

## **OP7 TECHNICAL GUIDANCE NOTE**

### **THREATENED SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS: INTERNATIONAL WATERS**

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#### **1. Background**

The importance of oceans to people and other living things on Earth cannot be over-emphasized. Oceans cover about 71 percent of the surface of our planet, contain 97 percent of its water, and provide the living space to nearly 200 million identified species. In light of this, “Earth” seems something of a misnomer for a planet that might more accurately be called “Water”. Not only do oceans dominate the ecological environment, they provide direct life support to human beings and other living things. More than 3 billion people directly depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, and the same number of people depend on the oceans as their primary source of protein.

Most water systems are connected and transboundary, hence are under the coverage of GEF International Waters mandate. These water systems know no national boundaries and generate ecosystem services and products for human beings, generally serving as transboundary lifelines. These waterbodies have suffered a trend of environmental degradation, in terms of water quality, ecosystem sustainability and environmental services and goods. The world is calling for effective actions to reverse this trend.

#### **2. Objectives and Strategic Programming**

Under this Strategic Initiative, the SGP will demonstrate for conservation and sustainable use of threatened ecosystems and species in priority landscapes and seascapes through an integrated approach in alignment with GEF-7 biodiversity, land degradation, and international focal area strategies and Impact Program on Sustainable Forest Management.

In International Waters focal area, SGP will promote coordinated actions and interventions by different actors, including the government, communities, and private sector to address root causes to root causes of threats to water-borne species and ecosystems. Priority freshwater ecosystems and seascape areas will be identified taking into consideration partnerships with relevant GEF full-sized projects (FSPs), as well as other projects and partners, to enhance local capacity to form regional networks of communities to deepen vertical cooperation from local to national and regional levels among stakeholders of shared waterbodies. SGP will work with small NGOs and local communities to protect and sustainably use the transboundary water systems and related natural resources. In GEF-7, SGP will focus on two strategic programming directions:

**SP 1: Blue economy: community solutions**

A global innovation program will be developed and implemented for this programming direction. Priority themes include fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and cross-cutting capacity development. Specifically, priority activities include:

Fisheries:

- Prevent, reduce and stop destructive fishing practices including bottom trawling, bycatch, the use of poison and explosives, and ghost fishing
- Promote sustainable fishery management by developing community by-laws, policies and monitoring schemes to enhance fisheries management
- Rehabilitate, conserve and sustainably manage coastal habitats for fisheries (mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass and other coastal wetlands)

Climate resilient aquaculture:

- Innovative aquaculture models that sustainably utilize ocean and coastal resources, for example, sea weed production, fish farming, medicine production from marine living resources and other uses
- Reduction of pollution from aquaculture and land-based pollution

Eco-tourism:

- Pilot and test community-managed eco-tourism initiatives
- Develop business plans and market tourist destinations or activities
- Management from tourists, hotels and other tourism generated waste

Capacity development could be a cross-cutting activity within the above three priority themes. Possible capacity development activities may include: a) Education and trainings to community members on sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and eco-tourism; and b) Identification, collection and codification of good practices on blue economy for local, national and global learning and sharing.

## **SP 2: Land-based pollution, especially plastics, in international waters**

Land-based pollution, particularly plastic waste, affects the world's freshwater systems and ocean and marine resources. Plastic waste pollutes our freshwater systems, through disintegrated plastic particles smaller than five millimeters, known as microplastics, and is transported through sewage, rivers and floodwaters. Plastic debris injures and kills fish, seabirds and marine mammals, severely threatening marine biodiversity. According to the United Nations, at least 800 species worldwide are affected by marine debris, and as much as 80 percent of that litter is plastic. The impacts include fatalities as a result of ingestion, starvation, suffocation, infection, drowning, and entanglement. If the current trend continues, there could be more plastic than fish (by weight) in the ocean by 2050.

SGP will support innovative plastic management practices to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics, and prevent plastics from entering rivers, lakes and our ocean. This cross-cutting programming direction will be implemented with a multi-focal area approach with chemicals, waste and mercury focal area (see

technical guidance note on chemicals, waste and mercury strategic programming direction on plastics and circular economy).

### SP 3: Freshwater and coastal habitat conservation and management

Water is life. World’s majority of population reside in places with fresh water resources along rivers and lakes, near underground water resources in desert areas, or along coastal areas where the oceans and seas offer food, transportation and other livelihoods. Coastal/marine habitats, such as mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs provide spawning grounds for fisheries, act as defense mechanisms against coastal erosions and natural disasters, and offer tourism opportunities. SGP will provide support to the following types of activities in habitat conservation and management:

- Establishment and management of community managed or protected areas;
- Restoration and conservation of degraded habitats (mangroves, seagrass, coral reefs and forest management at water sources);
- Development of community management cooperation scheme including community patrolling, monitoring and sanctions for sustainable use and conservation;
- Development, testing and scaling up innovative technologies and tools for habitat conservation for endangered species;
- Awareness raising, capacity development and policy campaigns for species and ecosystem conservation.

### 3. Results measurement and alignment with GEF and larger frameworks

SGP country programs should develop and implement country program strategies in alignment with the strategic programs under this focal area and Table 1 of project results below. Projects should be developed, implemented and followed up with monitoring and results collection to contribute to core indicator of GEF.

