementation of measures concerning MGR, ABMTs and EIA through training, information exchange, joint research, infrastructure development, and transfers of technology and equipment. The Clearing-House Mechanism should facilitate information exchange and match needs with available support, strengthening developing countries' capacity to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity.[26]

China emphasized that capacity-building and marine technology transfer should follow the country-driven principle. The actual needs and priorities of developing country Parties should be identified and assessed case by case, with particular attention to the concerns of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, geographically disadvantaged States, small island developing States, African coastal States,

[24] China's Written Submission on the Elements of a Draft International Instrument on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, revised 20 April 2017, p. 8, para. 25, https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

[25] Group of 77 and China, statement on capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology at the first session of the Intergovernmental Conference, 5–7 September 2018.

[26] China's Written Submission on the Elements of a Draft International Instrument on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, revised 20 April 2017, p. 9, para. 30, https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

archipelagic States and middle-income developing countries.[27] Arrangements should also reflect differing needs of countries at different stages of development, strengthen the long-term foundations for implementation in developing countries, provide the fair and most favourable terms for marine technology transfer, and ensure transparent, efficient and continuously improving delivery. These measures should enable developing countries to benefit effectively from advances in marine science and technology.[28]



Figure 11 China's positions and contributions on capacity-building and marine technology transfer

[27] China's Written Submission on the Elements of a Draft International Instrument on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, revised 20 April 2017, p. 9, para. 29, https://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversity/prepcom_files/streamlined/China.pdf (accessed 15 October 2026).

[28] Group of 77 and China, statement on capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology at the first session of the Intergovernmental Conference, 5–7 September 2018.

III China's Support for Implementation of the Agreement

China is a practitioner of global marine biodiversity conservation and a sharer in the benefits of ocean development. As one of the first signatories and Parties, it will engage substantively in global ocean governance through practical action and continue to support the full and effective implementation of the Agreement.

1 Sharing the benefits from the utilization of marine genetic resource

China operates crewed submersibles, including Jiaolong and Fendouzhe, and dozens of multidisciplinary research vessels, including Shenhai Yihao.[29] It regularly organizes joint international research cruises and cooperates with Bangladesh, Nigeria, Colombia, Mexico and other countries on MGR research.[30] It has made deep-sea diving operation platforms available to partners including Indonesia, Egypt and Mauritius,[31] enabling joint survey design, offshore operations and exchange of research findings. Through these cooperative platforms, developing countries share China's marine scientific and technological advances and strengthen their capacity to collect MGR and conduct research and development.

China has preserved nearly 60,000 samples of marine microbial resources[32] and established repositories and databases, including the Marine Culture Collection of China and the China National Center for Bioinformation. It provides access to MGR for international community, continuously makes related information publicly available, and offers specialized services to facilitate access to samples and data.

China is strengthening its domestic legislative and policy framework, aligning the management of scientific research with the information-sharing obligations under the Agreement with respect to the collection, utilization and benefit-sharing of MGR.[33] Entities engaged in activities related to MGR are required to notify information on collection activities and to monitor utilization, including the publication of papers and monographs, patent applications and product sales. China continuously advances collaborative research and promote the sharing of benefits arising from marine of MGR.

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[29] China's Offer to Host the Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement, March 2026, https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/sites/default/files/2026-03/BBNJSecHostOfferChinaZh.pdf (accessed 13 October 2026).

[30] Ministry of Natural Resources, "2024 Western Pacific International Cruise Sets Sail", August 2024, https://zrzyj.panjin.gov.cn/2024_08/12_14/content-483163.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[31] Institute of Deep-sea Science and Engineering, Chinese Academy of Sciences, "Fendouzhe Full-Ocean-Depth Crewed Submersible Successfully Completes the First China–Indonesia Joint Deep-Sea Research Expedition to the Java Trench", 29 March 2024, https://gzb.cas.cn/zhxw/shkx/202404/t20240424_7130456.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[32] Ibid.

[33] China Natural Resources News, "New Practices in Global Ocean Governance: Experts Explain the Significance and Implications of China's Participation in the BBNJ Agreement", 25 December 2025, https://www.iziran.net/news.html?aid=5448051 (accessed 13 October 2026).

