



**The 1st Meeting of the Project Steering Committee for
the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF Project on Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of
Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand**

4th – 5th December 2018
Jasmine City Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

**RESULTS OF THE 9TH GEF INTERNATIONAL WATER CONFERENCE
AND SOME HIGHLIGHTS**

I. INTRODUCTION

The GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC) is the signature event of the GEF IW Portfolio. The IWC objectives are to facilitate cross-sectoral and GEF IW Portfolio-wide learning and experience sharing. They strive to solicit advice from the existing GEF IW Portfolio on burning issues and to assist in building participant capacity in key management and technical areas. Participants sum up progress achieved and look to the future of programming within and beyond the GEF IW Focal Area. The eight previous conferences were held in Sri Lanka, Barbados, Croatia, Australia, South Africa, Brazil, China, and Hungary.

IWC9 was convened about 300 participants—comprising GEF IW project managers, representatives of beneficiary countries, non-governmental organizations, transboundary management institutions, UN Agencies and the private sector—in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 5-8 November 2018. Collectively, the participants were represented 84 active GEF IW projects, 80 countries and the various GEF Agencies.

Regarding this, Project Director of Fisheries *Refugia* and a government representative – the Chief National Scientific and Technical Committee for Philippines, Mr. Valeriano M. Borja attended the IWC with supported by the project.

II. RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCES

1) FILM FESTIVAL

The objective of this program was to allow participating projects share their innovative approaches and best practices to water resources management with the GEF IW Portfolio. The SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF Project joined this program by submission the Film on Introduction of the South China Sea (SCS) to support the SDG-14. (see link at www.fisheries-refugia.org or www.unepscs.org)

2) PORTFOLIO STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this agenda were: 1) to visionary remarks to frame the conference theme, 2) the GEF Secretariat shares their perspectives on the GEF-7 International Waters Strategy/ Programming Directions in the context of sustaining international waters cooperation and the UN Sustainable Development Goals to frame conference deliberations, and 3) the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) IW Focal Area Study is presented to provide an analysis of IW portfolio composition and trends.

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF presented the results of the third IW Focal Area Study (2016), which comes 10 years after of the previous one. The purpose of the Study was to provide insights and lessons for the **GEF-7 replenishment cycle** by assessing the continuing relevance of the focal area, and its effectiveness in creating an enabling environment for transboundary cooperation and environmental

stress reduction. The Study contains an analysis of the composition and trends of the entire IW portfolio (1992-2015), a synthesis of evaluative evidence from thematic and terminal evaluations and from stakeholder interviews. Its findings and final considerations may provide useful elements for countries, GEF agencies and portfolio managers.

3) VIEWS FROM POLICYMAKERS ON SUSTAINING INTERNATIONAL WATERS COOPERATION

GEF IW projects are built upon country-driven processes and dialogues that lead to ward transboundary cooperation. Legal and institutional frameworks, but particularly national policies and regulations help drive what gets achieved in GEF IW project implementation. This session engaged high-level government representatives of the GEF IW project community on the question of how GEF IW projects can work to sustain international waters cooperation. Policymakers will be queried on what, in their experience, is relevant for projects to pursue in terms of policymaker engagement and facilitating the processes and dialogues toward cooperation, and for sustaining it.

4) SHOWCASE ON SUSTAINING INTERNATIONAL WATERS COOPERATION

This was a platform for projects to present their action-inspiring solutions to transboundary waters management challenges to promote solution replication and scaling up across the IW Portfolio. Fisheries *Refugia* Project developed 2 posters to share and introduce our project. ([ANNEX 1](#) and [2](#)).

