



## Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

### MEETING OF THE PARTIES

Tenth session

Ljubljana, 23– 25 October 2024

Item 16 of the provisional agenda

**Partnerships and contribution to global processes**

## COOPERATION BETWEEN THE 1992 WATER CONVENTION AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Prepared by the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility

### Introduction

Collaboration between the Global Environment Facility (GEF)<sup>1</sup> International Waters Focal Area (IW Focal Area) and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (“the Convention”), serviced by UNECE as its Secretariat, is based on complementarity and synergy of support to riparian countries to catalyze cooperation to improve the governance and management of shared water resources. Both the GEF and the Convention promote the establishment of joint management bodies; cooperation and exchange of information and its availability to the public; and the formulation of joint assessments of shared water resources, based on the best available science.

The results of numerous activities and projects implemented with GEF support have benefitted GEF-eligible Convention Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention, such as to put in place legal and institutional frameworks for cooperation, operationalize joint management institutions, and invest in cooperative actions. Additionally, knowledge and programmatic guidance products published under the auspices of the Convention support GEF overall goals under *Healthy Planet, Healthy People* and specific GEF projects and global programs and initiatives, including addressing the water, energy, food and ecosystems nexus, promoting source to sea management, and building capacity for climate change resilience.

There is a long history of collaboration among GEF IW:LEARN, the Convention and other key IW partners to facilitate global dialogues and exchange of experiences and lessons learned on transboundary cooperation (see Box 1). In addition, collaboration on the ground between GEF and the Convention Secretariat has spanned more than 10 years in several important transboundary basins, including among others:

- enabling transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management (IWRM) in the Chu and Talas River Basins;
- promoting the nexus approach and implementing the Strategic Action Programs of the Drin Basin and Dniester Basin;
- enhancing the sustainable management of the Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer System to ensure access to water for populations facing water security challenges due to climate change and other stresses.

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<sup>1</sup> ([www.thegef.org](http://www.thegef.org)).

### Box 1: Sharing Knowledge and Lessons Learned and Building Capacities – GEF IW:LEARN

The GEF IW Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) serves as the knowledge management platform of the GEF IW portfolio (see [www.iwlearn.net](http://www.iwlearn.net)). It is operationalized through a project implemented by UNDP and UNEP and executed by IOC/UNESCO. It entered its fifth phase in June 2022, aiming to harness experience from 30 years of GEF IW portfolio and partner activities to bolster transboundary water cooperation. The main goal is to enhance project impacts and encourage the broader adoption of the portfolio results. It plays a vital role in sharing project experiences, fostering learning, replicating successful outcomes, and amplifying the impacts of projects across the entire GEF IW portfolio and its global partners. Through knowledge sharing, training, twinning, dialogue, partnership building and programmatic guidance, IW:LEARN connects GEF Agencies, countries and partners worldwide.

UNECE has been a consistent and strong partner of IW:LEARN. Building on the partnership established during previous phases, the collaboration between GEF, IW:LEARN and the Convention has continued to evolve since 2021, particularly in the following work areas:

**(a) Cooperation on transboundary waters:** IW:LEARN co-organized the Global Workshop on the Development of Transboundary Water Cooperation Agreements or other Arrangements (Budapest, October 2023)

**(b) Integrated management approaches:**

- *Water energy food ecosystem nexus.* IW:LEARN and the GEF Secretariat (GEFSEC) have regularly contributed to the annual Nexus task force meetings (Geneva, December 2022 and 2023)
- *Source-to-sea management.* IW:LEARN and GEFSEC contributed to the organization of the Global Workshop on Source-to-Sea Management (Geneva, December 2022)
- *Conjunctive water management.* IW:LEARN and IHP/UNESCO joined forces with UNECE to facilitate a global dialogue on conjunctive management of surface water and groundwater in transboundary basins as part of the Global Workshop Conjunctive Management of Surface Water and Groundwater (Geneva, October 2023).