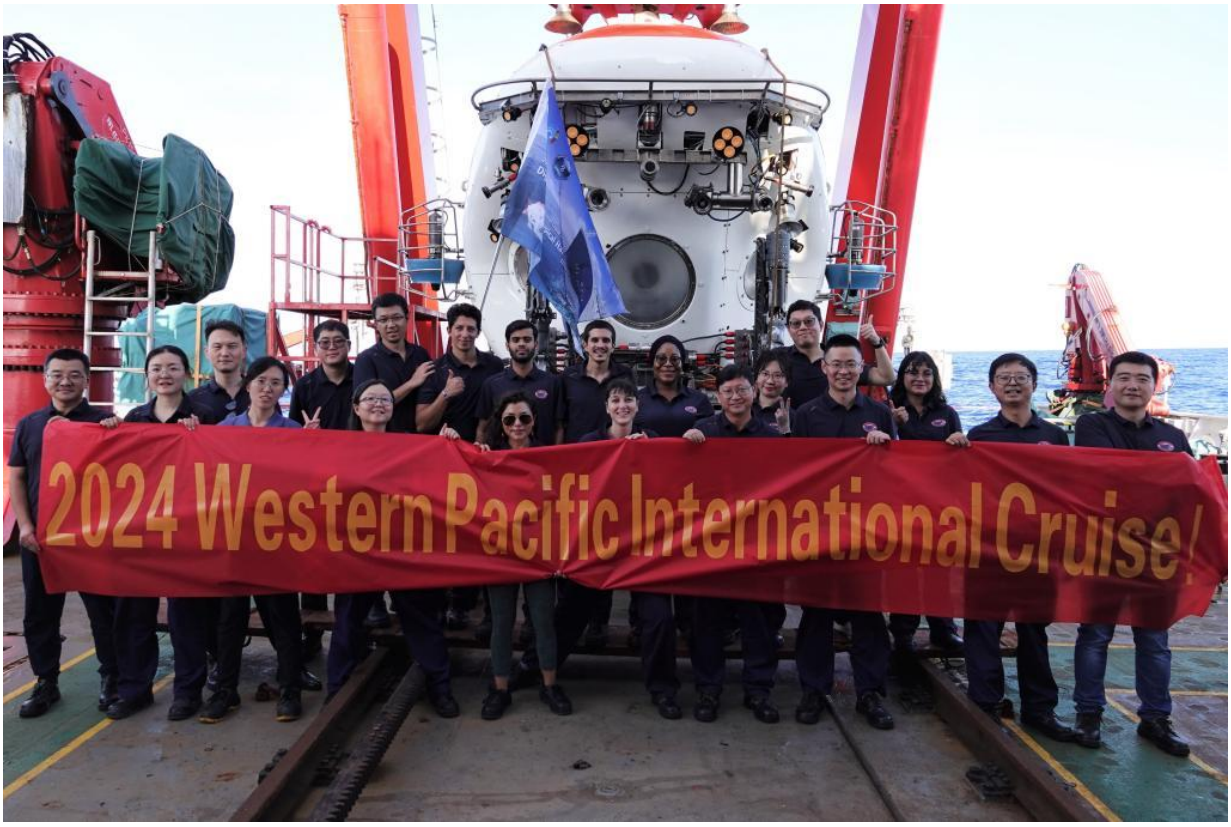


Figure 12 Chinese and international scientists participating in the 2024 Western Pacific International Cruise[34] (Photograph by Wang Yuhao, Xinhua)



Figure 13 Chinese and international scientists processing microbial and sediment samples in the laboratory aboard Shenhai Yihao[35] (Photograph by Wang Yuhao, Xinhua)

[34] Xinhua, "Chinese and International Scientists Explore the Deep Sea Together on Jiaolong's First International Cruise", 14 September 2024, https://www.news.cn/tech/20240914/920d1a9499024a42873902af90488e81/c.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[35] People's Daily Online, "Joint Scientific Research and Deeper Exchanges", 13 January 2025, https://world.people.com.cn/n1/2025/0113/c1002-40400343.html (accessed 13 October 2026).



