

## **Marine and coastal biodiversity**

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Reaffirming* Articles 3, 4, 5 and 22 of the Convention on Biological Diversity,<sup>1</sup> as well as its decisions [VIII/24](#) of 31 March 2006, [IX/20](#) of 30 May 2008, [X/29](#) of 29 October 2010, [XI/17](#) of 19 October 2012, [XII/22](#) of 17 October 2014, [XIII/12](#) of 17 December 2016, in particular its paragraph 3, [14/9](#) of 29 November 2018, [15/24 and 15/26](#) of 19 December 2022 ~~and~~, [16/16](#) of 30 October 2024, ~~and 16/17 of 1 November 2024,~~

*Recalling* resolution 80/110 of 9 December 2025 of the General Assembly of the United Nations on oceans and the law of the sea, including its preambular paragraphs on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,<sup>2,3,4</sup>

*Recognizing* that the ~~description~~[modification of descriptions](#) of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas [and the description of new areas](#) is an important scientific and technical process that contributes to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework<sup>5</sup> and 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,<sup>6</sup>

### **I**

#### **Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas**

1. *Decides* to extend the term of the Informal Advisory Group on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas [until the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties](#), and requests the Executive Secretary to continue to facilitate the work of the Group in line with its terms of reference<sup>7</sup> [and to make a report on this work available for a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties](#);

2. [\[Welcomes\]/\[Takes note of\]](#) the submissions related to the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the modification of existing descriptions, as contained in document CBD/SBSTTA/28/INF/2 and summarized in document CBD/SBSTTA/28/7/Add.1;

3. *Encourages* Parties; [and invites](#) other Governments, relevant organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and other stakeholders to contribute to the work on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas under the Convention ~~using the best available scientific information in order to increase the number and coverage of such areas around the world;~~ [as appropriate and in accordance with decision 16/16, using the best available scientific information and information from diverse knowledge systems, including the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities with their free, prior](#)

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. 1833, No. 31363.

<sup>3</sup> Colombia reaffirms that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is not the only legal instrument governing activities carried out in the oceans and seas. The participation of Colombia in the discussions under this agenda item does not affect its status or rights, nor can it be interpreted as a tacit or express acceptance of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

<sup>4</sup> Türkiye dissociates itself from the reference made to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to which it is not a party. The participation of Türkiye in the discussions under the present agenda item during the present meeting cannot be construed as a change in the well-known legal position of Türkiye with regard to the said instrument.

<sup>5</sup> Decision [15/4](#), annex.

<sup>6</sup> A/CONF.232/2023/4.

<sup>7</sup> The terms of reference for the Informal Advisory Group, which were aligned with the modalities contained in decision 16/16, are available here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cbdocumentspublic-imagebucket-15w2zyxk3prl8/21e49e9bee68702b764f600966c9640a>

and informed consent<sup>8</sup>, and ensuring their full and effective participation, as well as equitable access to information used in this work, ~~in order to increase thereby contributing to increasing the number and coverage, of such areas around the world, with a focus on areas beyond national jurisdiction, and ensuring that the descriptions are kept up to date, while promoting balanced regional participation, including from regions and sub-regions currently under-represented in the description of such areas, and while also strengthening the scientific and technical capacities of developing countries to contribute to this work;~~

3bis. Encourages Parties and invites other Governments and relevant organizations to support the identification and recognition of essential and particularly sensitive habitats of aquatic species, including Key Biodiversity Areas, Important Marine Mammal Areas, Important Shark and Ray Areas, and Important Marine Turtle Areas, recognizing their importance in informing the description and modification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas as well as area-based conservation measures and to ensure their consideration in the designation and management of protected areas, including under target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and in the implementation of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction;

[4. Adopts the voluntary ~~guidelines~~reference elements for good practice on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and other relevant compatible and complementary ~~scientific~~ criteria, as contained in annex I to the present decision, and ~~encourages~~invites Parties and invites other Governments and competent intergovernmental organizations to make use of the ~~guidelines~~reference elements, as appropriate and in accordance with national circumstances and the respective mandates and procedures of competent intergovernmental organizations, without affecting or modifying peer-review or decision-making processes established under other processes, and notes that the voluntary reference elements do not prejudice the sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction of States;]

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to include the submissions referred to in paragraph 2 above in the repository for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and to transmit them to the General Assembly of the United Nations, with a view to informing work under its relevant processes, as well as Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations;

6. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, in collaboration with the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres, to continue to facilitate and support, as appropriate, efforts to develop submissions for the modification of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the description of new areas, including through outreach, technical support and capacity-building efforts, and, subject to the availability of resources, to convene a global expert workshop to collate, synthesize, and review the best available ~~scientific~~ information from diverse knowledge systems on such ecological and biological features in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction in support of the potential development of future submissions, as appropriate and in accordance with the modalities contained in decision 16/16, without prejudicing future discussions of the Subsidiary Body and the Conference of the Parties, and in cooperation with the secretariat of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and other competent international organizations, while ensuring complementarity and avoiding unnecessary duplication with and/or prejudicing of work under the Agreement, including with respect to area-based management tools;

6bis. Requests the Executive Secretary to compile experiences in the use of the information contained in the descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine

<sup>8</sup> Free, prior and informed consent” refers to the tripartite terminology of “prior and informed consent”, “free, prior and informed consent” or “approval and involvement”.

areas, including efforts to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and other relevant international agreements and frameworks, and make this information available for a future meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice;

6ter. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to make the voluntary reference elements on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and other relevant compatible and complementary criteria and associated materials available in all official languages of the United Nations.

## II

### Conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity

7. *[Welcomes with appreciation] / [Takes note of]* the entry into force on 17 January 2026 of 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;

8. *Expresses* its appreciation to the Governments of Germany, Ireland, Norway and Sweden for their financial support for the organization of the expert workshop on scientific and technical work conducted under the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction in Bergen, Norway, from 2 to 5 December 2025 *and takes note of the outcomes of the expert workshop*;

9. *Encourages* Parties and *invites* other Governments *and relevant organizations, including regional seas conventions and action plans and regional fishery bodies,* to strengthen coordination *and cooperation* at the *global, regional and national levels* on issues related to marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, *with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and other stakeholders*;

10. *Also encourages* Parties and *invites* other Governments, and *invites* organizations with competence in areas beyond national jurisdiction, to *take into consideration* *utilize, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates and jurisdictional scopes,* the wide range of tools, guidance and experiences developed under the Convention in their work to conserve and use sustainably marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, *[including in the implementation of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction,] including in work to support capacity-building, scientific and technical cooperation, and technology transfer, without prejudicing work under these respective organizations and processes, while promoting synergies and avoiding the duplication of efforts*;

10bis *Notes with concern* the findings of the global report on collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework which show that marine and coastal ecosystems are consistently under-represented compared with terrestrial ecosystems, and *urges* Parties and *invites* other Governments, and *relevant organizations,* to *accelerate and strengthen efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Framework in marine and coastal ecosystems, including through enhanced policy coherence, scientific and technical cooperation, capacity-building, access to and transfer of technology, and the mobilization of adequate financial resources*;

11. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, *subject to the availability of resources,* to further cooperate with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat *(or the future secretariat of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction,)* and organizations with

competence in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular with a view to sharing tools, guidance and expertise, experiences and best practices developed under the Convention relevant to marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, as appropriate and within the mandates of the respective organizations, and in a manner that promotes coherence and coordination and does not undermine and fully respects the mandates and competencies of relevant legal instruments and frameworks or competent global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies;

[12. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare updates to the following documents, taking into account the best available scientific knowledge and the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources, within the mandate and jurisdictional scope of the Convention, taking into account relevant work under other international instruments, frameworks and competent global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies, avoiding duplication and promoting complementarity and coherence, and make these available for peer review by Parties and relevant organizations, before providing them for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at a meeting held before the ~~eighteenth~~nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties:

(a) The scientific guidance for selecting areas to establish a representative network of marine protected areas, including in open ocean waters and deep-sea habitats;<sup>9, 10</sup> taking into account knowledge gaps in various regions, and while maintaining a clear distinction between the scientific description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and decisions concerning the identification, proposal, designation or establishment of marine protected areas or other area-based management tools by competent authorities and bodies, taking into account ecological representativeness and connectivity as key criteria for area-based conservation, recognizing and integrating diverse knowledge systems, including the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities;

[(b) The voluntary specific workplan on biodiversity in cold-water areas within the jurisdictional scope of the Convention;<sup>11</sup>

[(c) The voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments in marine and coastal areas and the draft guidance on biodiversity-inclusive strategic environmental assessment in marine and coastal areas;<sup>12</sup>]

