



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
EVALUATION OFFICE



# Approach to GEF IW SCS Impact Evaluation

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# Overview



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# South China Sea Background

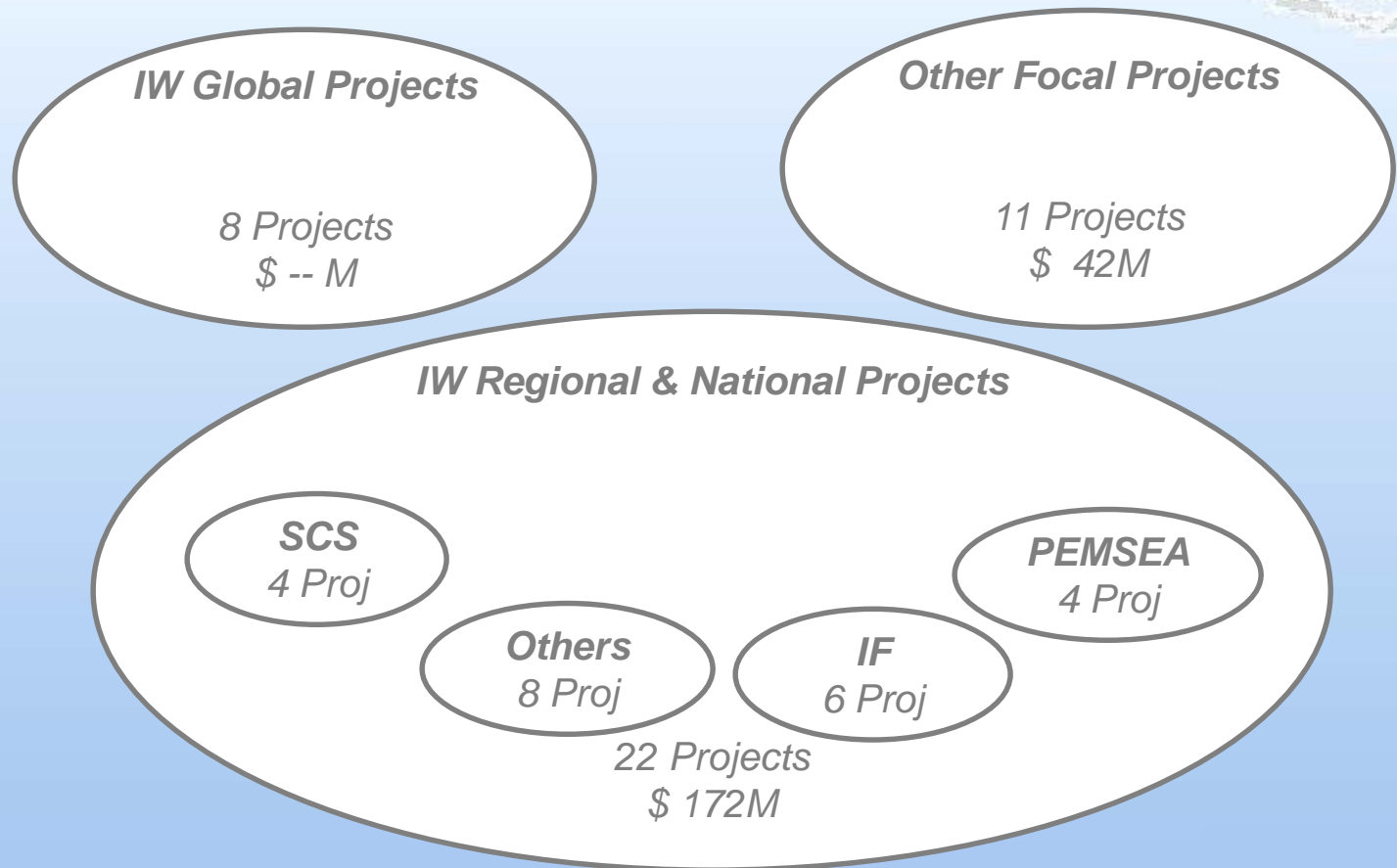


- Known for its rich biodiversity and natural resources, the South China Sea (SCS) provides food to 250 million people and directly provides a livelihood for over 100 million people.
- 40 years of rapid economic growth have had results that threaten the sustainability of the social, economic, and ecological services that the SCS provides
  - Growing coastal habitat destruction
  - Increased pollution
  - Increased overfishing
- Management of the SCS's rich marine resources is complicated by outstanding territorial disputes.