Figure 14 Marine microbial culture preservation equipment[36] and the institute housing the China National Center for Bioinformation

2 Advancing marine conservation that combines ambition with practical action

China is one of the countries with the richest marine biodiversity in the world. Guided by a governance approach that seeks harmony between people and the ocean, China has set marine ecological conservation red lines in sea areas under China's national jurisdiction cover 150,000 square kilometres, and established 353 marine protected sites.[37] China has implemented 194 marine ecological restoration major projects and is one of the few countries with a net increase in mangrove area.[38]

[36] Marine Culture Collection of China, official website, https://www.mccc.org.cn/photo?sn=d705c311-f134-43e4-8a8e-42a8f4046eda (accessed 13 October 2026).

[37] China's Offer to Host the Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement, March 2026, https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/sites/default/files/2026-03/BBNJSecHostOfferChinaZh.pdf (accessed 13 October 2026); Sun Lei, "General Statement at the Thirty-Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea", 18 June 2026, Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations,https://un.china-mission.gov.cn/chn/hyyfy/202606/t20260618_11948137.htm (accessed 13 October 2026).

[38] State Council Information Office, Marine Eco-Environmental Protection in China, 11 July 2024, Part IV, "Science-Based Conservation and Restoration of Marine Ecosystems", https://www.mee.gov.cn/ywdt/xwfb/202407/t20240711_1081353.shtml (accessed 13 October 2026).



Figure 15 Mangroves in Dongzhaigang National Nature Reserve in Hainan[39]



Figure 16 Xiatanwei Mangrove Park in Xiamen

[39] International Mangrove Center, official website, https://www.imc.int/cn/gallery/10.

China has actively responded to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. It has led the launch of 10 major international scientific programmes, including the Digital Deep-sea Typical Habitats,[40] and continues to make its research networks and data resources available to international partners. International public goods it has contributed include an intelligently integrated global marine environmental dataset and a multimodal large model for intelligent cognition and exploration of deep-sea habitats.[41] These resources support the identification of marine areas requiring protection, the development of ABMTs, and regular biodiversity monitoring and assessment, providing scientific evidence and technical support for implementation of the Agreement.

Table 2 International scientific programmes initiated by China under the UN Ocean Decade

Programme	Lead institution	International Cooperation	Year
Digital Deep-sea Typical Habitats (Digital DEPTH)	China Oceanic Affairs Administration	Jointly initiated by 64 institutions from 39 countries	2023
Deltas Associated with Large Rivers: Seeking Solutions to the Problem of Sustainability (Mega-Delta)	East China Normal University	Scientists from 11 countries; research covers 15 major river deltas	2021
Global Estuaries Monitoring (GEM)	City University of Hong Kong	First-phase sampling covered 191 estuaries of 51 countries	2021
Ocean Negative Carbon Emissions (ONCE)	Xiamen University	104 research institutions from 35 countries	2022
Ocean to Climate Seamless Forecasting System (OSF)	First Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources	Jointly initiated by 34 ocean and climate research institutions and 3 international organizations from 25 countries	2022
Global Subseafloor Ecosystem and Sustainability (GSES)	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	More than 40 partner institutions from 17 countries	2024
Deep Ocean Microbiomes and Ecosystems (DOME)	Shanghai Ocean University	42 research institutions from 27 countries	2025
Mitigation of Natural Incidence Towards an Increased Oceanic Resilience (MoNITOR)	Second Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources	More than 70 institutions and international organizations from over 30 countries and regions	2023
Global Hadal Exploration Programme (GHEP)	Institute of Deep-sea Science and Engineering, Chinese Academy of Sciences	Jointly initiated by research institutions from more than 10 countries	2025

[40] China's Offer to Host the Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement, March 2026, https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/sites/default/files/2026-03/BBNJSecHostOfferChinaZh.pdf (accessed 13 October 2026).

[41] National Data Administration, "High-Quality Dataset Case Study: China Global Ocean Integrated Dataset 1.0", 16 September 2025, https://www.nda.gov.cn/sjj/ywpd/szkjyjcss/0916/20250916163503245584481_pc.html. Ministry of Natural Resources, "World's First Multimodal Foundation Model for Deep-Sea Habitats Released", November 2025, https://zrzyt.xinjiang.gov.cn/xjgtzy/mtxc/202511/c0b91d8530254fbfbb414c66ecc60692.shtml (accessed 13 October 2026).