5) BUILDING TRACTION OF THE TDA-SAP PROCESS TOWARD 2030 AND BEYOND: FROM FORMULATION THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION

To share portfolio experience on ‘best practice’ and ‘lessons learned’ in the preparation, adoption and implementation of Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and Strategic Action Programs (SAP) in both shared marine and freshwater bodies, and discuss and compare this with country and other stakeholder views on traction and impacts within country, regional and global agendas (including the SDGs). The Desired Outcomes are 1) enhanced IW community knowledge and understanding of TDA-SAP and related methodology best practice; 2) new project-to-project partnerships to share TDA-SAP and related experience; 3) portfolio-wide improvement in the preparation, adoption and implementation of TDA-SAPs and related instruments, including mobilization of finance; and 4) enhanced awareness of TDA-SAP contribution to implementation of SDGs 6, 14, and others.

- *Freshwater World:*

Threats to freshwater ecosystems, stemming from urbanization and increasing food demand, further exacerbated by climate change, are increasing. Water is fundamental to achieving most of the SDGs. Provision of water for human settlements, agriculture, energy, etc. is a risk also by water scarcity events, such as floods and droughts. Cooperation on shared freshwater systems, including groundwater is essential in most international basins to support the need for water, food, energy, and ecosystems security. The need for transboundary cooperation is an essential element for effective integrated water resources management, stipulated in SDG 6.5.

GEF IW focal area support has been for more than 25 years focused on interventions on preventative actions in transboundary basins and shared aquifers facing multiple stressors and hence potential for conflict on national and regional levels, implementing the TDA-SAP approach, allowing countries to create common interest and to invest in regional cooperation improvement of the status of transboundary water systems. The TDA-SAP process offers common, participatory fact-finding and agreement on cooperative opportunities and shared constraints and a vision for a shared future. 90 countries currently have agreed SAPs or are currently engaged in their formulation.

This session provided to conference participants an interactive platform for discussion and mutual learning, related to participatory fact-finding and strategic planning processes in both transboundary basins and shared aquifers. They exchanged their views, experiences and national

perspectives on how to make SAPs operational and how to mobilize political support and public and private finance for SAP implementation at both international and national levels. They discussed how SAPs include climate change adaptation measures; should climate change be an integral part of the basin planning process, mainstreamed across all water users and sectors? Policies coherence and cross-sectoral co-ordination/co-operation towards implementation of SAPs; linkages between SAP targets and indicators with national reporting on progress on SDGs and delivery towards multilateral environmental agreements commitments will be explored and best practices will be shared among the session participants.

- *Coastal Zone and Marine World*

Intrinsically linked to prosperity and economic growth, healthy marine ecosystems have gained high-level global and national attention as critical to sustaining life on earth. In SDG 14, the international community committed to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

In September 2018, the UN began its first round of inter-governmental negotiations to draft the world's first international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (also known as the BBNJ Process).

One of the main challenges for the future will be to ensure conservation and promote sustainable utilization of resources both within and beyond the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and to ensure an effective mechanism for cooperation between inter-governmental organizations and regional arrangements in the marine space.

This session looked at three themes:

1. EEZ-ABNJ– Connections between TDA-SAPs, Regional Seas, RFMOs and the BBNJ Process
2. Use of marine spatial planning– coastal, and marine/ABNJ in SAPs and related ocean strategic planning processes
3. The role of non-State actors in the effective formulation and implementation of the SAP and related ocean strategic planning processes

6) PARTNERSHIPS AND SYNERGIES

Taking into consideration, the GEF has not kept pace with the growing opportunities for partnership with the private sector. Only 43 percent of respondents to IEO's survey agree that the GEF's ability to engage the private sector is a comparative advantage" (GEF-7 Strategy). GEF IW Project Managers are directed to engage private sector organizations (companies, non-governmental organizations and private foundations) as a key element of their replication, sustainability and co-finance strategies. But GEF IW projects continue to face barriers to partnering with the business community, including "Most companies are unfamiliar with the GEF"; "The GEF and private sector vocabularies are different"; and "GEF activities are perceived as taking too long to satisfy private sector timeframes". This session introduced the concept of a bankable project, and will demonstrate the "do's and don'ts" when communicating the value proposition/business case for business community engagement in GEF IW projects.

