

OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING ACTION ON THE OCEAN AND COASTS UNDER THE UNFCCC 2023

Earlier versions of this options paper have been published in 2021 and 2022. This updated version reflects the latest developments and opportunities under ongoing UNFCCC processes, and focuses on opportunities for advancing coastal and marine Nature-based Solutions.

Executive Summary

Ocean and coastal ecosystems hold a suite of options that can support countries as they adopt measures to achieve their climate mitigation and adaptation goals. It is also critical to recognize the negative impacts of climate change on ocean and coastal ecosystems, ocean-dependent communities and Large Ocean States, and work to limit these impacts through emissions reductions, adaptation, continued research efforts, and effective management.¹

This paper summarizes the key entry points within existing UNFCCC processes and negotiations where management actions concerning coastal and marine ecosystems can play a productive role in climate action.² The recommendations below focus primarily on opportunities for advancing coastal Nature-based Solutions (NbS) including blue carbon.³ This options paper does not cover all areas of opportunity within the ocean-climate nexus, including marine renewable energy, marine (green) shipping, and aquatic food.

Countries are encouraged to:

1. **FINANCE:** Within negotiations and processes related to climate finance, work to increase funding availability, increase access to financing, and mobilize new and additional finance flows for coastal and marine Nature-based Solutions.

In ongoing processes and negotiations related to climate finance, including the Ad hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance, the Standing Committee on Finance, COP guidance for the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility, and the Adaptation Fund, Parties should prioritize efforts to increase and accelerate new and additional climate finance flows to coastal and marine ecosystems through all sources—public and private, and market and non-market, including

Introduction

Ocean-based actions provide powerful opportunities, if implemented sustainably, for both climate adaptation and mitigation, but they remain mostly under-utilized. There are entry points and opportunities in numerous ongoing

UNFCCC PROCESSES AND NEGOTIATIONS RELATED TO THE OCEAN AND COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

Key areas within ongoing UNFCCC process and negotiations where countries may advance efforts to address ocean-climate challenges and opportunities:

1. Finance	5
• Ad Hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance	
• Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)	
• Green Climate Fund (GCF)	
• Global Environment Facility (GEF)	
• Adaptation Fund (AF)	
2. Transparency and the Global Stocktake	6
• Global Stocktake (GST)	
• Biennial transparency reporting (BTR)	
• Technical Expert Review (TER)	
3. Mitigation	7
• Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	
• Work Programme to Scale up Mitigation Ambition and Implementation (MWP)	
4. Adaptation	8
• Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	
• National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)	
• Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)	
• Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation	
• Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) and its Thematic Expert Group on the Ocean and Coastal zones	
• Adaptation Committee (AC) processes	
5. Cross-cutting Opportunities	9
• UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue	
• Supporting synergies across other international policy processes	

OTHER AREAS RELEVANT TO ADVANCING OCEAN-CLIMATE ACTION UNDER THE UNFCCC

6. Loss and Damage	10
• Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM)	
7. Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities Knowledge and Engagement	11
• Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP FWG)	
8. Science	12
• Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	
• Research and Systematic Observation (RSO)	
9. Technology Mechanism	13
• Technology Executive Committee (TEC)	
• Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)	
10. Capacity Building	14
• Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB)	

1. Finance

Within negotiations and processes related to climate finance, there is a critical need and opportunity to increase and mobilize new and additional finance flows for coastal and marine NbS. Countries should

3. Mitigation

The Paris Agreement (Decision 1/CP.21) and the Katowice Climate Package of 2018 (Decision 1/CP.24 and Decision 3/CMA.1) outline the key elements of the mitigation section in an NDC. Nature-based removals, such as conservation and restoration of coastal blue carbon ecosystems, can play a particularly important role in near-term action, not only for their mitigation benefits, but also for their ability to enhance adaptation and resilience, as they can provide additional environmental and social benefits.

The following are actions within UNFCCC process and ongoing negotiations countries could take to advance NbS in coastal and marine ecosystems for climate mitigation.

UNFCCC PROCESSES AND NEGOTIATIONS RELATED TO NBS IN COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND MITIGATION⁸

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- Parties could request that any new, future guidance on NDCs encourage countries to apply sectoral guidance on the inclusion of blue carbon ecosystems—such as mangroves, tidal marshes, and seagrasses—to aid countries' NDC update.
- Include, in future NDCs, links to principles and guidelines for incorporating wetland issues into integrated coastal zone management, as contained in the Ramsar Convention Resolution VIII.4, recognizing their values, functions and services, including their role in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Work Programme to Scale up Mitigation Ambition and Implementation (MWP)

- Call for the inclusion of NbS, including coastal and marine NbS and blue carbon ecosystem conservation and restoration action, to be included as a theme for the MWP in 2024.