Programme	Lead institution	International Cooperation	Year
Global Climate Impact of Methane Seeps (CliMetS)	Southern Marine Science and Engineering Guangdong Laboratory (Guangzhou)	Jointly initiated by 96 ocean-related institutions from 42 countries	2025
Second Cooperative Study of the Kuroshio and Adjacent Regions	Ocean University of China	Jointly initiated by 16 government and research institutions from 8 countries	2022

China implements voluntary fishing moratoriums in high-seas fishing grounds in the southwestern Atlantic, eastern Pacific and northern Indian Ocean,[42] and conducts high-seas patrols and boarding inspections.[43] Through resource conservation, activity monitoring and enforcement cooperation, it has accumulated experience in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and explored feasible ways to balance high-seas fishing with biodiversity conservation. China has participated in 25 international green shipping corridor initiatives[44] and led the establishment of the world's first green shipping corridor alliance.[45] By promoting coordinated development of green fuels, ships and ports, it seeks to reduce pressures on the marine environment from shipping and facilitate the coordinated delivery of shipping emissions reduction and marine biodiversity conservation.

China has played a leading role in global biodiversity conservation. As Presidency of the fifteenth meeting of the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity, it facilitated adoption of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including the global target of conserving at least 30 per cent of the terrestrial and inland water areas, and marine and coastal areas by 2030,[46] advancing marine conservation that combines ambition with practical action. China committed an initial RMB 1.5 billion to establish the Kunming Biodiversity Fund[47] and joined the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.[48] Through financial support and international cooperation, it is helping to implement marine conservation targets and measures such as ABMTs under the Agreement.

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[42] Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, "China Implements Voluntary High-Seas Fishing Moratoriums in 2022: First Pilot Morato rium in the Northern Indian Ocean", 25 May 2022, https://www.ccg.gov.cn/lbt/202509/t20250910_2832.html (accessed 13 October 20 26).

[43] China Coast Guard, "China Coast Guard Fleet Departs for High-Seas Fisheries Enforcement Patrols in the North Pacific", 10 Septem ber 2025, https://www.ccg.gov.cn/lbt/202509/t20250910_2832.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[44] Ministry of Transport, "Steady Progress in China's Joint Development of International Green Shipping Corridors", 28 May 2026, htt ps://www.mot.gov.cn/xinwen/jiaotongyaowen/202605/t20260528_4206414.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[45] Ministry of Transport, "International Green Shipping Corridor Alliance Established", 24 September 2026. The alliance was jointly in itiated by the China International Sustainable Transportation Innovation and Knowledge Center and other partners, https://www.mot.go v.cn/xinwen/jiaotongyaowen/202609/t20260924_4224850.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[46] Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Decision 15/4, Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 2022, http s://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/3. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, "COP15: Nations Adopt Four Goals, 23 Targets f or 2030 in Landmark UN Biodiversity Agreement", 19 December 2022, https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-cbd-press-release-final-19de c2022 (accessed 13 October 2026).

[47] Ministry of Ecology and Environment, "Latest Updates from the Regular Press Conference for May", 2 June 2024. China announced a contribution of RMB 1.5 billion, and a fund cooperation agreement was signed in May 2024, https://www.mee.gov.cn/ywdt/xwfb/202 406/t20240602_1074617.shtml (accessed 13 October 2026).

[48] World Resources Institute, "COP28: China Officially Joins the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People; WRI Supports Count ries' Biodiversity Commitments as the Coalition's Permanent Secretariat", 12 December 2023, https://wri.org.cn/en/node/860 (accesse d 13 October 2026).



Figure 17 Adoption of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at CBD COP15

3 Supporting developing countries in environmental impact assessment

In 2016, China promulgated the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Exploration and Exploitation of Resources in the Area. The Law requires marine surveys in exploration and exploitation areas, the establishment of environmental baselines, assessment of potential impacts on the marine environment, and the preparation and implementation of environmental monitoring plans.[49] To fulfil its international obligations under the International Seabed Authority's exploration regulations and other applicable rules, China issued the Notice on Regulating Environmental Impact Assessments of Resource Exploration Contractors in the Area in 2025, further standardizing the EIA work of Chinese contractors.

