Mid-Term Review of the joint UNDP/UNEP GEF Project “MENARID GEF IW:LEARN: Strengthening IW Portfolio Delivery and Impact”

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Andrew Menz, February 2013

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# Abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CoP | Community of Practice |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GEF-SEC | GEF Secretariat |
| GETF | Global Environment & Technology Foundation |
| GW | Groundwater |
| GWP-Med | Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean |
| IA | Implementing Agency (GEF) |
| IBRD | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| ICARDA | International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas |
| ICPDR | International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| IFC | International Finance Corporation |
| IHP | International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO) |
| IUCN WANI | International Union for Conservation of Nature - Water and Nature Initiative |
| IW | International Waters |
| IW:LEARN | International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network |
| IWC | GEF International Waters Conference |
| IWCAM | Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management |
| IWRM | Integrated Water Resource Management |
| KM (S) | Knowledge Management (System) |
| LAC | Latin America and the Caribbean |
| LME | Large Marine Ecosystem |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| MED EUWI | Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| MENARID | Middle East and North Africa Regional Development |
| MERCOSUR | Mercado Común del Sur - Southern Common Market |
| MTE | Mid-Term Evaluation (Evaluator) |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| PCU | Project Coordination Unit |
| PEMSEA | Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia |
| PIF | Project Identification Form |
| PIR | Project Implementation Review |
| PM | Project Manager |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| PPG | Project Preparatory Grant phase |
| RCU-CEP | Regional Coordination Unit – Caribbean Environment Programme |
| RTA | Regional Technical Adviser (GEF) |
| SAP | Strategic Action Programme |
| SCM | Steering Committee Meeting |
| SEE | South Eastern Europe |
| TDA | Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| TWM | Transboundary Water Management |
| TWRM | Transboundary Water Resources Management |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UNECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNEP-DEWA | UNEP – Division of Early Warning and Assessment |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WFD | EU Water Framework Directive |
| UNU-INWEH | United Nations University - Institute for Water, Environment and Health |
| WWF | World Water Forum |

# Executive Summary

## Project description

The GEF International Waters (IW) portfolio comprises 170 projects to date, including 16 multi-focal area projects, and consists of some US$1.1 billion of GEF grants invested in 149 different countries globally over the last 20 years. At the start, the portfolio was marginally interested in sharing its experience with itself. However, after previous phases of IW:LEARN demonstrated different learning methodologies, processes existed that engage the portfolio in such experience sharing. Such GEF IW:LEARN methodologies were considered ready to be up-scaled portfolio-wide, utilizing the current project, to enhance the application of GEF IW experiences to improve portfolio quality and mainstream the capacity to address transboundary concerns and assist with addressing climatic variability & change.

GEF IW:LEARN began in 1997 as an experimental portfolio-wide knowledge management and capacity building initiative, which encouraged networking and organized the first GEF IW Conference (IWC) in Budapest in 2000. A foundational project during the period 2000-2003 provided knowledge management training and on-demand technical assistance for GEF IW projects, as well as piloting of a number of learning tools. The subsequent Operational Phase of IWLEARN (2004-2008), built on pilot phase lessons, and developed a strategic approach to knowledge management, manifested by a consolidated knowledge management service line: project-project exchanges, targeted training workshops, portfolio-wide learning at the GEF Biennial International Waters conferences. knowledge products on, for example, Payment for Ecosystem Services and Stakeholder Engagement, information management, technical support to website development, regional and global dialogue processes, support for communities of practice and a help desk.

At a regional level, the GEF has increased its focus on the Mediterranean and MENARID regions, as well as on groundwater management issues. In response to country requests and global imperatives, the GEF IW focal area will direct attention to groundwater, recognising that this vital resource is often transboundary in nature, underlying multiple countries. The new IW:LEARN project includes cross-project and agency learning support to GEF project teams on methodologies for groundwater/surface water management, especially concerning aquifer protection and recharge issues in the MENARID region with mobilizing new partners.

The Project’s long term Goal is: ‘*To strengthen Transboundary Waters Management (TWM) by facilitating portfolio learning and information management amongst GEF IW projects and partners’*

While the immediate Objective is : ‘*To strengthen global portfolio experience sharing and learning, dialogue facilitation, targeted knowledge sharing and replication in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of GEF IW projects to deliver tangible results in partnership with other IW initiatives.’*

It is intended that the Objective will be achieved via the implementation of 5 interrelated substantive components together with supporting project management and M&E activities. The 5 main Components are further divided into 15 Sub-components designed to deliver 27 Outputs and 12 Outcomes.

## Context and purpose of evaluation

This Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) has been undertaken in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) presented in Annex 1 of this report and the project M&E plan. The evaluation process began in late December 2012 23 months into the planned 43 month implementation period ie slightly over the half way period. The evaluation is primarily intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project.

Owing to the global nature of the project the evaluation was conducted by means of a detailed questionnaire (Annex 2) sent to 166 individual stakeholders, including relevant personnel at GEF, Implementing Agencies, Executing Agencies, partner agencies, beneficiary project managers and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), prepared with the aid of the project PCU. The response was poor with only 19 respondents in spite of two follow up messages. A sub-set of these (55) were invited to discuss the project in person with the evaluator via Skype a total of 13 accepted. In addition a one question mini survey was sent to the same set of stakeholders as the first questionnaire to obtain a little more information regarding the Communities of Practice, 9 people responded.

An integral element of the evaluation process was the participation of the evaluator at the Project Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) held in Switzerland in January 2013, where the project progress and implementation challenges were discussed at length. The minutes of the meeting are given in Annex 3 of this report. The SCM also gave the MTE the opportunity to augment the Skype interviews mentioned above with one-on-one interviews with additional PSC members.

## Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

The following Table provides a comprehensive summary of the MTE assessments and ratings assigned throughout this report.

**Mid-Term Evaluation Ratings**

| **Criterion** | Evaluator’s Summary Comments | Reviewer’s Rating |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall Rating** | Overall the project is progressing well and although there are some shortcomings these are well within the capacity of the resources available to remedy well within the remaining time available. | S |
| **Attainment of project objectives and results (overall rating)**  **Sub criteria (below)** | Of the 12 sub-components the project has successfully initiated or completed all but two, namely 5c and 5e others are delayed but not critically so at this juncture. Limited success with the online CoPs and continuing re-jigging of the ICT platforms are holding back the overall attainment of project objectives. | S |
| Achievement of outputs and activities | **Component 1: HS –** A number of well organised and attended events across the MENA and other targeted regions that have been organised. Relevant and demand led capacity building has clearly been enhanced and it is likely that all planned outputs and activities will be achieved or indeed exceeded in some subcomponents.  **Component 2: MU –** There were significant delays owing to technical issues in getting the community platforms ready on which the CoPs depend and it was then considered inadequate to some degree by both partners There has, however, undoubtedly been some success in building engagement outside the bounds of the platforms through face-to-face activities.  **Component 3: S** – IWC6 and Science conference successfully delivered. Delays with Journal and 20 years of GEF publications.  **Component 4: MS –** Key components such as CoP platforms, visualisation tool and archive still not complete to key stakeholders satisfaction.  **Component 5: S** – Reasonable progress on all but two sub-components, notably TDA/SAP methodology and PM Manual. Others are less critical but will be completed except for Insurance Index. |  |
| Effectiveness | The project has delivered significant results during its first half of implementation and it is expected that this progress will continue in the second half provided the shortcomings of certain components especially CoPs and ICT platforms are corrected. | MS |
| Relevance | The project design clearly meets the needs of the IW Portfolio and its key stakeholders in GEF, IAs and Project Managers. | HS |
| Efficiency | Although largely on track with regard to use of GEF funds and most activities are on schedule there are some notable exceptions whose completion is outstanding. Most critical are the delays in a) finalising the ICT platforms, b) full completion of the TDA/SAP and PM manuals and c) Climate mainstreaming. Dual IAs/EAs considered inefficient. | MS |
| Assumptions and Risks | The assumptions and risks identified seem appropriate for this project but it is now clear that the level of certain risks pertaining to CoP participation are currently deemed to be higher. | S |
| **Progress toward Achievement of Project outcomes** | The project is making good progress toward achieving its outcomes and by so doing significantly increase the cost effectiveness of GEF investment however concerted and innovative efforts will be required by all parties to ensure sustainability which is sought after by all stakeholders. | ML |
| **Catalytic Role** | There are some initial examples of catalytic affects especially in the SEE Med regions. Information is currently lacking for the other components and must be collected during the remainder of the project. | S |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation  (overall rating)**  **Sub criteria (below)** | The project was designed with a comprehensive M&E plan and the various elements have been properly implemented during the course of the project to date. | S |
| M&E Design | The project documents and Inception report contain details of a comprehensive M&E and associated, roles responsibilities and budgets consistent with GEF and IA M&E policies. The Project Results Framework is fully elaborated and clear attempts have been made to make the Outcome indicators SMART[[1]](#footnote-1) although some are considered to be somewhat lacking in this respect. | S |
| M&E Plan Implementation | The Project Inception Report provided an updating of the projects results framework with some modification to targets and risks however not mid-term indicators were formulated. Although the quarterly reports have been produced as required some amendments are required and a mechanism put in place to provide feedback. | S |
| Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities | This appears to be adequate for a project of this size. | HS |
| Long-tem monitoring | The GEF Tracking Tool provides for some long term monitoring. Nevertheless given the unusually long duration of the IW LEARN series of projects it is unfortunate that a formal system of monitoring and estimating project impacts against expectations has not been instigated. | MS |
| **Assessment of process that affected attainment of project results(overall rating)**  **Sub criteria (below)** | This is considered to be adequate. | S |
| Preparation and readiness | The project went through a detailed design phase involving a wide range of stakeholders and lessons taken from two previous full sized projects. However the large number of sub-components and outcomes and the lack of readiness of the IT platforms has negatively affected project implementation. | MS |
| Implementation approach and adaptive management | The MTE has highlighted a number of issues that need addressing or are in the process of being addressed by the PCU and partners. The PCU personnel have adapted well to the split modality and multiple partners although not without some difficulties and PCU resources require further bolstering. The PSC needs to take a more proactive role in project support. | S |
| Stakeholders involvement | All key stakeholder groups have been actively involved in the IWC6, the Science Conference, workshops, regional meetings etc. Nevertheless a key objective of the project is that the face-to-face collaborative interventions be enhanced via the communities of Practice but as discussed elsewhere in this report this has not to date met with any real success. | S |
| Financial planning and management | Financial and administrative management have been carried out to the expected standards by both executing agencies. The PCU has monitored expenditures carefully throughout and has good controls in place. Co-financing requires to be kept more up to date especially with regard to in-kind contributions. | S |
| UNDP and UNEP Supervision and backstopping | The implementing agencies generally provide adequate supervision and backstopping. | S |

**Explanation of the GEF ratings utilised in this report.**

Rating of project objectives and results

* **Highly Satisfactory (HS):** The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives
* **Satisfactory (S):** The project had minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives,
* **Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives
* **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives,
* **Unsatisfactory (U)** The project had major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives,
* **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives,

Ratings on sustainability

* **Likely (L): There are no risks affecting this dimension of sustainability.**
* **Moderately Likely (ML). There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.**
* **Moderately Unlikely (MU):** There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability
* **Unlikely (U):** There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

Ratings of project M&E

* **Highly Satisfactory (HS):** There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Satisfactory(S):** There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Unsatisfactory (U):** There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** The Project had no M&E system.

All other ratings will be on the GEF six point scale (HS – HU).

### Lessons Learned

1. The demand for IW LEARN services to the GEF IW Portfolio remains strong providing as they do critical knowledge management services both online and through the various face-to-face events. Without these the IW portfolio as a whole be much less cost effective as valuable knowledge would be lost or underutilised. However an overarching knowledge management strategy is lacking and should be developed if further IW LEARN projects are developed to better direct and focus the available resources and avoid some of the current fragmentation.
2. The IW biennial Conferences remain the jewel in the crown of IW:LEARN providing as they do an unrivalled opportunity for all stakeholders to meet and exchange experiences and ideas both formally and informally on the challenges of TWRM. There is little doubt that project implementation and formulation gain important benefits which are passed on to the ultimate beneficiaries, the governments and citizens of participating countries in the form of more effective and efficient IW projects.
3. A wide range of stakeholders, particularly project managers and their technical staff, benefit from IW LEARN but they are still far less forthcoming in contributing to IW LEARN. This is particularly apparent in the failure of the Communities of Practice to gain traction and whereas this may, in part, be owing to shortcomings in the ICT platform it seems to be largely because Project Managers do not feel there is sufficient benefit from participation such that they are willing to allocate their time which is in constant demand from immediate project exigencies. It is not clear how, or indeed if, these difficulties can be overcome and future IW LEARN projects should be wary of repeating the same model but rather seek alternative means of achieving the ends the CoPs were intended to meet.
4. Design specifications for all the ICT platform improvements should have been determined at the start of the project with clear agreement from all key stakeholders. Constant, changes and requests for alterations or new features seriously diverts resources from the pursuit of the projects main objectives.
5. Dual IAs and EAs while perhaps desirable from an internal UN perspective is inefficient if partnering agencies still have to adhere to their different operational modalities. Any future IW LEARN projects should have a single IA and single EA. Expertise and support from other UN agencies is better brought in via more straightforward interagency cooperation agreements.
6. A complex project structure with multiple sub-components and partner agencies is not a good model for maximum impact as the key management resources of the PCU become overstretched especially when these are limited. A structure more focused on the core services would yield greater cost benefits to the IW Portfolio as a whole.

### Recommendations

The MTE makes the following recommendations to help ensure the project achieves its objectives:

1. Decisions and agreed actions from the January 2013 SCM should be rigorously followed up by the PCU and partner agencies. SC members should be kept informed of progress and take a pro-active role response to requests for support and or action from PCU. Key among these are:

1. UNEP IWL PCU to complete improvements to the Community space by **22 Feb**. DECISION: If improvements are not sufficiently completed, UNESCO will move the Groundwater CoP to the AKVO platform and work with UN IGRAC.
2. IUCN to prepare a schedule of content to be showcased on the Community platform. This will include a monthly topic of conversation, led by an expert on a specific topic to catalyse participation.
3. UNEP IWL to hire a consultant to have an independent review of the website and the different platforms of which it is composed by 15 Feb.
4. IWL will organize a technical design (knowledge management strategy) concept note to guide the website enhancements.
5. IWL Work with specific projects from each region (IWCAM, BCLME/Orange River, PEMSEA/South China Sea, Danube/Black Sea) to mine for information to pilot the visualization, particularly from TDA datasets. Acquire datasets, maps, videos and photos.
6. COPs and WGs to be asked for comments on the ecosystem specific guidance for the TDA/SAP Methodology. Martin to prepare questions to ask. IWL to organize by 31 Jan.
7. DECISION: Cancel the index insurance activity.
8. All partners to complete a one-page document with a preliminary indication of how their respective activities will be sustained after June 2014 by 15 Feb, with full plans by 15 Oct.
9. DECISION: IWL to look into further collaboration with NOAA including sharing their blog, working on visualization, sending projects to existing NOAA trainings.
10. IWL PSC to conduct a teleconference meeting in mid-February to review MTE findings. A face-to-face PSC meeting will be conducted to review progress in 6 to 7 months (likely as a one-day meeting after the IWC7 but ideally elsewhere).
11. IWL PSC should prepare a “what is” IW:LEARN publication and also include it in PM manual (including how projects might allocate their 1% and other related issues)
12. Requests to GEF-SEC and IWTF for comment or approval on documents sent from PCU should be dealt with in a more timely manner to enable activities to be completed and resources concentrated on outstanding tasks.
13. Quarterly progress reports should contain financial summaries including information regarding and delivery of expected co-financing and leveraged additional co-financing and should more clearly and with some detail highlight outstanding issues. The reports should be distributed directly to SC members who should in turn make comment and if possible take action. It is demoralising and wasteful for the PCU to produce reports which are seemingly read by very few of the intended recipients.
14. A system should be set up within the PCU to better capture catalytic and replication effects of project interventions. And future IW Learn project should specifically seek to collect and collate impacts of IW LEARN interventions over the period since their inception in 1998.
15. The project should develop an introductory package for new and recent project managers and technical staff. Possible in the form of a simple brochure style how-to guide to explain IW LEARN and the services it provides, draw attention to the obligations projects and their staff have to IW LEARN activities and to solicit their support.
16. The mandatory allocation of 1% of new project budgets to be targeted to IW LEARN should be increased to 2% and clear guidelines provided for the sort of activities that should be conducted with these funds. Ideally a separate project specific IW LEARN Component should be established within each project’s results framework.
17. Building on 1.h above the PCU and partners with input from GEF-SEC and IAs should develop a comprehensive fully costed (as far as feasible) sustainability plan for the project to be presented at the next SCM. To be feasible such a plan will probable require the outline of a future IW:LEARN project and some commitment from GEF to cover the incremental costs.
18. The more practicable recommendations contained in the Report of the Science Conference should be extracted and submitted to GEF in a separate note which should lead to a considered response by GEF and or IAs of each of the recommendations. Recommendations and responses should be published on the IW LEARN web site.
19. In order to encourage Project Managers to participate more in the CoPs and thereby more thoroughly test the concept before the end of the project it is recommended that GEF-SEC and IAs actively encourage PMs to participate by more clearly explaining the mutual benefits of so doing. This could be promulgated via the regular e-bulletins prepared by the PCU.
20. Consideration should be given to increasing the personnel available to the PCU Bratislava to enable a more proactive approach for the remainder of the project. This is particularly important in view of the forthcoming IWC7 that is already taking resources away from this project. Funds for IWC7 should be used to substitute resources diverted from IW LEARN III particularly with regard to dedicated managerial support.
21. A system should be implemented to collect, collate and feedback into the online versions of the TDA/SAP methodology and the PM Manual useful suggestions for improvements that users may post onto the website in the spaces already provided. A person or persons needs to be given the responsibility for this and provided with clear guidance.
22. Compliance by projects with completing the GEF tracking tool should be checked by GEF-SEC and if deficient steps taken to ensure better compliance in the future to aid IW LEARN impact tracking.
23. To ensure that Project Managers are aware and make full use of the guidance provided by the online Project Managers Manual each PM should be required take a short test based on the material which would lead to Certification of the PM when successfully completed.
24. Any future IW LEARN project should include a component to investigate, and report on previous IW LEARN impacts both directly on the GEF IW portfolio and on related programmes via catalytic influences

# Introduction

As per the project M&E plan a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of the of the global project “MENARID GEF IW:LEARN: Strengthening IW Portfolio Delivery and Impact” - GEF no. 4219, has been undertaken in line with the criteria of the project implementing agencies – UNDP/GEF and UNEP/GEF.