The Desired Outcomes are to Inspire additional bankable projects. By demonstrating that projects can be bankable and environmentally focused the audience will be inspired to think about bankable options when reviewing environmental pressures.

7) PARTNERSHIPS TO SCALE UP COMMUNITY-BASED INTERNATIONAL WATERS MANAGEMENT

The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a corporate program funded by the GEF and implemented by UNDP to support local action to address global environmental challenges. SGP provides financial and technical support to communities and civil society organizations to protect the environment while addressing poverty reduction and community empowerment. However, Local successes, if not being scaled up, have limited impacts and cannot reverse the environmental degradation trend in oceans and seas.

Recognizing partnerships are essential to scaling up, SGP has worked with GEF full-sized IW projects to practice integrated ocean and coastal management through implementing regional action programs at the local level and integrating local actions to regional frameworks.

This session desired outcomes are 1) Improved understanding and knowledge regarding how to integrate local actions into regional projects; and 2) Improved effectiveness of the GEF IW portfolio through more collaboration between SGP and full-sized projects, and vertical integration of actions at the regional, national and local levels

8) TOWARD A GENDER PROTOCOL FOR THE TDA-SAP PROCESS

The Objectives of this session were to collective participants inputs on and discuss a draft methodology for gender consideration as part of the TDA-SAP process, which eventually will guide the water projects on mainstreaming gender within the IW Portfolio.

The participants gained knowledge on the importance of gender considerations in the project preparation grant (PPG) phase and in project development as part of the TDA-SAP process. Through the highly interactive workshop, the coordinators of the workshop will learn from the attendees - project managers and designers, organizations, relevant stakeholders – what are the elements that need to be included, better defined or eliminated in the draft methodology. The participants would acquire a better understanding on the relevance of science-based approaches, such the application of gender analysis, including the collection of sex-disaggregated water data, and of gender-responsive indicators in line with the SDGs (WWAP Water & Gender-Responsive Indicators, version 2018).

9) USING PLANNING TOOLS TO SUPPORT THE TDA-SAP DEVELOPMENT AND UPDATES

Taking into accounts, extreme climate events are a reoccurring theme of many transboundary diagnostic analyses (TDA) and strategic action programmes (SAP). The IW focal area of the GEF identified the increased frequency and unpredictability of floods and droughts as a priority concern in transboundary contexts, along with the other multiple drivers that cause depletion and degradation of shared water resources. Responding to these needs, GEF IW has produced an online Flood and Drought portal (<http://www.flooddroughtmonitor.com/home>), which can support transboundary basins in their planning processes, including developing and updating their TDA and SAP. The portal provides planning support to combine, consider and address multiple priority stresses for individual water bodies with a view to optimizing water resources management.

The objectives on this session was to promote learning and knowledge exchange with GEF IW projects on using advanced information exchange (e.g. using the Flood and Drought portal) in developing and updating TDAs and SAPs.

10) FROM ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURES TO INVESTMENT SOLUTIONS USING THE TDA-SAP AND GEF PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES

The Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA-SAP) Approach is a highly collaborative process that has proven to be a major strategic planning tool for GEF International Waters Projects over the last 16 years. The TDA provides the factual basis for the formulation of the SAP. The TDA is a facilitative process of engagement and consultation with all the key stakeholders from the initial steps of the TDA to the subsequent development of alternative solutions during the formulation of the SAP. The TDA is a mechanism to help the participating countries to 'agree on the facts'.

The SAP is a negotiated policy document, and once endorsed by the government of the countries, it establishes clear priorities for action (for example, policy, legal, institutional reforms, or investments) to resolve the priority transboundary problems identified in the TDA through interventions which take place at the national level. As an additional step, when the TDA and SAP are agreed upon, the countries define and approve National Action Plans (NAPs), which identify hotspots of intervention at the national level.

During this session, the Mediterranean and Caribbean LMEs discussed their experiences in implementing the TDA-SAP Approach. This exchange was enriched by the experience of two Mediterranean Countries

(Lebanon and Morocco), which will share best practices and lesson learned in the execution of the SAP and NAPS, and by the contributions of the European Investment Bank, which is supporting the investment component of the GEF Multifocal Areas Programmatic Approach: the Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security.