China has conducted systematic, comprehensive marine environmental surveys in areas including the western Pacific and northern Indian Ocean and established relatively comprehensive environmental baseline databases. Contractors including China Minmetals Corporation and Beijing Pioneer Hi-Tech Development Corporation have prepared environmental impact statements for mineral resource exploration activities in accordance with applicable laws and regulations,[50] consulted extensively with stakeholders,[51]

[49] Law of the People's Republic of China on Exploration for and Exploitation of Resources in the Deep Seabed Area, adopted 26 February 2016, effective 1 May 2016, Articles 7 and 12–14, Ministry of Ecology and Environment legislation database, https://www.mee.gov.cn/ywgz/fgbz/fl/202303/t20230314_1019565.shtml (accessed 13 October 2026).

[50] International Seabed Authority, "Review of the Environmental Impact Statement Submitted by China Minmetals Corporation", ISBA/30/LTC/5, 30 January 2025, paras. 1–3, https://isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/ISBA_30_LTC_5_C.pdf; International Seabed Authority, "Review of the Environmental Impact Statement Submitted by Beijing Pioneer Hi-Tech Development Corporation", ISBA/30/LTC/4, 2025,https://isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/ISBA_30_LTC_4_C.pdf (accessed 13 October 2026).

[51] Legal and Technical Commission, International Seabed Authority, "Legal and Technical Commission Considerations on the Beijing Pioneer Hi-Tech Development Corporation Environmental Impact Statement", https://isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/LTC-considerations-on-BPC-EIS_reviewed-by-LTC-WG-2026_final.pdf (accessed 13 October 2026).

and proactively implemented the requirements of the International Seabed Authority, gaining broad recognition from all parties. China has accumulated mature practical experience in environmental impact assessment for deep-sea activities and built up data, technical expertise and a talent pool, which can help developing countries fulfil their EIA-related obligations under the Agreement.



Figure 18 EIA prepared by China Minmetals Corporation (left) and Beijing Pioneer Hi-Tech Development Corporation (right)

4 Strengthening the ocean-related capabilities of the Global South

China has promoted the building of practical blue partnerships based on equality, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. It has signed marine cooperation agreements with more than 50 countries, including Viet Nam, Kenya and Fiji, and with international organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme. More than 40 joint marine research centres and laboratories have been established with partners including Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Mozambique and Jamaica.[52] China contributed USD 4 billion to establish the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund[53] and USD 200 million to establish the China-United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund[54] to support developing countries in achieving the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It has invested approximately RMB 200 million in more than 100 small-scale, high-impact marine cooperation projects

[52] China's Offer to Host the Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement, March 2026, https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/sites/default/files/2026-03/BBNJSecHostOfferChinaZh.pdf. State Council Information Office, Marine Eco-Environmental Protection in China, 11 July 2024, Part VII, subsection 2, identifying partner countries involved in joint research institutions (accessed 13 October 2026).

[53] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Chair's Statement of the High-level Dialogue on Global Development", 24 June 2022, Annex, item 14. The South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund was upgraded to the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, with an additional USD 1 billion committed on top of the existing USD 3 billion, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gjhdqzz_681964/jzgj_682158/zywj_682170/202206/t20220624_10709803.shtml (accessed 13 October 2026).

[54] United Nations, "United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund", overview. China pledged USD 200 million over ten years. The Fund was established in 2016 and has been extended to 2030, https://www.un.org/zh/unpdf/ (accessed 13 October 2026).

that improve livelihoods.[55] These have benefited a large number of developing countries including Thailand, Angola, Madagascar and Nauru, strengthened their capacity for independent innovation and self-development, increased blue jobs, improved livelihoods and supported sustainable ocean development.

China launched the Blue Citizen Initiative[56] and formulated the China–Island Countries Cooperation Plan on Marine Disaster Prevention and Mitigation 2025–2030 and the China–Africa Joint Action Plan for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development,[57] with a view to enhancing developing countries' capacity to protect the ocean and respond to climate change and disasters. China launched the Chinese Government Marine Scholarship,[58] which has trained 345 marine science professionals for 47 countries and regions. Through international training platforms, including the China-ISA Joint Training and Research Center, China has organized more than 300 training courses on marine science, technology and management for over 6,000 young scholars and managers from developing countries,[59] strengthening their knowledge and capacity to implement the Agreement.