The main objective of this Mid-Term Evaluation is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities in relation to the stated objective and to produce plausible recommendations on how to improve the project management practices during the remaining duration of the project that is scheduled for completion in July 2014.

## Project Implementation

As has been the arrangement since about 2004 the current project is implemented by two GEF Implementing Agencies, UNDP taking the lead supported by UNEP; prior to that date and from its beginning in 1997 UNDP was the sole IA. UNEP is responsible for components 3c and 4 and for 23% of the total GEF funding while UNDP is responsible for the remainder. Hence owing to specific differing needs of the IAs there are two, albeit complementary, full project documents. For the purposes of this evaluation the project is considered for the most part as a single entity.

## Project Context

The GEF International Waters (IW) portfolio comprises 170 projects to date, including 16 multi-focal area projects, and consists of some US$1.1 billion of GEF grants invested in 149 different countries globally over the last 20 years. This investment leveraged approximately US$4 billion in co-financing. By all accounts and many evaluations, since the inception of the GEF in 1992, the portfolio has delivered real results and replicable experiences to be scaled-up and mainstreamed globally. At the start, the portfolio was marginally interested in sharing its experience with itself. However, after previous phases of IW:LEARN demonstrated different learning methodologies, processes existed that engage the portfolio in such experience sharing. Such GEF IW:LEARN methodologies were considered ready to be up-scaled portfolio-wide, utilizing the current project, to enhance the application of GEF IW experiences to improve portfolio quality and mainstream the capacity to address transboundary concerns and assist with addressing climatic variability & change. Moreover, there was a continued demand for:

* Assisting established and especially new projects in acquiring relevant knowledge related to transboundary waters management to improve project design and implementation
* Enhancing the understanding and application of GEF IW experiences across the portfolio to produce better quality project results
* Facilitating the replication and up scaling of good practices in transboundary waters management resulting in less costs and improved capacity to address transboundary concerns
* Ensuring that insights generated through project interventions are shared and add value to the portfolio and beyond

GEF IW:LEARN began in 1997 as an experimental portfolio-wide knowledge management and capacity building initiative, which encouraged networking, launched a Distance Masters program and organized the first GEF IW Conference (IWC) in Budapest in 2000. A foundational project during the period 2000-2003 provided knowledge management training and on-demand technical assistance for GEF IW projects, as well as piloting of a number of learning tools. The subsequent Operational Phase of IWLEARN (2004-2008), built on pilot phase lessons, and developed a strategic approach to knowledge management, manifested by a consolidated knowledge management service line: project-project exchanges, targeted training workshops, portfolio-wide learning at the GEF Biennial International Waters conferences, knowledge products on, for example, Payment for Ecosystem Services and Stakeholder Engagement, information management, technical support to website development, regional and global dialogue processes, support for communities of practice and a help desk.

At a regional level, the GEF has increased its focus on the Mediterranean and MENARID regions, as well as on groundwater management issues. Work underway in these regions provide, in particular, useful lessons on nation-to-nation cooperation in transboundary management of water resources—resources of significant global as well as regional economic and social value which are also especially vulnerable to changes in climate. In response to country requests and global imperatives, the GEF IW focal area will direct attention to groundwater, recognising that this vital resource is often transboundary in nature, underlying multiple countries. The new IW:LEARN project includes cross-project and agency learning support to GEF project teams on methodologies for groundwater/surface water management, especially concerning aquifer protection and recharge issues in the MENARID region with mobilizing new partners.

The Terminal Evaluation of the previous phase of IW:LEARN (November 2008) identified key strengths and some weaknesses that were to be addressed in this phase. The project was rated as ‘satisfactory’ with only minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives.[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Relevance to GEF Programmes

The project meets GEF-4 IW Strategic Objective 1 *‘to foster international, multi-state cooperation on priority transboundary water concerns through more comprehensive, ecosystem-based approaches to management’,* and Objective 2 *‘to catalyse transboundary action addressing water concerns, by assisting countries to utilize the full range of technical assistance, economic, financial, regulatory and institutional reforms that are needed’*. The project contributes, to all four strategic programs as delineated in the GEF 4 focal area strategy for international waters, and is wholly consistent with the goals and objectives of GEF 5, including portfolio learning. Given a sub-focus on groundwater and a sub-activity in the MENARID region, it is specifically aligned with SP3 *“Balancing overuse and conflicting uses of water resources in surface and groundwater basins that are transboundary in nature”*. In addition, climatic variability & change is addressed by the project as a crosscutting issue in two components, the enhancement of the TDA-SAP course & methodology, the development of climate risk-based insurance schemes and guidance to IW projects on mainstreaming its impacts.

## The Project

A global project, encouraging learning, information sharing, collaboration and replication of good practices and experiences in the GEF International Waters portfolio. The project has a strong focus on groundwater and supporting the Middle East and North Africa Development (MENARID) process, and in the replication and sharing of good practices between transboundary surface and groundwater management. IW:LEARN will provide tools and procedures to assist IW projects better achieve their objectives through the provision of improved knowledge management and guidance on mainstreaming climatic variability & change, gender and public-private co-operation in IW projects. IW:LEARN will facilitate the 6th IW Conference and initiate improved involvement between IW projects and the wider science community through the first IW Science Conference

The Project’s long term Goal is: ‘*To strengthen Transboundary Waters Management (TWM) by facilitating portfolio learning and information management amongst GEF IW projects and partners’*

While the immediate Objective is : ‘*To strengthen global portfolio experience sharing and learning, dialogue facilitation, targeted knowledge sharing and replication in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of GEF IW projects to deliver tangible results in partnership with other IW initiatives.’*

It is intended that the Objective will be achieved via the implementation of 5 interrelated substantive components together with supporting project management and M&E activities. The 5 main components are further divided into 15 sub-components designed to deliver 27 outputs and 12 outcomes.

### Project Activities

For the sake of brevity owing to the large number of distinct sub-components only a brief summary of each is provided here. As some sub-components are linked to the same outcome, each outcome is given a separate sequential number and indicated in the summary boxes below.

**Component 1:** MENARID Programme – Support via Land/Ground Water Integrated Management and Regional Portfolio Learning and Dialogue

Subcomponent 1a: Support to MENARID Integrated Land / Water Management

Expected **output** is: Mechanism for integration of groundwater dimensions within the MENARID programme projects

1. Expected **outcome** is: Improved effectiveness in combating land degradation in MENARID through and enhanced role of groundwater and improved subsurface space management

The MENARID Program currently consists of 11 investment projects co-funded by the GEF and by IFAD and various agencies, targeted at introducing more sustainable land management practices and ecosystem consideration in the region, from Morocco to Jordan, to Iran. This sub-component of IW:LEARN will strive to create dialogue among them on the theme of groundwater’s role in land management and agricultural production including aquifer recharge management – water harvesting, and the enhancement of traditional knowledge, in MENA countries in order to promote integrated land and groundwater management practices and solutions aimed at increasing the effectiveness of soil conservation efforts and more generally of land degradation mitigation initiatives. This regional IW:LEARN component will involve structured learning related to groundwater among all MENARID projects across GEF focal areas. It will bring groundwater awareness and needed actions including linkages with UNESCO-related networks already present into the MENARID Program’s sphere of action.

Sub-component 1b: Dialogue in South Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean

The expected **output** is: Regional approaches to transboundary co-operation advanced in South Eastern Europe and Mediterranean region

2. The expected **outcome** is: Enabling regional inter-basin co-ordination to enhance management capacity of institutions and project partners

Regional Dialogue processes, based on the past experience and the replication of practices used in the previous years under the Petersburg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process, will provide further benefits for TWRM in SEE and the Middle East.

The replication of the tested approach followed in SEE in the eastern Mediterranean, will aim for achieving proportional results. Furthermore, the consequent broadening of the knowledge base for TWRM management and the exchange of experiences in the Mediterranean will be beneficial for the overall activity.

The aim of the activity is to further demonstrate innovative and feasible approaches to transboundary water resources management, by deepening multi-stakeholder dialogue and experience-sharing among GEF projects in SEE and around the Mediterranean as well as sharing these experiences globally. Collaboration is envisaged with UNECE and Cornell University.

Sub-component 1c: Delivering IW:LEARN Services in the GEF Regions

The expected **output** is: Three regionally-defined technical groups (Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, and Sub-Saharan Africa) of GEF IW project stakeholders and partners, managed by regional institutions and conducting twinning/learning exchanges

2. The expected **outcome** is: Enabling regional inter-basin co-ordination to enhance management capacity of institutions and project partners

The regional co-ordination activities will draw together replication and tailoring of experiences from the 3 GEF regions (Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, and Sub-Saharan Africa) from marine, surface water and groundwater GEF projects. The principle activities will be to support training workshops and inter-project exchanges in partnership with regional institutions and linking freshwater/marine project co-ordination. The regional technical group will work synergistically with the global communities of practice (Component 2).

The project will work with: Rhodes University (in sub-Saharan Africa), South East Asia Regional Centre at Chulalongkorn University (in Asia and the Pacific) and UNEP Regional Co-ordination Unit of the Caribbean Environment Programme (RCU-CEP) (in Latin America and the Caribbean).

The sub-component will address key existing problems: Lack of communication between program managers of marine, surface freshwater and groundwater resources and the untapped potential for new models and approaches that can be exchanged between different sectors.

**COMPONENT 2** Learning and Replication of Good Practices in Transboundary Surface and Groundwater Management (sub-components a-b)

**Sub-component 2a**: **Groundwater Community of Practices**

The expected **outputs** are:

* Functioning and facilitated global Community of Practice (CoP) for GEF IW groundwater project stakeholders and partners, and regional dialogues linking GEF groundwater projects with surface and coastal environment.
* Dialogue with regional focus (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and SIDS) facilitated between GEF groundwater projects and ongoing relevant efforts
* Experience notes, policy briefs, special articles and case studies on good practices for groundwater management

The expected **outcomes** are:

3. Increased capacity of GEF groundwater and freshwater basin projects to exchange experiences and replicate successful groundwater management approaches and practices to address adaptive management

4. Lessons and science from GEF groundwater portfolio incorporated into and disseminated through networks, partners and processes, strengthening the GEF IW GW portfolio

This sub-component aims to establish a Groundwater Community of Practice to enhance integration of water management. There has been relatively little progress in developing multi-country aquifer projects since 1999 when the IW Focal Areas begun addressing this issue. During the last 10 years, the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Implementing Agencies have been working cooperatively to analyse opportunities for projects that would promote a new approach to groundwater management, better integrated with land use planning, ecosystems protection and basin management. This sub-component will link and build upon the work undertaken in the MENARID region (Component 1).

UNESCO brings on board internationally accepted wealth of knowledge and networks for ecologically sustainable management of shared waters including relevant legal and policy articles and generic cooperative potential frameworks. UNESCO will be able to mobilize matching funds through partner countries commitments and the execution of synergistic IHP-VII regular program activities (2009-2013) that are formulated by the member countries and are in line with proposed action area. This sub-component will also facilitate regional dialogue to enhance the integration of water management addressing freshwaters (both surface and groundwaters) and marine.

**Sub-component 2b: Surface Freshwater Community of Practice**

The expected **output** is: Functioning and facilitated global Community of Practice (CoP) for GEF IW surface freshwater project stakeholders and partners, and regional dialogues linking GEF surface freshwater projects with groundwater and coastal environment.

3. The expected **outcome** is: Increased capacity of GEF groundwater and freshwater basin projects to exchange experiences and replicate successful groundwater management approaches and practices to address adaptive management

This sub-component is intended to promote learning and knowledge exchange on management of surface waters enabling projects, with partners, to catalyse change in surface freshwater, governance, planning and investment.

Important partners with co-financing and know-how to help build portfolio capacity on the river basin/surface water CoP are IUCN, the ICPDR Murray-Darling Basin Authority, International Joint Commission and Great Lakes Fishery Commission in North America, and the South Florida Water Management District. IUCN-WANI will lead the overall sub-component.

A network of learning champions for surface waters will be formed to act as a catalytic coalitions among GEF-IW projects to promote learning that meets project-level priorities; learning resources that target project learning priorities will be made available, accessible and communicated, to support individual knowledge needs, project workshops and peer-assist activities; participants in learning activities will be empowered through knowledge to mobilise and implement change needed to meet GEF-IW project goals and learning on surface waters is applied in practice and shared with the Community of Practice.

**Component 3.** Global and GEF IW Portfolio Learning and Dialogue to Enhance Project Delivery and Impact (sub-components a-d

Sub-component 3a: 6th Biennial International Waters Conference

The expected **outputs** are:

1. 6th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference in the Mediterranean region

2. Project results presented at IWC-6 collated, analysed and disseminated in proceedings (an in journal articles, Experience Notes)

3. IWC6 Host Mediterranean Region dedicated session at IWC6

5. The expected **outcome** is: Global GEF IW portfolio performance and capacities strengthened, in particular among project managers of GEF IW projects.

The GEF Biennial International Waters Conferences (IWCs), five of them since 2000, offer a unique opportunity for representatives of the entire GEF IW portfolio, agencies, and partners to share experiences and build capacity in a South-to-South framework. Building on the active learning format of the 4th GEF IWC in Cape Town and the 5th GEF IWC in Australia, the 6th GEF IWC will convene about 300 representatives of governments cooperating in strategic transboundary water resources management programs, GEF IW project managers and executing partners. The conference will also serve to showcase results from the project’s other components. The 6th GEF IWC will maintain a specific focus on targeted training and the sharing of experience from projects in the Mediterranean host region.

**Sub-component 3b: Global Dialogue Participation**

The expected **output** is: Facilitated dissemination of best practices from GEF IW projects and partners in approved global dialogues processes to transfer experiences and know-how.

6. The expected **outcome** 3b is: Increased awareness of GEF IW experiences, achievements and partnerships with non-GEF supported interventions.

This sub-component will network and disseminate results of GEF International Waters portfolio into global transboundary water management processes (for example, the World Water Forum). The activity also aims to increase the outreach and interactions between the GEF IW portfolio and the broader water resources, coastal and marine management and scientific community. The intent is to share our portfolio’s innovations and also to influence the course of global dialogues on water. Targets for participation would include international freshwater and/or marine events – such as CSD, World Water Forum, Rio plus 20 and other meetings of relevance.

Sub-component 3c: IW Science Partnership

The expected **outputs** are:

1. Completion of the first GEF IW Science Conference

2. Functional scientific network integrating IW project experts and the wider scientific community

7. The expected **outcome** is: Improved technical implementation of projects through strengthening the science base of IW projects and improved integration of the wider science community into these projects.

The main objective of the Science Partnership is to strengthen the engagement of the wider scientific community in GEF projects and to assist with ensuring that GEF IW project staff and stakeholders are more engaged and aware of global scientific advances and how science is being implemented across the IW portfolio.

The main objective of the conference is to continue to enhance the use of science and the effectiveness of local science communities in GEF IW projects through knowledge synthesis and information exchange – building on the technologies and working groups assembled for the IW:Science project. The objective is centred around dissemination of GEF research results; science-based analyses for transboundary fact-finding; science-based monitoring & evaluation; the linkage of science outputs to policy development and management; and the building of research capacity within the GEF family, including access to external, non-GEF findings on emerging issues, new methodologies, and science breakthroughs.

