

GEF Evaluation Office

Selecting a Water Body for Evaluation of GEF International Waters Projects

Selection Criteria and Process

Contents

Section	Page
A. Introduction	1
B. GEF International Waters Projects by Water Body	6
C. Selection Criteria & Process: Selecting Water Body for Evaluation	7

Contacts:

Aaron Zazueta, Senior Evaluation Officer, GEF EO, azazueta@theGEF.org
Neeraj Negi, Evaluation Officer, GEF EO, nnegi1@theGEF.org

GEF Evaluation Office
1818 H Street NW
Washington DC 20433
Tel: 202 473-4054
Fax: 202 522-1691
www.gefeo.org

A. Introduction

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a mechanism for international cooperation to provide new and additional funding to meet the agreed incremental costs of securing global environmental benefits, working in partnership with GEF Agencies (UNEP, UNDP, World Bank, FAO, IFAD, UNIDO, AfDB, EBRD, ADB, IADB), national governments and civil society. More information can be found at its website: www.thegef.org
2. The evaluation of GEF International Waters (IW) projects in the South China Sea (SCS) is the result of a recommendation in the Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS4) to carry out an in-depth assessment of progress towards impacts in the International Waters focal area. Since the OPS4 focused on assessing likely impacts of individual projects, it was unable to fully capture GEF contributions at the project cluster level. Further, given the transnational nature of IW issues and the fact that multiple projects across multiple countries contribute to the impact of GEF IW operations in any particular water body, a project cluster level approach seems the most appropriate way to capture GEF IW contributions.
3. As a part of the IW evaluation, the GEFEO first undertook a portfolio analysis of various international bodies of water in which the GEF has been involved to select an appropriate body of water for assessment. This document presents the methods and criteria used to select a body of water for evaluation. This paper contains an overview of the four types of water bodies GEF IW projects target, a list of the selection criteria used to select the appropriate water body for evaluation, and a discussion of the selection process. The overview of the four types of water bodies includes details on levels of funding and areas emphasized for each type of water body. The water body selection criteria include factors such as: duration of GEF support; total grant allocations and number of projects; involvement of multiple GEF agencies; availability of information; and applicability of lessons to other GEF operations. In terms of selection process, after discussing selection criteria and soliciting suggestions on potential water bodies from stakeholders, the GEF Secretariat, and the IW task force at the 5th IW Conference in Cairns (Australia), the GEFEO conducted a preliminary portfolio analysis of the seven water bodies suggested as potential candidates for evaluation. The Office then applied the selection criteria to determine which water body best fit the criteria.

B. GEF International Waters Projects by Water Body

4. The GEF international waters portfolio consists of 175 council approved projects, with a total GEF grant of US\$ 1.082 billion and US\$ 6.23 billion in co-financing. GEF international waters projects target four types of transboundary water bodies; these include Large Marine Ecosystems, Fresh Water Basins, Ground Water Bodies, and Demonstration and Knowledge Management Projects.

Marine Ecosystems

5. The 66 large catchments and associated marine areas defined for the Global International Water Assessment (GIWA) project was used for this classification. This classification was

used to match with the GEF 2004 Program Study on International Waters. The next table shows the GEF allocation to Marine Ecosystems. MEs and their associated catchments account for about 64 percent of the total GEF grants to the international waters focal area. As shown in Table 1A, the Black Sea/Danube and the South China Sea are the largest recipients accounting for 21 and 19 percent of funding, respectively. Although six projects are strategically considered South China Sea projects, geographically they extend further North covering the East Asian Seas region. One such project is the PEMSEA, which is considered a South China Sea project although its coverage extends as far as the North Korea coastline. The Caribbean Sea and the Guinea current LMEs have the highest allocation in LAC and Africa respectively.

6. The Mediterranean Sea LME has the highest level of co-financing. This can be attributed to three national projects in Egypt (647million US\$), Tunisia (547 million US\$), and Croatia (202 million US\$). These projects have the highest amount of co-financing in the entire IW portfolio because they are often infrastructure-related coastal projects.

