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GEF IW:LEARN Legacy and Catalytic Impacts

*Dann Sklarew,
IW:LEARN CTA emeritus*

This *Bridges* issue marks the closure of GEF IW:LEARN's operational phase. Efforts to analyze the effectivity and impact of this unusual GEF IW project began in earnest this year, culminating in the standard independent terminal evaluation (TE).

IW:LEARN's designers, the GEF and its implementing agencies, identified a need and an opportunity for a full-sized GEF project to facilitate learning and information sharing among GEF IW projects and stakeholders. Evaluator Philip Tortell determined that the resulting 4-year UNDP-implemented project, "proved to be successful." Our sister project UNEP IW:LEARN continues and will be evaluated later in 2009.

All approximately 50 TE survey respondents indicated the project fully (67%) or partly (33%) met its mission: They agreed IW:LEARN significantly (57%) or slightly (43%) strengthened transboundary water management. They also wrote IW:LEARN:

- ◆ Increased projects efficient use of money and

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Lessons Corralled from GEF Coral Learning

Since the 1990s, the Global Environment Facility has invested over \$600 million in coastal and marine management. What wisdom can be gleaned from this enormous effort to ensure fragile, threatened coral reef ecosystems are able to survive our onslaught and persist for future generations?

Lessons and best practices to guide improved coral reef management took center stage at a recent workshop in Ft. Lauderdale, USA introducing current findings and results from the GEF Coral Reef Lessons Learned (LL) and GEF/World Bank Coral Reef Targeted Research (CRTR) projects. Participants focused on how these insights could inform the nascent Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) for Coral Reef, Fisheries and Food Security in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, featured as a case study for application by other coral management programs. Dr. Mark Tupper of Reefbase synthesized lessons from 25 GEF and 28 non-GEF coral projects, and coral experts from eight nations provided insights and feedback regarding a GEF LL-produced management toolkit and a set of best practices checklists.

Common themes emerged focusing on the importance of adequate capacity, in contrast to the special nature and scarcity of available skilled personnel capable of working within remote communities; difficulties in designing efficient and cost-effective reporting to meet donor needs while maximizing on-the-ground productivity; and the challenge and timescale of achieving sustainability.

A Philippines-based project, Fisheries Improved for Sustainable Harvest (FISH), demonstrated the broad scope of lessons derived by the Coral Reef Lessons Learned project:

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IW:LEARN aims to strengthen International Waters Management (IWM) by facilitating structured learning and information sharing among stakeholders.

For more information:

<http://www.iwlearn.net>, Email: info@iwlearn.org

GEF IW:LEARN, c/o UNDP BRC, Grosslingova 35, 81109 Bratislava, Slovakia

Phone: +421.2.59337.168, Fax: +421.2.59337.450



Engaging Stakeholders in Lake Basins

Gulnara Roll,

Peipsi Centre for Transboundary Cooperation

Agim Shimaj and Viktor Subotic are project managers of a new GEF-World Bank project for the Skadar/Shkoder Lake basin. One of their project's requirements includes the development of a stakeholder analysis and involvement plan.

In response to this need, the first of a series of targeted workshops under the Athens-Petersberg Process framework convened a few dozen stakeholders of transboundary southeastern European lakes to address the topic of stakeholder engagement. What lessons emerged from this highly interactive workshop?

As Agim says, "One of the lessons we learned from this interesting and important workshop and from sharing of experiences with other participants was that public participation and stakeholder involvement is crucial to planning and management of transboundary waters. Each project should conduct a stakeholder analysis right at the project start, to identify major stakeholders, their needs and voices, their social characteristics, their relationships and the way how they will be impacted by the project activities. This enables the planning of a process framework with mitigation actions for stakeholders who will be impacted negatively, and at the same time increases stakeholder involvement in the project preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholder involvement right at the project start up ensures a successful implementation of the project and achievement of the project goals."

Presenters from the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin offered lessons learned from management of the transboundary waters shared by Estonia and Russia, as well as the highly successful Danube Regional Project. An important part of ensuing discussion was devoted to merging currently used approaches that apply Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles covering public participation with the requirements of EU integration. As a key issue

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Changing Climate Ushers in New Cycle of GEF IW:LEARNing

Over the last 15 years, the GEF has invested over US\$1 billion, leveraging four times that much in co-financing from the more than 130 cooperating governments and their partners, to build the foundations of transboundary management regimes, in four types of critical hydrographically defined ecosystem-based management units: shared groundwater, river and lake basin systems, and large marine ecosystems. GEF IW has also successfully piloted, in collaboration with these partners, dozens of innovative scientific, technical and institutional approaches.



