

## **INTERNATIONAL WATERS FOCAL AREA STRATEGY**

### **Global Context of International Waters**

171. Intrinsically linked to prosperity and economic growth, healthy marine and freshwater ecosystems have gained high-level global and national attention as critical to sustaining life on earth. It is globally recognized that transboundary marine and freshwater systems underpin and connect ecosystems, human health, and key economic sectors. It is therefore imperative that countries work in a coordinated fashion towards actions that will secure a healthy environment for present and future generations. At the same time, national and localized planning strategies are increasingly mainstreaming sustainable use of these ecosystems into development strategies to ensure they continue to provide valuable services, including food security, potable water, recreation opportunities and carbon sequestration, all of which contribute to GDP, livelihoods, improved quality of life and business development.

172. Essential to addressing the multifaceted threats to transboundary freshwater and marine ecosystems is the need for multinational cooperation supported by regional organisations, such as transboundary organisations, commissions and, where appropriate, regional economic commissions. These regional institutions need to function as hubs for harnessing, coordinating and channeling political and economic interests from both public and private sectors. Further, while they will be instrumental in catalyzing national policy processes, regional harmonisation, stimulating essential infrastructure investments and safeguarding long term engagement strategies continue to be relevant at local, national and regional level.

173. Ocean ecosystems are under unprecedented anthropogenic pressures from climate change, acidification, habitat loss, pollution, fishing, shipping, and seabed mining. It is estimated that the world's Large Marine Ecosystems represent USD 12 trillion annually in market and non-market ecosystem goods and services. These services include providing livelihoods, food security, climate regulation, shoreline storm protection, carbon sequestration, and recreational opportunities for billions of people. However, some of these valuable coastal ecosystems and open oceans lack sustainable governance structures resulting in continued degradation. Therefore, efforts must be made to ensure the conservation and sustainable management of these valuable coastal ecosystems, including through securing adequate governance structures. Many intergovernmental and international organizations effectively manage and govern relevant activities in the ABNJ oceans, including the International Maritime Organization, the International Seabed Authority, and several regional fisheries management organizations established in line with the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. Additional coordination and cooperation between these existing organizations would contribute could be beneficial to combat degradation of coastal ecosystems and the open oceans.

174. Similar to oceans, freshwater ecosystems face daunting threats, including climate change, urbanization and increasing food demand; yet they are also highly valued ecosystems. Water is a prerequisite for human and ecosystems survival, underpins many economic activities and is fundamental to achieving most of the SDGs. Increasing scarcity in many regions of the world along with pollution of these waters threatens human health and economic development. Water

is directly interwoven into national economies through the provision of water for human settlements, agriculture, energy via cooling water needs and hydropower. Water scarcity events, such as floods and droughts, can become risk multipliers leading to destabilization, violence and migration as well as possible ground for radicalization spurring further conflict on national and regional levels.

175. Fish and related economic activities are increasingly under threat. Currently it is estimated that 31 % of marine fish stocks are considered overfished and 58 % are considered fully-fished, meaning that 90 % of stocks have limited or no potential for increasing production (FAO, 2016). Unsustainable fishing is further compounded by high levels of illegal, underreported and unregulated fishing with economic losses ranging from USD 10 to 25 billion annually (Agnew, 2009). Additionally, various ABNJ are seriously threatened by activities such as intensified fishing for highly migratory species, bottom trawling on seamounts, maritime transport and other stressors calling for the further consideration of the effectiveness of existing legal instruments and management systems. The UN decision to proceed with the negotiation of a global Agreement addressing such matters should fulfil that function.

176. The sustainability of all these fisheries – marine, freshwater and aquaculture – urgently requires improved coordination between management mechanisms to be put in place, to ensure that they can continue to supply the 3.1 billion people, for which they provide up to 20% of the animal protein in their daily diet. Further, improved management will be pivotal to efforts to restore and conserve fisheries habitats, such as wetlands, seagrass, mangroves and reefs, which are critical nursery and breeding habitats for many fish and crustacean species. Countries, therefore, need to step up national and regional actions safeguarding their marine and freshwater ecosystems to ensure continued growth, prosperity and unlock new economic opportunities.