OPPORTUNITIES TO INCLUDE COMMITMENTS FOR COASTAL BLUE CARBON ECOSYSTEMS IN UPDATED NDCS

Countries with coastal blue carbon ecosystems, such as mangroves, salt marshes, and seagrass, have multiple

4. Adaptation

To accelerate global adaptation efforts, countries need clear strategies for addressing local and regional adaptation needs, accessing finance and capacity building. Countries presently identify, communicate and address their medium- and long-term adaptation needs and strategies in their NDCs, NAPs, and other adaptation communications.

The following are actions within UNFCCC process and ongoing negotiations countries could take to advance NbS in coastal and marine ecosystems for climate adaptation:

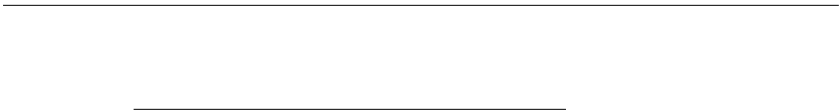
UNFCCC PROCESSES AND NEGOTIATIONS RELATED TO NBS IN COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND ADAPTATION

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- Include coastal and marine ecosystems as part of national adaptation goals, which can be a qualitative statement or reference an Adaptation Communication (AC) or NAP. As of March 2022, only about 38% of parties identified ocean ecosystems as a priority area in their adaptation component of the NDC.¹⁰
- Submit an adaptation communication (AC) as part of NDCs, as it can maximize cross-cutting climate

5. Cross-cutting Opportunities

Shifting from traditionally siloed approaches to integrated approaches across the UNFCCC and other international policy processes—including the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the 2030 Agenda and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—can help enhance ambition, accelerate implementa-



7. Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities Knowledge and Engagement

8. Science

Science is the underpinning of sound policymaking, and many governments are committed to the principle of evidence-based policy for decision-making. With the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UNFCCC has a dedicated body to provide policymakers with regular scientific assessments on climate change, its implications and potential future risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation options. With both the 2021–2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the 2021–2030 United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, strong allies for increased ocean and climate knowledge, including incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge, and coastal and marine ecosystem restoration have emerged.

The Global Ocean Decade for Blue Carbon (GO BC) is working to enhance understanding of the ocean-climate nexus and generate new knowledge and solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change, and the International (s a)-4.7 (n)-u.3 (e d [(e of O)-10.(r)-10./MCID 481 5.9 (e)-8.7 (d)-7.)-6.3 (d)-11.4 (.)]TJ En (o)-4.7 ((l)-7.)-8O)-10.8 (ci0.002)-6.3 63-8.8 (.e)0

9. Technology Mechanism

To date, only 20% of the ocean has been mapped and explored, so there is a significant need to better understand the ocean and its systems. As climate impacts accelerate, the ocean will face new pressures, which will require better and more accessible technology to find suitable solutions.

The following are existing actions within UNFCCC process and ongoing negotiations countries could take to advance coastal and marine ecosystem issues related to the Technology Mechanism:

UNFCCC PROCESSES AND NEGOTIATIONS RELATED TO NBS IN COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology Executive Committee (TEC)

- In cooperation with the WIM and Adaptation Committee, continue to expand the 2020 policy analysis¹⁶ on technologies for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage in coastal zones, putting specific emphasis on disaster risk reduction and coastal and marine NbS.
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10. Capacity Building

Accelerating mitigation and adaptation efforts and increasing resilience to climate change will require significant capacity building. Capacity building is a key element of climate change action, and it is essential for ensuring that countries have the knowledge, skills, and resources to implement climate change measures effectively. Capacity building can take many forms, including training, technical assistance, and knowledge sharing. It is important to ensure that capacity building efforts are tailored to the needs of individual countries and that they are sustainable and inclusive.

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Annex 2

Additional background into UNFCCC processes and negotiations

The definitions below are adapted from the provisional analysis, Coastal and Marine Ecosystems as Nature-based Solutions in New or Updated Nationally Determined Contributions.

References

1

OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING ACTION ON THE OCEAN AND COASTS UNDER THE UNFCCC | 18

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