*Shkodra targeted workshop participants engaged in a forum simulation.
--Photo courtesy Gulnara Roll*

Since 1998, the International Waters focal area's knowledge management initiative, GEF IW:LEARN (the GEF International Waters Learning Exchange and Resources Network) has made strategic use of GEF capacity to promote cooperation,

systematically convening key stakeholders in a variety of issue-oriented subsets of the global portfolio, to encourage knowledge-sharing, practical action and results-oriented dialogue processes to improve water resource system management and governance. GEF IW:LEARN has established a 'learning culture' within the International Waters portfolio, which sets the stage not only for adapting and replicating successfully piloted tools and approaches to improve water use efficiency, but also to assist cooperating partners in better balancing and fully valuing multiple uses of ecosystem goods and services, to help increase and more equitably share benefits among upstream and downstream riparians. This learning culture also helps to address emerging needs and priority concerns, for example how to ensure inclusivity of women, indigenous and vulnerable populations, or how to manage risks and recover from shocks, especially in the context of

NEW IW:LEARNing continued on page 9

Exchange Transfers Lessons on the TDA-SAP Experience

For Laura Namene, of the Namibian Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, a GEF IW:LEARN stakeholder exchange to Brazil offered the chance to learn from local experiences on how "...conflicts over allocation of water were resolved, treaties between countries sharing a basin were signed, basin committees were established and integrated water resources management plans were developed." Laura was part of a 10-member delegation consisting of GEF project stakeholders from the Okavango River Basin, which were hosted by the Brazil National Water Agency (ANA) in May 2008.

The Okavango remains one of the least human-impacted basins on the African continent. However, mounting socio-economic pressures in the riparian countries, Angola, Botswana and Namibia, threaten to change its present character. The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) received GEF funding to undertake a TDA/SAP process which has been initiated through the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango (EPSMO) Project. The EPSMO Project requested a peer learning exchange to network and benefit from experiential learning with Brazil's ANA. Learning objectives for the exchange included, above all, enhancing understanding of the TDA/SAP process among the technical level personnel of the Okavango National Coordinating Units, and more specifically to:

- ◆ strategically design the TDA so it informs the SAP formulation process
- ◆ develop national capacity among the relevant

Guarani Aquifer Shifts to the Toolkit

Khristine Custodio, UNEP IW:LEARN

The Guarani Aquifer project decided to use the IW:LEARN Toolkit for the benefits it offers, of which the continuity of its online presence is of greatest importance. Website hosting services and technical support currently provided at no cost by IW:LEARN to GEF IW projects like Guarani, help ensure that their stakeholders, as well as the public in general, continue to access information after the project has been completed.

The Toolkit facilitates user-friendly content management and requires minimal technical knowledge. Its simplicity made decentralizing the management of the Guarani website possible, by enabling non-IT project staff to contribute to content management and website updating.

Ease of access to content is essential for any website, and the Toolkit enables one to find project information right

away either through the auto-generated navigation links, sitemap or search tool. Another useful benefit of the Toolkit is that after project termination, it provides a section for each participating country to continue working and adding new information and materials. Each section can be protected to enable full access to authorized users.

As an international project which uses more than one language, it is also essential for Guarani to have a web tool that can address the challenge of having a multi-language website. Plone is a content management system offering translation capability as part of the Toolkit, which automatically translates text.



Photo collage of the Okavango exchange --Courtesy Chaminda Rajapakse

Connecting GEF Projects With a Global Audience

How can projects both increase the online visibility of their websites and also provide their virtual visitors with an engaging and interactive insight into project interventions and achievements? The latest GEF IW Experience Note presents how this challenge was addressed by the GEF/UNEP-supported South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand Project (SCS project).

A large number and wide variety of information and data outputs were produced as part of the SCS project. These outputs included, inter alia: four regional databases; a repository of more than 1,700 project documents and publications; online modeling tools; a large collection of regionally specific training materials; and a catalogue of multimedia public awareness resources. Ensuring ease of online access to project outputs is increasingly becoming an expectation of donors and partners, and the general approach adopted by projects has been to make outputs accessible on the Internet via websites based on Content Management System (CMS) software.

It was determined that the sustained use of project information and data outputs would likely depend on three key factors:

(1) ease of accessibility to the outputs; (2) user-friendliness of the website and databases in which the outputs are contained; (3) the general level of awareness of the existence of the project website.

The SCS project pursued a combined strategy of improving the search engine friendliness and content richness of its website. As the Experience Note investigates, this strategy resulted in a large increase in the number of visitors accessing the website.