Figure 19 Inauguration of the China–Madagascar Continental Shelf Joint Laboratory in 2024[60]

[55] Xinhua, "Innovation, Transformation and Mutual Benefit: Observations from the 2026 Ocean Cooperation and Development Forum", 19 September 2026, https://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/20260919/4e145bb84c404e1ba25afa84868c6d15/c.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[56] Third Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Blue Citizen Initiative Officially Launched", 13 November 2023, https://www.tio.org.cn/OWUP/html/zhxw/20231113/3424.html (accessed 19 October 2026).

[57] Chinese Social Sciences Net, "China–Island Countries Ocean Cooperation Forum Held in Fujian", 13 November 2024, https://cssn.cn/skgz/bwyc/202411/t20241113_5802016.shtml. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Forum on China–Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan 2025–2027, September 2024, section 9.3.1, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/1179_674909/202409/t20240905_11485697.shtml(accessed 19 October 2026).

[58] State Council Information Office, Marine Eco-Environmental Protection in China, 11 July 2024, Part VII, subsection 4.

[59] Xinhua, "Developing the Deep Blue and Accelerating China's Development as a Maritime Power", People's Daily, 14 August 2025, p. 11, https://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2025/0814/c64387-40542157.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[60] Second Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, official website, https://sio.org.cn/a/banner/22142.html.



Figure 20 A cargo vessel donated by China arrived in Nauru in 2025[61]



Figure 21 Blue Citizen Initiative capacity-building seminar in 2026[62]

[61] Embassy of China in the Republic of Nauru, "Ambassador Lü Jin Attends the Arrival Ceremony for a China-Donated Cargo Vessel in Nauru", 10 October 2025, ， https://nr.china-embassy.gov.cn/dshd/202510/t20251010_11729035.htm (accessed 19 October 2026).

[62] Second Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Blue Citizen Initiative Capacity-Building Seminar Concludes", 10 October 2026, https://www.sio.org.cn/a/snyw/23352.html (accessed 13 October 2026).



Figure 22 Opening of the 2026 Training Workshop of the ISA–China Joint Training and Research Center in Sanya[63]

China had advanced the establishment of the BRICS Deep-sea Resources International Research Center[64] and has strengthened the APEC Marine Sustainable Development Center, the China–Africa Marine Science and Blue Economy Cooperation Center, the China–Pacific Island Countries Sub-centre for Marine Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Cooperation, and the China–Indian Ocean Region Center for Marine Cooperation and Training. These platforms facilitate the sharing of marine scientific and technological advances. It has also built exchange platforms such as World Ocean Week in Xiamen, the Global Coastal Forum, the China–Africa Marine Science and Technology Forum, and the China–Island Countries Ocean Cooperation Forum, rallying the strength of the Global South and promoting policy dialogue, technical exchanges and project cooperation on ocean governance, including on the Agreement.

[63] China Oceanic Development Foundation, "2026 ISA–China Joint Training and Research Center Training Workshop Opens in Sanya", 30 May 2026, https://www.cfocean.org.cn/html/web/xinwenzixun/jijinhuixinwen/20606129227641528 34.html (accessed 13 October 2026).

[64] National Natural Science Foundation of China, "BRICS Deep-sea Resources International Research Center Established", 27 April 2025, https://www.nsfc.gov.cn/p1/3381/2821/79178.html (accessed 13 October 2026).



Figure 23 Launch of the BRICS Deep-sea Resources International Research Center in 2025



Figure 24 China–Island Countries Ocean Cooperation Forum held in Pingtan in 2025



Figure 25 Opening ceremony of 2025 World Ocean Week in Xiamen[65]



Figure 26 Launch of the third round of Blue Partnership Action Fund projects in 2025

[65] Xiamen Net, "Multiple Outcomes Announced at the Opening of World Ocean Week in Xiamen 2025", 7 November 2025, photograph by Wang Huoyan, Xiamen Daily, https://news.xmnn.cn/xmxw/202511/t20251107_375434.html (accessed 19 October 2026).