12bis Further requests the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to synthesise, in collaboration with relevant organisations, scientific and technical information on marine biological and ecological connectivity, including in coastal, open-ocean and deep-sea ecosystems, and including vertical connectivity, to inform the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and make this information available for a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

12ter Requests the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources and in collaboration with relevant organizations and experts, to develop scientific guidance on the application of emerging technologies, including environmental DNA, remote sensing and other appropriate biodiversity monitoring tools, to support marine biodiversity assessment and monitoring, taking into account national circumstances, capacities and priorities, and based on the best available scientific information;

<sup>9</sup> ~~Decision IX/20, annex II.~~

<sup>10</sup> ~~Decision IX/20, annex II.~~

<sup>11</sup> Decision XIII/11, annex II.

<sup>12</sup> ~~UNEP/CBD/COP/11/23, annex.~~

[13. *Decides* to establish an informal advisory group on work conducted under the Convention in relation to marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction in accordance with the terms of reference provided in annex II to the present decision, and requests the Group to provide a report on its progress for consideration at a meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice before the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties-]

13bis. Requests the Executive Secretary to develop a prioritized list of the topics contained in the annex to decision 16/17 of 1 November 2024 that would benefit from the development of new guidance under the Convention to advance the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework with respect to marine and coastal biodiversity for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at a meeting held before the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

13bis. Further requests the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to further enhance cooperation, collaboration or synergies, as appropriate, with other multilateral environmental agreements and global and regional organizations, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies, with regard to various thematic issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity and island biodiversity in support of the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## Annex I

### **Voluntary reference elements for good practice guidelines on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and other relevant compatible and complementary scientific criteria**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. There are various processes, on a range of scales and in diverse contexts, for describing areas of significance in marine and coastal areas, including the scientific description and mapping of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas. The processes reflect a range of objectives, contexts and priorities and may be coordinated variously by intergovernmental or governmental entities, indigenous peoples and local communities, and non-governmental organizations or initiatives. Some are focused on specific types of habitats, species or ecological processes, while others combine at least two of the above or have a broader scope. Processes other than those to describe ecologically or biologically significant marine areas may also be linked with management measures or used to inform related management decisions.

2. In its decision [16/16](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>13</sup> emphasized that, in developing submissions for descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas or modifications to those descriptions, proponents should consider the need for a strong scientific basis with sufficient information, as well as the importance of transparency, which are common factors of such processes. In that regard, peer review is a vital factor contributing to the effectiveness of the processes. Peer review can take various forms but is intended to provide an opportunity for experts to evaluate information in order to strengthen its scientific basis and credibility, enhance process transparency and support the consistent application of agreed criteria.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

3. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to develop voluntary guidelines on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and other relevant compatible and complementary scientific criteria. Elements of the process under the Convention to describe ecologically or biologically significant marine areas that are aimed at providing opportunities for expert review and input include six-month open comment periods, regional workshops, the publication of submissions and comments through an information-sharing mechanism and the requirement for submissions to be considered by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Conference of the Parties before they are included in the repository for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas.<sup>14</sup> Submissions of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas or the modifications of descriptions can, however, also undergo peer review before being provided to the Secretariat in order to strengthen their scientific quality.

## II. Purpose of the voluntary reference elements guidelines

4. The present voluntary reference elements guidelines are aimed at supporting inclusive, effective, scientifically robust, equitable and transparent expert peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and other relevant compatible and complementary scientific criteria, in line with section C of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

5. The voluntary reference elements guidelines are focused exclusively on expert peer reviews as a scientific and technical quality assurance mechanism. They are intended to strengthen the scientific basis of proposed descriptions and support the consistent application of agreed criteria, without prejudicing the identification, designation or prescription of management measures by the appropriate authorities recognizing that the description of an area as meeting the criteria for an ecologically or biologically significant marine area does not, in itself, constitute the identification, designation or establishment of a marine protected area or other area-based management tool or prescribe any management measure.

6. The voluntary reference elements guidelines are non-prescriptive, are flexible in nature and do not replace broader rights holder or stakeholder consultation processes, for which the objectives and relevant groups and individuals would differ compared with peer-review processes. The voluntary reference elements guidelines are intended to serve as a reference for good practice in support of relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties, in particular decision [16/16](#). They are primarily intended to inform the work of those who are managing a peer-review process, but they may also be useful for experts involved in peer reviews.