The creation of a SCS project layer for viewing on

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New Strategic Partnership Interlinks the Mediterranean

Virginie Hart, UNEP-MAP

The countries of the Mediterranean, in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and the Barcelona Convention, and with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank, have embarked on a strategic international partnership to protect the environmental resources of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas. Aims of the partnership include:

1. Achieving sustainable management of the Mediterranean coastal zone and water resources (including groundwater and aquifers)
2. Reducing pollution impacts on environment and human health
3. Reaching sustainable fisheries
4. Protecting coastal-marine biodiversity and communities



A bird's eye of the Mediterranean SP --Courtesy Virginie Hart

The participating countries are Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Montenegro, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey, while the Palestinian Authority also participates. Additional partners of the project include major international organizations (UNESCO-HP, UNIDO and FAO) and regional and international NGOs (WWF, GWP-MED and MIO-ECSDE), giving a unique opportunity to join forces and catalyze the policy, legal and institutional reforms, and the investments necessary to reverse the degradation trends affecting this unique large marine ecosystem, including its coastal habitats and biodiversity.

To achieve these objectives the Strategic Partnership is launching two Components :

♦ Regional Component: Implementation of agreed actions for the protection of the environmental resources of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal

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for countries in the European region, this entailed a lengthy focus on the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Stakeholders at the meeting had the opportunity to review a variety of different types of stakeholder engagement, actually tried and tested by the aforementioned projects. These included, inter alia: joint commissions, jury panels, focus groups, stakeholder forums, advisory bodies, visioning and role plays. For a hands on practicum, meeting participants engaged in a simulation of a forum, assessing how to mitigate impacts on different stakeholder groups of a proposed activity. Finally, participants split into working groups to conduct a full Skadar/Shkodra lake basin stakeholder identification exercise.

The final exercise encouraged participants to review these critical steps in identifying stakeholder objectives and interests:

- ◆ What are the main interest groups?
- ◆ What are their mutual relationships?
- ◆ Are there any conflicts between the interest groups?
- ◆ How do the interest groups perceive and word the problem?
- ◆ What are the basic concerns of the interest groups and how could they be motivated to participate?

The workshop, “Stakeholder involvement in Transboundary Water Resources Management” was organized by GWP-Med, the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO/ECSDE) and hosted by the Montenegrin Ministry of Tourism and Environment. Financial support was provided by the European Commission (via MIO-ECSDE) and GEF IW: LEARN. Representatives of water authorities, researchers, experts, representatives of NGOs and local authorities from Albania, Greece, FYR Macedonia, UN-Administered Kosovo, and Montenegro took part in the workshop.

The workshop series is organized in the context of the Athens-Petersberg Process, an initiative to strengthen transboundary cooperation and build capacity needed to develop and carry out integrated water resource management (IWRM) plans for the shared water systems in Southeastern Europe (SEE). Effective management of transboundary water resources is of particular importance to this region since 90% of the territory of SEE countries lies in transboundary water basins. This includes the Drin River basin system with its three sub-basins,

Prespa, Ohrid and Shkoder lakes collectively shared by the afore-mentioned countries and territories. The fact that both Albanian and Montenegrin water managers and administrators attended the workshop — and were involved in the preparation of the Lake Shkoder/Skadar water management participation plan — opens a window of opportunity for the proposals elaborated at the workshop — to be implemented.

All workshop presentations and additional information on transboundary water management in Southeastern Europe, are available at the Transboundary Waters Information Exchange Network for Southeastern Europe website (<http://www.watersee.net>). For further information please contact Dimitris Faloutsos (dimitris@gwpmed.org), GWP-Med.



Press Release: Website on Groundwater and Drought Management issues in SADC launched

Gaborone, Botswana - October 22 2008 - The SADC Groundwater and Drought Management Project is pleased to announce the launch of its website: <http://www.sadc-groundwater.org>, a site aimed at increasing awareness and sharing of information on groundwater and drought management issues in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

The objective of the Groundwater and Drought Management Project is to develop consensus on a regional strategic approach to support and enhance the capacity of SADC Member States in the

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- ◆ To realize and sustain project benefits, dynamic and capable leaders are needed to ensure divers, stakeholders and government officials alike appreciate and desire to contribute.
- ◆ Managers must also clarify incentives for stakeholders, including fisheries, tourism and other private sectors.
- ◆ Policy support for spatial planning at appropriate scales (using tools like GIS for visualization) and on-the-ground enforcement of illegal fishing is crucial.
- ◆ Practicing ecosystem-based management implies an integrated “ridge-to-reef” approach to coast management, integrating iconic species like sea turtles and charismatic habitats like healthy, biodiverse reefs.
- ◆ FISH further revealed the importance of continuously funded monitoring and evaluation (M&E) regimes, based on consistent, standard methods, with results translated into formats which are meaningful to users and stakeholders.
- ◆ Finally, a variegated approach to building ground-level reef management capacity should include some mix of expert advisory groups, regional mentoring, needs-based training, peer networks, study tours and exchange programs.

