



Standing Committee on Finance

06 February 2026

Thirty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance
11–12 February 2026
Bonn, Germany

Background paper on the 2026 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance on financing climate action in water systems and the ocean

Expected actions by the Standing Committee on Finance

The Standing Committee on Finance will be invited to:

- a) Appoint co-facilitators for the work;
- b) Consider submissions received in response to the call for inputs and possible sub-themes of the Forum;
- c) Consider the draft programme outline of the 2026 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance.

I. Possible actions for consideration by the Standing Committee on Finance

1. The Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) may wish to appoint co-facilitators, who will guide the preparation of the Forum of the Standing Committee on financing climate action in water systems and the ocean.
2. The SCF may wish to consider submissions received in response to the call for inputs and possible sub-themes in the context of the draft programme outline. In doing so, the SCF may wish to refer to an overview of ongoing work relating to financing climate action in water systems and the ocean within and outside of the UNFCCC (working document) for the 2026 SCF Forum, prepared by the secretariat and contained in annex I.
3. The SCF may wish to consider a possible outline of a draft programme of the 2026 SCF Forum as contained in annex II.

II. Background

4. The COP mandated the SCF to organize a forum for the communication and continued exchange of information among bodies and entities dealing with climate finance to promote linkages and coherence.¹ The COP requested the SCF to facilitate participation of the private sector, financial institutions and academia in the Forum.²
5. At SCF 37, the SCF agreed to focus its 2026 Forum on financing climate action in water systems and the ocean.³ COP 30 welcomed this topic for the next Forum and reiterated

¹ [Decision 2/CP.17](#), paragraph 121(a).

² [Decision 5/CP.18](#), paragraph 4.

³ [SCF/2025/37/9](#).

the importance of engaging all relevant Party and non-Party stakeholders in preparations for the Forum.⁴

6. At SCF 38, SCF agreed to issue a call for inputs on information, sub-themes, case studies, and potential partner organizations relating to the SCF Forum. SCF also agreed on a list of possible elements for the scope of the 2026 SCF Forum.⁵

III. Submissions received on the Forum

7. On 3 December 2025, the Committee issued an open call for inputs on the 2026 SCF Forum to interested Parties and stakeholders to submit:⁶

- (a) Relevant topics and themes to be considered in designing the Forum;
- (b) Information and case studies on financing climate action in water systems and the ocean;
- (c) Potential institutions and events to partner with the SCF Forum.

8. As of 6 February 2026, 28 submissions were received from Parties, private sector, non-governmental observers and other non-Party stakeholders, as shown in the table below.⁷

<i>Submitter</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Date of submission</i>
Alliance of Small Island States	Party group	3 February 2026
BNP Paribas	Financial institution	30 January 2026
Conservation International	Non-governmental organization	30 January 2026
Cyprus and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States	Party group	30 January 2026
Deltares	Research institute	6 February 2026
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	Bilateral development agency	30 January 2026
Fugro	Private sector	30 January 2026
Global Offshore Wind Alliance	Non-Party Stakeholder – Multi-Stakeholder Initiative	30 January 2026
International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification	Government-led initiative	31 January 2026
International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives - Local Governments for Sustainability	Non-governmental organization	26 January 2026
International Organization for Migration	United Nations agency	30 January 2026
International Water Management Institute	Non-governmental organization	31 January 2026

⁴ Decision -/CP.30, para. 8 (Matters relating to the SCF: [Advance unedited version](#))

⁵ [SCF/2025/38/5, annex I](#)

⁶ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Call%20for%20inputs_2026SCFForum.pdf

⁷ Submissions can be accessed online at <https://unfccc.int/event/financing-climate-action-in-water-systems-and-the-ocean>.

<i>Submitter</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Date of submission</i>
New Zealand	Party	5 February 2026
Norway	Party	30 January 2026
Ocean Conservancy	Non-governmental organization	30 January 2026
Ocean and Climate Platform	Non-governmental organization	30 January 2026
Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance	Non-governmental organization	30 January 2026
Pew Charitable Trusts	Non-governmental organization	22 January 2026
Russian Federation	Party	30 January 2026
Rare	Non-governmental organization	29 January 2026
Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group	Party group	29 January 2026
The Borders Institute	Non-governmental organization	1 February 2026
Triharmony Climate Network	Non-governmental organization	31 January 2026
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Party	30 January 2026
United Nations Water	UN entity	30 January 2026
Water Resilience for Economic Resilience	Multilateral initiative	31 January 2026
World Meteorological Organization	UN entity	2 February 2026
World Wide Fund for Nature	Non-governmental organization	30 January 2026

Annex I

Overview of ongoing work relating to financing climate action in water systems and the ocean within and outside of the UNFCCC

1. The information contained in this annex is an indicative, non-exhaustive overview of ongoing work, initiatives and events related to financing climate action in water systems and the ocean, within and outside the UNFCCC.

A. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

2. **Nationally Determined Contributions.** The 2025 NDC synthesis report reported an increase in ocean-based climate action in comparison with the previous NDCs. It was reported that 78 per cent of Parties included at least one explicit reference to the ocean, representing an increase of 39 per cent and 48 per cent reported finance-related needs for ocean-based action.⁸ A total number of 269 ocean-based measures were reported across the following streams: coastal resilience, ocean-based renewable energy, decarbonization of maritime transport, conservation/restoration of blue carbon ecosystems.⁹ Though comparatively fewer in number, ocean-based measures reported in NDCs demonstrate a growing determination by Parties to integrate ocean considerations into national climate strategies.

3. **Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue.** The Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue under the UNFCCC is focused on enhancing ocean-based climate action. The Dialogue was first held in 2020 and derives its mandate from COP 25, Chile Madrid Time for Action 2019.¹⁰ It is now held annually and is overseen by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). The Dialogue's outcomes are conveyed through summary reports wherein finance has continuously come up as a cross-cutting issue within other related themes.¹¹

4. **Global Goal for Adaptation (GGA).** The GGA is operationalized through the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience adopted at CMA 5, which sets out targets and indicators aimed at enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability.¹² The GGA also identifies water and sanitation among its thematic priorities. The UAE Framework was developed to generate indicators for measuring progress toward GGA targets and a final list of potential indicators for the GGA under the UAE Belém work programme has been developed awaiting full operationalisation. Integrating clear metrics related to ocean and water systems into the GGA monitoring process can enable adaptation finance to be tracked through a water and ocean lens.

5. **The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MP-GCA).** Under the MP-GCA non-Party stakeholders cooperate and mobilise under the UNFCCC within seven thematic areas, including the ocean and coastal zones. The Partnership serves as a

⁸ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs/2025-ndc-synthesis-report#Forest-and-ocean>.

⁹ [FCCC/PA/CMA/2025/8](https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/technical-panels/technical-panel-2/2025-ndc-synthesis-report#Forest-and-ocean).

¹⁰ Decision [1/CP.25](#), paras. 30–31 and 33–34.

¹¹ <https://unfccc.int/topics/ocean/ocean-and-climate-change-dialogue>.

¹² Decision [2/CMA.5](#).

complementary platform to enhance climate action.¹³ The MP-GCA in collaboration with the Climate Champions released the Ocean for Climate Declaration, which was signed by 120 organisations, becoming the first declaration to focus on ocean-based climate solutions within the UNFCCC framework and garnered support from NGOs, companies, scientific institutions, and international organisations.¹⁴

6. **The Global Climate Action Agenda.** Under the leadership of the Climate High-level Champions, the Action Agenda mobilizes voluntary climate action from civil society, businesses, investors, cities, states, and countries to intensify emission reductions, climate adaptation, and the transition to sustainable economies, as set out in the Paris Agreement. Under the pillar “Stewarding Forests, Oceans and Biodiversity”, a key objective is to preserve and restore oceans and coastal ecosystems.¹⁵

B. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Climate Funds, inter alia:

7. **Adaptation Fund (AF).** According to the Fund’s 2025 Annual performance report USD 42.81 million was allocated to Transboundary Water Management (3.1 per cent of its total portfolio), Coastal Management was allocated USD 88.48 million (6.4 per cent of total portfolio), and Water Management was allocated USD 140.58 million (10.1 per cent of total portfolio).¹⁶ Some relevant projects include Access to Safe Drinking Water for the Climate Vulnerable People in Coastal Areas of Bangladesh, and the Integrated Water and Soil Resources Management Project in Djibouti.¹⁷