# GEF support in the SCS+



- Since 1993, the GEF has allocated over \$180mn USD to projects related to the SCS and surrounding areas



# GEF Approach to International Waters



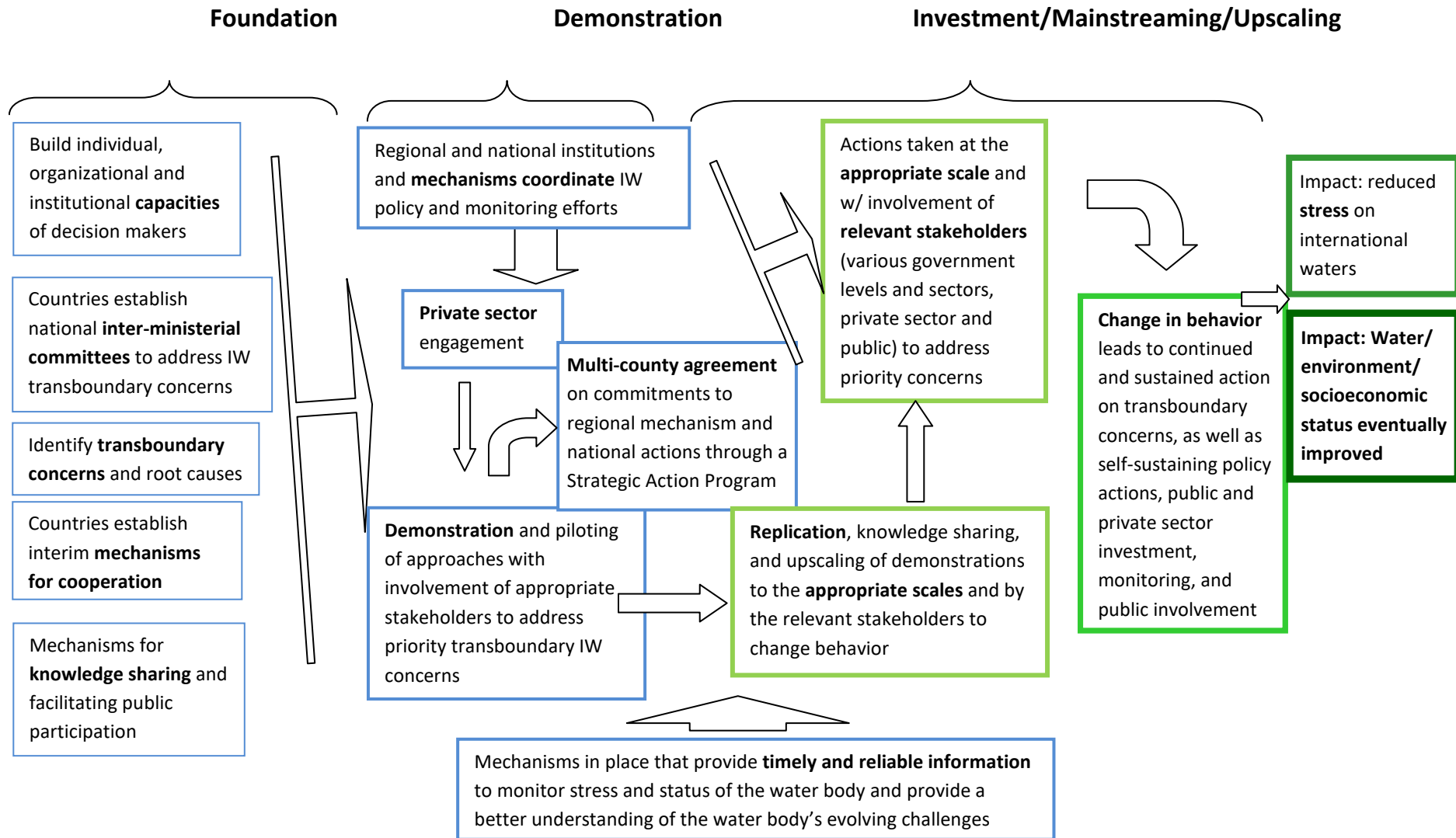
- The GEF helps countries work together to secure environmental benefits from shared surface water, ground water, and marine ecosystems by fostering **international cooperation and catalyzing action on priority transboundary water issues**.
- The GEF has developed an International Waters approach that involves:
  - Foundational Activities:

Build trust and confidence among countries, strengthen knowledge base on root causes, improve national capacity, and strengthen regional coordination mechanisms
  - Demonstration Activities  

Develop, test, and adapt approaches and technologies; catalyze further action to address problems
  - Investments  

Replicate, upscale, and/or mainstream technologies and approaches that work

# GEF Model to International Waters



# In practice



- The application of the model is shaped by context
- The sequence of interventions may vary
- A limitation: The does not fully capture opportunistic investments that might be undertaken by following the model.