A number of these lessons are already being applied in other GEF coral projects. For instance, Dr. Tonny Wagey from the CTI Secretariat referred to lessons in the context of his region's efforts to overcome the challenges of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, over-fishing and coral bleaching associated with climate change. CTI aims to protect the most biologically diverse coral region on Earth, to sustain a \$2.3 billion annual economy and the 150 million people dependent upon these coral ecosystems. Key objectives span effective management of priority seascapes, application of ecosystem-based fisheries management, improvement in the management of marine protected areas (MPAs), enactment of climate change adaptation measures, and improving the status of threatened species. These goals are highlighted in the CTI Plan of Action, which is to be adopted by the six Coral Triangle member states: Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands. With GEF support, CTI partners are now developing a regional “CTI-Learn” project, adapting elements of GEF IW:LEARN's service line to build local capacity as recommended in the findings of the coral lessons project. CTI also hopes to apply the Coral Reef Lessons Learned management toolkit and best

practice checklists to project development and implementation.

From Australia, Dr. Terry Hughes shared contributions of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies to community-based marine parks and no-take zones in the Philippines, to the GEF/World Bank CRTR project, to ongoing coral management research, as well as ARC's contributions in the CRTR Program's Connectivity, Bleaching and Diseases working groups. Recent research examines “conservation planning for sustainable futures” (2007) and “resilience of linked socio-ecological systems” (2006), for which new tools are now on-line at <http://www.resalliance.org/3871.php>. The ARC Centre is hosting a 5-day November 2008 workshop in Townsville, Australia to assist CTI implementation. For background papers, agenda and related information, see: <http://coralcoe.org.au/events/ctiworkshop/ctimain.html>.

Dr. Alasdair Edwards, Newcastle University, UK, chairs the GEF/World Bank CRTR Restoration and Remediation Working Group, and provided specific lessons learnt regarding coral reef restoration, which focuses on corals as keystone species, either through asexual or sexual propagation. Restoration is a process of assisting ecosystem recovery, which can enhance conservation, but is not as effective as habitat preservation. It was also demonstrated that off-site mitigation does not entirely replace the value of the habitat or population destroyed. In situ floating nurseries, wall plugs, ex situ tiles with chemical inducers, and new coral pegs illustrate the variety of approaches and cost-effective innovations that may make enhanced restoration of degraded reefs feasible in certain settings. The working group's latest research updates as well as Reef Restoration Concepts and Guidelines for managers are both available for download via the CRTR website: <http://www.gefcoral.org>.

For further information on the GEF CRTR project, please write info@gefcoral.org. For more information on the GEF LL project, please visit <http://gefll.reefbase.org> or contact Mark Tupper (m.tupper@CGIAR.ORG) or Jamie Oliver (j.oliver@CGIAR.ORG). For more information on CTI, please contact Dr. Tonny Wagey (t.wagey@fisheries.ubc.ca). Full presentations from the summer 2008 Ft. Lauderdale workshop are available at: http://www.iwlearn.net/abt_iwlearn/pns/learning/b2-3coral.

Guarani Website continued from page 3

In short, here are the key reasons why the Guarani project decided to use the IW:LEARN Toolkit, and why every GEF IW project should, too:

- ◆ User-friendliness and limited knowledge of programming required
- ◆ Free website hosting and technical support
- ◆ Built-in facility for efficient and decentralized content management
- ◆ Flexible and customizable design
- ◆ Pages, files and documents are editable and posted in real time
- ◆ Promotes dynamic collaboration among site administrators, other websites and users
- ◆ Built-in search tool has real-time indexing
- ◆ Translation capability for a multilingual website
- ◆ Option for automated integration with other project websites through RSS
- ◆ Other useful built-in tools for project communications: newsletters, GIS, calendar, message board

For more information on the IW:LEARN Toolkit please visit <http://www.iwlearn.net/websitetoolkit>. For more information on the Guarani Aquifer project please visit <http://www.sg-guarani.org> or contact Diego Lupinacci (dlupinacci@sg-guarani.org).

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areas led by the UNEP/MAP, to be implemented in partnership with UNIDO, FAO, UNESCO IHP, WWF, GWP MED, METAP and other agencies (approved by the GEF Council in 2008, with GEF financing of US\$12.8 million out of a total of US\$49.4million)

◆ Investment Fund: for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Partnership led by the World Bank (approved by the GEF Council in 2006). As of June 2008, the Investment Fund received US\$25 million from the GEF as the first tranche of a proposed US\$70 - 75 million GEF resource envelope to leverage co-financing of approximately US\$250 million.

The Regional Component (<http://www.medsp.org>) will include the implementation of over 30 demonstration/pilot projects, beginning in early 2009. The Investment Fund (<http://www.worldbank.org/medfund>) started implementation of its first projects "the Neretva and Trebisnjica Management Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina" and "Croatia: Coastal Cities Pollution Control Project" in 2008.

For more information on the Mediterranean SP please contact Virginie Hart (virginie.hart@unep.org) or Emilia Battaglini (ebattaglini@worldbank.org).

