

Session VI, GEF Related Activities in International Waters – General Session

Moderator: Tracy Hart, World Bank
Panelists: Eric Odada, STAP
Laurence Mee, GIWA
Dan Sklarew, IW LEARN
Phera Ramoeli, SADC
Sema Acar, Black Sea Environment Programme
Andrew Hudson, UNDP GEF
Manuel Marino, World Bank
Rapporteur: Tehmina Akhtar, UNDP GEF

The Moderator, Ms. Tracy Hart, explained that the session was designed to present a number of tools, approaches and programmes that have been developed in GEF's International Waters portfolio. The panelists were selected to present different experiences of using these tools and approaches as a stimulant for discussion about how participants could apply these lessons to strengthen their own International Waters projects.

The first panelist, Professor Eric Odada explained the role of the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP). He noted that STAP has opportunities to influence GEF by providing advice on new operational programmes and reviewing the work programmes. STAP also provides a mechanism for mobilizing and involving the wider scientific community. Some of the recommendations for linking science and policy include:

- Strengthening a focus on targeted research and including this in GEF's work
- Combining and applying technologies in different ways to address diverse problems in land and water management
- Establishing closer links between scientists and project managers.

Prof. Odada highlighted the importance of studying the relation between Global Warming and water resources and the different ways in which water resources may be affected (for example changing rainfall patterns and their impact on agriculture).

Dr. Laurence Mee presented the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), a global GEF supported project which is being implemented by the University of Kalmar in Sweden. The main goals of the project include:

- Implement both environmental and socio-economic impact assessment in 66 sub-regions (both marine and freshwater)
- Identify root causes of environmental degradation by using a causal-chain analysis approach
- Support the decision-making process carried out by GEF and GEF partners to identify priorities for remedial and mitigatory interventions.

The project will work on 66 sub-regions identified in a global assessment of catchment areas and associated marine areas. These sub-regions will be grouped in 9 regions. The project will address five main aspects:

- Freshwater
- Pollution
- Habitat and community modification
- Unsustainable exploitation of fisheries
- Global change

The project will be implemented in four phases:

- Methodology development and testing (pilot areas are Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Thailand)
- Information gathering (in 5 pilot areas first and then extended to remaining 61 sub-regions)
- Modelling and analysis
- Diffusion of results

At present the project is at the end of the first phase of methodology development and testing. The assessment methodology includes scoping, detailed impact assessment including EIA and socio-economic impact assessment, and applying causal-chain analysis.

The GIWA project is expected to lead to the identification of key aquatic ecosystems in each sub-region, the evidence of impacts and threats to ecosystems, the major indicators of change in ecosystems, the immediate and root causes of the impacts, and the barriers and governance issues needing to be addressed.

Mr. Dan Sklarew presented IW: LEARN a GEF financed Global project. The project considers ways to use the Internet to answer International Waters questions by promoting web-based knowledge sharing between projects and institutions. The IW LEARN Training Office is based in Washington DC. The project has a budget of \$1.9 million for a three year period. The objectives of the project are:

- to train individuals
- provide tangible and virtual spaces for knowledge sharing
- help IW projects produce and share knowledge products
- articulate and demonstrate new methodologies for building web-based knowledge

The web-site of IW LEARN is www.iwlearn.org where more information about the project is available as well as links to other sites and resources.

Mr. Phera Ramoeli, Chief Engineer from SADC Water Sector Coordinating Unit presented the project “Shared Water Basins in Southern Africa”. SADC is a regional institution of 14 member states which aims for regional integration on the basis of balance, equity and mutual benefits. The SADC treaty was signed in 1992 and several special Protocols were subsequently elaborated.

The development initiatives of SADC include the following:

- A Regional Strategic Action Plan containing 31 priority projects
- Some projects supported by GEF, including:
 - a regional project to control infestation and translocation of aquatic weeds (PDF B)
 - a project on groundwater use in drought prone areas (PDF B)
 - a project for the joint and integrated management of the Maputo Basin
 - a project on the integrated management of the Okavango Basin
- Zambezi River Basin Action Plan (with 19 programmes)
- Southern Africa Vision for Water, Life and Environment (Framework for Africa)
- UNCCD thematic network focal point for integrated management of river, lake, hydrogeological systems as a basis for implementation of the Regional Action Programme (RAP) for Africa.