11) TOOLS AND PRACTICES FOR IW PRACTITIONERS

The objectives of this session are to enhance the application of existing IW tools and practices and to expose the IW community to new and rapidly evolving disruptive technologies, business models and policies, with potential to advance transformation at scale. The desired outcomes is Enhanced knowledge and understanding of evolving technologies that have the potential to “disrupt” traditional development paradigms and rethink how countries plan and manage water and other national resources, including in a transboundary setting.

12) NEW PRACTICES AND TOOLS FOR MORE INFORMED DECISIONS AND BETTER MANAGEMENT OF SYSTEMS

- a. How can we use economic valuation to bridge the science to policy gap?
- b. How will the updated TDA-SAP guidance assist my project?
- c. How do I mainstream gender into my IW project in light of the new GEF policy on gender equality?
- d. How can my fisheries project help deliver more fish in the ocean, more food on the plate, and more prosperity for coastal communities?
- e. How to make visible the invisible? Tools to raise the profile of groundwater from local to global
- f. How to measure and understand ecosystem health: practical tools for inland and coastal waters
- g. How do I promote the effective management of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) through the TDA-SAP process?
- h. How to achieve a good nutrient balance in our environment – the key to a healthy planet, healthy living!
- i. How do I capture the value of coral reef and related ecosystem services by CCRES?
- j. How do I build a project website and visualize my spatial data? And how can access data to support critical transboundary decision making?
- k. How do I diagnose and treat weak governance? An exercise regime
- l. How do I convince politicians, industries and the public to not waste "waste"water?
- m. How can I better plan for floods and droughts?
- n. How can we develop indicators that are contextually relevant and are responsive to the TDA process?
- o. How to address climate change in transboundary basins, including tools, approaches and good practices
- p. How to apply Source-to-Sea management in practice

13) ENHANCING ACCESS AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

Governments across the globe face pressure to improve how they allocate and spend resources, and deliver public goods and services. In this regard, data, information and knowledge are critical for understanding how to share and use limited resources to respond to the needs of people, the economy and the environment. This forms the basis of science-informed decision-making process, and ensures a sound management and governance of water resources.

Knowledge derives from contextualized information, which itself consists of data (i.e. raw facts) that has been processed, organized and structured data to make it meaningful and usable. Despite the increasing gathering and availability of data in many parts of the world, the use of information to inform policies for improving the management of fresh and marine water resources remains limited. Reasons include a shortage of financial and human resources, a lack of commitment and investment from political leadership, gaps in technical skills, and an absence of clearly defined strategies and mechanisms to support the sharing and use of data and information. Those elements represent major development and management challenges for countries and GEF project managers.

In order to guarantee the efficiency of projects implemented, as well as their sustainability—i.e. the capacity of countries to seize and implement sound management of water resources – it is essential to develop tools to foster the access to and use of information and knowledge by decision-makers and water-stakeholders at large. Strategies in this sense include the implementation of visualization tools, the use of open-access, the creation of communities of practice, etc.

This session discussed— through the exchange of good practices and lessons learned—how such tools can be effectively implemented and used to favor sound, science-based decision-making, harnessing the results of GEF IW projects and fostering the sustainable management of water resources.

14) MSPGLOBAL - SUPPORTING INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING

Intensified activities in coastal and marine waters require integrated planning and decision-making and enhanced efforts, including transboundary coordination, to achieve sustainability and improved management. Traditional inshore activities such as local fishing and tourism are increasingly in conflict with new activities such as mariculture, renewable marine energies, scientific research, military activities, among others, while in offshore waters new developments pose potential challenges in the management of ocean space to avoid spatial conflicts between shipping, foreign fisheries, mineral development, bioprospecting and energy development, among others.

MSP is viewed as a public analysis and allocation process for the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that have usually been specified through a political process bringing together the different users of the ocean in order to address multiple objectives and make coordinated decisions.