Table 1 – GEF International Waters Funding to Marine Ecosystems (1991-2009)¹

Marine Ecosystem	Region	No. of Projects	GEF Grant (\$)	Co-financing (\$)	Inception Date
LMES					
Black Sea and Danube	ECA	28	147,681,400	685,365,601	05/01/1991
South China Sea (with East Asian Seas extensions)	Asia	17	129,082,036	1,206,909,240	05/01/1991
Caribbean Sea	LAC	10	69,732,511	246,525,893	12/01/1992
Mediterranean Sea	AFR/Asia/ECA	8	59,687,045	1,525,658,293	04/01/1992
Yellow Sea	Asia	3	36,394,183	310,993,865	05/01/2000
Guinea Current	AFR	2	26,812,404	34,383,992	12/01/1991
Red Sea and Gulf of Aden	AFR/Asia	3	24,500,000	35,622,500	05/01/1992
Canary Current	AFR	2	23,690,000	17,716,250	09/05/2007
Benguela Current	AFR	3	21,000,460	86,277,138	05/01/2000
Indian Ocean Islands Current	AFR	3	18,000,140	22,525,325	07/01/1998
Patagonian Shelf	LAC	3	16,880,000	40,320,000	01/01/1999
Agulhas/Somali Current	AFR	1	12,200,000	18,262,500	09/13/2005
Bay of Bengal	Asia	1	12,082,100	16,385,500	04/06/2005
Gulf of Mexico	LAC	2	8,502,500	106,729,271	09/05/2007
Baltic Sea	ECA	2	8,500,000	18,000,000	07/01/1998
East China Sea	Asia	1	5,000,000	133,900,000	11/10/2005
Brazilian Current	LAC	1	4,430,000	17,443,000	07/01/1998
Sulu Celebes and Timor Seas	Asia	1	5,390,000	8,870,000	04/24/2008

¹ The tables in this paper were composed using GEF Project Management Information System data as of November 24, 2009.

Aral Sea	ECA	1	12,000,000	59,500,000	
Arctic	ECA	2	6,610,000	14,494,000	05/01/1997
Bohai Sea	Asia	1	5,000,000	201,900,000	2/22/2000
Caspian	Asia/ECA	2	14,017,936	35,777,500	11/1/1998
Eastern Equatorial Pacific	LAC	1	5,000,000	21,326,000	6/14/2007
Small Island States	Asia	2	21,025,186	66,427,564	7/1/1998
Total			693,217,901	4,931,313,432	

Fresh Water Basins

7. Fresh bodies of water account for 17.6 percent of the GEF grant to the IW focal area. The bulk of that amount goes to water basins located in Africa (70.6 percent). This is followed by LAC with 11 percent. Asia and ECA account for only 7 and 12 percentage respectively. The three fresh water basins receiving the most funding are also found in Africa. Another notable feature is the huge amount of co-financing in the Nile basin.

Table 2 – GEF International Waters Funding to Fresh Water Bodies (1991-2009)

Water Body	Region	GEF Amount (\$)	Co-financing (\$)	Approval Date
Lake Victoria	AFR	36,000,000	48,200,000	4/1/1996
Nile	AFR	24,500,000	165,640,800	12/7/2001
Lake Tanganyika	AFR	23,500,000	43,500,000	12/1/1991
Bermejo River	LAC	14,030,000	11,465,000	11/1/1996
Niger River	AFR	13,000,000	16,902,000	5/16/2003
Mekong River	Asia	10,750,000	6,850,000	5/7/1999
Lake Chad	AFR	9,600,000	3,130,000	2/1/2000
Dnieper/Dnipro	ECA	9,035,000	13,700,000	3/30/1998
Senegal River	AFR	7,250,000	32,445,000	12/7/2001
Pantanal and Upper Paraguay	LAC	6,329,000	9,780,000	7/1/1998
Orange-Senqu River	AFR	6,300,000	30,161,500	4/24/2008
Okavango	AFR	5,391,000	2,425,000	7/1/2000
Volta River	AFR	5,347,380	10,374,400	5/16/2003
Tumen River	Asia/ECA	4,957,200	5,466,800	3/30/1998
Lake Skader-Shkoder	ECA	4,550,000	11,163,000	6/14/2007
Lake Ohrid	ECA	3,970,000	21,300,000	5/1/1997
Kura Aras	ECA	2,900,000	10,350,000	7/28/2008
Sistan Basin	Asia	2,000,000	10,100,000	11/13/2008
Lake Peipsi	ECA	1,000,000	3,775,000	1/9/2002
Total		190,409,580	456,728,500	

Ground Water Bodies

8. Ground water resources receive the least support in the GEF IW portfolio. Ground water accounts for only 2.5 percent of total IW funding. The Guarani aquifer in the LAC region accounts for almost half of the financing (49.8 percent). However, most of the water bodies are located in Africa, which accounts for 42 percent of funding. Support to the Nubian aquifer is less than one million US dollars, although the aquifer has a large amount of co-financing. The Dinaric Karst Aquifer in ECA accounts for 8 percent. There is no GEF support to ground water resources in Asia.