# Assumptions behind GEF IW Approach



- A strategic , programmatic approach of investments and countries' coordinated action **will lead to improvements** in water/environment/socioeconomic status
- The promoted measures and solutions are well **aligned** with both the **regional priorities** and the **national priorities** of the participating countries
- The “architecture” promoted will enable **adaptive management processes** that will lead to the policy changes and investments needed to reduce environmental stress and improve environmental status.
- Improvement of environmental and socioeconomic status will **take place over time** as long as countries and other actors take **follow up actions and investments** to address the transboundary IW concerns
- Water body impacts depend on **level of effort** in stress reduction and may be appropriate only for larger, programmatic approaches



# Objectives of the Evaluation



- Main objective: **Assess the extent** to which processes, knowledge, technologies, and capacities to which GEF contributes promote changes in policies, technology, management practices, and other behaviors that will address the **priority transboundary environmental concerns** that affect the social, economic, and environmental services of the SCS.
- Evaluation will answer four main questions:
  - Has support been **relevant** to SCS environmental threats and priorities?
  - What are the **effects** of GEF support (positive or negative, intended or unintended) on country efforts and environmental problems?
  - What are the **critical factors** that affect likelihood that support will catalyze actions that will reduce environmental stress and improve environmental and socioeconomic status?
  - What **lessons** can be learned from the interventions' successes and failures that apply to the SCS and elsewhere?

# Impact Evaluation Approach



- Impact:
  - “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.”  
(OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2002)
- The ROtI (**R**eview of **O**utcomes to **I**mpacts) methodology assesses **progress** of projects' outcomes **toward impact**, and the likelihood of achieving the ultimate goals of reducing environmental stress and improving environmental and socio-economic status.

# Approach Considerations



- Select illustrative interventions
- Assess how key actors responded to interventions,
  - Assuming that response to the same intervention will vary from actor to actor, time to time; thus the same intervention will have different impact in different places.
- Assess extent to which there is movement to intermediate stages
- Assess contextual factors affecting decisions

# Introduction to Theory of Change Approach



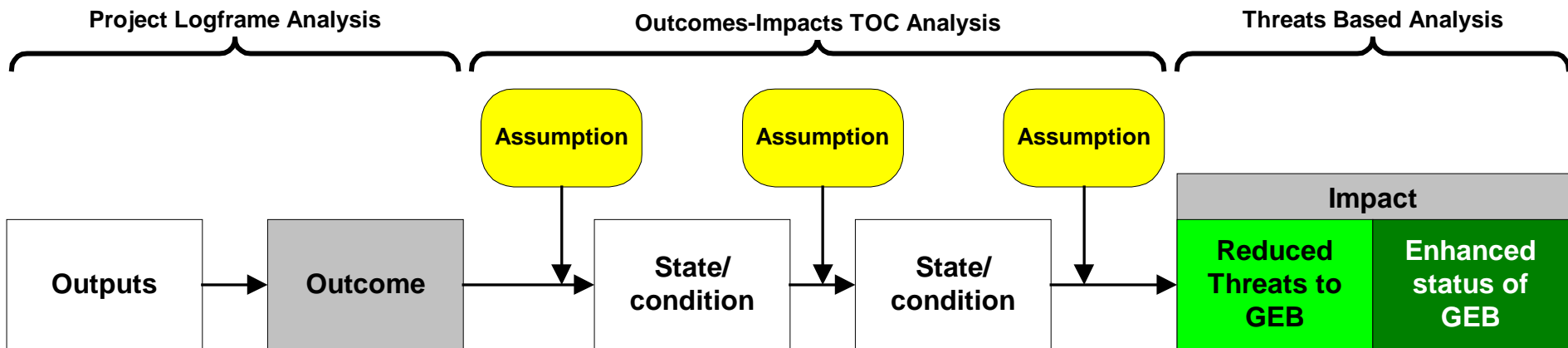
- Evaluation will use the Theory of Change approach: a tool to assess GEF support's contribution to impact
  - Assumes there are multiple paths toward impact
- Three characteristics of complex socio-ecological systems merit special attention in impact evaluations (E. Ostrom):
  - **Polycentric**: independent units interact with one another
  - **Multi-scalar**: institutions and processes are linked at multiple levels and system boundaries vary
  - **Multi-temporal**: diverse temporal lags and inherent delays exist between actions and (natural and other) systems' response.

