



IUCN EC DG INTPA Global Ocean Programme Component 1

Enhance capacities to respond to key global ABNJ biodiversity-related processes

CALL FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Version 2 – 4 February 2026

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V1	9 June 2025	N/A
V2	04 February 2026	Eligible Requesters

Applicants are strongly recommended to read this guidance document in full before completing and submitting a request.



Table of Contents

1.	Background	3
a.	General information.....	3
b.	The Global Ocean Programme – Component 1	3
c.	Technical Assistance Facility.....	3
2.	Objectives.....	4
3.	Eligibility criteria	4
a.	Eligible requesters.....	4
b.	Alignment with other biodiversity related processes	5
c.	Types of Technical Assistance.....	5
4.	How to apply	5
5.	Deadlines	6
6.	Technical Assistance requests appraisal, delivery monitoring	6

1. Background

a. General information

The global ocean is vital for life, supporting over 3 billion people—especially in developing countries—through livelihoods, food security, and economic growth. Ocean-based activities currently contribute €1.3 trillion to the global economy, with projections to double by 2030. To harness this potential, it's essential that developing nations turn emerging ocean sectors into drivers of sustainable and inclusive development, supported by international cooperation.

Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) make up nearly half the planet's surface and are rich in biodiversity and ecosystem services, including climate regulation and food security. However, overfishing, pollution, and advancing technology have increased exploitation of these vulnerable areas, making robust governance and conservation efforts urgent.

The adoption of the BBNJ Agreement (2023) and the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework (2022) establishes a new global legal framework to protect marine biodiversity in ABNJ. To effectively implement these frameworks, especially in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), substantial capacity building is required.

b. The Global Ocean Programme – Component 1

The **Global Ocean Programme (GOP)** is a €40 million EU-funded initiative under the NDICI–Global Europe thematic programme 'Global Challenges' (Planet) for 2024–2027 of the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA). It aims at enhancing DG INTPA partner countries capacities to implement and benefit from the newly adopted High Seas Biodiversity Treaty (BBNJ Agreement) and other agreements and processes - legal, institutional, and scientific - related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ).

IUCN is implementing Component 1 of GOP (GOP C1), which focuses on enhancing capacities at national and regional levels for engagement with BBNJ and other biodiversity-related processes in ABNJ.

c. The Technical Assistance Facility

The Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) is the primary delivery mechanism for GOP C1. It is designed to provide rapid-response, high-quality technical support to eligible partner countries and regional entities. The TAF is operated by IUCN and structured as follows:

- **TA Facility Team:** Manages intake, assessment, coordination and delivery of assistance.
- **Technical Assistance Approval Committee (TAAC):** Independent technical panel that validates the relevance, feasibility and added value of each TA request and proposed expert assignments.
- **Expert Pool:** Roster of thematic experts in legal, scientific, and institutional areas related to ABNJ and BBNJ implementation, selected through IUCN procurement processes.

2. Objectives

The overarching objective of the GOP C1 is to contribute to the effective delivery of global ocean commitments by 2030, while leaving in place an improved, inclusive and operational governance architecture to continue implementation post-2030.

Notably by providing support to eligible countries, particularly developing nations, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), to engage in biodiversity-related processes in ABNJ with a view to:

- improve ocean governance, conservation and sustainable use by enhancing the capacity of partner countries (in particular developing countries) to participate in, implement and benefit from global processes related to biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ); and
- support EU policies and priorities in international ocean governance while at the same time improving the resilience and livelihoods of people in partner countries, in particular Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The present Call for Technical Assistance request pertains to the first area of interventions, for which we invite all eligible applicants to submit their request through the IUCN Technical Assistance Portal (more information below).

Important: The objective of this call for Technical Assistance requests is to enhance capacities of partner countries but is not an allocation of funding! No transfer of funds directly to countries is anticipated.

3. Eligibility criteria

a. Eligible requesters

Technical Assistance requests can be submitted by representatives of:

- A governmental institution from an EU partner country.
- A regional intergovernmental organisation with ocean-related responsibilities (including regional fishery bodies, regional seas organisations, regional economic integration organisations, and others), including at least one EU partner country.

Please note:

- *Regional bodies can ask for assistance even when some countries within their membership are not eligible (e.g. France in Nairobi Convention).*
- *Any request submitted by the Secretariat of a regional body must demonstrate it has the support of its Member States or Country Members.*
- *Other stakeholders can be part of request for assistance, but under the lead of an eligible proponent.*

b. Alignment with other biodiversity related processes

The request must align with other BBNJ and other biodiversity related processes efforts and institutional awareness, notably to:

- Avoid duplication with other BBNJ-related funded efforts (e.g. GEF, philanthropy).
- Ensure all ministries concerned by BBNJ ratification and implementation, in the respective countries involved in this request, are informed of this request (e.g. Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry for Environment, ...).
- Ensure national GEF focal point(s) (see list [here](#)), if any, is aware of the request for technical assistance.

c. Types of Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance requests are required to fit under the following categories:

- **Category 1** - Conduct legal, policy and scientific gap assessments related to ABNJ biodiversity-related processes
- **Category 2** - Support for national adoption of the BBNJ Agreement (awareness raising, domestication, ratification...)
- **Category 3** - Strengthen capacity, science and technology related to the implementation of ABNJ biodiversity-related processes
- **Category 4** - Facilitate the capacity to participate in the institutional mechanisms related to biodiversity in ABNJ
- **Category 5** - Align ABNJ biodiversity-related processes, agreements and commitments at national or regional levels
- **Category 6** - Other type of support

4. How to apply

Applications can be submitted only through the [IUCN Technical Assistance Portal](#). **ONLY applications submitted online through the IUCN Technical Assistance Portal will be considered.**

Applications can be submitted in **all three IUCN official languages (English, French and Spanish)**. A template of the application form can be downloaded [here](#).

In the online application you will be asked to enter the following information about your request:

- Information on the lead requester(s). Please note that an official endorsement from the requester institution or organization or proof of delegation will be required
- Information on BBNJ and other biodiversity related processes
- Overview of the Technical Assistance request
- Sustainability of the Technical Assistance request
- Any additional information

Other documents may be requested at a later date.

Kindly take into consideration the appropriate time required to complete your proposal. We strongly encourage requesters to familiarize themselves with the application form (available for download) before starting to input information onto the IUCN Technical Assistance Portal.

If you have any questions regarding your application, please contact taf.ocean@iucn.org.

5. Deadlines

This is an open call for Technical Assistance requests and as such, there are no deadlines to submit a request. Appraisal will be conducted on a regular basis.

6. Technical Assistance requests appraisal, delivery and monitoring

Please note that requesters may be contacted during the appraisal process.