7. Nothing in the voluntary reference elements guidelines gives rise to any changes to the modalities adopted in decision [16/16](#), nor any additional steps or requirements with respect to the process for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas under the Convention or any processes related to the application of relevant compatible and complementary scientific criteria.

7bis. References in the present voluntary reference elements to other relevant compatible and complementary scientific criteria do not imply that the voluntary reference elements govern or modify processes established under other international instruments, frameworks or competent organizations. The use of the voluntary reference elements in such processes is voluntary and subject to their respective mandates, procedures and decisions.

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<sup>14</sup> The elements described apply only to certain types of submissions for the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and modification of descriptions.

### III. Voluntary reference elements~~Voluntary guidelines~~

#### A. Information regarding the criteria for which the area is being proposed

8. Sufficient information regarding the criteria against which the area is being proposed for assessment should be provided to those involved in the peer-review process and should include the following:

- (a) A full overview of the steps of the process for applying the criteria in question, including the steps that have been completed thus far;
- (b) The nature of the criteria that are being applied (e.g. context or objectives) and all requirements, including any associated thresholds, that the area in question must meet;
- (c) An indication of whether the area in question is associated with any other criteria;
- (d) Information on any previous unsuccessful efforts to assess the area against the criteria.

#### B. Clear justification of why the area meets the criteria

9. Given that the expert review process is focused on ensuring that the proposal is of a high quality, sufficient information should be provided to those involved in the review demonstrating that the area in question meets the criteria, including the following:

- (a) A clear geographical delineation of the area, using appropriate formats, such as geographic information system files or geographical coordinates, and the rationale for the delineation;
- (b) The geographical scope of the exercise or analysis that led to the proposal to describe the area in question as significant;
- (c) An indication of whether the process that led to the proposal was limited to or specifically focused on certain types of features, habitats, species or ecosystem services;
- (d) A clear explanation of the features of the area that contribute to the fulfilment of the relevant criteria, using the best available information and knowledge, including data or data-driven analyses; and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities;
- (e) The gaps or uncertainties that may exist in the information or knowledge used, including a description of confidence levels, where appropriate, and an explanation of the ways in which the gaps are addressed, where applicable, such as through assumptions, extrapolation, modelling or the use of complementary knowledge sources, including an indication of the associated uncertainty to ensure scientific transparency and robustness;
- (f) Full references or citations for all information and knowledge used, including statements on the availability or reproducibility of data, where needed;
- (g) Applicable permissions for all information and knowledge used, including the best available science and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their free, prior and informed consent.

#### C. Experts engaged in the peer-review process

10. The following factors should be borne in mind when engaging experts in the peer-review process:

- (a) A sufficient number of appropriate experts should be engaged, under a clear rationale for their engagement, such as those from indigenous peoples and local communities, and various rights holder and stakeholder groups, who would be participating in their expert capacity, giving due consideration to the participation of experts who were not involved in the development of the submission, including:

- (i) ~~Individuals~~Experts with ~~sufficient~~ scientific knowledge, which may include a range of knowledge systems and experiential knowledge, of the types of features, habitats, species or ecosystem services being discussed, ensuring that the peer-review group includes a sufficient number of experts with knowledge of all the main features of the area (e.g. two experts per area of expertise);
- (ii) ~~Individuals with sufficient expertise~~Experts in the methodological approaches used in the analysis;
- (iii) ~~Individuals~~Experts from indigenous peoples and local communities who have traditional knowledge relevant to the area in question, subject to their free, prior and informed consent;<sup>15</sup>
- ~~(iv) Individuals who have not been involved in the preparation of the submission;~~
- (iii)bis Experts from various sectors and user groups, including artisanal and commercial fisheries;

(b) Experts should understand and disclose their actual or potential conflicts of interest, potentially using individual, signed, formal declarations, and their motivating factors for engaging in the process, and a consistent approach should be applied to the management of conflicts;

(c) A clear explanation should be provided of the types of input expected from the experts, which may vary depending on their area of expertise, and of the format of the expected final output of the process;

(d) Peer-review methods and timelines should be flexible to reflect the range of regional and institutional contexts, especially where data or resources are limited, without losing scientific reliability.