IW:LEARN Catalytic Impacts continued from page 1

effort

- ◆ Enabled cooperation among participating countries
- ◆ Informed the design of on-the-ground interventions
- ◆ Facilitated dialogue leading to new regional initiatives
- ◆ Fostered learning and exchange of ideas and best practices
- ◆ Forged a community and network of specialists
- ◆ Ensured projects were informed of GEF IW portfolio happenings.

Dr. Tortell assessed IW:LEARN's catalytic role as "highly satisfactory." He remarked that IW event attendees have picked-up over a thousand sets of our Experience Notes and of our LME Governance handbooks. Over a thousand readers also accessed our library of projects' TDA and SAP documents on iwlearn.net. Some 431 stakeholders participated in our learning events. Our LME video documentary was viewed by 100+ nations' ministerial representatives, translated into Mandarin and Russian, posted to Google and incorporated into a educational package and distributed globally.

Building upon IW:LEARN initiatives, ELI and Coca-Cola have deployed a participatory water management training series, while IUCN continues to deliver 5-8 workshops on environmental flows in Latin America. An IW:LEARN investment in learning exchanges in SE Europe leveraged three times as many targeted workshops as planned. Finally, GEF support to the Athens-Petersberg Process resulted in a ministerial protocol on joint groundwater management in the Sava River Basin.

Finally, partnership with InWEnt led to the first pan-African network of freshwater and marine GEF IW projects and a bonus workshop on high priority concern with adaptation to climate change among African IW projects. This collaboration also catalyzed a new GEF IW project in support of African water ministers and their Africa Water Vision 2025.

The TE concluded that "the IW:LEARN model has successfully led to a number of products and a series of services which are highly valued by all who were asked. All wish to see these continue."

The TE and management response are on-line at <http://www.iwlearn.net/te>.

Dann Sklarew (dsklarew@gmu.edu), former IW:LEARN Director, is now a professor of Environmental Science and Policy at George Mason University in Virginia, USA.

TDA-SAP Exchange continued from page 3

agencies through the project

- ◆ appreciate the necessity for and develop a strategy to ensure broad based stakeholder participation
- ◆ develop a strategy to ensure high-level government commitments toward SAP formulation, and
- ◆ develop follow-on projects in SAP implementation

Brazil's ANA has gained extensive experience in these issues, having run GEF projects that utilized the TDA/SAP approach in the Sao Francisco, Pantanal, and Rio de La Plata basins. Brazil also offers natural linguistic connections to Portuguese speakers in Angola, a key Okavango riparian.

Subsequent to this learning exchange, the EPSMO project reported improved understanding in the following areas:

- ◆ challenges faced by ANA projects ranging from the integration of multiple consultant reports to strategies for public participation
- ◆ Brazilian institutional arrangements, specifically the devolution of management responsibility to local levels, which informed possibilities for institutional reform among the three Okavango member countries

◆ the management of water resources in Brazil, which will help develop a role for OKACOM in its transformation from a Commission to a fully fledged River Basin Organization

◆ how the ANA faced the daunting task of reducing sediment and pollution inflow to the Pantanal, which required negotiating with vested interests and involved economic trade-offs (Preventive planning could forestall an opposite outcome in the Okavango)

◆ increased understanding of the comparative advantages of the role of research centres (i.e. the Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre and the Pantanal branch of the Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agro-Pecuária) in the management of river basins

◆ comparison and greater understanding of the role of regional bodies (i.e. the Organization of American States and the Southern African Development Community) in the management of river basins.

This exchange organized by the GEF EPSMO project was conceived and developed at the 4th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference in Cape Town and also constituted the first step toward a program of technical cooperation and collaboration between ANA and OKACOM. The mission was co-funded by ANA, GEF IW:LEARN, the FAO-executed EPSMO project, UNDP and by OKACOM itself.

For more information on this learning exchange and its outcomes, presentations and reports, please contact Chaminda Rajapakse (chaminda.rajapakse@fao.org) or Carlos Motta Nunes at ANA (carlos.motta@ana.gov.br).

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Google Earth also assisted in building awareness of project outputs and interventions. The layer provides website visitors with an opportunity to interactively access information about the project's partner network, explore the project's suite of habitat demonstration sites, and access information and data for more than 135 mangrove, coral reef, seagrass, and wetland sites studied during the project. The layer resulted in several unanticipated outreach benefits, including addition of the project to Google's Outreach Showcase and its promotion in the official Google news as "a great example of how to connect with a wide audience".

The Note explains how GEF projects can connect with a global audience (a) by improving the online visibility of the website and (b) via the deployment of tools that enable Internet users to interact with project information in an intuitive and engaging manner. The potential for replicating the outreach initiatives of the SCS project by other projects is high, particularly considering that the results achieved using freely available software designed for use by non-IT specialists.