5 Offering to host the Secretariat in Xiamen

The conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity is a shared responsibility of the international community. China's bid to host the Secretariat of the Agreement in Xiamen is a concrete step in support of multilateralism and global ocean governance, as well as an important commitment to providing long-term and stable support to the international community. Through its bid, China seeks to translate its own ocean governance experience, marine scientific and technological capabilities, international cooperation networks and host-country support arrangements into concrete actions serving all parties, thereby providing strong support for the Agreement to establish an efficiently operating institutional system, form an open and inclusive platform for cooperation, and achieve sustained and effective intuitional operation.

China's bid seeks to promote broader, more equitable and more inclusive global ocean governance. Ocean governance requires the joint participation of countries across different regions and at different stages of development, and also requires a more balanced geographical distribution of international institutions. Located in an important hub of marine cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, Xiamen offers geographical advantages for international exchange and regional cooperation. If selected as the seat of the Secretariat, Xiamen would help strengthen links between the Asia-Pacific region and the global ocean governance system, broaden the geographical reach of international marine cooperation, and facilitate participation in the Agreement's work by all Parties, particularly developing countries. This would advance broad participation and mutually beneficial cooperation in global ocean governance.

China's bid to host the Secretariat also reflects the continuity of its maritime heritage and its sustainable development philosophy. Guided by the philosophy of harmony between humanity and nature, China is committed to placing equal emphasis on marine conservation and sustainable use, advocating respect for and protection of nature, and safeguarding the blue home on which humanity depends for survival..[66] China is ready to take its bid as an opportunity to deepen exchanges with other countries in marine biodiversity conservation, marine scientific research, capacity-building and marine technology cooperation, and to support science-based and cooperation-driven global ocean governance.

[66] Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, address on China's offer to host the Secretariat at the third session of the Preparatory Commission for the first meeting of the COP, https://webtv. un. org/en/asset/k1v/k1vrotehhh (accessed 13 October 2026).