**Table 1. Results Framework for Threatened Species and Ecosystems**

<b>Project Objective: To promote and support innovative and scalable initiatives, and foster multistakeholder partnerships at the local level to tackle global environmental issues in priority landscapes and seascapes</b>						
<b>Project Components</b>	<b>Component Type</b>	<b>Project Outcomes</b>	<b>Project Outputs</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>(in \$)</b>	
					<b>GEF Project Financing</b>	<b>Co-financing</b>
Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species	Technical assistance	Community-based models and approaches promoted for conservation and sustainable use of	Improved management effectiveness of protected areas through community-led initiatives including partnership with private sector and government (10 million ha of terrestrial, freshwater and marine PAs)	GEFTF	24,974,087	26,073,000

		threatened ecosystems and species in priority landscapes and seascapes.	<p>Community-led biodiversity friendly practices and approaches (agriculture, forestry, fisheries and infrastructure) promoted covering at least 2 million ha of landscapes/seascapes</p> <p>At least two community-based protected area/conserved area designations and/or networks strengthened in each country</p> <p>Community-led actions to enhance protection of threatened species including enhancing transboundary conservation</p>			
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#### 4. Stakeholders and Partnerships

In International Waters focal area, the key lies in bridging the gap between local communities and transboundary concerns, and developing a focused and regionally coordinated portfolio addressing regional priority issues. SGP projects must have regional considerations, meaning addressing issues identified as regional priorities and provide inputs to regional scientific studies and decision-making. Activities of SGP must be coordinated, through regional projects or initiatives, and grantees should be networked in parallel with regional inter-governmental forum. SGP will continue working with full-sized projects proactively and ensure close connections and linkages between regional, national and local interventions. Table 2 includes a summary of ongoing partnerships with GEF full-sized projects.

#### 5. Risks management, knowledge management and innovation

The vast area of IW systems and the transboundary nature of issues and actions impose considerably high transaction costs in developing and implementing IW projects. This becomes particularly daunting for small NGOs and CBOs in developing and implementing SGP projects, which have a funding limit of \$50,000 per project, and the average actual project funding is around \$26,000. Due to the inherent transboundary nature of IW issues, effective measures often require coordinated actions among countries sharing a water system or resource, which have proved difficult for SGP as the program allocation and approach are country driven. Specifically, challenges for international waters management include:

- Institutional challenges: lack of transboundary network and linkages among small NGOs/CBOs;
- High transaction costs in developing and implementing transboundary projects;
- Inadequate capacity of individual local NGOs/CBOs in addressing transboundary IW issues;
- Lack of financial resources;

- Lack of motivations of National Coordinators (NCs) of the SGP to develop and encourage IW projects development due to high transaction costs.

To address these challenges, SGP will continue its strategy to foster linkages and connections with GEF full-sized projects, where possible, to serve as a delivery mechanism for SGP. Under such collaboration modality, SGP and GEF IW full-sized projects can pool resources together for community demonstrations and innovations, while feeding back good practices to national and regional policy development processes. To incentivize such collaboration, SGP will continue matching grant allocation with additional FSPs' allocation of community component to SGP.

Knowledge management and innovation are also supported through regional collaboration initiatives around regional waterbodies. Country programs will be connected and networked to address common priority issues in shared waterbodies, and experiences and good practices will be disseminated and replicated.

## **6. Resources for further reading**

1. GEF-7 programming directions
2. Scaling up international waters management: experiences from GEF Small Grants Programme
3. Plastics and circular economy: community solutions (to be published)

**TABLE 2. SGP PARTNERSHIPS WITH GEF INTERNATIONAL WATERS PROJECTS**

Full-sized Projects	Agency	Countries	Collaboration Areas	Results or Expected Results
<b>Ongoing Partnerships</b>				
IWEco Project in the Caribbean	UN Environment/ UNDP	Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Vincent and Grenadines	Community demonstrations funded by \$1 million from the IWEco with \$1 million matching SGP fund  Regional sharing and networking	20 IWEco community demonstration sites under implementation; at least ten more projects to be developed and implemented; capacity development.
Amazon River Basin	UN Environment	Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela	Community demonstrations funded by \$1 million from the IWEco with \$1 million matching SGP fund  Regional technical support, sharing and networking	Community demonstration sites; capacity development
Wider Caribbean CREW Project	UN Environment	Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago	Community demonstrations funded by \$1 million from the IWEco with \$1 million matching SGP fund  Regional technical support, sharing and networking	Community demonstration sites; capacity development
South China Sea Phase I and Phase II	UN Environment	Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam	Phase I: \$700,000 from the FSP with a matching SGP fund to support community demonstrations  Phase II: to be determined	31 community demonstration sites
PEMSEA (Prevention and Management of Marine Pollution in the East Asian Seas)	UNDP	Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, DPR Korea, Lao PDR, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Vietnam	Alignment with East Asian Seas Sustainable Development Strategy  Joint development of community demonstration sites  Knowledge sharing and learning	Participation in the Partnership Council and East Asian Seas Congress/East Asian /Seas Youth Forum  Development of community projects
Yellow Sea Project	UNDP	China and South Korea	\$400,000 funding from FSP to support the implementation of its community components; sharing of expertise, knowledge and networking	SGP grantee partners receiving support  Experience sharing
GEF IW:Learn	UNDP	Global	Capacity development and networking	16 national coordinators trained with fund and technical support by IW:Learn