**(c) Sustainable funding and financing:** IW:LEARN and GEFSEC contributed to the organization of the Global Workshop on Funding and Financing Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development (December 2023)

**(d) GEF International Waters Conference.** UNECE contributed to the 10th GEF International Waters Conference (IWC10) in Uruguay in September 2024 as a key speaker and session organizer.

**Ongoing collaboration between UNECE and IW:LEARN.** The collaboration between UNECE and IW:LEARN on these work areas facilitates the exchange of experiences and best practices, showcasing of IW projects results and raising the capacities of partners. Together with IW:LEARN and partners, UNECE has outlined an ambitious work plan for the next phase of IW:LEARN, which aims to sustain this cooperation in organizing and implementing thematic and regional workshops for strengthening transboundary water management by sharing knowledge, lessons learned and building capacities.

## Overview of the GEF

The GEF provides funding to assist developing countries in meeting the objectives of international environmental conventions. The GEF serves as a "financial mechanism" to six conventions: United Nations

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement (BBNJ). The Conventions, for which the GEF serves as financial mechanism, provide broad strategic guidance to the two governing bodies of the GEF: the GEF Council and the GEF Assembly. The GEF Council converts this broad guidance into operational criteria (guidelines) for GEF projects.<sup>2</sup> The GEF is a partnership implementing these projects through 18 GEF agencies.<sup>3</sup>

The GEF is a multilateral family of funds whose mandate embraces all facets of a healthy environment, from biodiversity to climate change, to land degradation, to international waters, and including chemicals and waste. The family of funds includes the GEF Trust Fund, Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund (NPIF), and Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency Trust Fund (CBIT).

**Serves All Global Environmental Conventions**



**Global Environment Facility Trust Fund:** Focus on biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change, international waters, and land degradation, plus integrated programming.

**Serve the Convention on Biological Diversity**



**Global Biodiversity Framework Fund:** Newly-created fund to support the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its 2030 nature-positive goals.



**Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund:** Supports action on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.

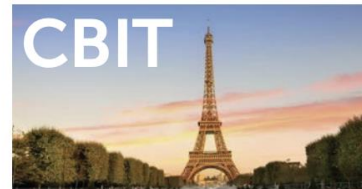
**Serve the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change**



**Least Developed Countries Fund:** The only dedicated source of multilateral funding for Least Developed Countries' most urgent climate adaptation needs.



**Special Climate Change Fund:** Climate adaptation fund focused on technology and innovation, with dedicated window for Small Island Developing States.



**Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency Trust Fund:** Support for climate change data and reporting, in support of the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework.

The GEF's financing enables developing countries to contribute to achieving global environmental goals. The GEF prioritizes inclusive conservation by working with civil society, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, women, and youth to ensure the projects and programs it supports are effective, culturally-sensitive, transparent, and sustainable. It also collaborates with other environmental funds to increase

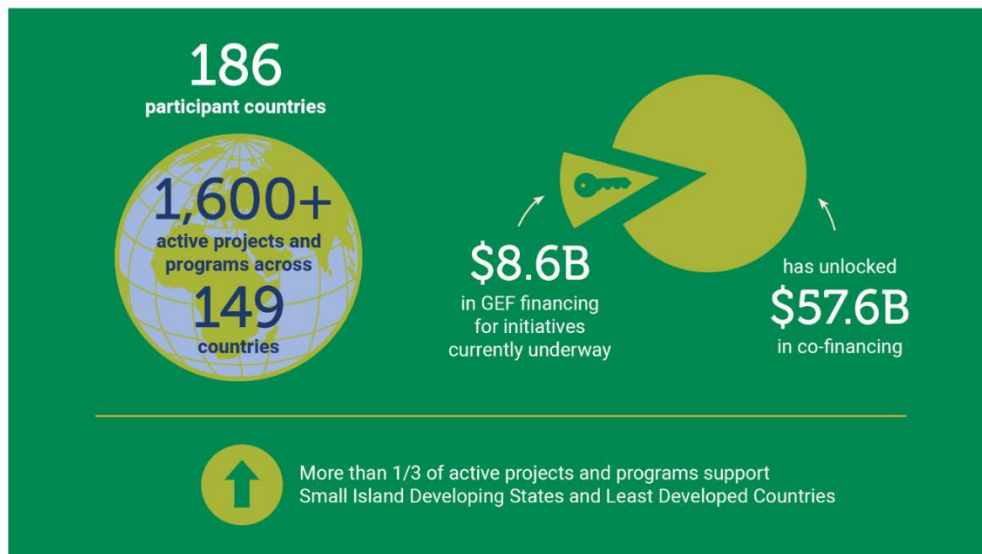
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/partners/conventions>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/partners/gef-agencies>