Therefore, MSP is an important means to achieve global ocean governance goals and Agenda 2030 by fostering integrated management practices to protect and restore marine and coastal ecosystems, avoid significant adverse impacts, strengthen resilience, and promoting healthy and productive oceans.

The session provided the context for active and effective participation of policymakers, stakeholders, scientists and citizens to discuss on how to improve governance at multiple levels, including cross-border and transboundary planning in large marine ecosystems as the recipe to achieve an ecosystem-based approach to supporting the ocean economy.

15) TRANSFORMATIONAL SOLUTIONS FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF ONGOING AND NEW INTERVENTIONS

This session talked to the future by briefly highlighting the big ideas for achieving breakthroughs in the IW space in three critical areas: (1) blue economy; (2) nature-based solutions; and (3) circular economy. The discussion included: Outlining the big ideas/ building blocks for transformation in each theme; How to switch and reward investment in sustainability to break the cycle of degradation; Strengthening governance and enabling conditions; Rethinking/aligning the TDA-SAP with blue economy; and the role of the GEF Partnership in the above.

The three lead experts from the three breakout sessions to follow (nature-based solutions; circular economy; blue economy) provided an inspirational overview of their topic, laying out the key issues, the status of action globally and the required building blocks for achieving the required change in trajectory/ transformation.

The Desired Outcomes are 1) Recognition that business as usual is not an option; 2) Identification of some of the big ideas which we need to consider in the three themes; 3) Recognition that greater focus on switching investment patterns is key; 4) Better understanding on how the TDA-SAP and blue economy space complement each other; and 5) How to better draw on the formidable array of technical and financing capabilities in the GEF Partnership to strengthen this agenda

16) TRANSFORMATIONAL SOLUTIONS: NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

This session highlighted the important role that natural ecosystems, and ecosystem-based management, can and must play in meeting goals for water security, climate resilience, and economic development in both inland and coastal environments.

Protecting upland forests, constructing treatment wetlands, restoring coastal mangroves, and “green infrastructure” interventions more generally can make major contributions to these goals, but have typically been underinvested in historically. Nature-based solutions (NBS) have made major technical progress and are more feasible than ever. Technical challenges do remain, but NBS upscaling is also hindered by policy environments and financing mechanisms that favor more conventional gray infrastructure.

The objective was to share experiences and lessons in how to design, implement, finance and scale NBS to problems, including water security, climate resilience and economic development

17) TRANSFORMATIONAL SOLUTIONS: CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Circular economy is an industrial economy that is restorative by intention, aims to rely on renewable energy sources, and systemic innovation is at its core. It is a new way of creating value, through extending product lifetime and relocating waste from the end of the supply chain to the beginning - in effect, using resources more efficiently by using them more than once. For instance, plastics are versatile materials that have many uses in construction, irrigation, food, clothing, footwear, furniture, automotive, among other sectors.

Extending lifetime of plastic products by repairs, reuse, sharing, and recycling or upcycling does not only conserve embedded energy and labor in such products with positive impacts on emissions, but is also the most effective strategy to reduce land-based sources of pollution of our freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. Employing designs that ease their disassembly, sorting and recycling; process innovations that replace toxic inputs with alternatives, reduce water and energy use in production, recycle wastewater for reuse; new business models that replace ownership with access so that consumer uses the product as a service are some of the new practices that circular economy approaches offer.

Whether a product is made from biological materials of agriculture, fishery and forestry origins or technical materials extracted by mining; such as minerals, petroleum, and chemicals and other synthetic materials not based on biological nutrients, closing the loops in production and use with circular economy practices returns nutrients back to nature and are transformational solutions towards sustaining health of our ecosystems. The objective of this session was introduce session participants to circular economy principles and practices.

18) TRANSFORMATIONAL SOLUTIONS: BLUE ECONOMY

Coastal areas, the ocean and their resources represent strategic assets in which the majority, if not all, of the countries are increasingly investing, in sectors such as coastal tourism, aquaculture, energy production and maritime transport. National authorities view these ocean activities as promising opportunities for the diversification and integration of their economies.