Google Earth Layer

For more information on the SCS and its activities, please visit its website at www.unepscs.org. For more information on SCS outreach efforts, including use of the web and Google Earth, please contact Chris Patterson (pattersonc@un.org). To download the full Experience Note, please visit www.iwlearn.net/experience.

New IW:LEARNing continued from page 2

rising concern over the compounding effects of climate variability and change.

Climate change integration was a key theme identified by participants in the 4th GEF IW Conference in Cape Town (2007). The global environment is undergoing substantial transformations as a result of climate change, a process that affects the spatial and temporal patterns of atmospheric and oceanic circulation. As a result, water resource systems - and all the natural and social systems that depend on them - are beginning to emerge as the loci of considerable stress - and also with a central role to play in the security and sustainability of our common future. GEF-supported initiatives addressing biodiversity and land degradation as well as international water systems, are already experiencing the localized effects of a changing global climate, while GEF IW projects are at the same time building the critical foundations upon which our future environmental security depends.

Working with the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands and the Coral Triangle Initiative, GEF IW:LEARN will continue to support regional learning initiatives with an emphasis on integration of freshwater and marine management. The new IW:LEARN project will also assist GEF projects in contributing to and benefiting from a wider and more targeted set of technical, management, and outreach tools and communities of practice. For example, the upcoming 5th GEF International Waters Conference will feature an expanded interactive portfolio learning format. GEF IWC5 will be hosted by Australia in October 2009.

GEF IW:LEARN will launch in 2009 a new third phase project, anchored in the Mediterranean and North Africa region, which will host the 6th GEF IW conference in 2011. With a focus on science-based water governance and adaptive management approaches that can increase environmental as well as economic benefits, GEF-IW:LEARN III will help projects build on an emerging body of experience, while further enlarging new directions including private sector partnerships. For example, advancing full valuation of water and natural resource systems through integration of data collection and analysis, and operationalizing the use of flows through payments for ecosystem services. A project focus on carbon sequestration and building adaptation capacity at the basin and LME scale through habitat restoration, as well as the introduction of financial

instruments such as index insurance will help to add value to ecosystem-based management in the context of comprehensive environmental and collective security.

It is imperative that rising concerns with human-induced changes in the global climate are not allowed to mask the still more detrimental impacts of population growth and unsustainable development and poor water and natural resource management, while at the same time recognizing that we already have many of the necessary tools to achieve MDGs and effectively cope with climate change. These tools are known to varying degrees and by different names to thousands of leaders and practitioners in hundreds of countries - IWRM, ICM, ICZM, TWRM, TNRM, WUE and EBM are some of the various ways we refer to these critical life-and-livelihood-saving methodologies! The scaling up and scaling out of successful approaches is at once the most important and most challenging task of the GEF IW portfolio, and therefore at the core of GEF IW:LEARN's knowledge-sharing mandate. As we enter the next cycle of GEF IW learning, our collective focus will remain on fostering more comprehensive, better integrated and ecosystem-based approaches as the common umbrella framework under which harmonization of efforts at the global, regional and local scales can be best operationalized, and without which achievement of MDGs will be at risk.

As the UNDP-supported GEF-IW:LEARN project sunsets at the close of 2008, we would like to ask the portfolio to join us in thanking Dann Sklarew for his many years of dedicated service and to wish him well in his new career in academia and as a new father of twins! The UNEP-supported side of IW:LEARN will continue to provide website and technical services, and we hope that you will welcome a new cycle of GEF IW learning projects developed by UNDP and interested partners. The new GEF-IW:LEARN projects will offer continuing service to the International Waters portfolio.

Janot Mendler de Suarez (janot@iwearn.org) is coordinating the Africa Governance Process regional learning project, has helped to formulate the new CTI-IW:LEARN project with the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands and with Mish Hamid (mish@ilwearn.org) is helping to prepare for the 5th GEF IW Conference in 2009 and to develop the GEF- IW:LEARN III project with UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and other partners which will include the 6th GEF IW conference in 2011.

IW:LEARN Operational Phase Sunsets, but GEF IW Learning Agenda Continues

IW:LEARN Continues via UNEP and a new UNDP-GEF MSP

The full-sized UNDP-GEF IW:LEARN will be closing its doors in 2008. However, this in no way means the IW:LEARN service line will stop. In fact, to the contrary, the IW:LEARN agenda will continue, initially via two GEF IW projects but also via a new suite of GEF IW Learning projects.