efficiency and achieve greater impact. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided nearly \$25 billion in financing and mobilized another \$145 billion in co-financing for country-driven priority projects.

## Three Decades of Investing in the Planet

Overall since 1991:



\*As of June 2024

## GEF International Waters Focal Area Strategy

Cooperation between the GEF and the 1992 Water Convention has been predominantly through the GEF IW Focal Area. The IW Focal Area has a unique mandate—to support transboundary cooperation in shared marine and freshwater ecosystems. It is the largest grant funding mechanism for multi-country collaboration on freshwater and the ocean, with GEF recipient countries and non-recipient countries working together on this critical issue. To date, the GEF IW Focal Area has invested in 470 projects across 157 countries, mobilizing more than \$3 billion in grants and \$19 billion in co-finance.

With GEF IW Focal Area support, countries have successfully negotiated regional cooperation frameworks, treaties, and protocols, ranging from cooperation on shared surface and groundwater to agreements on marine resources—which have reduced threats and fostered sustainable use of resources. GEF IW investments also facilitate integrated, cross-sectoral approaches that engage the public and private sector, civil society, nongovernmental organizations, and bilateral and multilateral institutions. They are designed to work at multiple scales—from community to cabinet— and across transboundary watersheds, from source to sea.

Programming within the GEF IW Focal Area falls under three strategic objectives: (1) accelerating joint action to support sustainable blue economic development; (2) advancing management



in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction; and (3) enhancing freshwater security in shared water ecosystems. GEF-8 includes a \$406 million allocation to the GEF IW Focal Area. Forty-five percent of this allocation (\$186 million) is earmarked for support to cooperation on shared freshwater ecosystems. Further details on the GEF IW strategy are presented in the GEF-8 Programming Directions.<sup>4</sup>

## GEF-8 International Waters Focal Area Objectives



### Objective 1

Accelerate joint action to support sustainable blue economic development



### Objective 2

Advance management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction



### Objective 3

Enhance Water Security in Shared Freshwater Ecosystems

### Objective 1: Accelerate joint action to support sustainable blue economic development

The GEF assists countries in identifying sustainable public and private investments to accelerate joint action in support of blue economies through two areas of strategic transboundary action: sustaining healthy blue ecosystems and advancing sustainable fisheries management. To sustain healthy blue ecosystems, GEF support focuses on support to cooperation and national and regional governance structures to address multiple anthropogenic pressures, including climate change impacts, nutrient runoff, noise pollution, plastic pollution, unsustainable fisheries, and habitat degradation and destruction in the Large Marine Ecosystems.