A closer analysis of the extent of issues covered in SAPs and NAPs and the number of NAPs formulated from SAPs revealed that some of the LMEs GEF has invested in have NAPs formulated. In some cases, the NAPs are indeed national plans that cover a spectrum of issues but more often they are limited to recommendations for investments as seen in the GCLME and the ASLME. In another LME, the NAPs were based on themes or issues such as mangroves and seagrasses. One common feature among the few NAPs formulated and implemented is weak national ownership and investment in the SAP and NAPs, and therefore reliance on subsequent GEF funding to undertake the needed actions.

The GEF’s inclusion of the Blue Economy in its 7th Programme is an opportunity to strengthen the relevance of SAPs and NAPs to national governments and the private sector and to increase their investment in managing the resources of their EEZs so that can break their dependence on GEF funding.

The key question is how do we take advantage of these opportunities especially given our experience of working with financial institutions on Blue Economy, working on strategies at country and regional levels, and implementing Blue Growth interventions at national and local scales?

The session discussed how the blue economy contributes to the blue growth of the countries by providing basic socio-economic benefits in terms of food security, safety and job creation.

19) ADOPTING THE WATER FUNDS MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLY FINANCED SOURCE WATER PROTECTION OF GEF IW PROJECT BASINS

The session was a targeted session to support GEF IW stakeholders in exploring whether the Water Fund model is an appropriate fit for their source water protection and restoration ambitions. Guided by trainers in a peer-learning environment, the session participants will examine the Water Fund Project Cycle and begin to apply the feasibility steps required to begin a Water Fund development process. The session will explore application and adaption of the Water Fund model in transnational basins, such the Cubango-Okavango Basin, as well as smaller urban source water basins, like the Upper Tana in Kenya.

Whether the participants' goal is to protect water sources from an identified threat such as sedimentation, improve water yield, or scale up catchment restoration activities, a Water Fund can be a useful tool to address many different social and conservation needs. This participant-led workshop is being organized by The Nature Conservancy's Africa Water Funds team, in collaboration with WWF North Africa and FEMSA Foundation.

Participants were provided with the opportunity to learn about a new capacity building program for protecting water at its source. This included the demonstration of new tools—a state-of-the-art Toolbox, Training, and Network—built around the globally-relevant, consensus-based best practices approach for developing Water Funds.

20) ANALYSIS OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER ECOSYSTEMS AND GREEN/BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE: A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

The aim of this session was to understand the social and ecological system of transboundary regions to design a multifunctional Green and Blue Infrastructure network—with conservation, exploitation and restoration objectives—and implement Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) measures with a comprehensive focus on freshwater, coastal and marine realms.

Economic activities such as the agriculture, livestock, fisheries and tourism are highly dependent on terrestrial and aquatic resources. The aquatic ecosystems provide a vital range of provisioning goods, and cultural, regulation and maintenance services for sustaining human well-being.

Green and Blue Infrastructure combines in one single solution an EBM outcome that balances conservation, restoration and exploitation objectives. The Green and Blue Infrastructure multi-zoning approach offers co-benefits in terms of ecosystem and biodiversity conservation as well as human well-being, while minimizing the potential conflicts between conservation and exploitation goals.

The local and regional experiences observed through the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt at the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean: Andalusia (Spain) – Morocco (IBRM) served to identify key areas that allow conserving biodiversity, maintaining ecosystem services capacity, and restoring degraded ecosystems, while minimizing costs. The results suggest that implementing EBM restoration measures when designing Green and Blue Infrastructure may result in greater coverage, while improving connectivity across its core and conservation zones.

The session, therefore discussed on the potential measures to improve EBM for transboundary water ecosystems as an example for projects to be developed within the framework of GEF-7 and the context of IW.