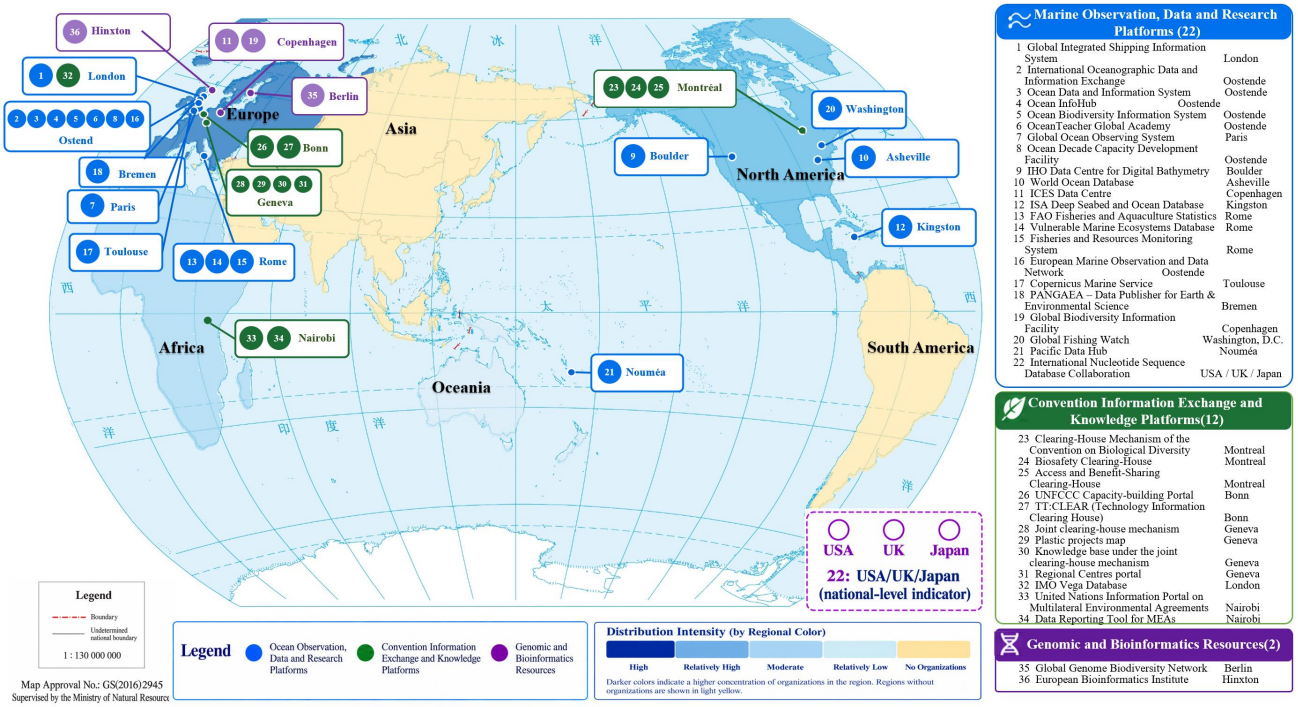


Figure 27 Geographical distribution of ocean-related international organizations

IV Conclusions and Outlook

The conclusion and entry into force of the Agreement represent a landmark achievement for multilateralism in global ocean governance and a milestone breakthrough in marine biodiversity conservation. The Agreement fills in the regulatory gap in the governance of marine biodiversity in ABNJ. Its full and effective implementation concerns not only the health and resilience of global marine ecosystems, but also the common well-being and long-term interests of humankind. As a major institutional innovation in global ocean governance, the Agreement cannot be implemented overnight. It requires the international community to build multilateral consensus, refine implementation mechanisms and deepen practical cooperation to jointly develop a global ocean governance system commensurate with its objectives, values and prospects.[67]

China is a committed supporter, defender and builder of the United Nations, participating substantively in global ocean governance. Throughout nearly two decades of negotiations on the Agreement, China engaged in consultations at every stage, actively conveyed developing countries' concerns, helped bridge differences in positions and build broad consensus, and played a key role in the Agreement's conclusion. In a complex and turbulent international environment, China remains steadfast in acting as a mainstay in defending multilateralism, boosting international confidence in jointly advancing ocean governance and working with other countries to build a community of life on Earth.[68]

As an advocate, participant and leader in marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, China is pursuing modernization featuring harmony between humanity and nature and steadily implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In support of the Agreement's purposes and objectives, China has developed relevant practices that can be drawn on in access to and benefit-sharing of MGR, marine ecological conservation and restoration, and EIA. Its implementation experience and institutional arrangements safeguard and support the full implementation of the Agreement. China continues to deepen South-South marine cooperation and build extensive blue partnerships, helping developing countries strengthen implementation capacity through financial and other support and ensuring that more countries and people benefit from its own development outcomes.

Looking ahead, China will fully implement the Global Governance Initiative, uphold multilateralism and the vision of a maritime community with a shared future, fulfil its obligations through practical actions, and actively advance implementation of the Agreement. It will continue contributing to global ocean governance and work with the international community to make the Agreement's mechanisms operational at an early stage and a Secretariat commensurate with its significance and long-term prospects. China will also work with the Global South to practice a governance approach based on extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, promote the building of a fairer and more equitable ocean governance

[67] Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, address on China's offer to host the Secretariat at the third session of the Preparatory Commission for the first meeting of the COP, https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1v/k1vrotehhh (accessed 13 October 2026).

[68] Ibid.

system, and ensure that the outcomes of marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use benefit all humanity.

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Term
ABMTs	Area-Based Management Tools
ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
BBNJ Agreement	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
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CliMetS	Global Climate Impact of Methane Seeps
COP	Conference of the Parties
Digital DEPTH	Digital Deep-sea Typical Habitats
DOME	Deep Ocean Microbiomes and Ecosystems
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GEM	Global Estuaries Monitoring
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHEP	Global Hadal Exploration Programme
GSES	Global Subseafloor Ecosystem and Sustainability
IFBs	Relevant Legal Instruments and Frameworks and Relevant Global, Regional, Subregional and Sectoral Bodies
ISA	International Seabed Authority
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
Mega-Delta	Deltas Associated with Large Rivers: Seeking Solutions to the Problem of Sustainability
MGR	Marine Genetic Resources
MoNITOR	Mitigation of Natural Incidence Towards an Increased Oceanic Resilience
MPA / MPAs	Marine Protected Area / Marine Protected Areas
ONCE	Ocean Negative Carbon Emissions
OSF	Ocean to Climate Seamless Forecasting System
RMB	Renminbi
STB	Scientific and Technical Body
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
USD	United States Dollar