### Objective 2: Advance management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

The Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) cover 64% of the ocean. They face significant threats, such as overfishing of some iconic pelagic migratory species, ocean energy facilities, bottom trawling on seamounts, and pollution. This objective aims to address these threats through multiple entry points, including increasing local, national, regional, and global management capacity and access to data and knowledge in close cooperation with existing Regional Seas and International Maritime Organization agreements, Regional Fisheries Management Organization processes, and implementation of the Port State Measures Act. This objective also includes supporting national ratification and early implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. The BBNJ Agreement identifies the GEF Trust Fund as part of its financial mechanism, which also includes a special fund and a voluntary trust fund.<sup>5</sup>

### Objective 3: Enhance Water Security in Shared Freshwater Ecosystems

Transboundary river basins cover about 50% of Earth's surface and are underpinning the achievement of most SDGs. GEF IW investments aim to strengthen cooperation to improve governance of transboundary water systems, including supporting the creation or strengthening of existing river, lake and groundwater

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/GEF-8\\_Programming\\_Directions.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/GEF-8_Programming_Directions.pdf) pgs. 162 ff

<sup>5</sup> GEF Council Decision 14/2024 approved Council document GEF/C.66/07 that articulated the initial guidelines for enabling activities and ratification support projects to promote early entry into force and implementation readiness for the BBNJ Agreement developed in close consultation with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, which serves as the temporary secretariat to the Agreement.

basin organizations, enhance regional and national policy coherence across sectors, manage freshwater connectivity across and within borders, and aid countries to jointly identify solutions to address nexus trade-offs through cooperation and sharing of benefits and costs. GEF IW investments are always country-owned and country-driven. A participatory process to identify key issues that affect national and regional water-related stresses is vital for transboundary priority setting and provides the basis for the development of shared Transboundary Strategic Action Programs.

**Targets of GEF-8 IW programming.** The GEF-8 IW strategy collectively aims to:

- improve cooperative management in 40 new and existing shared water ecosystems contributing to water security, decreased pollution, and more sustainable uses of water and related natural resources;
- improve management of at least 100 million ha of newly created and existing marine protected areas;
- improve practices to benefit biodiversity in a further 70 million ha of marine habitats; and
- move at least 2.1 million metric tons of global overexploited marine fisheries to more sustainable levels.

GEF IW Focal Area funds also complement key GEF-8 Integrated Programs (IP) to transform food systems, to decrease land-based sources of pollution, to promote circular solutions to plastic pollution, to protect critical forest biomes, and to eliminate hazardous chemicals from supply chains. (See Annex 1 for an overview of the GEF-8 programming directions funding structure).

## GEF IW Focal Area Programming Highlights Since MOP-9

1992 Water Convention Parties participating in ongoing, forthcoming or recently completed GEF IW transboundary projects and programs include Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Panama, Senegal, Serbia, Togo, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The below project examples offer highlights of GEF IW Focal Area projects approved since MOP-9 in 2021, with most relevance to the Convention's program of work, and hence a focus on river, lake, and groundwater basins and on land-based sources of pollution to coastal areas.<sup>6</sup>

**Implementation of the La Plata Basin SAP Priorities through Regional and National Actions.** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay. (GEF ID: 11053). Agency: CAF; GEF Project Financing: \$10,605,000; Co-financing: \$221,300,000. The project supports the countries in implementing identified priority actions in their joint Strategic Action Program (SAP) to promote cooperative management of shared water resources, regional integration, and sustainable development in the La Plata Basin. To this end, the project will (1) enhance the functions and strengthen the capacity of the Comité Intergubernamental Coordinador de los Países de la Cuenca del Plata (CIC Plata) as the basin coordination mechanism; (2) introduce and expand the use of conjunctive surface and groundwater approaches; (3) carry out on-the-ground water security activities, including through nature-based solutions, relating to floods and droughts, nutrient pollution, aquifer recharge, and erosion and sedimentation; and (4) improve data and information management.. The project aims to restore 5,000 ha of land and ecosystems; place 400,000 ha of landscapes under improved practices; place one shared water ecosystem under improved cooperative management; and directly benefit 200,000 people.

**Enhancing Transboundary Fisheries Management in the Lower Mekong Basin.** Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam. (GEF ID: 11304). Agency: IUCN; GEF Project Financing: \$10,709,176; Co-financing: \$77,600,000. The

<sup>6</sup> More information on all GEF approved projects is available at: <https://www.thegef.org/projects>.

Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) represents the world's largest inland fishery and home to nearly 1,200 fish species, making it the third most biodiverse river system in the world after the Amazon and Congo. The project aims to improve the management of cross-sector trade-offs, taking sustainable fisheries management, fish habitat connectivity and rehabilitation as entry points. Led by the Mekong River Commission, working in close partnerships with national line agencies relevant for fisheries management, the project will aim at harmonizing fisheries governance and coherence of water resources related policies and plans to support transboundary fisheries management. Project interventions will contribute to the safeguarding of food security of local communities as well as to the conservation of globally significant biodiversity. The project targets to stabilize fish stocks at 2020 levels; put 10,000 ha of protected wetlands/Ramsar sites under improved management; bring an estimated 350,000 ha of landscapes under improved management; bring one shared freshwater ecosystem under improved management; and directly benefit 20,000 people.

***Strengthening Zambezi River Basin Management towards Climate Resilience and Ecosystem Health.***

Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. (GEF ID: 11572). Agency: AfDB. GEF Project Financing: \$9,450,000; Cofinancing: \$ 320,150,001. This project will enhance inter-sectoral and cross-border cooperation to address water, food, and energy security and maintain ecosystems flows and services. Specifically, the project will enhance the Zambezi Information system (ZAMWIS) to enable countries to make informed decisions to achieve water, energy, food and environmental (WEFE) security; develop basin specific WEFE guidelines and promote their implementation; synchronize dam releases and revise infrastructure operational rules to ensure environmental flows along the main stem and to the delta; and address pollution reduction at hotspots. Strategies to reduce dependency on external funding sources will be explored and opportunities provided to youth and young professionals by funding internships. The project will enhance collaboration among the eight countries sharing the Zambezi Basin, including the delta; put 4000 ha of landscapes under improved management in pilot intervention areas; result in 2400 ha of marine habitat in the Zambezi delta under improved management; and directly benefit 100,000 people.

***Central Asia Water and Land Nexus (CAWLN) for Ecosystem Restoration, Improved Natural Resource Management and Increased Resilience.***

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. (GEF ID: 11378). Agency: FAO; GEF Project Financing: \$26,007,810; Co-financing: \$335,504,935. Central Asia includes one of the most complex watersheds in the world, which comprises the Amu Darya Basin (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and Syr Darya Basin (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan). The CAWLN program will promote water-land nexus approaches and facilitate their implementation in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya basins to enhance water security, increase resilience and improve rural livelihoods. To this end, it aims to overturn the baseline of self-reinforcing degradation trends within the basins by fostering an enabling environment for integrated natural resources management transformation, strengthening regional cooperation, building capacities for evidence-based decision making and participatory management, and effectively coordinating efforts across sectors. The program is structured as seven child projects. Two basin-level projects will focus on transboundary water-land nexus cooperation in the Amu Darya Basin and Syr Darya Basin; four national projects (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) will address unsustainable agriculture and natural resource management practices affecting water generation, use and conservation, including measures to address deforestation, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and ecosystems services deterioration; and one overarching regional coordination project will ensure optimization of child project activities and impacts across the basins and effective knowledge management, lesson learning and sharing of best practices and tools. The program will restore 5,350 ha of land and ecosystems; place 1,329,000 ha of landscapes under improved practices; mitigate 11,118,670 mt of GHG emissions; put two shared ecosystems under improved cooperative management; and directly benefit 487,000 people.