First, UNEP IW:LEARN will continue the advancement of information management in the GEF IW community through 2009. This means the IW:LEARN website will continue to be maintained, IT help desk assistance and support for the IW:LEARN Website Toolkit will continue. Primary contact for this is:

- ◆ Sean Khan (sean.khan@unep.org)

In the meantime, starting in early 2009, a new UNDP-GEF IW medium sized project, called CTI IW:LEARN will initiate. This project, under the Coral Triangle Initiative, combines support for the next Biennial GEF International Waters Conference with support for the Global Oceans agenda. Primary contact for this is:

- ◆ Janot-Reine Mendler de Suarez (janot@iwlearn.org)

Other New GEF IW Learning Projects online

Meanwhile, the GEF IW focal area has launched a number of new learning/capacity building medium-sized projects that will, despite some of them being regional, produce various outputs to support the global IW portfolio. These include:

- ◆ Regional Dialogue and Twinning to Improve Transboundary Water Resources Governance in Africa, Contact: janot@iwlearn.org
- ◆ Promoting Replication of Good Practices for

Nutrient Reduction and Joint Collaboration in Central and Eastern Europe, Contact: Chuck Chaitovitz (chuck@getf.org)

- ◆ Good Practices and Portfolio Learning in Transboundary Freshwater and Marine Legal and Institutional Frameworks, Contact: Richard Paisley (rpaisley@interchange.ubc.ca)

- ◆ Enhancing the Use of Science in International Waters Projects to Improve Project Results, Contact:

Zafar Adeel (adeelz@inweh.unu.edu)

- ◆ Development of Methodologies for GEF Transboundary Waters Assessment, Contact: Tessa Goverse (tessa.goverse@unep.org)

Network with Former IW:LEARN Partners

Over the course of the Operational Phase of the IW:LEARN project, it worked with the following partners to deliver capacity building workshops, guidance materials and other outputs. For this, we express our eternal gratitude to IW:LEARN's partners and encourage GEF IW

projects to continue interactions with them. Lead partners include:

- ◆ Environmental Law Institute (for stakeholder engagement and water law): Jessica Troell (troell@eli.org)
- ◆ IUCN-WANI and GMP (for economic valuation and payment for ecosystem services): Mark Smith (mark.smith@iucn.org) and James Oliver (james.oliver@iucn.org)
- ◆ InWent (for capacity building in Africa): Thomas Petermann (thomas.petermann@inwent.org)
- ◆ UNESCO-ISARM (for groundwater): Alice Aureli (a.aureli@unesco.org)
- ◆ LakeNet (for lakes): Lisa Borre (lborre@worldlakes.org)
- ◆ University of Rhode Island: Glenn Ricci (gricci@crc.uri.edu)
- ◆ WorldFish Center (for coral reefs): Mark Tupper (m.tupper@cgiar.org)
- ◆ GWP-Mediterranean (for IWRM, transboundary dialogues in SE Europe): Dimitris Faloutsos (dimitris@gwpmed.org)
- ◆ Gender & Water Alliance (for gender mainstreaming): Esther de Jong (estherdejong@chello.nl)

Save the Date! 5th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference in Australia

The next Biennial GEF International Waters Conference will occur from 26-29 October 2009 in Cairns, Australia. Further announcements, circulars and invitations will be forthcoming. Information will be on the conference's collaborative platform at: <http://www.gefiwc5.com> (to be launched in January 2009).

Upcoming Events

10 Feb. 2009 - 12 Feb. 2009

AQUATERRA: WORLD FORUM ON DELTA AND COASTAL DEVELOPMENT

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

<http://www.aquaterraforum.nl>

15 Mar. 2009 - 22 Mar. 2009

5th WORLD WATER FORUM

Istanbul, Turkey

<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org>

23 Mar. 2009 - 3 Apr. 2009

TRANSBOUNDARY WATER MGMT. COURSE

Mozambique and Swaziland

<http://www.siwi.org/sa/node.asp?node=42>

26 Apr. 2009 - 30 Apr. 2009

7th INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Bonn, Germany

<http://www.ihdp.unu.edu>

11 May 2009 - 15 May 2009

WORLD OCEAN CONFERENCE

Manado, Indonesia

<http://www.woc2009.org>

12 May 2009 - 13 May 2009

7th REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUTRIENT POLLUTION REDUCTION

Chisinau, Moldova

6 Jul. 2009 - 10 Jul. 2009

VII INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Havana, Cuba

<http://www.cubambiente.com>

07 Sep. 2009 - 09 Sep. 2009

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

Malta

<http://www.wessex.ac.uk/09-conferences/river-basin-management-2009.html>

26 Oct. 2009 - 29 Oct. 2009

5th BIENNIAL GEF INT. WATERS CONFERENCE

Cairns, Australia

<http://www.gefiwc5.com>

23 Nov. 2009 - 27 Nov. 2009

EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS

Manilla, The Philippines

<http://www.pemsea.org/eascongress>

SADC Groundwater continued from page 5

definition of drought management policies, specifically in relation to the role, availability (magnitude and recharge) and supply potential of groundwater resources.