177. Given the threats facing marine and freshwater ecosystem, strong, informed management approaches are critical to the sustainability of these valuable ecosystems. The Transboundary Waters Assessment Program (TWAP), illustrates the importance for action on transboundary water systems, including Rivers, ABNJ, Lakes Aquifers and LMEs. GEF experience demonstrate that sustainable environmental management of transboundary resources require a common understanding of what pressures the shared ecosystems are facing, coupled with national and regional investment plans. This transboundary approach has been the basis of GEF investments in International Waters to date and therefore has invested in the process of assessing threats and opportunities (Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses - TDAs) and developing regionally agreed action plans (Strategic Action Programs - SAPs), of which, some are already under implementation. Now that many transboundary ecosystems have established SAPs, the scene is set for implementation of the regionally agreed national and regional-level actions to ensure the health of the shared water bodies and their valuable services. The GEF plays a critical role in these initiatives as a major global grant funding mechanism to invest in transboundary water ecosystems and their management at regional and national levels.

178. Healthy transboundary marine and freshwater ecosystems are prioritized in most INDCs and NBSAPs. While the GEF is not the financial mechanism nor does it have any obligations to international conventions, the IW Focal Area Investments will support work of the UN Water Courses Convention and the UNECE Water Convention, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the RAMSAR Convention. Finally, IWLEARN, the GEF funded cross-agency and multi-actor platform of knowledge exchange and capacity building, supports facilitating partnerships between a range of actors to stimulate conversation and capacity between, and beyond, GEF funded activities.

### **GEF-7 International Waters Focal Area**

179. The unique mandate of GEFs International Water Focal area to support transboundary cooperation in shared marine and freshwater ecosystems has proven successful in achieving long term benefits. Complex transboundary water ecosystems, cut across a myriad of sectoral needs and themes while not being bound by political boundaries. Consequently, setting effective policy goals, coupled with investments, requires working at all scales, with a range of stakeholders, in the public and private sectors and across the watershed from source-to-sea and beyond. These principles are fundamental to the GEF-7 investments in International Waters. Three key objectives will be the target of GEF-7 IW investments: 1) strengthening national Blue Economy opportunities to reduce threats to marine and coastal waters; 2) improving management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), and 3) enhancing water security<sup>31</sup> in freshwater ecosystems.

180. These objectives will be realized through regional and national investments in the regionally endorsed cooperative frameworks (e.g. SAPs). Regional projects will need to leverage substantial co-financing, such as through blended finance via MDBs, foundations, GEF STAR financing or other resources to demonstrate national prioritization of the investment. In particular for national investments implementing regionally endorsed SAP priorities, following criteria needs to be adhered to: 1) national investments will need to align with SAP priorities, 2) be coordinated with the relevant regional institution responsible for regionally agreed frameworks and 3) project needs to include GEF STAR financing, loan and/or national budget financing. Recognizing the importance of gender issues, gender considerations will be mainstreamed into all processes and investments. GEF-7 IW investments will continue to require a gender assessment within each social analysis during project preparation, differentiated reporting of output indicators and additional measures based on the GEF's Gender Action Plan. As a result, the national and regional institutional capacity built, the legislative frameworks

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<sup>31</sup> Water security has been defined as “the availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, ecosystems and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks to people, environments and economies”. Water insecurity is perceived when it impairs human and environmental well-being, economic development and resulting in often difficult cross-sector trade-offs and/or straining cross-border relations. Grey, David & Sadoff, Claudia. (2007). Sink or Swim? Water Security for Growth and Development. Water Policy. 9. . 10.2166/wp.2007.021.