8. **Global Environment Facility (GEF).** Over the past 30 years, the GEF has provided almost USD 2.4 billion in over 370 projects related to the ocean covering thematic areas such as marine protected areas, ocean governance, innovative finance, and sustainable blue economy.¹⁸ Notable projects include the USD 5 million Seychelles sovereign blue bond, and Partnerships for Coral Reef Finance and Insurance in Asia and the Pacific.¹⁹

9. **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** has been involved in 35 blue economy projects across 70 countries and allocated over USD 1.3 billion and reaching over 220 million beneficiaries.²⁰ These include the USD 26.9 million Sierra Leone Coastal Resilience Project (SLCRP) which is aimed at enhancing climate resilience of coastal communities and ecosystems in Sierra Leone and the USD 500 million Global Fund for Coral Reefs Investment Window which will develop a private equity fund to increase investments in the blue economy by protecting coral reefs in 17 countries.

¹³ https://unfccc.int/files/paris_agreement/application/pdf/marrakech_partnership_for_global_climate_action.pdf.

¹⁴ Available at <https://ocean-breakthroughs.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/The-Ocean-for-Climate-Declaration.pdf>.

¹⁵ Available at <https://www.climatechampions.net/action-agenda/2-stewarding-forests-oceans-and-biodiversity/>.

¹⁶ Adaptation Fund. 2025. *Annual report: Accelerating Adaptation Impacts*. Washington: Adaptation Fund. Available at <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/AF-Annual-Performance-Report-2025.pdf>.

¹⁷ Available at <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/projects-programmes/project-sectors/water-management/>.

¹⁸ Global Environment Facility. (October) 2025. *The GEF’s wide-ranging support for the ocean*. Available at https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-10/2025_10_GEF_Oceans_factsheet.pdf.

¹⁹ Global Environment Facility. 2025. *The GEF and Oceans: Sustaining Healthy Marine Ecosystems*. Available at https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-10/2025_10_GEF_Oceans_Sustaining_long.pdf

²⁰ Available at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/theme/ocean>.

C. Multilateral development banks

10. Multilateral development banks (MDBs) continue to play a key role in financing climate action in water systems and the ocean. At COP 28, the Islamic Development Bank, on behalf of the MDBs announced that they had jointly committed USD 50 billion in development finance for climate-resilient water systems between 2018 and 2023, aimed at increasing the number of people benefiting from financial support for water security, particularly in regions facing water shortages. The banks have further pledged to significantly increase support to the water sector in the five years between 2025 and 2030.²¹

D. International conventions, treaties and conferences

11. SDG 6 is central to climate-resilient water systems, including water security, droughts, floods, and ecosystem protection while SDG 14 focuses on life below water, including marine ecosystems, coastal resilience, and sustainable ocean use.²² A 2024 World Bank study highlighted that to achieve SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2 the water supply and sanitation subsector alone faces an annual spending gap of between USD 131.4 billion and USD 140.8 billion in 2017 prices.²³

12. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the foundational legal framework for ocean governance and is an important reference point for cross-cutting climate action themes such as marine environmental protection and ocean-based adaptation and cooperation especially in Part XII on protection and preservation of the marine environment.²⁴

13. The High Seas Treaty, formally known as the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), entered into force on 17 January 2026²⁵ and represents an important development in ocean conservation and sustainable use of the ocean. Among the Treaty's key provisions is the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the high seas, building capacity for developing countries in marine technology, and controlling exploitation of marine resources.²⁶ The GEF is part of the BBNJ Agreement's financial mechanism contributing to the conservation and sustainability of marine biodiversity in areas outside country jurisdiction.²⁷

14. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted in 2022 includes several key targets related to water restoration, ocean-based adaptation and conservation of land, water and seas.²⁸

15. The 1997 UN Watercourses Convention provides for an international legal mechanism that calls for equitable and reasonable use of shared waters, requiring countries to maintain ecosystems to avoid significant harm as climate-induced water shortage

²¹ Available at <https://www.ndb.int/news/commitment-by-the-multilateral-development-banks-to-water-security/>.

²² Available at <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

²³ Joseph G, Hoo Y, et. al. 2024. *Funding a water-secure future: An assessment of global public spending*. Washington DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank. Available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099050624154572979/pdf/P172944-00adb1e8-ccd1-4542-88ab-d289e7f2f00b.pdf>.

²⁴ Available at https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf.

²⁵ Available at <https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/en>.