Ms. Sema Acar, the Programme Coordinator of the Black Sea Environment Programme presented the next phase of the Programme and the environmental challenges facing the Black Sea ecosystem. The natural characteristics of the Black Sea include two layers of water (fresh water and saline water) which do not allow the oxygen to mix easily and therefore result in particular characteristics of the sea. In the last 30 years the ecosystem of the Black Sea has suffered a severe decline due to a number of factors. The TDA carried out in 1996 identified the following major problems affecting the sea:

- eutrophication
- untreated waste water
- loss of Biodiversity and fisheries
- oil pollution
- toxics and pesticides
- solid waste
- radio-active substances
- exotic species

The nutrient loads entering the Black Sea consist of 70% coming from the coastal countries and 30% from the upstream countries (mainly from the Danube basin). From the nutrient loads coming from the Danube basin approximately 50% comes from agriculture, 25% from industry and another 25% from domestic discharges to the river. The significant nutrient loads have intensified the process of eutrophication of the Black Sea. The major effects of eutrophication include:

- loss of habitats
- decline in fisheries
- loss of endangered species
- replacement of indigenous species by exotic species
- loss of recreational opportunities

Priority actions to be taken by the Black Sea Programme and the basin countries include:

- a basin-wide approach to address eutrophication
- reform of agricultural policies
- improved industrial and municipal wastewater treatment
- rehabilitation of key basin ecosystems
- enhancing legal frameworks

Mr. Andrew Hudson presented the GEF Black Sea and Danube Basin Programmatic Approach. Such a programmatic approach was intended to enable donors and countries to jointly address common regional problems and to promote multi-agency and multi-country collaboration to implement the GPA and to reverse eutrophication trends. The programmatic approach involves collaboration among the GEF Implementing Agencies (IAs) and also other donors such as EU, EBRD etc. and also promotes synergy between ongoing and planned initiatives in the region.

The objectives of the Programmatic Approach are to:

- implement policy and institutional reforms
- promote investments in nutrient reduction measures
- build capacity of regional commission Secretariats
- set a target to cap nutrient inputs at the 1997 level
- mainstream toxics and nutrient reduction objectives into regular IA and country programmes
- pilot techniques for restoration and for integrated land and water management approaches

Among the main aspects and tools of the Programmatic Approach are: capital investments; economic instruments; development activities; capacity building; public participation; and monitoring, evaluation and use of indicators.

Mr. Manuel Marino presented the GEF World Bank Strategic Partnership for the Black Sea and Danube. He noted that despite knowledge and awareness about the problems there is a lack of financial resources to solve regional environmental problems. The challenge is therefore to mobilize investment funds and translate regional priorities into national investment plans. The Strategic Partnership provides grant funding approved by the GEF in an overall envelope of \$70 million to partially finance projects leading to nutrient reduction in the three main areas of:

- waste water treatment plants
- wetlands restoration activities
- agricultural reform and improvements

The GEF World Bank Strategic Partnership thus allows predictable and easy access by countries to a pre-approved envelope of GEF grants. The GEF grants are aimed at generating and substantial co-financing by other players and attracting private sector interest and action. Countries of the basin can benefit from the simple criteria which responds to regional

priorities and the streamlined process. There is no quota of allocations for countries, rather the Strategic Partnership is based on competitive selection of projects. The Strategic Partnership is a model arrangement that GEF could replicate in other regions.

In the discussion session several issues were raised including the following:

- How does the Strategic Partnership and Programmatic Approach link with agricultural policies of countries.
- Opportunities available for some of the countries to link GEF objectives with EU Accession requirements and take an integrated approach to agricultural reform taking environment into consideration.
- The role of the scientific community and local community in such GEF projects and some examples of the same from the SADC countries and the Black Sea basin.
- How to work with and strengthen weak institutions
- Opportunities for matching training needs and resources as well as cases and lessons through internet based tools such as IW LEARN.
- How could GIWA promote alternative approaches in addition to assessment and methodology work? It was noted that GIWA had an ambitious programme and limited resources and that it would have most impact on the TDA stage where problems and solutions could be better defined for follow-up actions.
- Countries want to increase industrial activities in the region of the Black Sea and Danube and preventive approaches are needed to address industrial pollution sources.
- What is the coordination existing between the GEF activities in the Black Sea and Danube and the EU PHARE and TACIS initiatives? It was noted that PHARE provides substantial assistance to pre-accession countries but is no longer able to deal with intercountry cooperation issues as in the past but works with individual countries, while TACIS can work in a regional framework but has less resources available. Coordination with EU needs to be improved.