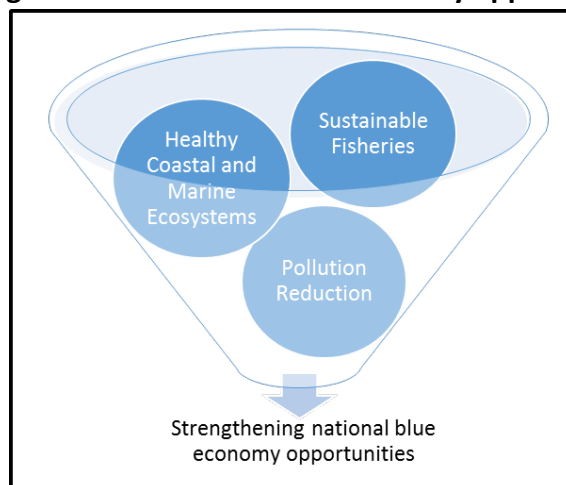
formulated and the policies adopted, implemented and coupled with investments will be more robust and sustainable.

181. The GEF international Waters investments will stimulate private sector investment through its three GEF-7 objectives. Even though the entry points vary, there are two main avenues for private sector engagement namely: 1) Stimulating engagement along the different supply chains towards reducing impacts on the freshwater and marine ecosystem environments. These could entail working with large scale commercial fishing fleets, development of marine spatial plans to identify investment opportunities for both private and public sector, advance private engagement to increase water, food, energy and environmental security, such as through industry roundtables and interest group and increase water efficiency, reuse, and reduce point and non-point sources of pollution addressing both primary and emerging pollutants, along the source to sea continuum. And 2) de-risking innovative investments within the freshwater and marine sectors, through support to testing of innovative approaches and technologies. Further, de-risking will be explored through using the identified areas of investments within the portfolio of ministerial endorsed SAPs towards attracting private sector investments and finance.

*Objective 1. Strengthening Blue Economy opportunities*

182. The Blue Economy concept identifies the oceans as areas for potential sustainable development of existing and new sectors, including tourism, extractive industries, renewable energy production, fisheries and aquaculture, coastal development and marine transport. To foster innovation towards more sustainable use of marine and coastal resources there is a need for coastal and island nations to deploy a suite of tools, among them marine spatial planning. These tools will foster a holistic understanding of the opportunities and constraints that lies within Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) to inform policy formulation, adoption and investment processes towards long-term environmental sustainability. Strengthening blue economy opportunities, require regional cooperation and national action.

**Figure 1. Benefits of a Blue Economy approach**



183. The GEF will assist countries in identifying sustainable public and private national investments within the Blue Economy space, through funding of collective management of coastal and marine systems and implementation of the full range of integrated ocean policies, legal and institutional reforms. This will be done in tandem with catalyzing regional processes, such as the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP)<sup>32</sup> in order to advance cooperation in Large Marine Ecosystems. Roughly 100 GEF-eligible nations have been reaching agreements, via TDA/SAPs to improve ocean management, via national and regional activities and agreements. GEF-7 presents a unique opportunity to assist countries in addressing a suite of stressors such as overfishing, land based sources of pollution, loss and damage of key coastal and marine ecosystems through a combination of national and regional investments towards strengthening national Blue Economy opportunities. In GEF-7, investments will be strengthening nations Blue Economy opportunities, through three areas of strategic action: 1) sustaining healthy coastal and marine ecosystems; 2) catalyzing sustainable fisheries management; and, 3) addressing pollution reduction in marine environments.

#### Sustaining healthy coastal and marine ecosystems

184. Key coastal and marine habitats, such as deltas, mangroves, salt marshes, sea grasses and coral reefs, are essential to many nations' economic development and to local and global ocean's health. They sustain fisheries, tourism, and coastal protection, sequester carbon, filter run-off waters, increase local, national and regional climate resilience and provide biodiversity hotspots while also offering other ecosystem services estimated to be worth USD 100s of billions annually.