# Approach: Theory-based Approach

- Programmes and projects are built on assumptions on how and why they are supposed to achieve their objectives
- In project proposal documents, some assumptions are explicit, others are not
- Assumptions about how and why impacts will be achieved must be made explicit before they can be evaluated
- When causal mechanisms behind assumptions and project contextual factors are known, indicators can be identified for progress towards impact



# Impact Evaluation Framework



*Assess direct effects of the project*



*Assess how these effects are leading to impacts*



*Assess whether impacts have actually occurred*

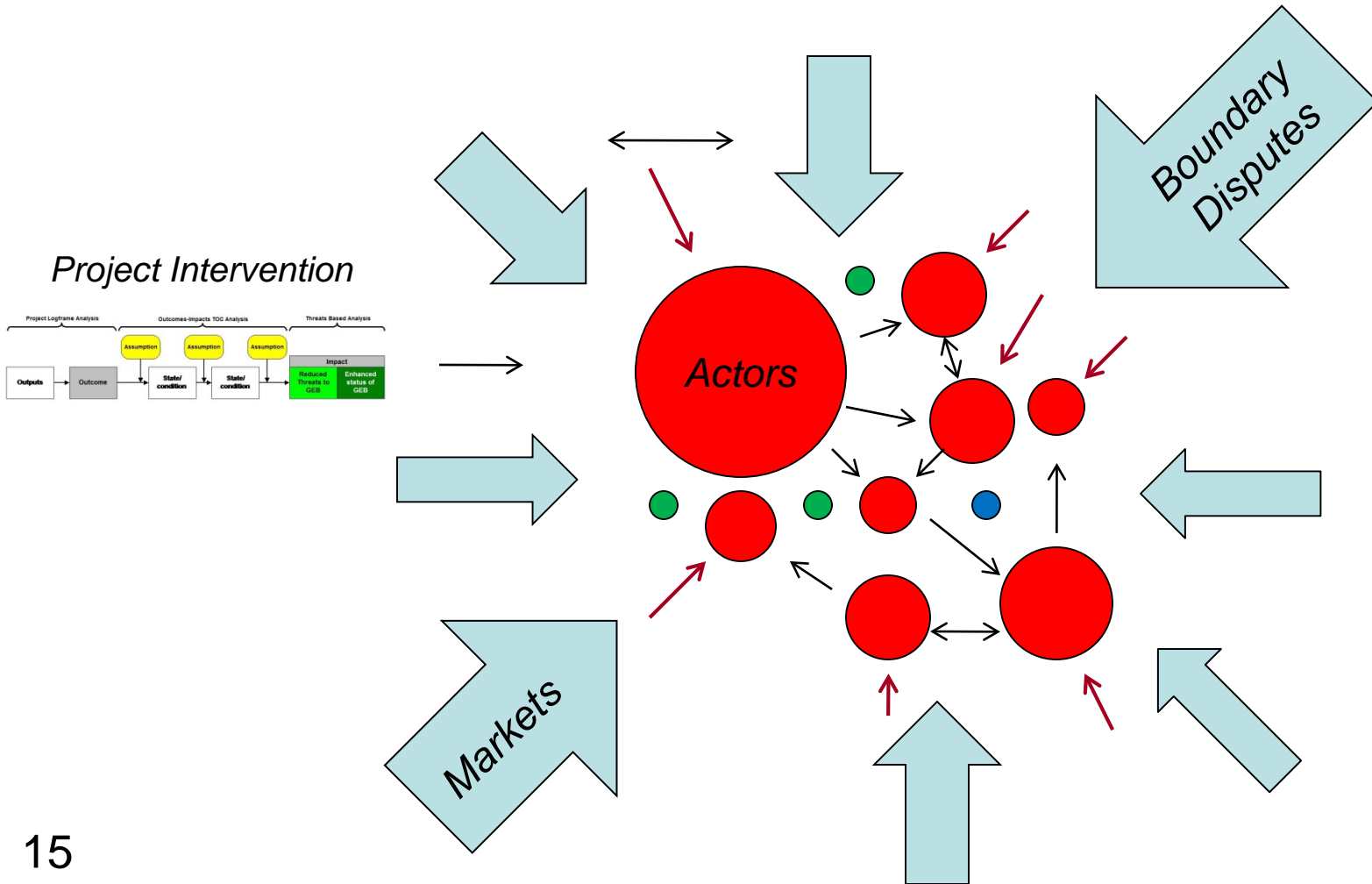


# Complex Socio-Ecological System

*Regional Factors*

*Country Factors*

*Country Decisions*





Thank you.

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