²⁶ Available at <https://www.unep.org/resources/agreement-marine-biological-diversity-areas-beyond-national-jurisdiction-bbnj-agreement>.

²⁷ Available at <https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/press-releases/gef-ceo-celebrates-imminent-entry-force-bbnj-agreement>.

²⁸ <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets>.

increases.²⁹ The convention is closely aligned with the 1992 UNECE Water Convention which requires countries to regulate transboundary impacts on the marine environment where rivers meet the sea.³⁰

16. The third United Nations Ocean Conference was held on 9–13 June 2025 in Nice, France. The Nice Ocean Action Plan is a landmark framework that mobilized commitments worth EUR 8.7 billion over five years through over 800 voluntary commitments to scale a regenerative blue economy with half of this funding driven by private investors and philanthropists, bolstered by the European Commission’s EUR 1 billion pledge and specific contributions like New Zealand’s USD 52 million for Pacific governance.³¹

17. There are international forums and events taking place in 2026 whose outcomes may be of relevance to the SCF Forum and are provided below for reference.

International forums and events

<i>Forum</i>	<i>Relevance</i>
Our Ocean Conference (OOC), 16–18 June 2026, Mombasa, Kenya	The 2026 Session will engage the private sector and deliver investment in the sustainable blue economy and catalyse ocean finance and since 2014, the conference has mobilized over 2,900 commitments worth approximately USD 169 billion. ^a
World Water Week, 23–27 August 2026, Stockholm, Sweden	Thematic areas include exploring how financial resources can be mobilized and directed towards those most in and developing strategies for securing new resources and designing more equitable financing flows. ^b
Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, 11–15 January 2026	The Sustainability Week’s Blue Forum focused on mobilizing USD 100 billion in water and ocean investment by 2030. Convening heads of state, global business leaders, investors, innovators, and policymakers, and hosted by the Sino-International Entrepreneurs Federation. ^c
13th Annual World Ocean Summit & Expo, 4 – 5 March 2026, Montréal, Canada	The Summit will translate recent global policy milestones into actionable growth strategies for business, finance, and government. The summit focuses on scaling the ocean economy by combining corporate capital with innovative tools like blue bonds, AI, and digital twins to restore marine health. ^d
European Blue Economy Conference, 3 February 2026, Brussels, Belgium	Finance will be discussed as a cross-cutting theme in the Conference’s sessions including attracting investment for the EU Ocean Pact. ^e
13th Roundtable on Financing Water, 21-22 May 2026, Madrid, Spain	Key objectives include identifying, assessing, and managing water-related risks

²⁹ https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/8_3_1997.pdf.

³⁰ <https://unece.org/DAM/env/water/pdf/watercon.pdf>.

³¹ <https://unocnice2025.org/en/>.

to financial systems and economies, and elevate understanding across government agendas.^f

^a <https://www.oceanconference.org/>.

^b <https://worldwaterweek.org/programme/theme>.

^c <https://abudhabisustainabilityweek.com/>.

^d https://events.economist.com/world-ocean-summit/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=tagdigitalbrand&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23460513050&gbraid=0AAAAADf-PMJIXIcW6QxhPgLh911GNmIpS&gclid=Cj0KCCQIAhOfLBhCCARIsAJPiopNcuMQvSfs39HmaucoElqcW0q8jthQsVjh-cxJmlq2NtT85tedOPa8aAu-EEALw_wcB.

^e https://blue-economy-observatory.ec.europa.eu/events/3rd-european-blue-economy-conference-2026-2026-02-03_en.

^f <https://sdg.iisd.org/events/13th-roundtable-on-financing-water/>.

E. Other key domestic stakeholders in developing countries

18. **National governments and international development agencies.** According to the World Bank, the public sector dominates spending on water; of the nearly USD 165 billion spending in the sector annually, 85.5 per cent comes from public finance. This underscores the pivotal role of national governments as primary financiers, while many large-scale projects are jointly implemented with international development agencies. A practical example of such a collaboration is AWARE 2.0, a climate adaptation project in Zambia supported by the GIZ which is focused on climate-resilient water catchment management and landscape protection. The project supports water security, catchment restoration, and sustainable land use, using GIS and remote sensing, with additional technical cooperation with partners such as the Czech Development Agency.³²