185. These essential coastal and marine habitats can be restored through targeted efforts to rebuild ecosystems and protected through the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs), through ensuring engagement of local users of the fishery and coastal resources. In addition,

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<sup>32</sup> The TDA/SAP process consists of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis in which common fact finding, and scientific analysis identifies the shared threats in a given transboundary ecosystem. This process leads naturally into the formulation of the Strategic Action Program, which is a politically endorsed document, that identifies the interventions needed to address the agreed threats in the region.

these ecosystems are also part of the world's 66 Large Marine Ecosystems, which harbor a suite of essential natural ecosystems that are vital to support national Blue Economy opportunities that in turn will deliver towards regional targets.

186. Under sustaining healthy coastal and marine ecosystems, the following types of investments will be supported:

- Develop and implement environmentally sustainable Blue Economy strategies;
- Establish and support existing marine protected areas in key biodiversity hotspots and coastal habitats;
- Restore degraded key habitats;
- Mainstream marine area based management and spatial tools in regional entities; including helping to clarify which policy instruments may be useful in reaching the global target of conserving 10 % of the world's coastal and marine areas by 2020;
- Create multi-state cooperation frameworks in transboundary deltas including an integrated source-to-sea approach;
- Formulate and formalize cooperative legal and institutional frameworks built on TDAs/SAPs approach, towards addressing the multiple anthropogenic pressures, including climate related effects in the Large Marine Ecosystems;
- Stimulate private sector engagement, through relevant industry sectoral roundtables and industry groups;
- Engage with national, regional and global stakeholders to increase collaboration and cross support to investments and processes, including through IW-LEARN; and,
- Foster collaboration among LMEs, Regional Seas conventions and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to protect and restore these key habitats.

#### Catalyze sustainable fisheries management

187. The oceans are an essential source of protein for 3.1 billion people that depend on the oceans as their primary source of protein. The GEF, in recognition of the vital role fisheries and fisheries practices play in impacting ecosystems integrity, eliminating hunger, promoting health, and reducing poverty, will support investments targeting sustainable fishing practices, policy processes both on national and regional level. These investments will include marine aquaculture and highly innovative production of marine algae as a substitute for fishmeal and oils, and its potential use as a cost effective nutrient pollution remediation, carbon sequestration and renewable energy tool.

188. GEF-7 will also build on, strengthen and expand partnerships to further investments in sustainable fisheries at local, national and regional scales while expanding opportunities to engage with the private sector. Initiatives will address national and shared fisheries by supporting existing policy goals and targets established through RFMOs, the 2009 Port State Measures Agreement and the FAO Voluntary Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines. Improving shared management of marine fisheries will also include promoting technology to support monitoring, compliance and surveillance with particular focus on combatting Illegal Unreported, Unregulated (IUU) fisheries.

189. In order to catalyze sustainable fisheries management, the following types of investments will be supported:

- Policy reforms to end IUU, overfishing and sustainably manage marine capture fisheries.
- Implementation of market mechanisms to support sustainable fisheries value chains.
- Standard setting for sustainable aquaculture to enhance marine ecosystem health and improving food and nutrition security.
- Strengthening and creating policy frameworks, including working with countries to eliminate harmful incentive structures;

#### Addressing pollution reduction in marine environments

190. There is an urgent need to address eutrophication of the marine environment. This will require a suite of investments targeting prevention, reduction, and control of coastal point and non-point pollution caused by such practices as run-off from agricultural lands and release of ineffectively treated wastewater treatment. Addressing these needs will help ensure ecological, social, and economic well-being of coastal nations. The GEF will continue to pilot and promote the scaling up of innovative measures to prevent point and non-point pollution, as a direct response to roughly 80% of global collected waste water being discharged untreated and with severe impacts on the health of freshwater biodiversity, human health, and leading to hypoxia in coastal zones. The number of hypoxic zones are expected to rise as the oceans warm and urban, agricultural and industrial waste flows continue to increase. In addition, toxic algal blooms are an increasing threat to marine life and human health and 'feed off' enhanced nutrient contents. Further, persistent and toxic pollutants are increasingly found in rivers and oceans, ranging from endocrine disruptors to the recent discovery of significant concentration of persistent organic pollutants in the deepest parts of our oceans.

