



### **Why is marine and coastal biodiversity on the SBSTTA 26 agenda?**

Marine and coastal biodiversity is critical to the healthy functioning of the planet as well as the health, well-being and prosperity of humanity. As such, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has addressed marine and coastal biodiversity at nearly every one of its meetings. At SBSTTA 26, the Subsidiary Body will work to advance progress on various key issues essential to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, or the Biodiversity Plan, including key issues on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, and areas in need of further attention to implement the Biodiversity Plan in marine, coastal and island ecosystems.

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

Under this item, SBSTTA 26 will consider a broad range of issues, including gaps and areas in need of focus to effectively implement the Biodiversity Plan with respect to marine, coastal and island biodiversity. It will also discuss potential options for modalities for collaboration and cooperation with relevant global and regional organizations in the context of the BBNJ Agreement, as well as linkages with various other international processes related to the ocean. SBSTTA 26 will also discuss capacity building and partnerships for marine and coastal biodiversity for the implementation of the Biodiversity Plan, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative.

### **Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs): further work**

The EBSAs are special areas in the ocean that serve important purposes, in one way or another, to support the healthy functioning of oceans and the many services that it provides.

SBSTTA 26 will prepare recommendations on modalities for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and for describing new EBSAs. The Secretariat has coordinated the EBSA process, aimed at identifying the “special places in the world’s oceans”. Since 2010, 15 regional EBSA workshops have been convened around the world, resulting in the description of more than 300 EBSAs globally. While the process has been successful, the Conference of the Parties has been discussing ways to improve it since 2014 and it is hoped that the recommendations emerging from SBSTTA 26 will lead to an agreed way forward so that the EBSAs can continue to be described and refined to best support research, planning and management.

### **Background**

Work under the CBD on EBSAs is based on a set of scientific criteria adopted by the COP in 2008. It was kicked off in 2010 when the COP requested the Secretariat to convene regional workshops to facilitate the mapping and description of EBSAs. As the only global intergovernmental process to map out all kinds of areas of significance in the ocean, this effort has been a major part of efforts to better understand, protect and manage areas that are most critical to the healthy functioning of marine ecosystems.



For additional information, please contact:  
David Ainsworth at +1 514 5612720 or [david.ainsworth@un.org](mailto:david.ainsworth@un.org)

Important links:

<https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/>

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