
Implementing Agency	United Nations Development Programme
Region	Gulf of Guinea
Focal Area	International Waters
Project Title	Industrial Water Pollution Control in the Gulf of Guinea Large Marine Ecosystem
GEF Allocation	US\$6.0 million
Total Financing	US\$6.0 million
Dates	October 1993–March 1998
Environmental Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water body with biological and economic importance threatened by agricultural, industrial, and urban discharges and other impacts
Project Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and equip network of scientific and monitoring institutions and train officials on pollution assessment and environmental management • Conduct ecosystem research, improve information management and exchange, analyze and revise policies, and build national and regional consensus on managing gulf resources

The Gulf of Guinea is a large marine ecosystem extending from Guinea-Bissau to Gabon in western Africa. The gulf is rich in living marine resources and well endowed with commercially valuable fish species, both deep sea and coastal. An estimated 1 million metric tons of fish are caught annually, of which a third is exported. Extensive mangroves occur mostly along the Nigerian coast, but also along the coasts of Benin, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. These mangroves are critical spawning grounds for numerous species of fish, including many commercial varieties.

Despite their importance, none of the gulf's mangroves are protected and many are subject to industrial, urban, agricultural, and other pollution. The gulf itself may be undergoing ecological changes. In the past two decades, significant variations in species composition and fisheries landings have been noted. The nature and causes of such changes remain unknown, reflecting a poor understanding of this large marine ecosystem. In addition, on the southern West African coast, lagoons possessing unique biodiversity suffer from pollution, affecting mangroves, fish, and other economically important natural resources. Growing human population, as well as industrial development along the coast, threaten to exacerbate existing problems. Until recently, little or no consideration has been given to the environmental implications of these trends. The few institutions in the region that monitor environmental trends do not exchange information with each other.

The Project This project, implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, worked to develop an effective regional approach to preventing pollution in the Gulf of Guinea and protecting and restoring the health of this large marine ecosystem. The project formulated a program for pollution control, developed mechanisms to promote the health of the ecosystem, and set up demonstration sites. It also strengthened institutions, provided training, and monitored water quality and ecosystems. Specific objectives included (a) upgrading facilities and human resources of institutions involved in environmental monitoring, (b) establishing effective communication among these institutions to exchange and correlate information, and (c) supporting systems at the national and regional levels that provide decisionmakers with feasible management options based on information gathered and shared by these institutions.

- Activities**
- *Strengthen regional institutional capabilities to prevent and remedy pollution in the gulf.* Activities included (a) establishing a network of scientific institutions on pollution and resource monitoring and assessment, (b) creating a cross-sectoral network of government agencies responsible for environmental management, pollution control, and industrial development, (c) facilitating participation of nongovernmental organizations in project activities, and (d) training scientists, technicians, and resource managers in monitoring, assessment, and environmental management techniques and tools.
 - *Strengthen environmental management capability.* This involved developing an integrated system of information management and decisionmaking support, including a geographic information system.
 - *Establish a comprehensive program for monitoring and assessing the gulf's health and productivity.* This included developing (a) a regional monitoring and assessment program emphasizing stressed ecosystems, (b) a consistent system of coastal ecosystem and environmental measurements, information synthesis, analysis, and reporting to mitigate coastal ecosystem stress, (c) indexes of environmental quality and assessment of coastal ecosystem health, and (d) recommendations for marine environmental management and mitigation and recovery of degraded coastal ecosystems.
 - *Prevention and control of land-based sources of industrial and urban pollution.* This included developing strategic options and an action plan for the region, including incentives for pollution control
 - *Development of national and regional strategies and policies to manage and protect the gulf in the long term.* This included developing guidelines for integrated coastal zone management planning, mechanisms for financial support, and mechanisms for regional policy and strategy formulation and implementation.

- Benefits**
- Ensure an environment more conducive to the health and well-being of communities
 - Sustain the productivity of the waters of the gulf
 - Improve economic benefits for individual industrial enterprises
 - Serve as a catalyst for attracting targeted additional assistance for protection of the gulf.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a financial mechanism that provides grants and concessional funds to developing countries for projects and activities designed to protect the global environment. GEF resources address climate change, biological diversity, international waters, and depletion of the ozone layer. Activities concerning land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation as they relate to the four focal areas, are also eligible for funding.

GEF is a joint venture of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank. These three agencies implement GEF projects.

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