The conference will draw upon leading experts from outside the GEF IW projects, as well as scientists from current and past IW projects. Such groups have already been created for the GEF IW Science project for the five IW System Types and these would be maintained as part of the science conference. Membership of these groups would evolve over time, depending on the activities of the group, and 2-yearly Chairmanship of these groups would be through a nomination and selection process. The first conference is proposed for 2012 and future conferences are proposed to be held biannually.

Sub-Component 3d: IW Focal Area Portfolio Results Dissemination

The expected **outputs** are:

1. GEF IW project results and achievements captured in peer-reviewed journal.

2. The achievements of the GEF IW Focal Area presented in two publications focusing on marine and freshwater systems.

3. The achievements of the GEF IW Focal Area presented in a 20 minute film.

The expected **outcomes** from sub-component 3d are:

6. Increased awareness of GEF IW experiences and achievements and partnership with non- GEF supported Interventions

Over the last 20 years the GEF IW Focal Area has accumulated significant outputs and outcomes through the projects undertaken. The objectives of this sub-component are to make this information available and to provide a peer-reviewed journal aimed at GEF IW projects and stakeholders of these projects.

A preliminary proposal for the journal series would be to publish themed issues along the GEF IW main areas of activity; promoting regional security through partnerships and cooperation, river basins - collaborating across borders, managing transboundary groundwater aquifers, transnational sharing of terrestrial water bodies, integrated management of coastal resources, reducing coastal dead zones, ecosystem-based approach to managing coastal fisheries, reducing environmental risks of marine transport, helping small island states, policy recommendations and decision support fact sheets. UNU-INWEH will execute the activity with its ongoing work with the Scientific Partnership and publication experience.

In addition two high-publicity publications are to be prepared for the GEF IW. These publications are to draw on the 20 year history of GEF and promote and disseminate the following IW achievements:

GEF IW Results from marine (including Integrated Coastal Management and LME activities)

GEF IW Results from freshwater (IWRM addressing surface and groundwaters)

**COMPONENT 4**. Information Management and Communications Platform to Support GEF IW Projects Learning and Dialogue

Component 4: Information Management and Communications Platform to Support GEF IW Projects Learning and Dialogue

The expected **outputs** from component 4 are:

* IW Resource Center with user driven and user-friendly functionality for regional and thematic communities of practice (CoPs) and individual project websites
* Training and technical assistance for individual project website and links to UN-Water family platforms, to support targeted knowledge sharing and dialogues.
* Portfolio visualization tools (utilizing e.g. Google Earth and video), applications and regular dissemination including e-updates.
* Workspaces for specific portfolio subgroups such as COPs, project managers and governments and IWFT.
* A comprehensive searchable catalogue of GEF IW project experiences and results.

The **outcomes** from component 4:

8. Improved web-based and knowledge management and utilisation of the IW Resource center and project communication platforms.

9. Enhanced visibility and visualization of project activities and results facilitates cooperation and replication.

10. Enhanced stakeholder access to data and results from IW projects.

Information management, backed by a robust content and a knowledge management platform, forms a key IW:LEARN service that backstops the experience-sharing and capacity development activities the project conducts. UNEP brings to this component and the development of the IW Resource Center a strong understanding of data and information management to support ecosystem management and policy making. UNEP has made significant investments in the realm of data management, science-based networking, early warning and assessment of emerging environmental issues and trends. Moreover UNEP will leverage its programs covering timely, scientifically credible, policy-relevant environmental data and information for decision making and action planning. UNEP will utilize the GEF increment to service the GEF project community and to support knowledge management of the GEF IW portfolio by effectively complementing the IW:LEARN service line with its knowledge management activities.

This component will improve information and communication about management practices by the portfolio through enhancement and expansion of Internet-based tools and technology utilized by both GEF IW:LEARN and the GEF IW project portfolio (i.e. the existing Website Toolkit) as well as good practices from UNEP’s portfolio on ecosystem-based management – building upon its programmatic basis and experience in ecosystem-based ground-, surface and coastal water management and the Regional Seas Programme. The current content management system will be improved with a more interactive functionality consistent with the growth of mainstream Internet-based applications. The improvements will facilitate the development of platforms, hosted at iwlearn.net, that support the communities of practice established by other components. The improvements will also enable the platform to serve an important communications function.

UNEP will deliver training workshops applying cost effective technologies to improve information exchange and learning – effectively catalysing the capacity of projects – and develop an online guide to bring projects on board with the new technology. This will ultimately increase dialogue among projects. UNU-INWEH has developed a complete Knowledge Management System within IW:Science for the management of scientific knowledge from the IW portfolio. Following the preparation of a design concept for knowledge management, database and interactive tool technologies, or Learning Network, were developed for the user to specifically meet the knowledge management needs of the IW portfolio. Consequently, work completed as part of the IW:Science project will be taken up as a base on which to expand for KM in IW:LEARN 3.

Moreover, the component will make accessible and visible the results and achievements of 20 years of GEF IW projects by establishing an online user-friendly archiving [system] to systematically preserve IW project data and keep them available for future projects, and develop a portfolio visualization tool to ease the discovery of project activities in given spatial areas (using, for example, Google Earth or Microsoft Virtual Earth). A tool for visualizing the portfolio will be developed as a decision-support system by linking portfolio data to other information. Visualization will also include support for project multimedia capturing results whenever available. The component will also, produce a monthly bulletin based on project updates. Finally, a long standing need to link the efforts of the GEF IW portfolio with efforts throughout the UN-Water family (other portfolios) will be addressed through the development of syndication links, i.e. the automatic searching and sharing of content across platforms (such as UN WaterWiki) throughout the global IW community.

**COMPONENT 5** Programmatic Management Tools and Innovative Approaches related to Climate / Water and Private Sector Participation to Enhance GEF IW Portfolio Project Performance (sub-components a-e)

Sub-Component 5a: TDA- SAP Methodology and Course

The expected **output is**: A revised, and GEF IWTF endorsed, TDA/SAP on-line training course that incorporates emerging issues of gender mainstreaming, financial sustainability, and supports new approaches to adaptive management for climatic variability & change

11. The **outcome** is: Improved standardization and harmonization of new GEF methodological approaches as well as results-based management in IW projects to help address new global issues & improve performance, including vulnerability to climatic variability & change in transboundary basins.

The Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) approach has proven to be a major element of GEF International Waters Projects over the last 15 years. The TDA/SAP process is seen as a major element of an adaptive management strategy that sets long-term goals based upon environmental status targets and indicators that are achieved through a stepwise process of interventions guided by shorter-term stress reduction and process targets and indicators.

This sub-component is aimed at updating the TDA-SAP approach and the training material, including addressing issues such as water body specificity gender, climatic variability & change and financial sustainability.

Sub-Component 5b: Focal Area/ Project Manager Manual and Course

The expected **outputs** are:

Leadership training for IW project managers, based on an IW Focal Area on-line manual and capacity building to support skills required including understanding RBM and train in utilisation of GEF IW tracking tool, including:

* Finalised concept utilised in DVDs, web and printed
* Training course material demonstrated at IWC6

11. The expected **outcomes** are: Improved standardization and harmonization of new GEF methodological approaches as well as results-based management in IW projects to help address new global issues & improve performance, including vulnerability to climatic variability & change in transboundary basins.

The objective of this sub-component is the production of GEF IW Focal Area Manual for Project Managers. It is expected that this manual will assist in delivering: Enhanced IW management capacity among IW project managers and regional consultants; better managed and more cost effective IW projects; improved access to, and sharing of knowledge and experience for all actors involved in IW projects; and improved project implementation through greater country understanding of the transboundary problems, their inter-connectivity, their causes and their possible solutions.

**Sub-component 5c: Index-Insurance Pilot**

The expected **outputs** are: Testing of 2-3 risk insurance mechanisms and other economic instruments on the basis of vetted climate risk methodology

11. The expected **outcomes** are: Improved standardization and harmonization of new GEF methodological approaches as well as results-based management in IW projects to help address new global issues & improve performance, including vulnerability to climatic variability & change in transboundary basins.

This sub-component is specifically focused on scoping risk financing options, in particular on index insurance, designed to improve the lives and livelihoods of populations vulnerable to flood risks in transboundary river basins. Transboundary approaches to water management can enhance economic development and poverty reduction, and are integral to water security that is at the heart of many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This project represents a unique opportunity for innovation, as risk financing currently exists at the national or sub-national scale, but not at the transboundary or international river basin scale.

**Sub-component 5d: Private Sector Engagement**

The expected **outputs** are: GEF IW and other experiences with public-private partnerships codified and demonstrated in 2-3 new projects.

12. The expected **outcomes** are: Public-private partnerships promoted and facilitate sustainability of GEF IW interventions

Private sector companies and non-governmental organizations have often provided strong support for many GEF IW Focal Area projects to reduce short and long term impacts on the environment. The threats to our transboundary water resources, including climatic variability & change implications and limits of public funding and interventions require that a broader set of solutions and funding options, including increasing private sector involvement, be explored. The objectives of this sub-component are to: Develop models to expand active engagement, impact and investment of the private sector; establish private sector coalitions to drive government actions to improve environmental performance of the industry and reduce impact on transboundary waters, initially through regional basin pilot(s) opportunities; receive feedback from business and NGO leaders to identify business models that will help make GEF IW projects more attractive investments and promote easier paths for collaboration for private sector partners; generate learning products that help provide guidance to GEF project managers to systematize private sector involvement; and assist in meeting sustainability requirements of the new GEF IW strategy. A comprehensive set of best practices from GEF IW projects on managing private sector engagement will be collated that will be used in the development of guidance documents for future GEF IW projects.

The Global Environment and Technology Foundation, (GETF) which has environmental finance and public-private partnerships as its core business, will execute this sub-component.

Sub-component 5e: Mainstreaming Climate Impacts in IW

The expected **output** is: Methodology to address climatic variability & change impacts in shared water bodies

11. The expected **outcomes** are: Improved standardization and harmonization of new GEF methodological approaches as well as results-based management in IW projects to help address new global issues & improve performance, including vulnerability to climatic variability & change in transboundary basins.

Climatic variability & change continues to grow in significance as a water management issue. Or perhaps better said, the world is recognizing that water management plays a major part in managing climatic variability & change. The issue featured prominently during the 5th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference and now plays a major role in the GEF5 Replenishment planning, and the GEF5 International Waters Focal Area Strategy is just one manifestation of this. The project will also attempt to realize the application of guidance in some projects, as a pilot exercise likely with UNDP Cap-Net, Water Governance Facility and other core UNDP climate-related activities as partners.

The sub-component will develop simple and accessible guidance to projects on how to take the new GEF5 requirements into account. The activity will leverage existing resources and activities, in particular at UNDP, as well as the volumes of existing guidance, to develop custom content for GEF International Waters projects, which have unique requirements.

### Project Budget

The overall project budget includes a $4,095,000 GEF grant and $5,204,824 in co-financing from a range of sources. The GEF grant is divided between UNDP and UNDP, $3,160,000 and $935,000 respectively.

Total GEF budget and distribution

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **GEF Outcome** | **IA/EA** | **Amount Year 1** | **Amount Year 2** | **Amount Year 3** | **Amount Year 4** | **Total** |
| OUTCOME 1: | UNDP/UNOPS | $300,400 | $265,200 | $265,200 | $110,200 | **$941,000** |
| OUTCOME 2: | UNDP/UNOPS | $117,900 | $112,700 | $112,700 | $87,700 | **$431,000** |
| OUTCOME 3: | UNDP/UNOPS | $405,400 | $205,200 | $145,200 | $58,200 | **$814,000** |
| OUTCOME 4: | UNEP/UNEP-DEWA | $216,034 | $275,283 | $266,883 | $176,800 | **$935,000** |
| OUTCOME 5: | UNDP/UNOPS | $157,900 | $102,900 | $92,900 | $70,300 | **$424,000** |
| M&E | UNDP/UNOPS | $10,000 | $57,500 | $7,500 | $75,000 | **$150,000** |
| Project management unit | UNDP/UNOPS | $120,250 | $118,250 | $117,650 | $43,850 | **$400,000** |
| **TOTALS** |  | **$1,327,884** | **$1,137,033** | **$1,008,033** | **$622,050** | **$4,095,000** |

Pledges for Co-finance

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| UNDP Energy and Environment Group | in cash | $415,000 |
| UNDP Energy and Environment Group | In-Kind | $1,348,000 |
| UNESCO-IHP | In-Kind | $550,000 |
| Cornell University | In-Kind | $40,000 |
| UNECE | Cash/In-Kind | $60,000 |
| Sea-Start | In-Kind | $130,000 |
| UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme | In-Kind | $100,000 |
| IUCN-WANI | In-Kind | $202,000 |
| UNEP-Interdivisional Water Group (Comp3) | In-Kind | $200,000 |
| UNU-INWEH | In-Kind | $1,240,000 |
| UNEP-DEWA | In-Kind | $701,824 |
| Sea-Start | In-Kind | $108,000 |
| UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre | In-Kind | $60,000 |
| UNEP | In-Kind | $50,000 |
| **TOTAL** |  | **$5,204,824** |

### Project Duration

The PIF indicated a start date of March 2011 and end date of April 2014 giving a duration of 37 months. The approved project document gives a start date of 1 Jan 2011 and 30 June 2014 giving a duration of 42 months. The start date of implementation in the latest PIR/APR indicates a start date of 26 January 2011 and end date of 31 July 2014, thus retaining the 42 month duration.

### Institutional arrangements

The key bodies, are the Inter-Agency Forum,(IAF) the Project Steering Committee, the Project Coordination Unit together with supporting functions provided by the GEF International Waters Task Force (IWTF) and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The following diagram indicates the linkages between the various bodies and the Agencies and Partners responsible for each of the Components.

**Inter-Agency Forum**

**Project Steering Committee**

**Project Coordination Unit**

**GEF International Waters Task Force**

**Component 1**

UNDP, UNESCO, GWP-Med, Rhodes University, SeaStart, Caribbean Environment Programme

**Component 2**

UNDP, UNESCO, IUCN-WANI

**Component 3**

UNDP, UNEP, UNU

**Component 4**

UNEP, SeaStart, UNU

**Component 5**

UNDP, GETF

**Technical Advisory Group**

#### Inter-Agency Forum (IAF)

**Overall Role**

The Inter-Agency Forum will provide a formal mechanism for the GEF and GEF IW:LEARN Agencies to discuss project implementation and to resolve any competing issues likely to impact overall project performance.

**Membership**

* GEF
* UNDP-DGEF
* UNEP-DGEF

**Responsibilities**

* This body will provide formal approval of outputs and any programme changes recommended by the Project Steering Committee.
* UNDP and UNEP, as the GEF Implementing Agencies of this project, will be responsible for overall project supervision to ensure consistency with GEF and UNDP & UNEP policies and procedures, and will provide guidance on linkages with related UNDP & UNEP- and GEF-funded activities as well as technical guidance on specific issues.
* The meetings will also agree common reporting formats for PIR/APR and agree the Terms of References for the Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluations.
* Any issues relating to project M&E will first be discussed at this meeting.

#### Project Steering Committee (PSC)

**Overall Role**

The Project Steering Committee formally supervises all activities undertaken through the PCU, providing strategic direction, guidance and assessment to maximize the project’s execution progress, relevance and impact on its beneficiaries.

**Membership**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GEF | UNESCO | IW Project Manager #1 |
| UNDP-DGEF | IFAD | IW Project Manager #2 |
| UNEP-DGEF | UNU-INWEH | IW Project Manager #3 |
| UNEP-DEWA | IUCN-WANI | IW:LEARN PCU (as observers and secretariat of the PSC) |
| IBRD | GWP-Med |
| UNOPS | GETF |

#### Technical Advisory Group

**Overall Role**

The Technical Advisory Group will provide technical guidance and assistance, where necessary, to the PCU and the sub-component activities of the IW:LEARN.

**Responsibilities**

* This *ad hoc* group is planned primarily to assist two sub-components (e.g. TDA developments - 5a, Project Manual – 5b, etc.) but may also provide input to both the PCU and sub-components on the essential cross-cutting issues that are central to the IW:LEARN (e.g. gender mainstreaming, climatic variability & change, public-private partnerships, etc.).

#### Project Coordination Unit

**Overall Role**

The Project Coordination Unit will provide a coordination and management structure to ensure effective development, implementation, coordination and sustainability of GEF IW:LEARN project components and activities in accordance with the rules and procedures of GEF, UNDP, UNEP and UNOPS, based on guidance and direction provided by the project Steering Committee and Inter-Agency Forum.

**Membership**

* UNOPS CTA/Project Manager
* UNDP-UNOPS Project Coordination Officer
* UNEP Project Coordinator
* UNEP Technical Assistant
* SeaStart Information Technology Specialist
* SeaStart Communications and Training Specialist
* SeaStart Information Technology Assistant

### Project execution

Project execution for the UNDP portion of the project is the responsibility of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) through its International Waters Unit in accordance with UNDP and UNOPS operational guidelines and procedures. The UNEP portion of the project is executed through UNEP-Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) according to its own operational guidelines and procedures.

