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UNEP is an Implementing Agency of the GEF with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is the only GEF Agency whose sole focus is the environment.

Knowledge Management and information sharing

UNEP both delivers information on the environmental status of global waters and manages knowledge transfer services within the GEF.

IW:LEARN, and its web based learning portal, is one of the main tools for sharing information and lessons learned among the GEF IW projects. Almost all UNEP/GEF projects include public awareness and policy change elements.

The IW:Science project with the support of UNU (United Nations University) is key to enhance, through knowledge integration and information-sharing tools, the use of science in the GEF (IW) focal area to strengthen priority setting, knowledge sharing, and results-based, adaptive management in current and future projects.

As the Secretariat for the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), UNEP forms the key link between the science communities and the GEF. By seeking out new directions and new technologies, UNEP assists both the GEF and countries in the application and utilization of the best available technologies, and the conduct of scientifically-sound projects and programs.

UNEP and GEF-V

GEF-V, commencing in July 2010, offers new possibilities for UNEP to continue cooperation with countries sharing Transboundary Waters. The focus of GEF V International Waters projects will be in the following subjects:

- Balancing conflicting water uses in transboundary waters
- Rebuilding marine fisheries and reducing pollution of coastal areas and Large Marine Ecosystems
- Supporting foundational capacity building, portfolio learning, and targeted research;
- Promoting effective management of Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction directed at preventing fisheries depletion.

UNEP plays a key role in supporting countries to develop and execute GEF projects, with a focus on:

- Scientific assessments, monitoring, early warning;
- Linking science to policy (Capacity Building, Enabling Activities) at national, regional and global levels;
- Innovation, technology transfer and lifting barriers;
- Regional and global cooperation;
- Awareness raising, advocacy, and Knowledge management.

UNEP also plays an important role in supporting the strategic and policy directions of the GEF, operationalising the Trust Fund and enhancing its scientific rigour and relevance. UNEP hosts the secretariat of the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP).

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UNEP and GEF

International Waters

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UNEP's Record of Achievements

Since its inception in 1972, UNEP has a record of successful multi-country and regional interventions to improve freshwater basin management. Beginning with the Environmentally-Sound Management of Inland Waters (EMINWA) Programme, this record has continued through its ecosystem management programme and Integrated Water Resources Management Programme which are designed to assist nations to comprehensively integrate environmental concerns into the management and development of inland water resources. These programmes stress the need for an integrated approach for managing both the river basins and coastal areas.

In 1974, UNEP initiated the Regional Seas Programme and currently serves as the secretariat for many Regional Seas Conventions. The Regional Seas Programme also promotes an integrated approach, as coastal management is required to address land-based activities in the adjacent drainage basins.

Since 1995, UNEP has served as the Secretariat for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources of Pollution (GPA/LBA), assisting States in preventing and reducing major threats to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine environment resulting from human activities on land and in coastal areas.

UNEP's Catalytic Role

Scientific assessments – understanding global water issues and providing strategic guidance to the GEF

In the GEF Instrument, UNEP is assigned the primary role in catalyzing the development of scientific and technical analyses and advancing environmental management within GEF-financed activities.



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Lack of an International Waters Assessment comparable to those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Global Biodiversity Assessment, etc has proven to be a serious impediment to the International Waters (IW) component of the GEF. UNEP initiated the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) to address this gap.

The GEF also needs to document the results of its investments through periodic global assessments. UNEP is currently working with GEF resources and in collaboration with international organizations on the Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme (TWAP). The TWAP is formulating a scientifically-robust methodology for assessing the changing conditions in transboundary rivers, lakes, groundwater aquifers, coastal marine areas, and open ocean systems.

Under the auspices of the GEF and in association with the LOICZ, UNEP has supported targeted research into how biological systems alter the rates of respiration and carbon fixation in coastal waters, affecting the carbon status of coastal seas and atmospheric CO₂ estimating the impacts of nutrient enrichment on coastal waters, and changes in the biogeochemical cycling of nutrients and carbon between coastal seas and the atmosphere.

Linking science to policy

In the IW focal area, the GEF assists countries to work collectively to address transboundary water resources concerns using the full range of policy, legal and institutional reforms and



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investments. The GEF also helps countries in building institutional capacity and developing new institutional arrangements to better address transboundary water concerns and provide funding for implementing priority corrective measures.

GEF uses a two step approach: (1) a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) identifies priority transboundary environmental concerns and their root causes, and (2) a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) of actions to address priority transboundary concerns through an array of baseline and additional actions. UNEP has worked actively with key partners in many multi-country basins as well as Large Marine Ecosystems around the world in the conduct of TDA/ SAP projects.

Innovation and technology transfer

UNEP also facilitates transfer of knowledge and technology for sustainable development and has been supporting Caribbean countries through the innovative Integrated Watershed and Coastal Areas Management GEF UNEP-UNDP-CAR/RCU IWCAM project to test the feasibility of an integrated approach to the management of watersheds and coastal areas to enable countries to manage their aquatic resources and ecosystems on a sustainable basis.

Many UNEP/GEF projects also test new technologies and innovations in smaller scale pilot demonstration sites. Promising results and technologies are often replicated elsewhere as a part of SAP implementation projects. UNEP/GEF along with FAO has also been engaged in reducing the environmental impact from tropical shrimp trawling through the introduction of by-catch reduction technologies and change of management.