***Towards a Better Understanding of the Amazon Aquifer Systems for its Protection and Sustainable Management.*** Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela. (GEF ID 11108). Agency: UNEP and IADB; GEF Project Financing: \$13,461,468; Co-Financing: \$131,236,473. This project aims to strengthen the governance of the Amazon Aquifer Systems (AAS) to enhance water security and ecosystem resilience in the Amazon region. To this end, the project will (i) assess, model and analyze the AAS to expand the current knowledge base and build a common understanding of the aquifer system among the basin riparians; (ii) strengthen institutional capacity and promote better coordination of AAS management at the regional, national and local levels; (iii) conduct a series of on-the-ground pilots that test and demonstrate scalable approaches to reduce stress on the AAS; and (iv) support the countries to jointly commit to a strategic agenda of identified priority actions and investments to protect and sustainably use the AAS. The project will place one shared water ecosystem under improved management (Amazon Basin). Through the pilot interventions, the project will place 3,950 ha of landscapes under improved practices and directly benefit 2,255 people. The substantial aquifer knowledge generated will contribute to good groundwater governance globally, through the IW:LEARN platform.

***Improving the Source to Sea Governance to Reduce the Impacts on the Transboundary Large Marine Ecosystems in the SICA Region.*** Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama. (GEF ID 11520). Agency: FAO; GEF Project Financing: \$18,048,624; Co-financing: \$148,332,855. This project aims to extend the successful ridge-to-reef/source-to-sea management approach utilized in the recently completed GEF Mesoamerican Reef MAR2R project to all countries in the SICA region. This scaling up will positively impact the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystems and 12 adjacent large watersheds. The project will: (i) strengthen the capacity of the SICA countries and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) to implement the source-to-sea management approach; (ii) develop a regionally endorsed 2050 source-to-sea action plan for transboundary and national watersheds; (iii) build and operationalize integrated management plans, water quality monitoring strategies and governance structures in targeted basins (iv) promote investment in innovative technologies and set up sustainable finance mechanisms to enhance water security; (v) develop an initial portfolio of subprojects for the first five-year phase of the action plan; and (vi) carry out a rigorous knowledge management, learning and awareness campaign, including upgrading the Regional Environmental Observatory. The project will improve the management of more than 1.6 million ha of terrestrial protected areas as well as more than 166,000 ha of marine protected areas; place 300 ha of land and ecosystems under restoration; place more than 350,000 ha of landscapes under improved practices; put two shared water ecosystems under improved cooperative management; and directly benefit 350,000 people.

***Enhancing the Sustainable Management of Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer System to Ensure Access to Water for Populations Facing Climate Change.*** Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal. (GEF ID 10784). Agency: UNEP; GEF Project Financing: \$3,150,000; Co-financing: \$57,330,000. The Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer System (SMAS) is shared by four countries and the area is crossed by two important transboundary watercourses, the Senegal and the Gambia Rivers. The SMAS basin area is characterized by a great diversity of terrestrial, riverine and coastal ecosystems, high potential of arable land, and provides the majority of the drinking water to several large urban centers. The project will provide the knowledge and information basis to support conjunctive management of the SMAS for the sustainable use of water resources, to improve food security and resilience to climate change in the region. It will support the development of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, identify and implement innovative pilot initiatives, and facilitate the development of a regional Strategic Action Plan to be endorsed on ministerial level and identifying regional and national reforms and investments and aim to mobilize finance for implementation. The project will build on the recently signed ministerial declaration and formation of a regional working group and facilitate the development of an options assessment to help



identify a regional governance mechanism for long term conjunctive management of the surface and groundwater resources of the SMAS and in that seamlessly align with the support of UNECE, the World Bank and other partners.

**International Waters Focal Area funding within GEF-8 Integrated Programs (IPs).** GEF IW funds contribute to the GEF IPs,<sup>7</sup> including the two IPs described below:

***Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program*** (GEF ID 11349). Agencies: FAO (Lead), ADB, CAF, EBRD. GEF Program Financing: \$100,338,691; Co-Financing: \$748,061,993 68. Given the complexities and sheer size of the agricultural, industrial and municipal drivers of coastal zone pollution a highly coordinated, integrated and innovative effort at scale is needed to overcome key barriers to mobilize urgently required collective action to incentivize innovative solutions and best management options. The goal of the Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program is to catalyze such an effort to curb coastal zone pollution from agriculture, industrial and municipal sources by facilitating and promoting policy and regulatory measures and infrastructure investments, combined with nature-based solutions. In doing so, the program will foster an enabling environment to advance countries' efforts toward sustainable blue economy goals. The Integrated Program structure includes one global coordination project and 14 national projects working in nine Large Marine Ecosystems and 14 countries. The Integrated Program will create or put under improved management 520,193 ha of terrestrial protected areas; create or put under improved management 423,251 ha of marine protected areas; restore 96,711 of land and ecosystems; place 1,274,397 ha of landscapes under improved practices; place 6,629,347 ha of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity; and directly benefit 616,752 people.

***Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program.*** Agencies: UNEP (Lead) - WWF-US, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO (GEFID 11181) GEF Project Financing: \$96,280,581. Co-financing: \$595,778,545. As the plastic pollution crisis continues to worsen, there is an urgent need for a cohesive, global approach that matches the scale of interventions to the scale of the problem. The Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution IP is responding to this urgency by tackling the root causes of plastic pollution: ever-growing unsustainable consumption and production of single-use and problematic plastic products and packaging with low circularity. The Plastics IP will demonstrate and scale-up upstream solutions in the food and beverage sector, including the elimination of single-use plastic packaging; circular design of materials, products and business models; as well as ensuring materials and products are circulated in practice through reuse and refill systems. This vision will be achieved by focusing on five interlinked intervention areas: (1) enabling a regulatory and policy environment; (2) mobilizing finance; (3) adopting circular practices within the food and beverage private sector; (4) activating behavior and social change; and (5) fostering project and program-level knowledge sharing, communication, and coordination. The Integrated Program will mitigate 6,033,020 (indirect) metric tons of GHG emissions; facilitate 1,538,486 metric tons of residual plastic waste avoided; and directly benefit 41,960 people.

## Next steps

The GEFSEC IW Focal Area team is eager to build upon our good partnership with the Convention Secretariat and to further discuss the following areas of cooperation:

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<sup>7</sup> See Annex 1

1. Cooperating with UNECE to strengthen the *Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition (TWCC)*<sup>8</sup> and to build shared advocacy to advance transboundary cooperation as a key element for the SDGs; Join forces in that pursuit in international fora, including the 2026 UN Water Conference.
2. Making available and encourage the use of relevant knowledge products and tools developed by the TWCC and its members; and strengthen coordination across TWCC members for greater impact.
3. Continuing the long-standing collaboration with UNECE through IW:LEARN and the GEF Partnership on experience-sharing and strengthening of capacities of transboundary and national institutions, including development and dissemination of knowledge and practical guidance tools.
4. Continuing to seek synergies of efforts on the ground on basin and country levels in the support of countries and basin organizations to further their cooperation on shared water ecosystems.
5. Discussing with the Convention Secretariat their upcoming program of work, which will be adopted at the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention, with a view to drafting a rolling work plan to join forces on items of priority for both the Convention Secretariat and the GEF.

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<sup>8</sup> This strengthening includes facilitating coordination across Coalition members to seek synergies for greater impact, and making available and encouraging broader use of relevant knowledge products and tools developed by the Coalition and its members.

## Annex 1 – Overview of the GEF-8 Programming Structure



## Annex 2 – GEF Council Approved IW Projects and Programs Since MOP9

GEF International Waters and multi focal area projects and programs approved since the last Meeting of the Parties (September 2021). The approved projects total \$540 million dollars (including GEF grants and fees).