# Scope, Objective and Methods of Evaluation

This Mid-Term Evaluation has been undertaken in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) presented in Annex 1 of this report and the project M&E plan. The evaluation process began in late December 2012 23 months into the planned 43 month implementation period ie slightly over the half way period. The evaluation is primarily intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project.

More specifically, the evaluation was designed to assess inter alia the following key elements:

* Project, context relevance and strategy
* Preparation and readiness
* Stakeholder participation in project design
* Project organization/management arrangements
* Project budget and duration
* Design of Project Monitoring and Evaluation system
* Sustainability and replication strategy
* Adaptive management in project implementation
* UNDP & UNEP Contribution
* UNOPS & UNEP-DEWA Contribution
* Stakeholder Participation,

Owing to the global nature of the project the evaluation was conducted by means of a detailed questionnaire (Annex 2) sent to 166 individual stakeholders, including relevant personnel at GEF, Implementing Agencies, Executing Agencies, partner agencies, beneficiary project managers and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), prepared with the aid of the project PCU. The response was poor with only 19 respondents in spite of two follow up messages. A sub-set of these (55) were invited to discuss the project in person with the evaluator via Skype a total of 13 accepted. In addition a one question mini survey was sent to the same set of stakeholders as the first questionnaire to obtain a little more information regarding the Communities of Practice, 9 people responded.

Because of the low response to the full questionnaire no attempt has been made to extract statistics regarding respondent’s ratings of the various project components and IW LEARN services, however, the often detailed comments have been most useful and incorporated into the evaluation findings.

An integral element of the evaluation process was the participation of the evaluator at the Project Steering Committee meeting held in Switzerland in January 2013, where the project progress and implementation challenges were discussed at length. The minutes of the meeting are given in Annex 3 of this report. The SCM also gave the MTE the opportunity to augment the Skype interviews mentioned above with one on one interviews of additional SC members.

The MTE combined the above with desk-based reviews of key project documents,

A list of stakeholders interviewed is provided in Annex 4 and the documents reviewed in Annex 5.

# Project Performance and Impact

## Attainment of objectives and planned results (progress to-date)

This section summarises the extent that the Projects objectives have been either achieved or the progress of the project toward reaching these objectives at the mid-point.

### Achievement of outputs and activities

Of the 12 sub-components the project has successfully initiated or completed all but two, namely 5c and 5e others are delayed but not beyond recovery at this juncture. Limited success with the online CoPs and continuing re-jigging of the ICT platforms are holding back the overall attainment of project objectives. The Project is therefore rated by the MTE as **Satisfactory** with regard to the achievement of outputs and activities.

**COMPONENT 1: MENARID Programme -** Support via Land/Ground Water Integrated Management and Regional Portfolio Learning and Dialogue

Overall this component was rated as **Highly Satisfactory** given the number of well organised and attended events across the MENA and other targeted regions that have been organised. Relevant and demand led capacity building has clearly been enhanced and it is likely that all planned outputs and activities will be achieved or indeed exceeded in some subcomponents.

Targeted workshops, twinnings and other face to face events are the core of IW LEARN and based on the majority of feedback received are seen as one of, if not the, most valued and beneficial component of IW LEARN.

Subcomponent 1a: Support to MENARID Integrated Land / Water Management – Lead Partner UNESCO - IHP

Expected **output** is: Mechanism for integration of groundwater dimensions within the MENARID programme projects

The MTE assessed sub-component 1a as **Satisfactory**. Following a survey of MENARID projects a portfolio meeting was held at which capacity-building priorities for the MENARID portfolio personnel were identified. Subsequently two regional learning workshops (out of 4 planned) have been organized one on traditional knowledge and the other on Managed Aquifer discharge at which attendance has been good and feedback highly positive. All MENA countries have been involved and an effective strategic partnership established between ICARDA and IFAD. Through these face-to-face activities an operational technical group has been established. An online community platform has also been established with over 50 members, hosted by ICARDA taking account of a project’s needs assessment undertaken by UNESCO-IHP. However there has been limited activity on the online platform to date and still no involvement by government representatives (land/water ministries, etc). This notwithstanding the MTE considers that the stated objectives will be achieved within the time available.

Sub-component 1b: Dialogue in South Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean – Lead Partner GWP-Med.

The expected **output** is: Regional approaches to transboundary co-operation advanced in South Eastern Europe and Mediterranean region

The MTE assessed this sub-component as **Highly Satisfactory** following a delayed start owing to political upheaval in the region. Following a stakeholder identification exercise and survey of regional priorities for capacity building needs several very successful roundtables and workshops have been organised. Three targeted training workshops organized in Tirana, Albania, on WFD, Zagreb - Policy and Science, Flood Management, in Zagreb. The first SEE regional roundtable was conducted in Zagreb, setting priorities for the process agenda going forward. A Targeted Capacity Building Workshop entitled “Implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) as a means to enhanced water resources management” was organized by GWP-Med and UNECE in Tirana, Albania.

Most recently the International Roundtable on Transboundary Water Resources Management in the Southern Mediterranean was jointly organized by the UNECE, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the GWP-Med, GEF IW:LEARN, and the MED EUWI, with the support of the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea. The Roundtable was held, prior to the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).

A workshop for the utilization of the IWLEARN ICT tools for the construction websites was organized in GWP-Med’s premises in Athens on 30 May – 1 June 2012. The conversion to IW:LEARN website toolkit has begun.

Building on activities begun in previous IW Learn projects this project in partnership with GWP-Med has certainly advanced regional cooperation on transboundary waters and catalysed a number of related activities discussed elsewhere in this report.

Sub-component 1c: Delivering IW:LEARN Services in the GEF Regions

Expected **output**: Three regionally-defined technical groups (Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, and Sub-Saharan Africa) of GEF IW project stakeholders and partners, managed by regional institutions and conducting twinning/learning exchanges

The MTE assessed this subcomponent as **Satisfactory** good progress having been made especially in Africa and LAC and good prospects for Asia to catch up following a switch of partner to PEMSEA for this activity in the Asia region.

In Africa led by Rhodes University two targeted workshops for IW projects have been organised. The first in South Africa, April 2012 identified priority topics around which to structure future regional workshops and second on Economic Valuation involving 17 and 18 African IW projects respectively. The second was held in partnership with Rhodes, IUCN, UNECA, UNECE and FAO

In LAC region the lead partner the Caribbean Environment Programme first targeted workshop was completed involving 11 GEF IW projects, and twinning exchanges for 4 projects on TDA-SAP and related topics were organised.

In Asia-Pacific region the first targeted project roundtable involving, 11 projects took place following IW Science Conference and twinning exchanges have been arranged between Bay of Bengal LME to Canary Current LME and Lake Baikal to Sava River Basin Commission.

High satisfaction has been recorded for all of the workshops undertaken to date. The weakest areas included insufficient time for informal networking and addressing sufficiently the linkages between terrestrial and marine water systems. Future workshops will be adapted to address these matters.

Implementation will need to accelerate in Asia but otherwise this component is on track to meet its objectives.

**COMPONENT 2:** Learning and Replication of Good Practices in Transboundary Surface and Groundwater Management

Overall this component is assessed as **Moderately Unsatisfactory** owing largely the lack of traction that has been achieved with the online CoPs. There were significant delays owing to technical issues in getting the community platform ready (Component 4a) on which the CoPs depend and it was then considered inadequate to some degree by both partners in this component UNESCO-IHP and IUCN. In May of 2012 an analysis of performance and technical features of the CoP online working space was undertaken followed by submission of a list of suggested improvements to enhance the user’s experience and allow visual material to be utilized in the CoP this was further discussed in detail at a meeting in September 2012. The full list of improvements has yet to be implemented and UNESCO have requested that they move their CoP to another platform to be developed by an experienced NGO they have contact with. Notwithstanding the technical difficulties however it has been remarked upon by key stakeholders and the MTE agrees that more could and should be done with regard to online content, experience notes related to the already identified needs, and more frequent direct interaction with projects to elicit participation.

While there has undoubtedly been some success in building engagement outside the bounds of the platform through collaboration in the face to face activities under component 1; project learning needs have been assessed and delivered at the various workshops and these have been well received, translating this success to the online platform has not been successful to date. It is clear that getting project staff to participate in online discussions is an onerous task and it is interesting to note that in a mini survey carried out by the MTE which posed the following query: ‘*It is acknowledged by all that Project Managers have a challenging and often  onerous task  to achieve their project objectives in the time available.  This is one reason often cited for lack of participation in the IW:LEARN online CoP platforms.  Do you agree with this statement and if not what changes to the online CoPs would encourage you to participate more?*

All who responded were in general agreement with the first part of the statement but often of equal importance was the perceived lack of value to the individual or their project of participation.

It has also been suggested that more top-down encouragement from the IAs (and GEF) to their project staff to participate would help and while the MTE agrees, to some extent, voluntary engagement based on recognised value is most desirable if achievable. Nevertheless to encourage Project Managers to participate more in the CoPs and thereby more thoroughly test the concept before the end of the project it is recommended that GEF-SEC and IAs actively encourage PMs to participate by more clearly explaining the mutual benefits of so doing. This could be promulgated via the regular e-bulletins prepared by the PCU. From discussions with project managers it appears that the emphasis on online CoPs has not been demand led but rather perceived as a good idea at the project design stage owing to their potential to provide a more cost effective and sustainable means of interaction among projects. It is notable that the “Discussions Forums” set up under previous phases of IW:LEARN, and which can be considered precursors to the CoPs had similar lack of success.

During deliberations on the CoPs during the SCM in January 2013 a number of actions were agreed key among which in the view of the MTE are:

* Link participation in twinnings & global dialogues to participation in the communities of practice.
* ICT team to complete improvements to the Community space by 22 Feb. However if improvements are not sufficiently completed, UNESCO will move the Groundwater CoP to another platform which they have identified and believe is more suitable.
* IUCN to prepare a schedule of content to be showcased on the Community platform. This will include a monthly topic of conversation, led by an expert on a specific topic to catalyse participation.

Sub-component 2a: Groundwater Community of Practices. Lead Partner UNESCO

Expected **Outputs:**

i) Functioning and facilitated global Community of Practice (CoP), and regional dialogues linking GEF groundwater projects with surface and coastal environment -

ii) Dialogue with regional focus (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and SIDS) facilitated between GEF groundwater projects and ongoing relevant efforts

iii) Experience notes, policy briefs, special articles and case studies on good practices for groundwater management

A good deal of work has already been done under this subcomponent led by UNESCO but the lack of traction of the online CoP which is a key output leads the MTE to deem this sub-component as **Moderately Unsatisfactory**. The online CoP was established on the IW LEARN platform with some delay and launched at IWC6 in October of 2011. Currently it has only 37 members and very limited activity i.e. 10 posts, the last being in September of 2012 and this in spite of some UNESCO-IHP proactive facilitation and outreach at numerous events, (although six experience notes that have been prepared have yet to be posted). For example the Joint session conducted with IUCN at WWF to present both GW and SFW cops with about 20 people in attendance which facilitated exchange and harmonization of CoP basic principles, objectives and *modus operandi*. The Organization of a CoP side event (joint UNESCO-IHP and IUCN) at the 6th World Water Forum, March 2012, Marseille. Contribution to preparation of the groundwater working group for the IW Science Conference in Bangkok, 24-26 September 2012. Contribution to the creation of database of experts already engaged in GEF IW networks. The CoPs were presented at the Conference and a Groundwater Talks teaser video launched. Recording of interviews with groundwater experts for Groundwater Talks which have

Presentation of the Groundwater CoP and Groundwater Talks at the Third Regional Consultation for Arab States of the GEF Groundwater Governance Project. Linkages have been established between the Permanent Consultation Mechanism (PCM) and the Groundwater CoP. Presentation of the Groundwater CoP and Groundwater Talks at the Fourth Regional Consultation for the Asia-Pacific region of the GEF Groundwater Governance Project (3-5 December 2012, China).

Dialogue preparations are not yet underway, but are expected to be combined with targeted workshops under activity 1c

In addition a Second update of the GEF Groundwater Portfolio Analysis, has been prepared which will be a useful resource if kept up to date as intended.

Hence there has been much activity with regard to the offline aspects of the CoP but still insufficient on the online which is important not least for sustainability and cost effectiveness aspects of this component and 2b. However it was stressed to the MTE that UNESCO firmly believe that much of the difficulty in getting an acceptable level of participation in the CoP is directly related to the shortcomings of the platform and they have been in discussions with a NGO, in collaboration with which they believe a platform more fit for purpose could be quickly developed at reasonable cost. The MTE considers that it would be of great interest with regard to understanding the dynamics of CoP participation if this alternative platform were to be developed and tested.

Sub-component 2b: Surface Freshwater Community of Practice. Lead Partner IUCN

The expected **output** is: Functioning and facilitated global Community of Practice (CoP) and regional dialogues linking GEF surface freshwater projects with groundwater and coastal environment.

This component is assessed as **Moderately** **Unsatisfactory** once again largely because of a lack of success in developing the online components of the CoP. The CoP was launched at IWC6, and bilateral discussions with projects begun to draft learning agendas. The CoP currently has 77 members which includes representatives from some 36 freshwater projects and some marine projects. The 5 freshwater projects that are currently not engaged are being pursued. Currently only 7 blog entries have been logged the latest being Jan 2013.

From interactions at the 1st African regional workshops and targeted telephone interviews Seventeen Project level learning champions have been recruited and four project twinning groups have been created to cover, ICM linking freshwater and marine projects, integrated lake basin management, river basins – collaboration across borders and Small island developing states. Related thematic learning resource briefs have been uploaded onto the CoP website. Follow up to generate interaction, sharing and generation of relevant learning resources is underway.

Difficulties were reported in generating activity on the CoPs. For example members of the 1st and 2nd twinning groups were invited to exchange on the platform to further develop topics of interest and define own learning agendas. It was not possible to facilitate this process by setting up initial conference calls to trigger discussion within the groups as projects proved reluctant or time-deficient to engage.

In marked contrast, learning agendas were developed to the detail needed to mobilize adequate support for some African projects as a consequence of face-to-face time during dedicated breakout group sessions at the 2nd African targeted workshop in Addis.

Two more project twinning groups were to be created on mainstreaming climate change and good groundwater governance, and private sector engagement. However, projects did not respond to the following invitation (1st Asian targeted workshop in Bangkok, later extended to the entire global CoP):

Formation of the Facilitation Group was partly successful with most results yielding in Africa where WWF and CARE Kenya were invited to present practical case studies of PES implementation from the ground. This is the result of past and current IUCN leadership in green growth thinking and partnerships. Again, this could not have been possible without a clear demand stemming from face-to-face activities, i.e. economics as the topic democratically selected for the workshop.

The number of active surface freshwater projects and of opportunities for mobilizing the right partnerships to organise the workshops in Africa as opposed to Asia-Pacific and Latin America & Caribbean played a major role in producing this regional imbalance.

**Component 3.** Global and GEF IW Portfolio Learning and Dialogue to Enhance Project Delivery and Impact

The MTE deemed this component to be currently  **Satisfactory**  a higher rating is not considered appropriate owing largely to slow progress with the journal special editions and with the 2nd 20 years of GEF (Marine) publication.

Sub-component 3a: 6th Biennial International Waters Conference – Lead UNDP

Expected **Outputs**: a) 6th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference in the Mediterranean region. b) Project results presented at IWC-6 collated, analysed and disseminated in proceedings (an in journal articles, Experience Notes). c) IWC6 Host Mediterranean Region dedicated session at IWC6

The MTE assessed this sub-component as **Highly Satisfactory**. IWC6 held, in October 2012 had 328 participants, including government representatives, IW project managers, staff of international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and transboundary commissions, originating from some 81 countries and representing 73 GEF International Waters projects.

As per the evaluation report based on responses from participants (31%) Overall, participants considered the event a “Success”. They found it directly applicable to their work functions and that it allowed sufficient time for networking. They felt it enhanced their understanding of the results of the GEF IW portfolio after 20 years as well as of private sector engagement. The participant workshops and innovation marketplace were the most highly regarded sessions of the conference.

There was some criticism in terms of too many plenaries on good themes but with insufficient time for discussion, coupled with, too many of the “excellent” smaller workshops being offered in parallel.

The IW Biennial conference is rightly considered as one of the corner stones of the IW LEARN programme and it was encouraging for the MTE to learn that IWC7 is already under preparation for October 2013 funded via a sister IW project, albeit not yet fully approved.

The MTE notes that owing no doubt to the quasi programmatic nature of IW:LEARN and the extensive experience of the current Project Manager with organising and running previous IWCs, it was clear from the SCM discussions that the PCU of the current project is expected to take a major role in organising the next event. It will be critically important that sufficient support is contracted for the purposes of organising and running IWC7 to ensure that substantial resources of manpower are not diverted from this project with subsequent negative consequences in terms of this project meeting its objectives and providing for a sustainable future.