21) LEARNING FROM THE PAST FOR NEXT GENERATION SOURCE-TO-SEA IN ASIA AND BEYOND

Ecosystems along a continuum from source-to-sea are being degraded as an unintended consequence of economic activities that might happen far upstream or downstream in the source-to-sea system (Granit. J. et al, 2017). This is happening primarily for two reasons: first, a lack of awareness and understanding of the land-to-sea ecosystem linkages and flows of water, sediment, pollutants, biota and ecosystem services. Second, a lack of capacity and know-how to avoid or mitigate the interconnected threats and negative impacts coming from multiple sectors and multiple resource users.

The S2S approach aims to address these barriers and achieve the sustainable development of national or shared river basins from the source to the discharge into coastal areas by highlighting the dynamic

connections between terrestrial and marine environments and raising awareness among stakeholders of how one group's resource use affects other users and vice versa.

Agriculture in the broadest sense (crops, livestock, aquaculture and fisheries) is frequently the biggest user of water along a S2S continuum in Asia, particularly the large-scale irrigation schemes that dominate Asia. Agriculture has a significant (and often worsening) impact on freshwater ecosystems in terms of water quality, quantity, timing of river flows and connectivity as well as the supply to domestic and other users. The FAO approach to S2S, therefore, is prioritising concrete investments that focus on a small number of priority flows stemming from the agricultural sub-sectors. The approach seeks to enhance positive flows (clean water, biota, biodiversity) and reduce negative flows (agro-pollutants, sediments, etc.). Activities can include watershed rehabilitation, improved irrigation and on-farm water management, farmer field schools to change/reduce agro-pollutants, ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, green infrastructure including mangrove restoration, natural capital accounting and market-based instruments to support sustainable production.

The S2S in Asia session is designed to facilitate an in-depth exchange between practitioners that are already implementing projects, proponents that are designing future projects and investors that are financing S2S projects across Asia. This exchange should help to underpin a new and improved generation of S2S projects both in Asia and beyond.

The aim of the session was for participants to engage with S2S proponents and practitioners working with the GEF in Asia (and beyond) to learn about the challenges and opportunities associated with taking a S2S approach to river basin management. Participants will be given the additional opportunity to question S2S project proponents; and investors to gather information on the shape and design of next generation S2S programming. GEF-IW stakeholders would acquire a better understanding of how to design projects utilizing a S2S approach that have long-term sustainability 'built in' from the outset.

22) INTEGRATED RIDGE-TO-REEF APPROACHES IN PACIFIC SIDS: PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES

The GEF has been supporting programs and projects that implement integrated approaches to address environmental issues in SIDS around the world. Within the limited geographic confines of small islands, integrated ridge-to-reef approaches are appropriate to tackle biodiversity loss in terrestrial and marine ecosystems, degradation and loss of habitats, pollution of the groundwater, land degradation, carbon sequestration, among others. This session will bring together project proponents from the Pacific to share experiences and lessons learned. It is expected that these will serve as guideposts in designing and implementing R2R projects in SIDS in the Pacific and elsewhere.

In the Pacific during the GEF 5 replenishment period, a programmatic approach entitled "R2R- Pacific Islands Ridge-to-Reef National Priorities – Integrated Water, Land, Forest and Coastal Management to Preserve Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods" is currently being implemented. The program consists of 15 child projects – 14 national R2R projects and a regional program support project. All the 14 Pacific SIDS that are beneficiaries of the GEF are implementing on-the-ground integrated approaches at either the catchment level and/or in small islands or atolls. These national child projects are supported programmatically and technically by the program support project, which on its own has demonstration activities in each of the SIDS. The R2R program is a showcase for a multi-focal, multi-trust fund and multi-agency regional program.

III. ACTION BY THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

- The committee is requested to take note on the results of the GEF-IWC9.
- The committee is also invited to provide suggestion/comments on lessons learnt from the Conference to be applied to project implementation.

