

**Contribution from the Global Environment Facility
to the Secretary-General's Report to the fifty-eight session of the General Assembly
on Oceans and the Law of the Sea**

February 2003

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is pleased to respond to the request of the Secretary-General for information related to GEF activities at protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems and addressing safety of navigation. The information provided illustrates the programs and projects that the GEF has financed as of June 2002 in the two areas consistent with its mandate. The information also includes capacity building projects in these two areas since most GEF programs and projects incorporate capacity building components and activities that directly address priority needs related to specific objectives identified in the projects.

The GEF finances actions in the context of sustainable development that address six critical threats to the global environment: biodiversity loss, climate change, degradation of international waters, ozone depletion, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants. GEF projects are implemented through United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank. Seven other agencies work directly with the GEF through expanded opportunities for executing agencies.

During its first decade, the GEF allocated \$US 4.2 billion in grant financing, supplemented by more than \$US 12 billion in co-financing, for more than 1000 projects in over 140 developing countries and those in economic transition. In August 2002, 32 donor nations pledged nearly \$US 3 billion to fund the work of the GEF for the next four years.

All six thematic areas of the GEF have implications for coastal and marine ecosystems. Of the six areas, the biodiversity and international waters focal areas have been utilized by developing countries more than the other areas to address coastal and marine issues. Biodiversity programs are developed taking into account guidance from the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity while international water programs are consistent with both Chapters 17 and 18 of Agenda 21.

The following paragraphs include a summary of the types of interventions GEF has supported to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems or to address safety of navigation. The annexes provide a list of relevant projects approved by the GEF Council.

Protecting Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

From 1991 to 2002, 46 biodiversity projects with a GEF allocation of \$US 304 million and a total cost of \$US 1,155 million were approved that address specific coastal and marine ecosystems. These biodiversity projects represent important interventions to help improve protection and preservation of the highly vulnerable marine environment.

Establishing marine protected areas represents an important tool for recovery of fish biomass and marine biodiversity. Community-based co-management strategies and gender-based initiatives can help achieve sustainable use goals. GEF has piloted successful strategies of community-based participation by local users through the development of local management structures. Marine conservation, small-scale fisheries management, and development of sustainable aquaculture facilities are all integral parts of integrated coastal management (ICM) in these vulnerable systems.

The international waters focal area of the GEF was established to help recipient nations address concerns of waterbodies that are transboundary in nature. Over 95 % of all captured fisheries of the oceans are taken from the 64 large marine ecosystems (LMEs) that parallel the continental shelves and make up semi-enclosed seas. Pollution may enter from upstream, non-coastal States, and the pollution may cross national boundaries within the LME. In addition, living resources may cross national boundaries, habitat within national boundaries may provide nursery areas for mobile living resources, and ships may release contaminants and alien species from other nations. In 1995, the GEF Council included the concept of LMEs in the GEF Operational Strategy as a vehicle for promoting ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine resources in the international waters focal area within a spirit of adaptive management. GEF allocations have played a catalytic role in this area during the last decade in order to test approaches and demonstrate strategies for reversing degradation and restoring biomass.

From 1991 to 2002, 32 GEF international waters projects were approved that address the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems. The GEF allocation for these approved projects was \$US 277 million with a total project cost of \$US 600 million. Some 35 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and 32 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are participating in these GEF projects addressing coastal and marine waters. A number of other GEF projects address pollution reduction in freshwater basins draining to coastal ecosystems, but they are not reported here even though they have downstream coastal benefits.

The GEF international water projects address vulnerable ecosystems in 9 LMEs as well as the Pacific Warm-water Pool Ecosystem (sometimes referred to as an LME) that the Pacific SIDS share. Through this GEF project, the Pacific SIDS have negotiated through their Forum Fisheries Agency the first treaty under the 1995 Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks Agreement. In addition, with a special project for capacity building known as IW:LEARN, GEF has supported South-to-South exchanges of experience and learning within its marine ecosystem portfolio in order to facilitate replication of good experiences across its portfolio of projects. Concepts for at least 7 other LMEs projects have been reviewed for possible future funding.

Safety of Ship Navigation

One important feature about safety of navigation relates to ships discharging contaminants in marine ecosystems and in ports that create environmental problems. When that occurs, then navigation is not safe for the marine ecosystems that are being

utilized. GEF has helped since 1991 to address this issue by assisting nations to incorporate environmental considerations into the maritime shipping sector.

Thirteen GEF projects have been approved that address facets of shipping, port, and navigation safety and their environmental dimensions. These projects utilize \$US 140 million in GEF grants and represent \$US 285 million in total project cost. The activities range from certified pump-out facilities for oily ballast water and other contaminants from ships for environmental safety and accident/spill contingency planning to vessel traffic systems and integrated management around ports. These different types of requests from nations are evident in the project titles listed in the attached Annex 2.

GEF projects in the East Asian Seas and the Caribbean raised awareness of States to the benefits of global instruments with the outcome that many States ratified ocean-related conventions. For example, a project for the Western Indian Ocean SIDS through the World Bank contributed to their capacity to address ship-related spills of oil and enhanced their activities under a ship-related Annex of the Nairobi Convention---one of the regional seas conventions. An existing demonstration project for addressing alien species in ship ballast water is undertaking activities that help to deal with safety considerations in the mid-ocean transfer of ballast water to minimize transfer of those noxious alien species.

GEF is now moving to demonstrations of technologies for prevention rather than spill control and countermeasures in its international waters projects. Several GEF projects are under preparation to test precision navigation systems, the prominent one being under development with the IMO for the Malacca Straits in Indonesia and Malaysia. Such technology as used in Canada and Europe may revolutionize ship navigation and protect vulnerable marine ecosystems traversed by ships.

Annex 1. List of GEF Projects Addressing Vulnerable Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

Annex 2. List of GEF Projects Contributing to the Safety of Ship Navigation