Sub-component 3b: Global Dialogue Participation. Lead UNDP

Expected **output** is: Facilitated dissemination of best practices from GEF IW projects and partners in approved global dialogue processes.

The MTE assessed this sub-component as **Satisfactory.** Five separate political/dialogue processes have featured six different IW projects: the Hai river project to Bonn 2011 Conference: The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus; Lake Victoria Project to 6th World Water Forum in Marseille; the Dnipro river project to Rio+20 - United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, IW:LEARN project to the 14th International River Symposium in Brisbane, and the Dinaric & Volta river projects to 6th UNECE Water Convention Meeting of the Parties in Rome.

A calendar of future events is required and guidance from IWTF as to which should be targeted by IW LEARN for project participation.

Sub-component 3c: IW Science Partnership. Lead UNEP in partnership with UNU-INWEH.

Expected **outputs** are: a) Completion of the first GEF IW Science Conference. b) Functional scientific network integrating IW project experts and the wider scientific community

The MTE assessed this sub-component to be **Satisfactory.** Output a) has been achieved and to some extent output b). The science conference was completed successfully with 193 participants including representatives from 45 GEF projects. From feedback to the MTE the conference was generally well received although some respondents felt it did not deliver as expected owing in part to disparate views held by key members of the organising committee on the structure and main objectives of the conference. Several stakeholders contacted found sessions on indicators and the GEF tracking tool to be of particular value, plus the networking opportunities. It is difficult to evaluate further at this stage as the post conference survey results have yet to be reported. Although the project document (UNEP) suggests that the intention was to repeat every two years this seems no longer to be the intention based on January SCM discussions. It was suggested that the best aspects of the conference could form part of future IW Conferences rather than have further regular stand-alone science conferences. The MTE fully supports this idea as it will ensure better focus and make more efficient use of resources.

Working groups on aquifers, River basins, Lake basins and LMEs, previously established under the GEF IW Project – “Enhancing the use of science in IW projects to improve project results” attended the conference to present results in the form of IW science synthesis reports and analysis reports and hold workshops, consultation forums etc to discuss, refine and finalize findings/recommendations which have been published in a report for each group (except for rivers group). Policy guidance/support for decision-makings (policy brief) is overdue but reported to be close to finalisation.

The conference report makes a number of pertinent recommendations to GEF and other stakeholders however these are dispersed throughout much of the document and some are rather vague especially with regard to how they might be achieved within the context of the GEF IW portfolio e.g. *“Pay full attention of the drivers of change, including demography, economic development and climate change;* “ others are more pragmatic e.g. *“GEF should develop an effective learning strategy, including a meta-database of scientific knowledge that also should capture evaluations of the effectiveness of governance structures, and the transfer of science into project governance and policy. There needs to be official guidance on GEF IW learning budgets (use of 1%)”.*  The MTE believes that the more practicable recommendations be extracted and submitted to GEF in a separate note which should lead to a considered response which should be published on the IW LEARN web site and used among other things to assess future impacts. Failing this much of the value of the conference will be lost. If it is intended that the Policy guidance brief mentioned above will cover this adequately then this recommendation may be redundant.

Sub-Component 3d: IW Focal Area Portfolio Results Dissemination – Lead Partner UNU

Expected **outputs** are: a) GEF IW project results and achievements captured in peer-reviewed journal. b) The achievements of the GEF IW Focal Area presented in two publications focusing on marine and freshwater systems. c) The achievements of the GEF IW Focal Area presented in a 20 minute film.

The MTE assessed this component as **Moderately Satisfactory.** Arrangements have been made for two special editions of ‘Environmental Development’ and an editor nominated and retained. Deadline for papers 1 February for publication in July, sufficient papers have been promised but only 5 received at time of MTE and the whole process is overdue by about 8 months

‘Community to Cabinet: Two Decades of GEF Action to Secure Transboundary River Basins and Aquifers’ was completed and launched at WWF6 in Marseille, March 2012, 800 copies distributed.

With regard to the Marine publication an annotated content list, story angles and contacts are being prepared by a consultant author but publication was pushed back Feb 2013 delivery as requested by GEF. According to the original workplan both these docs should have been completed by end Q3 of the project.

The proposed film was originally scheduled to have been finished for Rio Plus 20 (June 2012) but owing in part to the delay in producing the marine publication production of the film was also delayed as it relies to some extent for its story line on that publication. Progress is now being made and it is expected to be completed during Q2 2013.

**COMPONENT 4**. Information Management and Communications Platform to Support GEF IW Projects Learning and Dialogue. Lead UNEP

Expected **outputs** from component 4 are:

* IW Resource Center with user driven and user-friendly functionality for regional and thematic communities of practice (CoPs) and individual project websites
* Training and technical assistance for individual project website and links to UN-Water family platforms, to support targeted knowledge sharing and dialogues.
* Portfolio visualization tools (utilizing e.g. Google Earth and video), applications and regular dissemination including e-updates.
* Workspaces for specific portfolio subgroups such as COPs, project managers and governments and IWFT.
* A comprehensive searchable catalogue of GEF IW project experiences and results.

Overall this Component is assessed as **Moderately Satisfactory**. Some important features are delayed against the workplan in the inception report such as the visualisation tool and UN water family links while others seem to have been in a lesser state of readiness than originally perceived when the project was being formulated, such as the CoP platforms. A concerted effort will be required to catch up on outstanding issues to fully realise the potential of the website(s). What is notably lacking in the Project Document with regard to this Component is a detailed time bound work plan. All the activities described are shown to be ongoing from the start to the end of project. This is corrected to some extent in the Inception report but the MTE believes that activities should have been described in far more detail with clear milestones as indeed was done for the other components and their respective activities.

The general consensus of stakeholders contacted is that the IW LEARN website (http://iwlearn.net) has improved notably since the start of the project further enhanced by now being mobile friendly. However there also seems to be a sentiment among key stakeholders that more needs to be done to make the wealth of information from the IW portfolio more easily accessible and that this is linked to the “user friendliness” of the interface. That being said the MTE did not hear and could not find in reviewed documents a clear, detailed unambiguous description of what exactly is required and indeed what is possible with the resources available. And this in spite of the issue having been discussed at some length on a number of occasions by the ICT team, PCU IAs and GEF. It was decided at the SCM and the MTE fully supports the idea, that a suitably qualified consultant(s) be hired immediately to develop a technical design for the site that combines a clear understanding of what is required with a practicable plan for implementation. There have been suggestions that more use could be made of existing platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook and these possibilities should be factored into the analysis.

As mentioned previously the requirements of the CoP platform have been articulated by partners and the above exercise should not delay further implementation of these, where possible, by the ICT team.

Four successful and well received ICT training workshops have been conducted and a number of new toolkit websites developed and supported by the ICT team with good feed back. Clearly not all projects will use the IW Learn web toolkit but it is essential that those that do not develop websites that are compatible to assist with data exchange and linkages. Currently 64% of active GEF IW projects have establish a project website according to the IW:LEARN guidelines. As planned links have been established with all UN Water websites.

Regular e-bulletins are being prepared and widely distributed and these are appreciated by recipients. They could also be used more to provide updates on and encourage usage of CoPs.

The Portfolio Visualisation tools were officially launched at the IW Science Conference has great potential not only as a resource for projects but perhaps most notably for the IAs and GEF. The first layers on visualization tools have been consolidated (events, PCU locations, basins/ecosystems); OpenLayers & Google map/earth visualization tools launched.

The key stumbling block to fully demonstrate the full potential of this tool is reported to be the obtaining of information from projects; there is an unwillingness of projects to respond to requests from the PCU albeit, in some instances, this is due to the data requested been considered sensitive by PMs. It was also evident to the MTE at the SCM that there is some lack of clarity regarding what data and information should be collected and displayed and supports the view that PCU must engage in bilateral discussions with selected mature projects such as IWCAM, BCLME, PEMSEA etc to extract what none confidential data is available and thus enable the system to be properly tested and its features displayed. This may in turn induce more cooperation from the rest of the projects.

In addition to the GW and SFW CoPs other workspaces have been established for, GEF IW Project Manager’s CoP, IW LEARN Technical Advisory Group for the TDA-SAP methodology revision, IW LEARN Tool Kit CoP, Legal and Institutional Frameworks CoP, Nutrient Management CoP and CTI Learning Resource Network CoP. Nevertheless most have had little success in eliciting any substantial discussion or exchange of information other than for short periods such as during the development of the TDA-SAP course but with limited numbers of individuals. Online guidance has, however, been provided on the use of the workspaces in the form of manuals and FAQs.

With regard to the project results archive summary results have been assembled by the PCU from, the GEF Tracking Tool including results notes, final evaluations etc. and these will be uploaded to the archive database once this is ready, expected by end of February 2013. However there has not been much progress yet on the landing page or visualisation. It was reported to the MTE that many projects in the IW portfolio fail to complete the GEF Tracking tool which leaves significant gaps in data. The MTE was unable to obtain up-to-date information but if indeed projects are not completing this obligation it would be helpful if GEF-SEC reminded IAs of their obligations to complete the Tracking Tool.

It is imperative that the most if not all technical difficulties, updates etc are resolved within the next six months or at least before the next SCM, in order that the maximum potential is realised and can be showcased both there and at the next IW Conference. Specific actions that came out of the January SCM should be followed up rigorously including:

* Hiring a consultant to have an independent review of the website and the different platforms of which it is composed by **15 Feb**.
* Organize a technical design (knowledge management strategy) concept note to guide the website enhancements.
* update outline for the Visualization and share with PSC on how to proceed.
* Work directly with specific projects from each region that are known to be data rich (IWCAM, BCLME/Orange River, PEMSEA/South China Sea, Danube/Black Sea) to mine for information to pilot the visualization, particularly from TDA datasets. Acquire datasets, maps, videos and photos.

**COMPONENT 5** Programmatic Management Tools and Innovative Approaches related to Climate / Water and Private Sector Participation to Enhance GEF IW Portfolio Project Performance.

Notwithstanding the MTE recommendation below to remove the sub-component 5c (Flood Index-Insurance Pilot) and little progress on sub-component 5e (climate change methodology) the relatively greater importance to the overall project objective of the other sub-components where progress has been made results in this component being assessed as **Satisfactory.**

Sub-Component 5a: TDA- SAP Methodology and Course. Lead UNDP

Expected **output is**: A revised, and GEF IWTF endorsed, TDA/SAP on-line training course.

This sub-component is assessed as currently being **Satisfactory**. The bulk of the work has been done albeit delayed and is available online and provides excellent guidance to new and experienced practitioners. It is currently being updated/modified to be in line with the changes requested by the GEF and other PSC members who would like to see more water body specific guidance especially with regard to aquifers. The MTE believes that the majority of the TDA/SAP process is generic and it would be unwise to have completely separate processes developed for each water-body type. However, some water body specific examples and methodological guidance, particularly for aquifers and their recharge areas is necessary to bring the tool fully up to date with the IW Portfolio requirements. It will, however, be important to get complete clarity and agreement on what is required before the additional elements are added to avoid another round of amendments. On the online system each section provides a space for comments but this should be backed up with a process to collate and evaluate suggestions for improvement that might be received and the online version updated accordingly at regular intervals. The MTE believes that the link from the front page of iwlearn.net to the TDA-SAP page should be made more obvious. At the January 2013 SCM it was agreed that COPs and WGs to be asked for comments on the ecosystem specific guidance for the TDA/SAP Methodology and $5000 to be set aside to hire a consultant to look at the TDA for Groundwater.

Sub-Component 5b: Focal Area/ Project Manager Manual and Course

Expected **outputs** are: a)Leadership training for IW project managers, based on an IW Focal Area on-line manual and capacity building to support skills required. b) Finalised concept utilised in DVDs, web and printed. c) Training course material demonstrated at IWC6

This component is deemed **Satisfactory.**  The manual has been uploaded onto <http://manuals.iwlearn.net> however as with the TDA-SAP methodology The MTE believes that the link from the front page of iwlearn.net to the PM manual page should be made more obvious. The iwlearn.net page is where most people would look for the manual and it takes some searching to find the link and that will detract from its utility. Further relevant examples and information are being harvested from projects and will be added. Currently it not possible to print off a clean PDF version, which is desirable for many users, and this is being attended to. Preliminary feedback is favourable and the MTE believes this will be an extremely valuable resource for new and current PMs. On the online system each section provides a space for comments but this should be backed up with a process to collate and evaluate suggestions for improvement that might be received and the online version updated accordingly at regular intervals.

It is not clear exactly what form the proposed course will take and there currently seems lack of consensus on this point among the PSC members – a full course where one would work through the manual and have to pass a test at the end of each section before proceeding or a general test having read the manual. Given the nature of the online material the MTE believes that the latter approach is the most practical. It has been suggested that new PMs receive a Certification following successful completion of the test and be a mandatory part of the inception phase of all projects. The MTE supports this approach, as it is all too easy for new PMs to skip over this and miss valuable guidance in the inevitable rush to get new projects underway.

Sub-component 5c: Index-Insurance Pilot – Lead UNDP

Expected **output** is: Testing of 2-3 risk insurance mechanisms and other economic instruments on the basis of vetted climate risk methodology

No rating. This activity did not get off the ground for reasons beyond the control of the project.

It was intended that this innovative activity would be significantly co-financed through the UNDP Climate Risk Finance Facility however the finance did not materialise and in spite of PCU efforts to find alternative sources of funding for example some discussions were conducted with UNDP Bangkok on possible linkage to Adaptation Fund, discussions were held also with SwissRe (insurance broker) on possible partnerships and contact with IFC was initiated, but all to no avail.

In view of the overall funding shortfall no activities have been initiated. Given the difficulties encountered and the relatively risky nature in terms of achieving its output the MTE recommends that this sub-component be dropped from the project and funds diverted to other components to ensure a better chance of success of components that have already made some progress but would benefit from extra resources. Some minor reallocations were agreed at the SCM, see Annex 3.

Sub-component 5d: Private Sector Engagement. Lead partner GEFT

Expected **output is**: GEF IW and other experiences with public-private partnerships codified and demonstrated in 2-3 new projects.

The component is currently assessed as **Satisfactory.** A manual has been produced and comments just received from the GEF-SEC, which will be incorporated and added into the content ready to be published on the online manuals platform. Given the importance of this topic it has been proposed that funds saved from 5c could be directed to additional activities under this sub-component. The MTE supports this and some suggestions were tabled at the SCM such as trying to engage directly with a wider group of private sector partners in hopes of forming an advisory body based on e.g. UN Global compact. It is not clear to the MTE how these ideas would be implemented in practice and some investigation will be required before committing substantial funds. An MTE interviewee from one of the IAs, particularly knowledgeable in this regard cautioned against trying to develop a generic one-size-fits-all projects solution as this has not worked in the past.

Sub-component 5e: Mainstreaming Climate Impacts in IW

Expected **output** is: Methodology to address climatic variability & change impacts in shared water bodies

Rated as currently being **Unsatisfactory.** No progress on this sub-component to date which is strongly linked to TDA-SAP process which is thus dependent upon it for its own eventual success. According to the project workplan this component should have been completed by Q1 2012 and is thus considerably behind schedule. A consultant is to be hired to provide a synopsis of existing relevant materials that can guide IW project formulation and implementation. In this regard the MTE draws attention to the initiative led by GWP-Med under sub-component 1b. In order to utilise the extensive experience developed by UNECE at the “Second Workshop on water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins” UNECE worked with selected participants from SEE and MENA countries to share these experiences aiming to facilitate their transfer after adaptation to the specific realities in the south and east part of the Mediterranean area.

### Relevance

This aspect of the project is assessed by the MTE to be **Highly Satisfactory.** The project design, activities undertaken and results obtained are highly relevant to the stipulated project goal and objective, providing as they do divers opportunities for IW portfolio personnel most particularly project managers, to interact with each other and members of the broader relevant management and scientific communities and by so doing; assist established and new projects in acquiring relevant knowledge related to transboundary waters management; aid in project design and implementation; enhance the understanding and application of GEF IW experiences across the portfolio to produce better quality project results; facilitate the replication and up-scaling of good practices in transboundary waters management resulting in less costs and improved capacity to address transboundary concerns and finally ensure that insights generated through project interventions are shared and add value to the portfolio and beyond.

Virtually all respondents to this and previous IW Learn project evaluations have recognised the need for and value of the core activities supported by IW LEARN. The IW Portfolio is a dynamic ever evolving programme and personnel most especially project managers and other project staff are transient. It is rare for a Project manager or a project staff member to be directly involved with more than one IW project. The knowledge management services provided by IW Learn are thus critical if maximum advantage is to be gained from the considerable investments made by GEF in the past and those it will make in the future.

The project aligns with and is relevant to GEF5 International Waters strategic objective number 5 *‘Support foundational capacity building, portfolio learning and targeted research needs for ecosystem based joint management of transboundary water systems*.’ It also forms a key element in the GEF Knowledge Management Initiative.

