



**MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND BLUE ECONOMY**

**CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**Terms of Reference for the Preparation of Seychelles' BBNJ National  
Assessment under the UNEP/GEF Enabling Activities Project**

**Estimated contract duration and timing: 45 days between November 2025 and August  
2026**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 provides the overarching legal framework for ocean governance but left important gaps with respect to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). To address these gaps, the Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) was adopted on 19 June 2023, following nearly two decades of negotiations at the United Nations.

The BBNJ Agreement, the third implementing agreement under UNCLOS, establishes a long-awaited global governance regime for ABNJ. It covers four critical pillars: (i) access and benefit-sharing of marine genetic resources and associated digital sequence information, (ii) area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, (iii) environmental impact assessments for human activities in ABNJ, and (iv) capacity building and transfer of marine technology to support equitable participation of developing states.

For small island developing states (SIDS) such as Seychelles, the BBNJ Agreement represents both an opportunity and a necessity. With limited land territory but vast ocean space, Seychelles' economic, social, and environmental well-being is intrinsically tied to the health of the ocean. Recognized globally as a leader in sustainable ocean governance and the Blue Economy, Seychelles signed the BBNJ Agreement on 20 September 2023 and became the very first country in Africa and the fourth globally to ratify the treaty. With an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.37 million km<sup>2</sup>, one of the largest in the world relative to land area, the nation relies heavily on its marine resources to sustain fisheries, tourism, and broader national development. Seychelles has pioneered innovative financing mechanisms, including the ground-breaking Debt-for-Nature Swap, while also designating 30% of its EEZ as protected under its Marine Spatial Plan, establishing a global benchmark for ocean sustainability, climate resilience, and effective stewardship of marine biodiversity.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is providing financial and technical assistance to developing countries to support early ratification and implementation readiness of the BBNJ Agreement. This support includes legal and policy gap assessments, institutional strengthening, awareness raising, and inclusive consultation processes to ensure readiness. For Seychelles, this initiative provides an opportunity to reinforce its international leadership in ocean governance, enhance national technical expertise, and position the country to engage proactively and effectively in the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement once it enters into force.

The Department of Blue Economy, as the National Executing Agency, will oversee Seychelles' **BBNJ UNEP/GEF Enabling Activities Project** which is scheduled to formally commence in November 2025. The project aligns with Seychelles' broader policy objectives of promoting sustainable ocean management and advancing the country's strategic role as a global advocate for ocean governance and the Blue Economy.

To support implementation readiness under the project, the Department of Blue Economy seeks to recruit a technical expert or firm to undertake key activities, including assessments, policy analysis, legal/institutional capacity building, awareness raising activities, and gender-responsive interventions.

## **2. Duties and responsibilities**

- Formulate an assessment of national situation with respect to the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ and potential impact thereon, as per the project workplan
- Undertake an overview of the institutions and legislative and regulatory framework already in place in relation to the Agreement
- Map out main challenges to future implementation, including priority capacity building needs
- Formulate the consolidated national BBNJ initial assessment
- Support the BBNJ initial assessment endorsement and submission to DOALOS.
- Document best practices, lessons learned and provide technical input to the global BBNJ project knowledge sharing.
- Lead the preparation of best practices for sharing on the Global BBNJ platform.
- Support the Department of Blue Economy in awareness raising and gender-responsive activities at the national level

## **3. Deliverables**

The key deliverables will be as follows

- A comprehensive situation assessment as input to the BBNJ initial assessment.
- A comprehensive institutional and legislative and regulatory framework analysis as input to the BBNJ assessment
- Consolidated national BBNJ initial assessment report.
- Mapping report on stakeholders, traditional knowledge, and existing resources/repositories
- Identification and analysis of potential challenges, gaps, and capacity needs for future implementation of the BBNJ Treaty, with actionable recommendations.
- Technical recommendations for national legislative and regulatory updates.
- Reviewed and quality-assured technical inputs to the BBNJ initial assessment and reporting to the country and UNEP
- Drafts or technical review of policy, legal, and implementation readiness documents for implementation
- Summary of technical contributions to national capacity-building events, workshops, and technical trainings.
- Compilation of national-level best practices for global BBNJ knowledge sharing

#### **4. Supervision responsibility**

The technical expert(s) will report to the Department of Blue Economy and provide regular progress reports and will respond in a timely manner to queries and draft documents.

#### **5. Qualifications and competencies**

1. Master's degree in oceanography, marine sciences, environmental policy/law, international environmental governance, or a closely related field.
2. At least 5 years of professional experience in technical roles related to marine biodiversity, environmental impact assessment, or international environmental policy
3. Demonstrated experience in assessment and analysis of legal, policy, or institutional frameworks relevant to BBNJ or similar transboundary environmental regimes
4. Strong understanding of international ocean governance frameworks (UNCLOS, CBD, BBNJ, CONVEMAR).
5. Knowledge of the legal and institutional framework related to marine biodiversity and ocean governance including but not limited to UNCLOS and the BBNJ Agreement
6. Strong skills in technical report writing and data analysis
7. Ability to synthesise scientific, policy, and legal material for diverse technical and non-technical audiences
8. Excellent organisational and communication skills; able to work independently and collaboratively across diverse, multicultural teams.
9. Full proficiency in English is a requirement, working knowledge of French would be an advantage

#### **6. Application process**

The Department of Blue Economy invites eligible technical experts to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI). The EOI should include:

- Cover letter.
- Curriculum vitae(s)
- Examples of similar assignments undertaken.

The deadline for submission of EOIs is **16<sup>th</sup> November** Submissions should be clearly marked: ***“Expression of Interest – Preparation of Seychelles’ BBNJ National Assessment under the UNEP/GEF Enabling Activities Project”***

EOIs should be delivered by email to: Mrs Phillianne Ernesta, Principal Secretary, Department of Blue Economy [phillianne.albert@gov.sc](mailto:phillianne.albert@gov.sc) and cc Mr Chrissant Barbe [chrissantbarbe@gov.sc](mailto:chrissantbarbe@gov.sc) and Ms Ashley Dias [ashley.dias@gov.sc](mailto:ashley.dias@gov.sc)