191. As highlighted in the recent UNEP resolution<sup>33</sup>, 80% marine litter is plastic and has been found throughout the world's oceans, from the surface to the sea floor, and from urbanized coastlines to remote unpopulated islands. 8 million tons of plastics are entering the oceans annually and ¼ of seafood is contaminated with plastics. In the report Marine Debris as a Global

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<sup>33</sup> UNEP/EA.3/L.20

Environmental Problem, the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel highlighted the significance of this issue and accordingly recommended GEF take action. In GEF-6 the GEF sort to build a global corporate alliance across the entire plastics value chain, to identify and socialize among APEC countries waste management solutions and to advise on opportunities for future GEF investments. Recognizing the need to transform the entire life cycle of plastics to reduce marine plastic pollution, the GEF will invest in a few strategic Circular Economy initiatives to promote the adoption of closed loop production and consumption patterns instead of traditional linear take-make-waste approaches. Investments will be focusing on public-private investments to transform the plastic life cycle, combined with coordination and knowledge sharing with other GEF-7 Circular Economy initiatives, such as those supported under the Chemicals and Waste Focal Area focusing on addressing POPs and Mercury.

192. Looking to GEF-7 a suite of investments are needed to prevent, reduce, and control coastal point and non-point pollution to ensure ecological, social, and economic well-being of coastal and island nations. The GEF will continue to pilot and promote the scaling of innovative point and non-point nutrient pollution, through the following types of investments:

- Catalyze national policy development coupled with investments in innovative approaches, through regional processes, to address nutrient and emerging pollution issues along the Source-to-Sea/Ridge-to-Reef Continuum;
- Support common fact finding between public and private sectors to ensure that priority actions will lead to transformed practices in both sectors;
- Stimulate private sector engagement, through relevant industry sectoral roundtables and industry groups;
- Increase understanding of marine noise in a transboundary context potentially through target research, towards stimulating the adoption by private sector of good practices aiming at avoiding and mitigating the impacts of marine noise on marine fauna;
- Support and engage with national, regional and global stakeholders to increase collaboration and cross support to investments and processes, through IWLEARN; and
- Support a few strategic global and regional investments to transform plastic life cycles that emphasize public-private partnerships and significantly address global marine plastic pollution.

*Objective 2. Improve management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)*

193. The complex ecosystems in the ABNJ include both the water column and seabed making the sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation especially challenging. Urgent action is needed to improve conservation and sustainable use of the open oceans that covers 40% of the planet, and are increasingly threatened by over-fishing of iconic



pelagic migratory species, maritime navigation, ocean energy facilities, bottom trawling on seamounts, pollution and extraction of minerals and hydrocarbons.

194. Building on GEFs past experience in successfully supporting an applied ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management of deep sea fisheries, including seamounts, as well as regional tuna fisheries management organizations (tRFMOs) in ABNJ. The GEF intends through this strategic objective to renew its efforts within the ABNJ space. In GEF-7 support will be given to foster information sharing to promote sustainable practices and inform decision-making by private businesses and regional organisations such as, LME commissions, RFMOs or the Regional Seas program. Addressing fisheries and in particular IUU fishing in the high seas will also continue to be a high priority. GEF investments will assist capacity building among concerned states and organisations and foster public private partnerships between the RFMOs and the large commercial fishing fleets harvesting in the high seas and its associated supply chain. Finally, GEF investments will facilitate cooperative frameworks between the ABNJs and the Large Marine Ecosystems that they border, to improve management opportunities and cohesion between these two interdependent management frameworks.

195. The following types of investments will be supported to ensure sound maritime legal frameworks for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity:

- Strengthen support to RFMO activities including national and regional policy setting to end IUU and overfishing and inform sustainably management of marine capture fisheries;
- Policy work towards reaching agreements to reduce harmful fishing subsidies;
- Collaboration among relevant international, regional and domestic bodies on area-based management in national waters and ABNJs;
- Reduce overexploitation of fish stocks and IUU, through implementation of international agreements; and
- Reduce overexploitation of fish stocks, with a particular focus on IUU.

