



IUCN's Explanatory Guide to the BBNJ Agreement

A tool to support understanding and implementation



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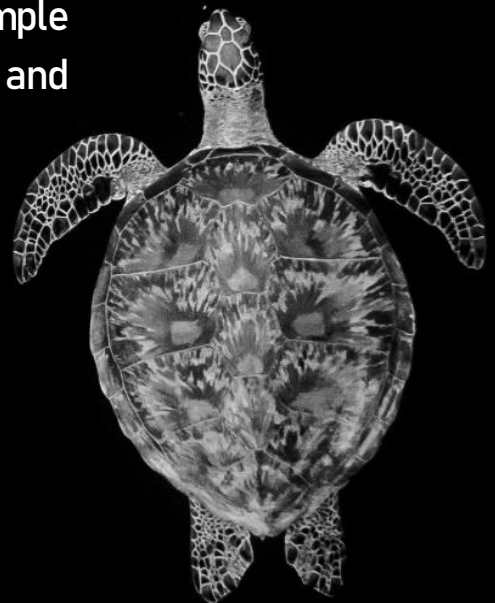
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IUCN is developing an explanatory guide to assist Contracting Parties, States and other relevant stakeholders to understand the BBNJ Agreement, its provisions, their interplay with other treaties and agreements, and overall, how it will contribute to the effective governance architecture of the high seas. The guide will be the newest addition to the IUCN Environmental Policy and Law Series – including guides to the CBD, Cartagena Protocol and Nagoya Protocol.

Why an Explanatory Guide?

The BBNJ Agreement is a complex legal instrument. To effectively engage with, and implement this Agreement, there are several measures States will need to take, including:

- Preparing to participate in the newly set up institutions (a scientific and technical body, STB, a Clearing-House Mechanism and a Standard Committee on Finance).
- Ensuring that their policies, agency guidance, legislation and regulations are aligned with their rights and duties under the BBNJ Agreement.
- Developing internal procedures to coordinate between agencies and ministries that may previously not have collaborated, for example those responsible for marine conservation and those that relate to shipping.



Why Now?

As the BBNJ Agreement moves toward ratification and implementation, States require clear and accessible resources. The Guide will serve as a timely tool to:

1. Clarify the legal obligations under the BBNJ Agreement.
2. Provide practical, step-by-step information for ratification and national implementation

Who is the Target Audience?

As the high seas is an area where multiple activities, biological and ecological processes take place, the audience for such guide will also be very diverse, ranging from decision-makers and government officials, technical experts, academia, private sector, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and civil society at large.

Content of the Explanatory guide

The Guide will address each of the **twelve (12) parts** of the BBNJ Agreement, with its **76 articles**, and **two annexes**.

It will also include a **glossary** to assist in clarifying the meaning, as some terms have different meanings within different and relevant fields.

A central contribution of the explanatory guide will be its **user-friendly language** to make the Agreement's technical language accessible to any non-specialist.

Next steps and expected timeline

A “sneak preview” of the Explanatory Guide is planned to be presented at the IUCN Congress, in October 2025. The overall completion is scheduled for mid-2026.

The Guide will also serve as a foundation for future IUCN capacity-building tools and stakeholder engagement efforts.





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