Table 3 – GEF International Waters Funding to Ground Water Resources (1991-2009)

Ground Water Body	Region	GEF Amount (\$)	Co-financing (\$)	Approval Date
Guarani aquifer	LAC	13,400,000	13,300,000	12/7/2001
SADC Ground Water	AFR	7,000,000	6,900,000	3/22/2004
Dinaric Karst Aquifer	ECA	2,160,000	3,050,000	7/28/2008
West Sahara Aquifer	AFR	1,560,000	2,457,140	12/18/2002
Nubian Aquifer	AFR	975,000	6,951,100	6/21/2005
Iullemeden Aquifer System	AFR	958,000	780,000	6/24/2003
Egypt Ground Water	AFR	830,000	1,005,000	3/15/2001
Total		26,883,000	34,443,240	

Demonstration and Knowledge Management Projects

9. Most of the demonstration and knowledge projects are global projects. There are, however, a number of regional projects on this strategic program. Most of these projects are mainly in sub-Saharan Africa. One major program is the World Bank initiative on Strategic Partnership for a Sustainable Fisheries Investment Fund in the Large Marine Ecosystems of Sub-Saharan Africa comprising four projects. The total GEF support to the investment fund is about US\$ 17.6 million and co-financing amounts to US\$ 215.8 million.

C. Selection Criteria & Process: Selecting Water Body for Evaluation

10. The evaluation proposes to focus on the South China Sea region, including the Gulf of Thailand and adjacent areas. This water body was selected based on a process that entailed: defining the selection criteria; classification of IW projects by water catchment; assessment of the candidate water bodies proposed by stakeholders during the 5th IW Conference in Cairns (Australia); a brief characterization of GEF's involvement on selected water catchments; and the final selection through bilateral consultations.

Criteria used for the selection of a water body or catchment for study

11. Five criteria were used:

1. *Length of time GEF has been supporting activities in the water body.* Given that IW strategy points to long-term processes to test the validity of the IW model, it will be critical to select areas in which GEF has had a long engagement, and that have moved beyond foundational activities to demonstration and investment activities.
2. *Total grant allocations and number of projects.* To assess the programmatic and comprehensive nature of GEF's IW approach it will be important to select an area that has multiple interventions that address the various dimensions of the priority transboundary environmental concerns. It will also be important that a critical mass of projects has come to maturity and have been closed or are close to completion.
3. *Involvement of multiple GEF Agencies.* Given their comprehensive nature, the IW approach also requires coordinated work among agencies that bring different strengths and are expected to work in partnership. GEF generally assigns Agencies tasks on the basis of their "comparative advantages" as formally understood in the GEF.
4. *Available information.* To assess the extent to which countries have adopted actions that address agreed upon priority transboundary environmental concerns, it will be important to have access to information on project interventions, including localization of demonstrations and investments and results regarding the extent to which proposed approaches actually reduce environmental stresses and improve conditions of local populations. The evaluation will also need information on long-term trends such as changes in ecological status, generation of knowledge, and institution strengthening and governance.
5. *Potential to derive lessons applicable to the operations of the GEF and other actors.* The IW impact analysis will have to look beyond outcomes and will seek to shed light on how and why interventions work or don't work. It will also examine some of the approaches, such as the partnership or the investment fund. This offers an opportunity to work closely with GEF IW stakeholders to identify questions and issues that, within the context of an independent evaluation, provide information to sharpen the GEF approach to international waters.