	Riparians	Project title
Europe and Central Asia	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan	Blueing the Caspian Sea (11429)
	Albania, Kosovo <sup>9</sup> , Montenegro, North Macedonia	Implementing the Strategic Action Programme of the Drin Basin to Strengthen Transboundary Cooperation and Enable Integrated Natural Resources Management (10881)
	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Central Asia Water Land Nexus Program (11378)
	Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Strengthening Zambezi River Basin Management towards Climate Resilience and Ecosystem Health (11572)
Africa	Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania	Strengthening integrated transboundary source-to-sea management of the Ruvuma River Basin and its coastal zones to ensure ecosystem health and livelihood security (11410)
	Benin, Malawi, Mozambique, Togo, Uganda	Groundwater for Deep Resilience in Africa (G4DR in Africa) (10970)

<sup>9</sup> United Nations administered territory under the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

Latin America Caribbean	Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique	Program for improving sustainable marine fisheries opportunities in SADC – The Case of the Mozambique Channel (11452)
	Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen	An Inclusive Approach for Harnessing Marine Ecosystem Services and Transforming to Sustainable Blue Economy in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (HESBERSGA) (11050)
	Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal	Enhancing the sustainable management of Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer System to ensure access to water for populations facing climate change (SMAS) (10784)
	Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Yemen	Promoting sustainable fisheries management in the Red Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (RedSeaFish project) (11113)
	Angola, Namibia, South Africa	Mainstreaming Climate-Resilient Blue Economy in the BCLME Region (BCLME IV Project) (11282)
	Eswatini, Mozambique, South Africa	Strengthening integrated transboundary management of the Incomati and Maputo river basins (11180)
	Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo	Using Marine Spatial Planning in the Gulf of Guinea for the implementation of Payment for Ecosystem Services and Coastal Nature-based Solutions (10875)
	Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles	Supporting Sustainable Inclusive Blue Economy Transformation in AIO SIDS (10865)
	Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama	Improving the source to sea governance to reduce the impacts on the transboundary large marine ecosystems in the SICA region (11520)
	Costa Rica, Panama, Peru	Expanding blue economy benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and ecosystem services by managing surf ecosystems (10931)
	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay	Implementation of the La Plata Basin SAP priorities through regional and national actions (11053)
	Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela	Towards a better understanding of the Amazon Aquifer Systems for its protection and sustainable management (11108)
	Chile	Towards Sustainable Phosphorus Cycles in Lake Catchments (uP-Cycle) (10892)
	Bolivia, Argentina	Integrated water resources management in the transboundary Bermejo River Basin (10995)
	Asia Pacific	Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago
Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama		Beyond 30x30: Securing resilience in the Eastern Tropical Pacific through enhanced transboundary cooperation (11267)
Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam		Enhancing transboundary fisheries management in the Lower Mekong Basin (11304)
Barbados, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago		Strategies, technologies and social solutions to manage bycatch in tropical Large Marine Ecosystem Fisheries (REBYC-III CLME+) (10857)
Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand		Effectively Managing Networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems in the ASEAN Region (ASEAN ENMAPS) (10873)
Indonesia, Timor Leste	Towards Sustainable and Conversion-Free Aquaculture in Indonesian Seas Large Marine Ecosystem (ISLME) (10867)	

	Malaysia, Thailand	Enhancing Environmental Security and Transboundary Cooperation in the Golok/Kolok River Basin (10794)
Global	Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, India, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago	Global Partnership for Mitigation of Underwater Noise from Shipping (GloNoise Partnership) (10890)
	Ecuador, Guatemala, Mauritania, Morocco, Panama, Senegal	Mainstreaming Sustainable Marine Fisheries Value Chains into the Blue Economy of the Canary Current and the Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystems (11011)
	Costa Rica, Kenya, Vanuatu	Plastic Reduction in the Oceans: Sustaining and Enhancing Actions on Sea-based Sources (PRO-SEAS) (11166)
	Grenada, Jordan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mexico, Moldova, Panama, Peru, Sri Lanka, St. Kitts and Nevis, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Viet Nam, Venezuela	Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program (11349)
	Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago	Eliminating Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains Integrated Program (11169)
	Brazil, Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, India, Jordan, Lao PDR, Senegal, South Africa, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines	Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program(11181)