



REFERENCE: BBNJ Agreement/Initial CB Needs Survey/MS

11 January 2024

Excellency,

We have the honour to refer to resolution 77/321 of 1 August 2023, in which the General Assembly approved the assumption by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the functions assigned to him under 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 (the BBNJ Agreement), including the performance, through the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations (the Division), of secretariat functions until such time as the secretariat to be established under the BBNJ Agreement commences its functions. We also have the honour to refer to article 52 of the BBNJ Agreement in which the Global Environment Facility (GEF) trust fund is included as part of the financial mechanism under the Agreement.

In response to the request from the General Assembly in its resolution 77/321, the Division is implementing a programme to promote a better understanding of the BBNJ Agreement and prepare for its entry into force. The programme includes capacity-building and technical assistance activities. In response to its inclusion as part of the funding mechanism under the BBNJ agreement, the GEF Council authorized the use of up to \$34 million for the funding of ratification support and early action activities for the BBNJ Agreement. Eligible countries will be invited to submit their funding requests, including letters of endorsement from the GEF Operational Focal Point, upon approval of corresponding initial guidelines for enabling activities and ratification support projects by the GEF Council, which is to take place during the 66th Council meeting held from 5 to 9 February 2024.

In that context, the Division and the GEF Secretariat are working closely to ensure coordination of efforts and the efficient use of resources by avoiding gaps and duplications in the delivery of assistance.

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In that context, the Division and the GEF Secretariat are working closely to ensure coordination of efforts and the efficient use of resources by avoiding gaps and duplications in the delivery of assistance.

Accordingly, the Division and the GEF Secretariat are conducting an initial survey of capacity-building and technical assistance needs, including with regard to making progress towards signature and ratification, approval, acceptance or accession, to inform the development of future assistance in support of becoming parties to the BBNJ Agreement and its early implementation. Your Government is kindly invited to provide input to this exercise by filling out, by 11 February 2024, the following online survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/6UL4eypPbD>.

We also encourage the national administration(s) leading the ratification, approval, acceptance or accession process to liaise with national GEF focal points in anticipation of upcoming requests for GEF support. The list of GEF focal points is available at: <https://www.thegef.org/who-we-are/focal-points>.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Miguel de Serpa Soares
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs
and United Nations Legal Counsel

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez
CEO, Global Environment Facility