### *Objective 3. Enhance water security in freshwater ecosystems*

196. Shared freshwater resources comprise a special case for cooperation with large potential spillover and global impacts. Transboundary river basins cover about 50% of the earth's land surface and are home to about 40% of the world's population. 1.2 billion people live in river basins where human water use has surpassed sustainable limits. Cooperation on water, therefore, is 'a must' in most international basins to support the need for water, food, energy, and ecosystems security and increase resilience for each nation. The need for transboundary cooperation, therefore, has been anchored in the SDGs as an essential element for effective integrated water resources management (SDG 6.5). Shared groundwater resources are especially hard to manage due to the limited knowledge of the resource and its 'invisibility'. With mounting pressures on water resources and increasing pressures from climate variability and change

managing surface and groundwater is the only sustainable path. Both cooperation on water quantity and quality are of key concern – impacting people and environmental assets of global significance, including wetland biodiversity, freshwater fish stocks, and unique aquatic and terrestrial habitats. IW support in freshwater basins will therefore focus on three areas of strategic action: 1) advance information exchange and early warning; 2) enhance regional and national cooperation on shared freshwater surface and groundwater basins; and, 3) invest in water, food, energy and environmental security.

#### Advance information exchange and early warning

197. Disaster risk management is often an early entry point for cooperation among countries by creating trust and establishing a track record of cooperation on a wide set of issues. Flood and drought early warning systems can be instrumental for countries and the international community alike to intervene early and increase resilience before the onset of destabilizing social conditions and out-migrations with obvious humanitarian benefits.

198. GEF support will be designed to enhance the availability of sound data and information for science-based policies and decisions. On regional level this will build the science base and dialogue for informed prioritization of investments; on a global level this effort will enable predicting future ‘hotspots’ and ‘basins at risk’.

199. Under advancing information exchange and early warnings the following types of investments will be supported:

- Flood and drought early warning systems and disaster risk management plans;
- Nature based efforts for disaster risk management, including floods, droughts, and coastline protection;
- Enhanced quality, coverage and free availability of sound information on surface and groundwater availability and use, natural resources, and related grey and green infrastructure assets and adaptation deficits;
- Increased capacity to gather, distill and process global and regionally increasingly available traditional and innovative data sources into policy relevant analysis, including the economic evaluations of ecosystem services; and
- Enhanced capacity on country level and dialogue among countries to draw conclusions from increasingly complex and innovative information sources to support decision making and to identify joint opportunities for action.

#### Enhance regional and national cooperation on shared freshwater surface and groundwater basins.

200. GEF support will focus on interventions in shared basins where water stress creates both a challenge but can be a driver and opportunity for cooperation. Interventions will prioritize

preventative actions in transboundary basins facing multiple stressors and hence potential for conflict on national and regional levels. Investment in cooperation among countries in shared basins can be one avenue to increase interaction among countries and enhance trade and transport of goods and services. These investments can, consequently, create common interests and provide an entry point for regional integration and peaceful country relations.

201. As identified by WRI, WWF, TWAP<sup>34</sup> and others, including ongoing GEF supported work on nexus dimensions, emerging hotspots appear to be in Africa, MNA and sub-regions of Asia. These areas are aggravated by increasing severity of floods and droughts intensified by increasing climate variability and change (e.g. rising sea levels), population growth, urbanization and associated increasing needs for food and energy. Cooperation on water is an imperative in these regions to support the need for water, food, energy, and ecosystems security and related dimensions for each nation.