Water body selection process

12. During September and October of 2009 the Evaluation Office started informal consultations with the GEF Secretariat on the overall direction of the evaluation and on defining the criteria for selection of a water body for this evaluation. In November the Office also carried out a preliminary portfolio analysis to determine the level of support that the GEF has provided to different water bodies around the world. Following the approach adopted by the GEF International Waters focal area, this analysis distinguished between three types of water bodies: large marine ecosystems, fresh water basins, and underground water bodies. This analysis provided information on the length of involvement of the GEF, and on the number of projects supported and total grant allocations in each water body. In November 2009 the Evaluation Office also presented and discussed the criteria with other GEF IW stakeholders in the IW International Waters Conference held in Cairns, Australia. At the same time, the Office solicited suggestions from stakeholders on candidate water bodies to consider for the evaluation. Most stakeholders consulted agreed that the Danube Black Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (DBS) should be excluded as the previous EO studies have examined the GEF

involvement in this water body to considerable depth. The incentives provided by the European Union accession process to the participating countries also make this water body somewhat atypical from other water bodies where the GEF operates.

13. Seven water bodies were suggested by GEF stakeholders as potential candidates for the Evaluation. South China Sea, the Caribbean Sea, The Mediterranean Sea, The Nile Basin, African lakes (Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika), West Indian Ocean, and Benguela Current. The suggested candidate water bodies were consistent with the findings of the preliminary portfolio analysis. As most of these water bodies were among those in which GEF had the longest involvement and also had a high number of projects or grant allocations, the Office did a quick characterization of each, examining the main environmental concerns addressed by the GEF projects, and identifying the GEF agencies involved and each project's stage in the project cycle. Table 1.D summarizes the information drawn from the portfolio review; it compares the seven water bodies in terms on length of GEF involvement, number of projects, total grant allocations, and number of GEF Agencies involved.
14. The South China Sea Large Marine Ecosystem best fits the three selection criteria that could be assessed on the basis of the portfolio analysis (the time of GEF involvement, total grant allocations and number of projects, and GEF agencies involved). SCS is among the oldest in terms of GEF involvement (16 years) and ranks highest in terms of grant allocations (140 million USD). Its allocations are nearly double the GEF allocations in any other candidate water body. It also has the largest number of projects (18 – of which six are completed, seven are under implementation, and five in the pre-implementation phase), and GEF operations in the SCS also involve more agencies than other water bodies (ADB, FAO, UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank). With regards to the available information to carry out the evaluation, SCS also ranks high (there are six terminal evaluations and implementation reports of several projects with more than three years of implementation). Historical records of GEF involvement in the region are available in the management units of the region's GEF projects (UNDP, World Bank, and UNEP). Moreover, much information on activities and outcomes of projects has been compiled and mapped using GIS by project management units, which by itself provides a good starting base. Also, while there are two main project strands in the region that have pursued different approaches, both seek to address a common set of issues (management of coral reef, fisheries, and nutrient loads and pollution). Other water bodies with long GEF involvement that were considered either had much lower GEF funding, had only a few GEF Agencies involved, or had too few completed projects.

Table 4 – Comparison of Proposed Water Bodies for the IW Evaluation²

Water body	Length of time GEF involved	Total grant allocations (US\$) and Number of projects	GEF Agencies involved
South China Sea (With East Asian Seas extensions)	1993 (16 years)	140 Million; 18 (6 completed, 7 under implementation, 2 Council approved, 1 CEO endorsed, 2 CEO approved)	UNDP, World Bank, UNEP, ADB and FAO

² Table includes information on GEF Council approved projects found in the GEF Project Management Information System as of November 23, 2009. SCS projects include the Mekong Water Utilization Project (11million USD)

Caribbean Sea	1992 (17 years)	70 million; 10 projects(4 completed, 3 under implementation, 2 IA approved, 1 CEO endorsed)	IADB, UNEP, UNDP, World Bank
African lakes (Lake Victoria & Lake Tangayika)	1996 (13 years) 1991 (18 years)	60 million; 3 (2 completed projects in LV, and one completed and one approved in LT)	World Bank for LV and UNDP for LT
Mediterranean Sea	1992 (17 years)	60 million; 9 projects(2 completed, 6 Council approved, 1 CEO endorsed)	UNDP, World Bank
Nile Basin	2001 (8 years)	24 million; 3 projects (0 completed, 3 IA approved)	UNDP, World Bank
Benguela Current	2000 (9 years)	21 million; 3projects (2 under implementation, 1 IA approved)	UNDP
Indian Ocean Islands	1998 (11 years)	18 million; 3 projects (1 completed, 1 under implementation, 1 IA approved)	UNDP, World Bank