#### **D. Establishing and conducting the peer-review process**

11. The timing of the implementation of a peer-review process should be chosen in such a way that the ~~scientific foundation~~ and quality of the process and the information used can be ensured as effectively as possible. The process should be carefully crafted and conducted, incorporating the following features:

(a) Effective and equitable modalities, which may include a combination of approaches, that help to facilitate the robust review of the proposal;

(b) Clear steps and expected timelines that are consistently respected and clear explanations of any deviations;

(c) Clear rules of procedure and code of conduct that are set out, explained to everyone involved and consistently respected throughout the process, including rules for:

- (i) Reporting in any public documentation discussions and information provided during the process; including on the use of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, with their free, prior and informed consent;
- (ii) Deciding when a consensus is expected or required and the steps to be taken when a consensus is not possible;

(d) Clear plans for the consideration of input received through the process and, where appropriate, for its incorporation and reflection in the output of the process, recognizing that not all input can be incorporated;

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<sup>15</sup> Free, prior and informed consent” refers to the tripartite terminology of “prior and informed consent”, “free, prior and informed consent” or “approval and involvement”.

- (e) Information on the ways in which the peer-review process influenced the final proposal, including a clear justification for any expert input that is not incorporated into the final output, as well as any dissenting views regarding the final output, in order to ensure transparency and the scientific reliability of the outcome;
- (f) Adherence to any rules, procedures, timelines and expectations articulated at the outset of the process;
- (g) Public availability of the outputs of the process, as well as input received during the process, as appropriate;
- (h) Provisions for the adaptive improvement of the peer-review process for future exercises.

## Annex II

### Terms of reference for an informal advisory group on work conducted under the Convention in relation to marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

1. The Informal Advisory Group on Work Conducted under the Convention in relation to Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction shall:

(a) Provide scientific and technical advice to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>16</sup> on ~~its~~the work of the Secretariat relevant to marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular on the prioritization of and approaches for possible activities, drawing within the mandate and jurisdictional scope of the Convention and initiatives, including, but not limited to, on opportunities identified during the expert workshop on scientific and technical work conducted under the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction held in Bergen, Norway, from 2 to 5 December 2025;<sup>17</sup>

(b) Identify timely opportunities for specific areas of cooperation and synergy with the ~~Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (or the future~~ secretariat of 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)<sup>18</sup> and other competent international bodies with respect to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, drawing on cooperation opportunities identified at the expert workshop noted above;

(c) Provide advice on areas of potential synergy and collaboration with respect to work under the Convention on Biological Diversity and work under the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, including with respect to potential means and opportunities for the Conference of the Parties of the Convention and its subsidiary bodies to provide ~~the input necessary to work under the Agreement,~~ relevant scientific and technical information, as appropriate and in line with the mandate and jurisdictional scope of the Convention, to inform work under the Agreement.

2. The Informal Advisory Group will respect and -take fully into account the mandates and work of other competent intergovernmental organizations with respect to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, as well as previous guidance by the Conference of the Parties regarding the role of the Convention with respect to

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

<sup>17</sup> See [CBD/MCB/WS/2025/1/2](#).

<sup>18</sup> [A/CONF.232/2023/4](#).

the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, and shall conduct its work in a manner that promotes coherence and coordination and does not undermine relevant legal instruments and frameworks or competent global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies.

3. The Informal Advisory Group will be composed of up to 20 experts nominated by Parties, up to 10 experts nominated by intergovernmental organizations with competence in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, and up to ~~5~~7 experts nominated by other relevant organizations, including from civil society and indigenous peoples and local communities. The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, will select experts from the nominations with due regard to a diversity of relevant technical expertise, geographical representation, gender balance and the representation of indigenous peoples and local communities, women's and youth groups, and ~~major~~other relevant stakeholders.

4. The Informal Advisory Group is established for a two-year period that may be renewed by a decision of the Conference of the Parties. The members of the Group shall be selected for a two-year period. The work of the Group should continue regardless of any changes in membership.

5. The Informal Advisory Group may invite ~~experts-participation from~~ from outside the Group, as appropriate, including experts and representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth, to contribute to discussions on specific issues considered by the Group. These experts will be subject to a no-objection period, during which the Parties may express their opposition to contributing to the Informal Advisory Group.

6. The Informal Advisory Group will primarily conduct its work online and, subject to the availability of resources, will also meet in person.

7. The Informal Advisory Group is to start its work immediately after the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and report on its work to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at a meeting held before the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

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