### Effectiveness – achievement against Outcome indicators

The project has delivered significant results during its first half of implementation and it is expected that this progress will continue in the second half provided shortcomings of certain components discussed elsewhere in this report are addressed. Unfortunately what is missing in spite of their development being required as per the project documents and in the Inception report are mid-term indicators. These should have been developed at the inception meeting but were overlooked. Overall the project is assessed to be **Moderately Satisfactory** with respect to effectiveness of project implementation.

Table 1 below provides a summary of progress toward achieving the stated project outcome indicator targets as a result of activities and outputs accomplished to date discussed earlier in this report. Based on this the MTE has rated each of the project components in term of effectiveness of progress toward meeting targets as follows:

**COMPONENT 1.** MENARID Programme – Support via Land/Ground Water Integrated Management and Regional Portfolio Learning and Dialogue. **Satisfactory:** Good progress on all activities generating valuable results main outputs and outcomes likely to be achieved.

**COMPONENT 2.** Learning and Replication of Good Practices in Transboundary Surface and Groundwater Management. **Moderately Satisfactory**: Some progress in most aspects but even more pro-active approach required to thoroughly test the CoP concept as a means to achieving stated outcomes.

**COMPONENT 3.** Global and GEF IW Portfolio Learning and Dialogue to Enhance Project Delivery and Impact. **Satisfactory:** Two good conferences providingexcellent opportunities for learning and synthesis of experience and best practice in face to face environment. Crucial that recommendations from Science Conference and taken up by GEF if full value of investment is to be realised.

**COMPONENT 4.** Information Management and Communications Platform to Support GEF IW Projects Learning and Dialogue. **Moderately Satisfactory:**  Given the time already lapsed in project implementation the fact that several key design and content issues related to the platforms have still to be resolved is of concern.

**COMPONENT 5** Programmatic Management Tools and Innovative Approaches related to Climate / Water and Private Sector Participation to Enhance GEF IW Portfolio Project Performance. **Moderately Satisfactory:** Although there is some disparity across the sub-components the MTE believes the retained outcome targets are likely to be achieved by the end of the project.

Table 1. Project Progress against established Outcome indicators.

|  | **Indicator** | **Risks and Assumptions** | **Targets**  **End of Project** | **MTE amended target** | **Results as of 31/12/12** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Objective**  To strengthen global portfolio experience sharing and learning, dialogue facilitation, targeted knowledge sharing and replication in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of GEF IW projects to deliver tangible results in partnership with other IW initiatives | % IW projects participating at IW Conference and / or science conference or IW workshop or project-project learning exchange | Projects and Agencies agree to strengthen projects through improved guidance and encourage stronger links between projects | 100% of IW Projects participate in IW Conference and/or IW Science Conference or IW workshop or project-project learning exchange |  | 81% of IW Projects participate in IW Conference (65/80) and/or IW Science Conference or IW workshop or project-project learning exchange | Overall Satisfactory progress toward achieving stated project objective. |
| % of IW projects exchanging information between water ecosystem types | 50 % of existing projects demonstrate exchanges / sharing of information between different ecosystem water types |  | Some 37% (28 out of approximately 75 GEF IW projects) demonstrate or participate in exchanges to share information between different ecosystem water types (thru 2 regional workshops and twinning exchanges) |
| % of active projects establish a project website according to the IW:LEARN guidelines | 100% of active GEF IW projects establish a project website according to the IW:LEARN guidelines |  | 64% of active GEF IW projects establish a project website according to the IW:LEARN guidelines |
| % of active projects that produce IW Experience Notes, which center on a key project achievement or innovation. | 100% of active FSP’s produce at least 2 experience notes, and MSP’s produce at least 1 experience notes, which center on a key project achievement or innovation. |  | 0% of active FSP’s produce experience notes, 0 MSP’s produce experience notes, |
| Number of IW projects attracting private sector finance | 10 projects have attracted private sector finance |  | 1 project has attracted private sector finance |
| % existing IW projects uploading results to iwlearn.net | 85% of existing IW projects (and 50% of closed projects) provide results, etc. to iwlearn.net |  | 100% of existing IW projects (and 50% of closed projects) have provided some results, etc. to iwlearn.net |
| **Outcome 1.1**  *(sub-comp 1a.)*  Improved effectiveness in combating Land Degradation in MENARID through an enhanced role of groundwater and improved subsurface space management | % MENARID projects incorporating GW management planning | Facilitated technical groups and other IW LEARN tools promote effective exchanges among projects and countries and succeed in raising active participation / involvement of stakeholders. | 100% of MENARID projects incorporate 5 new management planning activities of GW use/protection in their activities. | 100% of MENARID projects incorporate at new management planning activities of GW use/protection in their activities. | Capacity of 100% of MENARID projects built to integrate groundwater elements and considerations into project execution. (all MENARID project portfolio attend at least 1 UNESCO training | Good progress.  In target ref to 5 new activities is arbitrary and unrealistic. |
| **Outcome 1.2**  *(sub-comps 1b, 1c)*  Enabling regional inter-basin coordination to enhance management capacity of institutions and project partners | Number of new regional processes in SEE | National governments, development partners and stakeholders engage willingly and productively in the dialogue and knowledge sharing activities.  Stakeholders are adequately represented in the dialogue and engage in effective interaction.  GEF projects in the SEE and the Med region are well informed about the IWLEARN and are willing or able to engage  Insufficient funding or capacity to hold 3 regional meetings  Sufficient interest to hold 5 learning exchanges in each region  Not all 3 ecosystem types (marine, groundwater, surface) participate equitably.  GEF IW projects are open and see value in engaging with projects dealing with different resource sectors | Enhance and existing political process in the SEE or Middle East Region |  | Enhanced an existing regional political process / initiative in the SEE Drin Basin – Initiated Nijerta basin – signs in MENA  None as yet | Very good progress |
| Number of new regional processes in Middle East |
| Number of new co-operation processes in transboundary basins | Cooperation on at least one transboundary basins is enhanced or initiated. | Cooperation in Nijerta basin. |
| Number of IW projects adopting new management approaches | 5 IW projects demonstrate that partners have adopted at least 2 different management approaches as a result of sub-component | None as yet but in process |
| **Outcome 2.1**  *(sub-comps 2a, 2c)*  Increased capacity of GEF groundwater and freshwater basin projects to exchange experiences and replicate successful groundwater management approaches and practices to address adaptive management | Number of CoPs formed | Facilitated and structured dialogues succeed in engaging active participation of stakeholders and practitioners  Learning champions fail to follow through in developing surface water agenda.  COP members find IW:LEARN community platform hard to use or reluctant to use | Two functional CoPs (surface freshwater and groundwater) established |  | CoPs formed. | In spite of difficulties with online CoPs good progress via face to face activities.  Indicators use language that makes monitoring difficult e.g. What is meant by involved in the CoPs. If one were to say actively involved then % is unrealistic.  10 Commissions seems arbitrary and should be assessed against the number of relevant commissions. |
| % of groundwater projects involved in CoP | 100% of IW groundwater projects involved | 100% of IW groundwater projects involved | 36% GW projects signed up |
| % surface freshwater projects involved in CoP | 75% of IW surface freshwater projects involved | 75% of IW surface freshwater projects involved | 85% GW projects signed up |
| Number of transboundary commissions (or equivalent) involved in CoP | 10 transboundary commissions involved | Currently 3 (Cartagena, Lake Victoria Fisheries, ICPDR | See comment |
| Number of groundwater practices replicated through IWL | 3 groundwater related priority replicable practices disseminated through IW LEARN platform, and 2 cases of integrated cooperative approaches among water-bodies documented. |  | None as yet |
| Number of exchanges between surface and groundwater projects | 5 exchanges between groundwater and surface water projects. |  | Achieved through various workshops and roundtables. |
| ~~Participation at groundwater CoP by surface water representatives and~~ *~~vice versa~~* | ~~Groundwater and surface water CoP representatives routinely attend each others meetings~~ | Remove as not clear what meetings are being referred to. |  |
| **Outcome 2.2**  *(sub-comp 2a)*  Lessons and science from GEF groundwater portfolio incorporated into and disseminated through networks, partners, and processes, strengthening the GEF IW GW portfolio | Number of examples/lessons/ good practices disseminated | GEF IW groundwater projects identify appropriate lessons for dissemination  Sufficient interest from IW groundwater projects to participate in IW Science Conference.  Continuing promotion of transboundary groundwater projects by GEF for future funding.  GEF IW groundwater and surface water projects interact and future GEF IW projects reflect better integration | 6 examples / lessons / good practices disseminated through networks and / or published through IW:LEARN and partner networks or programmes |  | Currently no clear examples of lessons disseminated. | Some progress via face to face meetings and other activities previously mentioned under sub-comp 2a and science conference |
| % of presentations focusing on groundwater at IW Science conference | 30% of presentations at IW Science conference focus on Groundwater | 25% presentations focused on GW. |
| **Outcome 3.1**  *(sub-comp 3a)*  Global GEF IW portfolio performance and capacities strengthened, in particular among project managers of GEF IW projects | % of IWC6 participants indicate increased capacity | Not all GEF IW projects are willing to engage in various types of portfolio learning activities or to expose any weaknesses in project implementation to external scrutiny.  Geopolitical and economic conditions enable full participation in the IWC6  The previous four IW conferences have helped to build a sense of community and trust among all IW projects. | At least 75% of IWC6 participant evaluations confirm increased capacity vs. individual baselines, and/or indicate changes to personal or institutional work plans |  | 88% of participants submitting evaluations confirm the IWC6 was relevant to work and an overall success (4.41/5) | Achieved. |
| % of IWC6 exhibit an innovation or replicable experience | 50% of IWC6-attending GEF IW projects exhibit at least one top innovation and/or replicable experience | 52% of attending GEF IW projects exhibit |
| % of IW project managers attend IWC6 | 75% of IWC6-attending GEF IW project managers attend the IWC6 and pre-conference workshops | 65% of IWC6 attending GEF IW managers attend the pre-conference |
| **Outcome 3.2**  *(sub-comps 3b, 3d)*  Increased awareness of GEF IW experiences and achievements and partnership with non- GEF supported Interventions | Number of global policy discussions/events with GEF IW Projects on the agenda | Mutual acceptance between GEF and meeting hosts regarding GEF IW projects’ participation side-events  Contact will be made with event organizers well in advance | 2 events featuring at least 4 projects per year |  | 5 events featuring 6 projects (Hai to Bonn, Victoria to Marseille, Dnipro to Rio, International River Symposium, Dinaric, Volta to UNECE Water Convention) linking to 5 separate political/dialogue processes | Reasonable progress |
| Number of partnerships (established between GEF IW projects and external partners), joint activities or co-funding resulting from global forum participation | At least one example each year |
| **Outcome 3.3**  *(sub-comp 3c)*  Improved technical implementation of projects through strengthening the science base of IW projects and improved integration of the wider science community into these projects. | % of GEF IW projects participating at Science Conference sharing results | IW projects collect and deliver ‘science’ information at IW Science Conference  IW and international scientists willing to participate and interact  Projects value the Journal publication  Projects actively participate submitting papers | 50% of IW projects participating in GEF IW Science Conference actively share results |  | 56% projects participating (45 GEF projects) | Reasonable progress mainly via science conference. |
| Number of IW projects referenced in scientific literature | 10 IW projects are ‘cited’ in the Science Citation Index |  | 0 projects cited in index |
| % of IW projects submitting papers to journal | 40% of IW portfolio submit papers for consideration in Journal | SCM mins record change to 24 projects not clear why – MTE recommends retention of original. | 2 to date. |
| ~~% readers satisfied~~ | ~~Reader surveys indicate 75% satisfied and willing to contribute / read future editions~~ | Not measurable – remove. |  |
| % IW projects demonstrate examples of shared practices | 50% of GEF IW projects indicate at least one example of sharing practices |  | 6% (10/168) of GEF IW projects indicate at least one example of sharing practices |
| **Outcome 4.1**  *(Comp 4)*  Improved web-based information and knowledge management and utilization of the IW resource center and project communication platforms | % of IW Stakeholders satisfied with iwlearn.net | Stakeholders have good access to internet  Web-platform actively used by other IW:LEARN activities  Availability of up-to-date content  Other ‘waters’ web sites are up-to-date | Stakeholder satisfaction rating for iwlearn.net >75% ‘satisfied’ |  | No formal survey of stakeholder satisfaction was undertaken for the MTE but from feedback received by MTE stakeholder satisfaction is close to target but usage is low. | Progress in that website has been much improved but still some critical issues regarding functionality and content esp. wrt to CoP platforms and visualisation tool. Not as advanced as it should be at this stage of the project.  MTE doubts that unique hits is a good measure of outcome success. More of a measure of general public awareness. |
| \Number of hits per month on iwlearn.net increase | End of project show 25% more hits per month vs. baseline |  | From a baseline of 6,739 av. Unique hits per month the average increase over the first 12 months but over the last 12 months it is 3% down on baseline. |
| Number of downloads per month increase | End of project show 25% more downloads per month vs. baseline |  | From a baseline of 19 downloads per month there was 89% increase to May 2012 but this has since dropped back to baseline for average of last 8 months. |
| **Outcome 4.2**  *(Comps 4)*  Enhanced visibility and visualization of project activities and results facilitates cooperation and replication | % of projects utilising the IW:LEARN Website toolkit or offering a website consistent with IW:LEARN Website Guidelines | 75% of projects utilising the IW:LEARN Website toolkit or offering a website consistent with IW:LEARN Website Guidelines |  | 64% of active GEF IW projects establish a project website according to the IW:LEARN guidelines | Good progress |
| **Outcome 4.3**  *(Comp 4)*  Enhanced stakeholder access to data and results from IW projects | % of IW projects have current information on project results iwlearn.net | At least 90% of IW projects have current information on project results at iwlearn.net or maintain links to project sites housed elsewhere |  | 45% of IW projects, consisting of both ongoing projects with websites and recently commenced projects have current information in the Project Database. | Progress but difficulties getting projects to supply required data sets. |
| **Outcome 5.1**  *(sub-comps 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d)*  Improved standardization and harmonization of new GEF methodological approaches as well as results-based management in IW projects to help address new global issues & improve performance, including vulnerability to climatic variability & change in transboundary basins. | Endorsement of TDA/SAP methodology by GEF IWTF | The TDA/SAP methodology and training course will be endorsed by GEF IWTF. Sustainability will rely on continued support from GEF and the Agencies.  The methodology and training course is perceived as prescriptive. Lack of institutional ownership leads to poor delivery coverage and little further development of the process.  Agreement between GEF, Agencies and Projects on Manual contents  Co-operation needed between insurance and financial private sector with IW projects at the transboundary level  An agreed synthesis of current best practices can be prepared and accepted by experts/IWTF  Projects and private sector are willing to participate in preparing guidance  Private sector values involvement with GEF projects | GEF IWTF endorsement |  | TDA/SAP draft online and GEF comments to be incorporated | Good progress |
| Number of IW projects utilizing new methodology | 5 new projects utilize the new methodology by end of project |  | 5 projects using the new methodology (Kura, Humboldt, CLME, Baikal, Amazon) | Good progress |
| Number of CTAs/PMs using the manual | 50% CTAs/PM using the manual | 10% CTAs/PM have taken online Test on Manual content | Too early to determine | All PMs should be expected to review the manual and be consulting the manual at regular intervals to enhance harmonization of approach and full utilization of lessons. |
| ~~IW project start up time reduced~~ | ~~Start-up phase of projects take 50% less time~~ | None |  | Remove this indicator  Does not address the Outcome in any meaningful way. |
| ~~Majority of project stakeholders accept index-insurance methodology~~  ~~Number of IW projects using approach~~ | ~~Acceptance by stakeholders of approach~~  ~~At least one IW projects utilize methodology~~ | None |  | Remove both indicators  as related activity no longer to be pursued. |
| Number of IW projects using approach to climatic variability & change | Agreed methodology developed and piloted in 5 GEF5 IW projects; Acceptance of approach by IWTF for use in all IW projects | Agreed methodology developed and piloted in 5 GEF5 IW projects | No pilots as yet | If the methodology is agreed this de facto involves IWTF acceptance. However related subcomponent yet to commence activities. |
| **Outcome 5.2**  *(sub-comp 5d)*  Public-private partnerships promoted and facilitate sustainability of GEF IW interventions | Number of IW projects with sustainable private sector finances | 10 projects have developed/promoted public-private sector engagement |  | 1/10 projects have developed/promoted public-private sector engagement | Some progress in that draft of guidance manual produced. |
| % of IW projects included public-private partnerships in sustainability plans | 50% of IW projects have a sustainability plan / exit strategy that utilizes the best practices collated |  | None as yet |  |

### Efficiency

The MTE assessed the project overall in efficient use of time to date as **Moderately Satisfactory.**

The project began implementation as expected in January 2011 and is due to end in July 2014 hence about 57% of project time has elapsed and as shown under Section 3.5.4 Financial Planning, 55% of project funds has been utilised to date which indicates the project is largely on track in this respect. Some savings have been made most notably in regard to Monitoring & Evaluation activities where only 14% of funds have been utilised and further savings of about $150,000 were realised on IWC6 allowing some additional funds to be diverted to other components where original budgets were tight. However costs associated with project management are well ahead of expected owing it seems to under budgeting for this component at the start of the project. If the current spend rate under this component remains the same unspent budgets are barely sufficient and must be monitored carefully.