202. In order to support enhanced regional and national cooperation on shared freshwater surface and groundwater basins the following types of investments the GEF will focus on the following priorities:

- Common, participatory fact-finding and agreement on cooperative opportunities and shared constraints and a vision for a shared future (such as via the formulation of a common Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Programs);
- Capacity building efforts to level the playing field across countries, including for example negotiation skills and international water law;
- Processes to formulate and formalize cooperative legal and institutional frameworks;
- Identify and leverage resources for investments addressing SAP identified priorities;
- National reform of policies, strategies and regulations in accordance with regional agreements and MEA commitments;
- Improved policy formulation processes and conjunctive management of surface and groundwater resources on national and regional levels;
- Periodical update of existing Transboundary Diagnostic and Strategic Action Programs - or their equivalents; and
- Engagement with national, regional and global stakeholders to increase collaboration and cross support to investments and processes, through IW-LEARN.

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<sup>34</sup> The TWAP River Basins (TWAP RB) component is a global assessment of 286 transboundary river basins, and is an indicator-based assessment, allowing for an analysis of basins, based on risks to both societies and ecosystems.

## Investments in water, food, energy and environmental security

203. In shared water basins, cooperation can assure greater water-, energy-, food – and ecosystems security through cooperation and trade of energy, food and sharing of ecosystems services. Realizing benefits from cooperation through national and regional investments with visible impacts enhances stability of country relations and ensures sustainable financing of regional cooperative institutions. Enhanced economic ties and multi-level interactions among countries sharing a basin/sub-region deflate the likelihood of escalating conflict potential. Increasing pressures from climate change, urbanization and other pressures require innovative investments to address increasing water stresses, including pollution pressures. Much of such innovation can only be realized by a combination of private and public finance and by enhancing the enabling environment for private sector engagement.

204. Priority investments anchored in agreed basin-wide strategic action plans span both national and multi-country support to soft and hard investments in improved information, policies and innovative technologies. Further, investments will be ensuring the inclusion of the ecosystem dimension into the Water, Energy, Food nexus, which will increase environmental security. GEF will finance the incremental costs of creating regional benefits and de-risk innovation in measures to address water security both in terms of quality and quantity/availability. Country eligibility for national investments will be guided by signature of existing SAPs and currently includes over 90 countries with valid SAPs.<sup>35</sup> Criteria to assure solid co-finance and country ownership and commitments on national level have been outlined earlier.

205. GEF Investments in water, food, energy and environmental security will support:

- Supply chain approaches for increased water efficiency and reduction of ecosystems pressures, such as through industry roundtables and interest groups;
- Efforts to increase water efficiency, reuse, and reduce point and non-point sources of pollution addressing both primary and emerging pollutants, along the source to sea continuum<sup>36</sup>;
- De-risk innovation in development through incremental finance and piloting of innovative technologies, e.g. for scalable water-reuse, water efficiency, and water pollution abatements technologies and regulations;
- Nature based approaches to improve infiltration, avoid sedimentation and erosion through integrated watershed management and sustainable land management;

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<sup>35</sup> 90 countries currently have agreed SAPs or are currently engaged in their formulation.

<sup>36</sup> This will need to address both pollution from water and land sources as well as identify sources of airborne pollutants traversing borders and affecting fresh- and marine water bodies.

- Protect and rehabilitate aquatic ecosystems, especially wetland areas, river banks, mangroves, and other key habitats with multiple ecosystems services;
- Establish minimum environmental flows to maintain healthy ecosystems and aquatic biodiversity;
- Sustain freshwater fisheries and aquaculture via improved management strategies and policy formulation processes, including measures for prevention of IUU; and
- Support fragile and/or conflict affected countries, via a country based pilot to fully engage in the transboundary process (see below).

206. The strategy will support environmental security by allowing investments in a small number of fragile and/or conflict affected countries in transboundary basins both in foundational processes and SAP implementation. This aims to support actions by which decreasing natural resource pressures and water stress can contribute to decreasing fragility and allowing fragile areas and/or countries to stabilize and fully engage in regional processes, hence contributing to preventing larger regional conflict. GEF-IW focal area investments will seek enhancement and complementarity with resources and investments in other focal areas and IPs (such as e.g. the LD and BD focal areas and investments in drylands within the Sustainable Forest Management IP).