19. **National banks and local financial institutions.** The role of domestic financial institutions in developing countries remains critical. Local commercial banks, microfinance institutions (MFIs) and national development banks (NDBs) often serve as intermediaries for larger funds and provide accessible, localized lending for small-scale investments such as upgrading water infrastructure, improving sanitation and strengthening climate resilience.³³ For instance, in Tajikistan, local MFIs and banks have channeled Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) funds for adaptation projects, extending microloans for water-efficient farming and flood protection, accelerating community-level solutions.³⁴

20. **Water Management Companies.** Many water utility companies in developing countries are implementing both mitigation and adaptation measures to ensure sustainable water supply and reduce the impacts of climate change on water availability. In South Africa, Rand Water, the country's water utility provider is implementing a comprehensive climate mitigation strategy to address water scarcity in South Africa by 2030 through diversifying

³² Joseph G, Hoo Y, et. al. 2024. *Funding a water-secure future: An assessment of global public spending*. Washington DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank. Available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099050624154572979/pdf/P172944-00adb1e8-ccd1-4542-88ab-d289e7f2f00b.pdf>.

³³ International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2023. *Innovative Financial Instruments and Their Potential to Finance Climate Change Adaptation in Developing Countries*. Winnipeg: IISD. Available at <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2023-06/financial-instruments-climate-change-adaptation.pdf>.

³⁴ Available at https://www.cif.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/tajikistan_micro-finance.pdf.

raw water sources, implementing robust infrastructure maintenance to reduce losses, and fostering strategic research partnerships for water-energy-food security.³⁵

³⁵ Rand Water. 2025. *Water Under Pressure: Navigating Risk for Bulk Water Supply and Sustainability*. Available at <https://www.randwater.co.za/media/forums/presentations/Water%20Under%20Pressure%20Navigating%20Climate%20Risk%20for%20Bulk%20water%20Supply%20and%20Sustainability.pdf>.

Annex II

Draft programme outline of the 2026 SCF Forum on financing climate action in water systems and the ocean

DAY 1: FRAMING THE ISSUES AND IDENTIFYING BARRIERS
<p>Opening Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction of the overall theme and objectives of the Forum</i>
<p>Session 2: Climate finance for water systems and the ocean: trends, gaps and the climate agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overview of the current climate finance landscape as it relates to water systems and the ocean, highlighting recent trends in finance flows, persistent gaps and key challenges. It will help establish a shared understanding of water systems and the ocean within the climate finance landscape and the broader climate and sustainable development agenda, and underscore their importance for climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience.</i>
<p>Session 3: Barriers effecting the flow of climate finance to water systems and the ocean: Structural and systemic barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assess the structural and systemic factors that constrain the scaling up of climate finance for water systems and the ocean. The session aims to explore barriers across different levels of the finance landscape, including fiscal space and debt constraints, low financial returns and risk perceptions for adaptation-focused interventions and challenges in translating policy priorities into project pipelines and finance-ready investments.</i>
<p>Session 4: Enabling environments: governance and institutional systems for scaling climate finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explore how enabling environments at national and subnational levels can create the institutional and governance systems necessary for scaling climate finance for water systems and the ocean. The session aims to examine how climate priorities are embedded within planning and policy frameworks, including nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans, and how institutional arrangements, coordination mechanisms and capacity-building efforts can influence the coherence and impact of climate finance flows.</i>
DAY 2: DELIVERY, EFFECTIVENESS AND COHERENCE OF CLIMATE FINANCE
<p>Session 5: Matching barriers with financial solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explore how different financial instruments and approaches can respond to specific barriers identified during Day 1. Through focused discussions, the session aims to highlight linkages between constraints, financial solutions and enabling conditions, and to identify common lessons and considerations for improving the effectiveness and scalability of climate finance for water systems and the ocean</i>
<p>Session 6: Financial instruments and approaches for scaling climate finance for water systems and the ocean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explore a range of financial instruments and approaches, including public and private sources that can support the scaling up of climate finance for water systems and the ocean, with particular attention to adaptation and resilience.</i>
<p>Session 7: Delivery and access: reaching local actors and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assess how climate finance for water systems and the ocean is delivered to, or constrained from reaching, local actors responsible for implementation, including cities, subnational governments, and frontline communities. The session will consider practical experiences and emerging models that improve the delivery, accessibility, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of climate finance, at the local level.</i>
<p>Session 8: Key takeaways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify key takeaways and actionable recommendations for consideration by the COP and the CMA.</i>