Table 2. Deviations from expected schedule of project deliverables

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Deviation from scheduled delivery |
| 1a MENARID | No deviations |
| 1b SEE & Med Dialogue | No deviations |
| 1c Services to regions | No deviations |
| 2a Groundwater Copy | Groundwater Integration Dialogue #1 in the MERCOSUR region. National experts involved in the follow up to the GEF Guarani Project. Due Q4 2012 now expected Q2 2013 |
| 2b Surface water CoP | Some delay with Formation of Facilitator Group and facilitation of exchanges to prepare surface water 'learning agendas'. Now expected Q1 2013. |
| 3a IWC6 | No major deviations, except the final report overdue expected Q1 2013 |
| 3b Global dialogue participation | No deviation |
| 3c Science partnership | No major deviation although evaluation report overdue. Expected Q1 2013 |
| 3d Journal  3d Publications  3d Film | Significant delay: due Q2 2012 now expected July 2013.  Freshwater completed, Marine, delayed at GEF behest, was to be finished by Rio Plus 20 (June 2012) now expected Q2 2013. D  Significant delay: should have been finished for Rio Plus 20 (June 2012)  Now expected Q2 2013 |
| COMPONENT 4 | Visualization tool is late but difficult to evaluate in detail as the workplan for this component indicates that all activities were ongoing thru the entire implementation period of the project. |
| 5a TDA-SAP Methodology | Entire activity, both methodology and course were to be finished Q4 2012. GEF slow to comment  >2013Q1 |
| 5b PM Manual | Some delay preparation of accompanying Course outstanding now due Q1 2013 |
| 5c Flood index | No progress |
| 5d Private Sector | 2011Q4 Manual – delayed owing to slow response to draft by GEF. Completion shortly. |
| 5e Climate methodology | Significant delay to entire component due Q2 2012 now expected Q2 2013 |

As indicted in Table 2 above, with regard to delivering results as per the planned schedule from the Inception Report most activities are on schedule but with some notable exceptions whose completion is outstanding. Most critical in the view of the MTE are the delays in a) finalising the ICT platforms, b) full completion of the TDA/SAP and PM manuals and c) Climate mainstreaming. Whereas the MTE believes that the project will catch up the in the time remaining having so many loose ends, reports, film, IT fixes etc distracts and dilutes the efforts of the PCU and this is confirmed by the PM.

Finally with regard to efficiency as noted under section 3.5.2 the MTE considers the dual IAs, and EA’s and split PCU to be a highly inefficient arrangement with concomitant impact on effectiveness as a consequence of geographic separation and weakened command chain.

### Assumptions and Risks

The MTE considered the identification and management of risks to be **Satisfactory**. The Project Document identified the underlying assumptions for attainment of project objectives and the key risks. These were further updated in the inception report and are shown in Table 1. above and following Table 3 identified potential risks and means of mitigation. The assumptions and risks identified seem appropriate for this project but it is now clear that the level of certain risks is currently higher. This applies to Risks number 4 and 6 and relates to the currently very poor support from projects with regard to providing materials and data for the website and visualisation tool and participation in the CoPs. The MTE believes the appropriate levels of risk are now **Medium** and **High** respectively. Identified mitigation measures are appropriate but they need to be stepped up if the medium and high level risks are to be avoided.

**Table 3. Project Risk Table**

|  | **Risk description** | Rating | **Mitigation measures** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Not all GEF IW projects are willing to engage in various types of portfolio learning activities or to expose any weaknesses in project implementation to external scrutiny | L | Project stakeholders are officially encouraged to utilize GEF IW:LEARN services at all levels of implementation and execution |
| 2 | Participants are sufficiently aware of GEF IW:LEARN and know how to both engage its services and provide their own experience to peers (via CoP participation, IWEN production IWC engagement and information syndication) | M | The project will effectively market its basic service line to the portfolio |
| 3 | A flood index for an insurance based mechanism is not feasible. This is a highly innovative index in an emerging area of climate risk financing. As compared to other tested index-based insurance products, the complexity stems from (i) transboundary nature of the risk considered; (ii) potential human intervention and subsequent willingness of the insurance industry to adopt the index | M | If the demonstration does not succeed, a methodology would still have been developed and capacity built on climate risk assessment in transboundary basins |
| 4 | With a global spread of constituents, the website and similar mechanisms cannot be replied upon to “pull” beneficiaries. There is a need to “push” (as the previous IW:LEARN team did with their direct interaction) as well as rely on “pull” for electronic products and services. | L  **(M)** | The project will make an investment in direct interaction with beneficiaries. Constituents need to be engaged to the extent possible to create a sense of ownership. |
| 5 | The proposed regional context is a positive step but it risks fragmentation (between regions and themes) and might weaken its global dimension and hence the cost benefit is much reduced. | L | The project's management will be specifically tasked with ensuring coherence (in their terms of reference) |
| 6 | Partners do not interact between different CoPs or follow requests to increase interactions from PCU/PSC | M  **(H)** | Agreements between partners/Agencies/EAs will reflect importance of co-operation to ensure integrated approach |
| 7 | There is a risk of instability and potential for continued worsening of political situation in the Middle East | M | Mitigation strategy will be to redirect funds accordingly in the event that instability prevents us from conducting workshops in the region |

## Assessment of the progress towards achievement and sustainability of project outcomes

Progress toward achievement of Outcomes is generally satisfactory and most are likely to be realised to a large extent by the end of the project, what is less certain at this stage is their sustainability. Thus the likelihood that the project will achieve and sustain its Outcomes is assessed by the MTE as being **Moderately Likely.**

With the GEF International Waters focal area lacking an overarching governing convention, IW:LEARN is seen as filling the gap of the function of experience sharing and learning typically found under conventions and their clearing house mechanisms. Numerous respondents to the MTE have pressed for a permanent IW-LEARN to be incorporated into the GEF Secretariat and one of the key recommendations from the Terminal Evaluation of the last phase (foot note) was that ‘*IW-Learning should be mainstreamed into IW projects (especially during their formulation stages) and institutionalised by the Agencies and particularly by the GEF Secretariat within the IW core function of the Secretariat. The key to sustainability of IW:LEARN benefits is therefore mainstreaming and institutionalisation. Without it, the GEF will be that much poorer.’* The MTE supports those statements. However MTE respondents close to GEF state that institutionalising within GEF is, unfortunately, unlikely to happen in the near future.

It seems inevitable, therefore, that if the core outcomes of the project are to be sustained and the overwhelming consensus of those involved with GEF IW portfolio and the MTE believe they should be, some incremental costs will, of necessity, need to be covered by GEF. And indeed this is already been done, to some extent, through several GEF projects such as the currently under implementation *GEF IW: LEARN/CTI, (foot);* the project *‘A Global Community of Practice to Improve the Management of Large Marine Ecosystems and their coasts (LME/ICM-CoP)’* expected to start implementation later this year and the project through which the next IW Conference will be supported – ‘*Implementing Integrated Land Water and Wastewater Management in Caribbean SIDS.’* However none of these provide for core IW LEARN services and hence a follow on project will be required to ensure continuity and sustainability of IW Learn services to the whole IW portfolio.

It was commented at the SCM by the GEF representative that KM is playing an increasingly important role within GEF-SEC and anticipated that KM, portfolio learning and RBM would take a more prominent role in the GEF6 strategy currently under formulation. He stressed that they for their part would be doing their utmost to sustain the IWLEARN activities and were looking at innovative partnership arrangements with new partners such as large international NGOs and possibly UNECE et to cover some of the costs, together with perhaps some incremental funding from GEF.

Starting under GEF4 (Nov 2006) all new GEF IW projects developed are required to allocate 1% of the budget to IW Learning activities much of which is usually spent on participation of project staff and relevant government officials at the IW Conference. Otherwise no direction is provided by GEF regarding how the money should be spent. To further spread the cost of learning activities and better target the funds the MTE recommends that the allocation be increased to 2% as soon as possible and that clear direction is given as to how the funds are to be spent. This should be fully articulated as part of the Project’s Sustainability plan – see below.

Before the end of the Project, all project partners according to their TORs and are required to elaborate a final report that must include … *’any possible plan or strategy for sustaining the activity and its benefits after project termination*.’ The PCU is further charged with incorporating the individual partner plans into an overall sustainability plan for the project. The MTE recommends that work on these sustainability plans begins forthwith because in most cases the institutional support required will need to be formally solicited and approved by relevant authorities prior to the end of the project if the sustainability plan is to provide a clear road map for the future rather than a mere wish-list. A comprehensive sustainability plan was written in October 2008[[3]](#footnote-3) and provides a useful model for the forthcoming plan. What seems to have been lacking previously according to the PM, who helped formulate the plan, was obtaining full ownership by IAs and GEF.

## Catalytic role

The terminal evaluation of the previous phase rated that project as highly satisfactory with regard to the projects catalytic role and replication and there are already some notable examples under this phase under component 1b (see below) and this aspect of the project is currently assessed by the MTE as being **Satisfactory.**

The International Roundtable on Protection and Sustainable Use of Transboundary Waters in Southeastern Europe (15-16 December 2011, Zagreb, Croatia) has resulted in a decision to continue  the Petersburg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process. Both the German Ministry of Environment and UNECE, re-confirmed its commitment to partner with the GEF IWLEARN towards the enhancement of cooperation on TWRM in SEE. In addition, it was decided that the Petersburg-type  approach should be replicated elsewhere in the SEE area if respective interest is expressed by SEE countries.

The International Roundtable on Transboundary Water Resources Management in the Southern Mediterranean was organized back to back with the Sixth Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The Roundtable fed in the MoP of the Water Convention and facilitate related discussion; the conclusions of the Roundtable including the expression of support of the participants to the prospect of the southern Mediterranean countries becoming eligible to accede to the Water Convention were presented to the MoP. Tunisia announced its interest to explore possibilities to initiate the process to accede the Water Convention. A new initiative for transboundary cooperation is being developed between Algeria and Tunisia for the river Medjerda within the AMCOW framework with the support of GWP-Med. A concrete request was made for the support of the initiative by International Organisations, including GEF, and donors. The UfM Secretariat, GWP-Med and UNECE as well as the UNESCWA responded positively as new partners.

Whereas the above are good examples which were brought to the attention of the MTE the MTE believes there may well be many more in the other regions and the PCU and Partners should collect and document these to demonstrate further the value of IW LEARN and for purposes of the final evaluation.

## Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

The Project is assessed overall as **Satisfactory** with respect to monitoring and evaluation systems.

### M&E design

The project documents and Inception report contain details of a comprehensive M&E and associated, roles responsibilities and budgets fully consistent with GEF and IA M&E policies. The Project Results Framework is fully elaborated and clear attempts have been made to make the Outcome indicators SMART[[4]](#footnote-4) although some are considered by the MTE to be lacking in this respect. The indicators were reviewed at the last SCM and changes highlighted in Table 1, in section 3.1.3. Unfortunately what is missing in spite of mention being made to them in the project documents and Inception report, are mid-term indicators. These should have been developed at the inception meeting but were overlooked. M&E design is assessed as **Satisfactory**

### M&E plan implementation

As required a project inception workshop was held on March 2011 with all relevant parties present. A full and comprehensive report was produced albeit without the elaboration of mid-term outcome indicators. Minor justified modifications were made to the results framework and risk table.

Day to day monitoring is the responsibility of the PCU and this has been done most effectively utilising weekly virtual meetings with PCU components in Bangkok and Nairobi and regular monitoring of activities and expenditures utilising a shadow budget and project activity master spread sheet.

The Project Steering Committee is the primary governing body intended to provide strategic guidance to the project execution and formally supervise all activities undertaken through the PCU. The PCU met for the first time immediately following the Inception workshop, and again, with partial participation, in the margins of the IWC6 and then again virtually (partial participation) in June 2012. It was intended according to the TOR for the Committee that it should meet twice per year, once face-to-face and once virtually. Unfortunately the SCM did not have its second full face to face meeting until January 2013 nearly two years after the first. Given the delayed status of some of the key project activities the MTE considers it critical that the SCM meet again face-to-face, with full participation at about the half way point through the remainder of the project.

Quarterly progress reports as required by the M&E plan to be produced by the PCU with oversight from UNOPS are the main project status reports and should be distributed to all SCM members. In addition the project is required to update UNDPs Atlas based and Enhanced Results Based Management Platform. Regarding the latter, this has been complied with although it appears that progress reports have only been entered into the ERBM since quarter 1 of 2012. With respect to the former the MTE notes that the reports offer a succinct overview of progress and indicate slips and corrections and very briefly outstanding issues. The MTE believes that these reports would be of more benefit if more emphasis were given to the issues and corrective actions and responsible parties indicated – more of a typical issue log. Currently the progress reports are only sent directly to the UNDP RTA and UNOPS, other SCM are expected to read reports once posted on the IW LEARN website. The MTE believes that if SCM members are to respond to project progress reports as they should the reports must be sent to all member of the Steering Committee directly and comments sought. The M&E plan also requires that project financial status is reported on quarterly including information regarding and delivery of expected co-financing and leveraged additional co-financing. Both these elements are absent from the QPRs and these omissions should be corrected for the remainder of the project.

With regard to annual reporting the M&E plan requires the project to deliver the standard Annual Project Review/Project Implementation Reports (APR/PIR) and this indeed completed for the period from start of project to June 2012 in time for the June 2012 SCM. M&E implementation is assessed as **Satisfactory.**

### Budgeting and funding for M&E activities

The M&E activities and associated budgets (total 150,000 USD) presented in the Project Document is considered by the MTE to be consistent with the scope and overall budget of the project. All the expected M&E activities planned have been undertaken by the Project or are a continuous process. It has not been possible to verify the precise costs of the various activities during the MTE. M&E budgeting and funding is assessed as **Highly Satisfactory**

### Long-term monitoring

The GEF Tracking Tool containing as it does two Process Indicators relating to IW learning activities provides some long term monitoring. Nevertheless given the unusually long duration of the IW LEARN series of projects it is unfortunate that a formal system of monitoring and estimating project impacts against expectations has not been instigated. Any future IW LEARN project should include a component to investigate, and report on previous IW LEARN impacts both directly on the GEF IW portfolio and on related programmes via catalytic influences. The PM did report however that in preparation for a planned presentation of the IW LEARN programme to the GEF CEO the PCU has established a beneficiary database of 1000's of people who participated in workshops, IT workshops, IWC's, dialogues, twinnings and global dialogues with a few to surveying them and following up on their related activities. Project long-term monitoring is assessed as **Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

## Assessment of processes that affected attainment of project results

Overall this is considered by the MTE to be **Satisfactory.**

### Preparation and readiness

The MTE assessed the project to be **Moderately Satisfactory** in respect to Preparation and Readiness. The development of the current IW LEARN builds on experiences dating from 1997 as an experimental portfolio-wide knowledge management and capacity building initiative, that also organized the first GEF IW Conference (IWC) in Budapest in 2000. A foundational project during the period 2000-2003 provided knowledge management training and on-demand technical assistance for GEF IW projects, as well as piloting of a number of learning tools. The subsequent Operational Phase of IWLEARN (2004-2008), built on pilot phase. During this period a further 4 IW conferences were organised every two years in differing locations around the globe. It is also notable that many of the key figures in the development of the project have been involved with IW LEARN since very early on in the programme and some from the very beginning. This wealth of experience plus the observations and recommendations from mid-term and final evaluations summarised in a document produced by current Project Manager of the previous projects, were thus available for the development of the current phase under a PPG grant extending from December 2009 to December 2011. The core activities of IW LEARN, i.e. those that are seen to most directly respond to the needs of the Portfolio are thus rightly prominent in the current project namely to deliver its varied service lines consisting of both information management activities and face-to-face capacity building initiatives. experience sharing and learning and dialogue facilitation notable under components 1, 3 and 4.

The emphasis on Ground water in Components 1a, 2a and related sub-components stems from the GEF having increased its focus on the Mediterranean and MENARID regions, as well as on groundwater management issues. The new IW:LEARN project includes cross-project and agency learning support to GEF project teams on methodologies for groundwater/surface water management, especially concerning aquifer protection and recharge issues in the MENARID region with mobilizing new partners.

Several analyses of the main project stakeholders are reported to have been undertaken during the PPG phase. In addition, each project sub-component had a sub-set of IW:LEARN’s overall stakeholders contributing and undertaking further surveys to design the proposed sub-component activities.