ANNEX 1: Fisheries *Refugia* Project

Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea

ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF A REGIONAL SYSTEM OF FISHERIES REFUGIA IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AND GULF OF THAILAND

HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

30% INCREASED SEAGRASS

16% INCREASED MANGROVES

20% INCREASED VESSELS APPLYING IMPROVED GEARS

50% REDUCTION IN FISHING PRESSURE WITHIN REFUGIA

16% INCREASED CORAL REEFS

FISHERIES REFUGIA AND FISH LIFE CYCLES

269,500 ha

OF FISH REFUGIA HABITAT CONSERVED AND EFFECTIVELY MANAGED

OUTCOMES

- 1) Reduced stress on fish stock and coastal habitats;
- 2) Increased Institutional Capacity for the designation and operational management of Fisheries *Refugia*;
- 3) Strengthened knowledge management & information sharing and access;
- 4) Cost-effective and efficient coordination of national and regional level cooperation for integrated fisheries and environmental Management

Project Supports Achievement of the SDGs:

- 1** **POOR PEOPLE**: By 2030, ensure that all fishers, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to natural resources with appropriate new technology.
- 2** **ZERO HUNGER**: Enhancing food security of vulnerable, small-scale fishing communities of Southeast Asia and supported politically via the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Resolution and Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region Towards 2020"
- 12** **RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**: By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources. In addition, support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.
- 14** **LIFE BELOW WATER**: By 2030, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

Scope : Regional
 Countries : Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam
 Partners : SEAFDEC, UNEP, National Fisheries and Environment Agencies
 GEF Grant : \$3 million
 Co-finance: \$12.5 million

ANNEX 2: the SCS Project

UN environment **gef**

Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea

SCS : LEARN
Stories from the South China Sea

Stories from the South China Sea : Overview
 Southeast Asia is renowned as one of the most culturally diverse parts of the world. The region's diversity of religions, languages, customs, and cuisines have challenged visitors to the region for centuries past, and surely for those to come. It is however this diversity which defines the region and is celebrated by all. The seas of the region are equally as diverse but there is one that dwarfs all others, particularly in terms of importance to national economies, as a navigational route, in the supply of oil and gas, contributions to global protein supply from seafood, and the more than 300 million people that live on its coast – this is the SOUTH CHINA SEA!

Stories from the South China Sea : Short Mackerel
 This short film presents the issue of the overexploitation of one of Southeast Asia's iconic small pelagic species. Actions of governments, fishing communities and civil society organisations to safeguard short mackerel (Rastrelliger brachyura) stocks in the South China Sea are highlighted. Threats associated with global demand for seafood from Southeast Asia are discussed briefly in the context of the need to think globally, and act locally. Please share this film with your colleagues and other ocean leaders to help spread the word of the many successes being achieved here in Southeast Asia.

Stories from the South China Sea : Land-Based Pollution
 This short film presents the issue of land-based pollution in the South China Sea. Actions of governments, coastal communities and civil society organisations to help plan infrastructure investments using scientific tools developed for the South China Sea are highlighted. The unique aspect of the initiative is that it aims to provide tools for better management of land-based pollution in order to bring about transformational change in how countries manage wastes associated with their burgeoning economies. The environmental costs of meeting global demand for seafood, high-end electronics, and elite holiday getaway destinations from the global community are presented and discussed briefly in the context of the need to think globally, and act locally.

Stories from the South China Sea: Promoting Gender Equality in Fisheries
 Seafood supply systems of Southeast Asia are unique. Chain whale families are involved in the activity of buying, acting as market analysts, conducting fishing vessels and gear, and often operate small seafood outlets that are enjoyed by the 300 million people that live in coastal areas of the South China Sea. This film highlights the role of women in fisheries whom, among other things, often possess incredibly valuable information and knowledge about fish stocks and markets for seafood products, work as communicators of information about rules and regulations to protect family financial interests, and interface with administrations to support strengthened small-scale fisheries management.

COASTAL COMMUNITIES BORDERING THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AT THE HIGHEST RISK GLOBALLY OF COASTAL AND MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Three QR codes are provided at the bottom of the banner.