



GESAMP

Joint Group of Experts on the
Scientific Aspects of Marine
Environmental Protection

GESAMP 39/INF.2
12 April 2012
ENGLISH ONLY

39th Session
Agenda item 6

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UN REGULAR PROCESS/GEF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER ASSESSMENT

Note by UNEP (Mr. Salif Diop UNEP Technical Secretary for GESAMP)

Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme (TWAP)

1 With the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNEP and partners coordinated a Medium Sized Project (MSP) "Development of the Methodology and Arrangements for the GEF Transboundary Waters". To facilitate a global assessment, TWAP defines five categories of transboundary water systems: aquifers, lake/reservoir basins, river basins, LMEs, and the open ocean. The results of the MSP, the assessment methodologies of the five water systems and partners and institutional arrangements are presented in a six volume report available at the project website <http://twap.iwlearn.org/publications/databases>

2 As a follow up the GEF CEO gave approval in February 2012 the concept for a Full Size Project (FSP) TWAP: Aquifers, Lake/Reservoir Basins, River Basins, Large Marine Ecosystems, and Open Ocean to catalyze sound environmental management. The objective of the FSP is to undertake a global assessment of transboundary water bodies, through a formalised consortium of partners, to support informed investments by the GEF and other international organizations. It also expected that such an assessment will be sustained through a periodic process in partnership with key institutions aiming at incorporating transboundary considerations into regular assessment programmes. The assessment will establish a baseline environmental, governance, socio-economic and natural resource overview of the five types of transboundary water systems. This global assessment of the five types of transboundary water systems will utilize networks and globally-available information and data sets. Newly-collected information (from observation networks and modeling) will complement the assessment where needed to address crucial data gaps. This will include evaluation of existing environmental and natural resource status of transboundary waters, human and natural drivers and related stress, human dependency and vulnerability to the extent possible, and the current status of governance arrangements.

3 A project preparation for the FSP is expected to commence with a meeting on the 3-4 May 2012 to be hosted by UNESCO at the Headquarters in Paris, France. In view of the fact that preliminary assessment results from the TWAP FSP will be needed to inform the International Waters (GEF6) strategy formulation which would start in October 2013, it is expected that there will be a submission of the TWAP FSP documentation for CEO approval latest by end of September 2012. It is estimated that the FSP execution would start latest by December 2012.

Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the marine Environment including Socio-economic aspects. (The Regular Process)

4 In accordance with UNGA resolution 65/37 (section XII) UNEP was invited by the Secretary General in December 2010 to provide technical and scientific support to the Regular Process. UNEP has been supporting the process through its established programmes related to scientific assessments, communication and capacity building.

- A. **In the area of Communication:** In cooperation with UNEP/GRID-Arendal, a communication portal and a dedicated website – including a document management system has been developed and ready for testing. The purpose of this project is to build a new web portal to assist with delivering the first Global Integrated Marine Assessment Report, which is scheduled for completion by 2014. The portal will include the GRAMED database. The GRID project team is supported by one member of the GoE and is currently building the website and uploading the content. The draft website is on track to be finalized soon.
- B. **In the area of Assessments:** UNEP through its contribution to the Regular Process Voluntary Trust Fund (as requested in the last UNGA Resolution) has provided support of 30,000 USD to enable developing countries participate fully in the development of the first Global Integrated Marine Assessment Report.
- C. **In the area of Capacity building:** Technical and financial support has been provided to member States for the organisation of Regional Capacity Building Workshops on the Regular Process:
- I. The first Regular Process Workshop hosted by the Government of Chile was held from 13-15 September in Santiago, Chile, facilitated by the Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur (CPPS), a Regional Seas Convention and Action Plan for the South Pacific;
 - II. The second workshop was hosted by the Government of the People's Republic of China in Sanya, China from 21 to 23 February 2012 for the Eastern and South Eastern Asian Seas with the support of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) and North West Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP). Through these two capacity building workshops, 28 member states have been engaged in the Regular Process; and
 - III. Two further capacity building workshops are planned for the third Quarter of 2012; namely:
 - o Workshop to be held in August 2012 for the Western Indian Ocean Region, to be hosted by the Government of Mozambique, in Maputo, Mozambique, facilitated by the Nairobi Convention;
 - o Workshop in September 2012 for the Wider Caribbean Region, to be hosted by the Government of the United States of America, facilitated by the Cartagena Convention.
 - o Proposal by the Government of Cote D'Ivoire to host a workshop for the Abidjan Convention Countries in Abidjan this year.

5 The 3rd Ad-Hoc Working Group of the Whole Meeting will be held in NY, 23-27 April 2012. The UNEP Focal Point for the RP, Mr. Salif Diop will attend.

GEF International Waters Science Conference (IWSC-2012)

6 Over the years the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has developed a comprehensive framework for the study of various water systems with the main objective of proposing best management options within the context of implementing its Water Policy and Strategy. A series of water programmes and projects (covering fresh, coastal and marine waters) are included in this framework. In the context of this network, the UNEP has been requested by GEF to organize a science conference with focus on international waters in GEF-funded water projects and programmes. This activity is part of GEF approved third phase of the UNDP/UNEP International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW: LEARN-3-Component 3c). Twenty years of GEF International Waters (IW) projects have resulted in a wealth of knowledge.

7 The International Waters Science Conference will provide a key forum for bringing these findings to a wider audience. Benefiting from lessons learned can significantly support new and on-going projects in achieving better results. The conference will provide a special series of sessions for project participants to share their experiences with other experts. The conference theme is: 'Setting IW Science Priorities for the Next Decade'. The IW Science Conference provides an open opportunity for the science community and policy-makers to share ideas and exchange knowledge (including experience in implementing best water management practices at all levels), and to identify best approaches to governance and socio-economic issues, including responding to emerging issues and relevant follow-up.

8 The target audience will be the GEF IW projects as well as the international water science community, managers and experts working at the science/policy interface. Organization is being coordinated by DEWA-SAB together with DEWA-EWB and UNEP-IDWG.

9 As part of UNEP's co-finance a consultant has been recruited who is assisting with the organization of the conference. The Scientific Advisory Committee for the conference is chaired by the UNEP Chief Scientist with representatives from external partners such as GEFSEC, UNDP, UNU, LOICZ, GESAMP, UNEP STAP, UN-Water and others.

10 Planned for 24 to 26 September 2012 at the UN ESCAP Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand, the will consist of plenary and parallel sessions with keynote speakers, panel presentations on river and lake basins, aquifers and large marine ecosystems and coastal areas as well as open ocean including linkages with earth systems. Parallel breakout sessions consisting of working groups on the five water systems will present key messages and priorities in international waters. Cross-cutting issues including Tools & Methodologies (e.g. GEF tracking Tools) and Governance experience and best practices on GEF/Science projects will also be discussed. Outcomes from working groups will also feed into a discussion and new tasks for the next decade on international waters as well as recommendations for the GEF IW portfolio on "Setting the stage for the next decade".

Action requested of GESAMP

11 GESAMP is invited to note this report and to comment on it as appropriate.