Senior Programme Manager for Water at the SADC secretariat Phera Pamoeli says, "It is our hope that the website will contribute to increased awareness and understanding of groundwater and groundwater drought management in the region, resulting in the incorporation of groundwater principles into policy development and decision making throughout the SADC region."

Groundwater is an essential resource of great social, environmental and economic importance in the SADC region where it is the source of water for 70 percent of the population. However, there is inadequate awareness, limited resources and capacity in the region to implement effective management of groundwater and drought mitigation.

With continuous population growth and industrial expansion impacting the state of groundwater around the world, implementing comprehensive groundwater management strategies is critical.

The website will provide information on issues affecting groundwater management in the SADC region as well as serve as a forum for information sharing on groundwater and drought management-related issues among decision makers, groundwater experts, water managers, researchers and the media.

The SADC Groundwater and Drought Management is part of the regional Groundwater Management Programme (GMP), whose overall objective is to promote the sustainable development of groundwater resources at a regional level, incorporating research, assessment, exploitation and protection, particularly related to groundwater drought management. The Project is a partnership between SADC, working through the Water Division, in the Infrastructure and Services Directorate, the governments and government departments of SADC Member States. Its implementation began in January 2007 with support from The Global Environmental Facility Trust Fund (TF 055090 SADC) with The World Bank as implementing agency, and the SADC Member States.

For more information contact: Barbara Lopi, Communications Officer; SADC Groundwater and Drought Management Project (+267.3953386, blopi@sadc.int)



IW:LEARN ACTIVITIES PLANNED

IW EVENTS/TRAININGS

- ◆ Stakeholder Exchange: Climate Change Adaptation Working Session (in Pretoria, South Africa; with UNDP Pretoria)
- ◆ Stakeholder Exchange: La Plata to ICPDR (in Vienna; with ICPDR)
- ◆ Stakeholder Exchange: Humboldt Current to Benguela Current (in South Africa; with BCC)
- ◆ Replicate Environmental Flows Workshop in Caribbean (with CEHI/IWCAM)

IW OUTREACH

- ◆ Circulate Public Participation Handbook
- ◆ Produce LME video in more UN languages
- ◆ Publish IW Experience Notes
- ◆ All structured learning activity outputs will be posted to <http://www.iwlearn.net>

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS 2008Q3+Q4

- ✓ GEF Lessons session at 11th International Coral Reef Symposium (in Ft. Lauderdale, FL; with ReefBase and the World Bank)
- ✓ Groundwater and Climate Change Adaptation Workshop (in Kampala, Uganda; with UNESCO)
- ✓ IW:LEARN Terminal Evaluation
- ✓ Stakeholder Exchange: Orange-Senqu and Okavango River basins to ICPDR (in Austria; with GTZ and ICPDR)
- ✓ Targeted Workshop on IWRM Planning for Lake Basins in SE Europe (in SE Europe; with GWP-Med and EU)
- ✓ Refine IW:LEARN Sustainability Plan with Stakeholders
- ✓ Three IW Experience notes published

News from the IW Community

From the September IWCAM Newsletter, WaterWays

The September 2008 GEF-IWCAM newsletter, features the Antigua & Barbuda Demonstration Project; other Demonstration Project highlights; and an update on Indicators in IWCAM.

In 2007 the GEF-IWCAM Project conducted an indicators assessment as part of a larger assignment on IWCAM indicators mechanisms. The study's objective was to assess the mechanisms and capacity in the countries to utilize and monitor indicators for the IWCAM approach, and to develop a template based on GEF International Waters indicators (Process, Stress Reduction, and Environmental Status Indicators). Data and information sources included published and unpublished documents and reports, internet searches, and a questionnaire distributed among the countries. In order to validate the findings of the desk study, groundtruthing was conducted in Barbados, Dominican Republic, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This report has been finalized and now is located on the GEF-IWCAM web-site: <http://www.iwcam.org>. The newsletter is at the following link: <http://www.iwcam.org/media-centre/quarterly-newsletter-caribbean-waterways/caribbean-waterways-english/gef-iwcam-quarterly-newsletter-caribbean-waterways-vol-2-issue-3-september-2008>.

IW:LEARN Website Toolkit

The Toolkit is a "ready to use" software package designed to support GEF International Waters projects in developing a dynamic website and seeks to build on efforts to strengthen information sharing within the GEF IW community. To learn more about the Toolkit, visit www.iwlearn.net/websitetoolkit

IW:LEARN aims to strengthen International Waters Management (IWM) by facilitating structured learning and information sharing among stakeholders.

For more information:

<http://www.iwlearn.net>, Email: info@iwlearn.org

GEF IW:LEARN, c/o UNDP BRC, Grosslingova 35, 81109 Bratislava, Slovakia

Phone: +421.2.59337.168, Fax: +421.2.59337.450