Perhaps most importantly in terms of readiness however is the apparent lack at the start of the project of a clear articulation of the design specification of the overarching ICT component 4. Although the MTE notes that the PM did produce more detailed descriptions of the requirements for the Visualisation Tool and Results Archive shortly after project start up it seems not to have had the desired impact. This has led to several switches in software platform and technical specifications and a lack of clarity among users and the ICT of exactly what the various ICT tools should be delivering. This was most evident at the January 2013 SCM which the MTE attended and led to the recommendation to engage a consultant to look at overall design and content specs. The MTE considers this to be most unfortunate given that the project is half way through its implementation. The UNEP Components Coordinator (Nairobi) expressed understandable frustration at the lack of clear or shifting guidelines however the MTE believes that clarity and stability should have been insisted upon by UNEP-PCU at the onset and fully documented.

### Implementation approach and adaptive management

The MTE assessed the Project as **Satisfactory** with regard to implementation approach and adaptive management. Project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project documents are considered by the MTE to have been designed with clear roles and responsibilities that have been largely followed by the project .

The project documents outline the relative comparative advantages of the two implementing agencies with regard to the dual project implementation and notes UNDPs global network of country offices and the fact that UNDP has successfully lead the implementation of the IW:LEARN project since its inception in 1998. UNDP is also the implementing agency for the current project: Portfolio Learning in International Waters with a Focus on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands and Regional Asia/Pacific and Coral Triangle Learning Processes” (CTI IW:LEARN) which will support continuation of a number of the successfully piloted KM activities under the IW:LEARN pilot and operational phases from 2000 - 2008. In addition, UNDP has established itself as one of the leading international organizations supporting the improved governance of transboundary water bodies. Whereas UNEPs comparative advantage lies in knowledge management, science to policy linkages and capacity building. UNEP has long-implemented GEF IW:LEARN’s information management agenda, including specifically, the iwlearn.net website and subsidiary website toolkit.

In the view of the MTE while the above supports dual implementation it does not fully justify it or exclude single agency implementation.

The MTE believes that the arrangement of dual IAs is inefficient requiring as it does the production of two full project documents and associated approval procedures, and more important a weakening of project oversight and command chain and the resulting de facto split in the PCU. And although this problem has been specifically addressed in the project document following previous evaluations drawing attention to the negative impact of this arrangement it is reported that some difficulties remain regarding the command chain within the current PCU.

The need to divide the project into 15 sub-components with 12 intended Outcomes under the 5 main components does result in a rather overcomplicated project structure which leads to resources especially those of the PCU being thinly spread. In addition, although interesting and innovative the MTE considers that the components on the Index Insurance Pilot and mainstreaming of climate impacts could have been left out given the time and funds allocated to the overall project.

The MTE considers that the large number of pre-selected partners, several with responsibilities for several sub-components as illustrated in the table below is an unnecessary over complication that has led to inefficiencies of implementation and added to the burden of the PCU to orchestrate partner activities and deliverables. This is not to say that lead individuals within the partner agencies have not been fully cooperative and committed to the project as this has indeed been reported with regard to all partner agencies.

**Table 4. Matrix of responsibilities of Partner to Sub-Component.**

| **Sub-Comp.** | **UNDP** | **UNEP** | **UNESCO** | **UNU** | **GWP-MED** | **IUCN** | **Sea Start** | **Rhodes Uni** | **CEP** | **PEMSEA** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1.a** |  |  | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1.b** |  |  |  |  | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1.c** | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **S** | **S** | **S** |
| **2.a** | **S** |  | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.b** | **S** |  |  |  |  | **L** |  |  |  |  |
| **3.a** | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.b** | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.c** | **S** | **S** |  | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.d** | **S** | **S** | **S** | **L** | **S** | **S** |  |  |  |  |
| **4a-e** | **S** | **L** | **S** | **S** | **S** | **S** | **S** |  |  |  |
| **5.a** | **L** |  |  | **S** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5.b** | **L** |  |  | **S** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5.c** | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5.d** | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5.e** | **L** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The project Steering committee met for the first time immediately following the Inception workshop, again with partial participation in the margins of the IWC6 Oct 2011 and again virtually in June 2012. Although it was intended that the SC would meet twice per year, once face to face and once virtually, unfortunately the SCM did not have its second full face to face meeting until January 2013 nearly two years later. Given the delayed status of some of the key project activities the MTE considers that the SC has only partially fulfilled its role of providing strategic direction, guidance and assessment to maximise the projects execution progress.

The PCU is comprised of the following individuals.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title | Location |
| UNOPS CTA/Project Manager | Bratislava |
| UNDP-UNOPS Project Coordination Officer | Bratislava |
| UNEP Project Coordinator | Nairobi |
| UNEP Technical Assistant | Nairobi |
| SeaStart Information Technology Specialist | Bangkok |
| SeaStart Communications and Training Specialist | Bangkok |
| SeaStart Information Technology Assistant | Bangkok |

It is reported by all the PCU that whereas the split between three locations (and three agencies) is by no means ideal they have adapted well to the situation and virtual meetings are held each week. It is clear that the PCU members are highly competent individuals who are dedicated to their tasks and have adapted well to the projects constant demands and have sought innovative solutions to the challenges met. The MTE believes, however, that for such a project having the PCU in a single location under a single agency with a clear chain of command would have substantially aided communication and progress particularly with regard to the ICT platforms.

Given the multiple sub-components and partner agencies the MTE believes that more programme support should have been provided to the PCU in the project design and budget. This has become even more evident since UNOPS and UNDP agreed that more routine administrative tasks would fall to the PCU rather than UNOPS IW Unit in Copenhagen. The original support provided in the project document is that of a single administrative assistant and this was provided, but only part time, as an in kind contribution from UNDP Bratislava office where the PM is located. Thanks to savings made, largely on the IWC6, funds have been available to support the hiring of a much needed programme officer since April 2012. It is clear that programme and administrative support requirements were underestimated and although the current situation is functional the PCU and the MTE agrees that additional support through perhaps an intern or more in-kind support from UNDP would allow for more effective implementation in the remaining period of the project.

### Stakeholder involvement

Although the primary stakeholders may be defined as GEF recipient countries, IW projects and their partners, GEF Agencies, EAs and the GEF, IW:LEARN’s most important stakeholders are the managers of active GEF IW projects, as well as those under development. A number of project managers or ex project managers were involved in project development and some are also members of the Technical Advisor Group providing input, in particular to the TDA/SAP manual and the Project Managers Manual.

Ongoing communication and involvement of stakeholders, primarily PMs and partner institutions is primarily through the workshops, targeted learning events and twinnings. All key stakeholder groups have been actively involved in the IWC6 and the Science Conference. A key objective of the project is that the face-to-face collaborative interventions be enhanced via the online Communities of Practice but as discussed elsewhere in this report this has not to date met with any real success.

In general, from feedback received the MTE believes that excellent collaboration between the various partners and institutions has been developed and maintained. This aspect of the project is assessed by the MTE to be **Satisfactory.**

### Financial planning and management

This aspect of the project is assessed by the MTE to be **Satisfactory.** Project finances are overseen and managed by UNOPS and UNEP-DEWA for the UNDP and UNEP implemented components respectively according to their respective rules and procedures. Once again this does lead to a difficulty for the PCU as the financial management procedures and online resources available to the PCU are quite different and incompatible except when rolled up to full Component level. And whereas the PM is actively involved in the financial planning process of the UNOPS/UNDP component and has maintained a detailed and regularly updated shadow budget he has no input into the UNEP financial management process.

Notwithstanding the above operational difficulties the MTE believes that both financial and administrative management have been carried out to the expected standards by both executing agencies.

Table 5 shows the overall project budget by component with variances in expected versus actual expenditures over the first two years of the project. What is notable is that for components 3, 5 & 7 expenditures are lagging whereas for project management etc expenditure is 48% in excess of the expected. In regard to component 3 much of this is due to savings made on the IWC6 and for the M&E component is similarly due to savings. The lag in component 5 is owing to delayed implementation of several subcomponents discussed elsewhere in this report. The over expenditure against project management is, from discussions with the PCU and UNOPS, due largely to underestimation of these costs during project formulation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 5. MENARID GEF IW: LEARN – Summary of budgets expenditures and variances. | | | | | | | |
| Comp. | Description | Initial Budget | Expenditure to Date | Planned expend. at start | Variance % to date | 2013 Budget | 2014 Budget |
| 1  UNDP | 1. MENARID Support | 906,290 | 495,269 | 565,600 | -12% | 235,068 | 177,534 |
| 2  UNDP | Accelerated Learning and Replication | 405,209 | 237,441 | 230,600 | 3% | 122,863 | 43,255 |
| 3  UNDP | Global and GEF IW Portfolio Learning | 763,980 | 419,326 | 610,600 | -31% | 241,693 | 128,383 |
| 4  UNEP | Information Management and Comms. Platform  *NB. These figures include UNEP 3c.* | 935,000 | 513,766 | 533,117 | -4% | 210,617 | 210,617 |
| 5  UNDP | Programmatic Tools | 407,371 | 210,493 | 260,800 | -19% | 152,870 | 64,885 |
| UNDP | Monitoring and Evaluation | 155,150 | 22,011 | 67,500 | -67% | 32,100 | 77,575 |
| UNDP | Project Management PCU inc Travel | 522,000 | 352,979 | 238,500 | 48% | 137,310 | 46,630 |
|  | TOTALS | 4,095,000 | 2,251,284 | 2,506,717 | 11% | 1,132,520 | 748,879 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 6. Summary of Co-financing Pledged and received Sources** | | | | | | |
| **Activity** | **Name of Co-finance source** | **Classification** | **Type** | **Amount Committed** | **Total Co-financing Recorded** | **% Received** |
|  | **Original Pledges** |  |  |  |  |  |
| All | UNDP Energy and Environment Group | Impl. Agency | Grant | 415,000 | 0 | Will not be realised - |
| All | UNDP Energy and Environment Group | Impl. Agency | In-Kind | 1,348,000 | 0 | - |
| 1a&2b | UNESCO-IHP | Multilat. Agency | In-Kind | 550,000 | 115000 | 21 |
| 1b | Cornell University | NGO | In-Kind | 40,000 | 0 | - |
| 1b | UNECE | Multilat. Agency | Cash/In-Kind | 60,000 | 37139 | 62 |
| 1c | Sea-Start | NGO | In-Kind | 130,000 | 0 | - |
| 1c | UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme | Multilat. Agency | In-Kind | 100,000 | 12500 | 13 |
| 2a | IUCN-WANI | NGO | In-Kind | 202,000 | 39430 | 20 |
| 3c | UNEP-IWG (Comp3) | Impl. Agency | In-Kind | 200,000 | 0 | - |
| 3c and 5 | UNU-INWEH | Multilat. Agency | In-Kind | 1,240,000 | 50595 | 4 |
| 4 | UNEP-DEWA | Impl. Agency | In-Kind | 701824 | 386608 | 55 |
| 4 | Sea-Start (now to PEMSEA) | NGO | In-Kind | 108000 | 0 |  |
| 7 PCU | UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre | Impl. Agency | In-Kind | 60,000 | 0 | - |
| 7 PCU | UNEP | Impl. Agency | In-Kind | 50,000 | 0 | - |
|  |  |  |  | **5,204,824** | **641,272.00** | **12** |
| **Leveraged additional Co-finance** | | |  |  |  |  |
| 1a&2b MENARID, gwater cop | FAO | Impl. Agency | In-Kind |  | 5000 |  |
| 1a&2b MENARID, gwater cop | ICARDA | Multilat. Agency | In-Kind |  | 15000 |  |
| 1b Med Dialogue | German Ministry of Environment | Nat’l Gov’t | Grant |  | 59853 |  |
| 1b Med Dialogue | Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/MEP | NGO | Grant |  | 10416 |  |
| 1b Med Dialogue | UNESCO | Multilat. Agency | Grant |  | 15461 |  |
| 1b Med Dialogue | Union for the Mediterranean | Multilat. Agency | Cash |  | 11180 |  |
| 1c Regional | Rhodes University | NGO | In-Kind |  | 5719 |  |
| 1c Regional | UNECA |  |  |  | 12000 |  |
| 1c Regional | FAO |  |  |  | 6438 |  |
| 1c Regional | UNEP COBSEA (SIDA) | Impl. Agency | Cash |  | 1189.51 |  |
| 1c Regional | UNECE |  |  |  | 13500 |  |
| 3a IWC6 | Government of Flanders/UNESCO-IOC | Multilat. Agency |  |  | 10636 |  |
| 3a IWC6 | Coca-Cola Eurasia Group | Private Sector |  |  | 30000 |  |
| 3a IWC6 | Municipality of Dubrovnik/Libertas Bus |  |  |  | 1350 |  |
| 3a IWC6 | Prefecture - Dubrovnik-Neretva County |  |  |  | 918 |  |
| 3a IWC6 | RSHU |  |  |  | 918 |  |
| 3c Science | SIDA | Bilateral | Cash |  | 77000 |  |
| 5a | Barefoot Partnership | Private Sector | In-Kind |  | 5000 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | 281,578.51 |  |

Table 6 above indicates that of the $5,204,824 originally pledged it is now known that the $415,000 that was to come via the UNDPClimate Risk Finance Facility will not be realised and of the remainder only $641,272 has been received to date. The MTE was assured by the PCU and this was reiterated at the SCM that part of the deficit is due to underreporting to date and the remainder will indeed be provided.

To date the project has had some success in raising additional co-finance amounting to $281,578 and it is expected by the PCU that more will be forthcoming.

### *UNDP and UNEP supervision and backstopping*

UNDP supervision and backstopping is by the IW Regional Technical Advisor based in the same offices as the Project Manager and is thus available as and when required by the Project Manager. UNEP supervision and backstopping is provided primarily via the Steering Committee but is reported to be sufficient although once again the fact that the UNEP project coordinator is based in Nairobi but the PCU person responsible for management of the ICT component is based in Bangkok and formally at least reports via Nairobi to the UNDP project manager in Bratislava does not help communications.

# Conclusions and Rating

The following Table 7 provides a comprehensive summary of the MTE assessments and ratings assigned throughout this report according to the applicable criteria and standards as indicated in the Terms of Reference

**Table 7. Mid-Term Evaluation Ratings**

| **Criterion** | Evaluator’s Summary Comments | Reviewer’s Rating |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall Rating** | Overall the project is progressing well and although there are some shortcomings these are well within the capacity of the resources available to remedy well within the remaining time available. | S |
| **Attainment of project objectives and results (overall rating)**  **Sub criteria (below)** | Of the 12 sub-components the project has successfully initiated or completed all but two, namely 5c and 5e others are delayed but not critically so at this juncture. Limited success with the online CoPs and continuing re-jigging of the ICT platforms are holding back the overall attainment of project objectives. | S |
| Achievement of outputs and activities | **Component 1: HS –** A number of well organised and attended events across the MENA and other targeted regions that have been organised. Relevant and demand led capacity building has clearly been enhanced and it is likely that all planned outputs and activities will be achieved or indeed exceeded in some subcomponents.  **Component 2: MU –** There were significant delays owing to technical issues in getting the community platforms ready on which the CoPs depend and it was then considered inadequate to some degree by both partners There has, however, undoubtedly been some success in building engagement outside the bounds of the platforms through face to face activities.  **Component 3: S** – IWC6 and Science conference successfully delivered. Delays with Journal and 20 years of GEF publications.  **Component 4: MS –** Key components such as CoP platforms, visualisation tool and archive still not complete to key stakeholders satisfaction.  **Component 5: S** – Reasonable progress on all but two sub-components, notably TDA/SAP methodology and PM Manual. Others are less critical but will be completed except for Insurance Index. |  |
| Effectiveness | The project has delivered significant results during its first half of implementation and it is expected that this progress will continue in the second half provided the shortcomings of certain components especially CoPs and ICT platforms are corrected. | MS |
| Relevance | The project design clearly meets the needs of the IW Portfolio and its key stakeholders in GEF, IAs and Project Managers. | HS |
| Efficiency | Although largely on track with regard to use of GEF funds and most activities are on schedule there are some notable exceptions whose completion is outstanding. Most critical are the delays in a) finalising the ICT platforms, b) full completion of the TDA/SAP and PM manuals and c) Climate mainstreaming. Dual IAs/EAs considered inefficient. | MS |
| Assumptions and Risks | The assumptions and risks identified seem appropriate for this project but it is now clear that the level of certain risks pertaining to CoP participation are currently deemed to be higher. | S |
| **Progress toward Achievement of Project outcomes** | The project is making good progress toward achieving its outcomes and by so doing significantly increase the cost effectiveness of GEF investment however concerted and innovative efforts will be required by all parties to ensure sustainability which is sought after by all stakeholders. | ML |
| **Catalytic Role** | There are some initial examples of catalytic affects especially in the SEE Med regions. Information is currently lacking for the other components and must be collected during the remainder of the project. | S |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation  (overall rating)**  **Sub criteria (below)** | The project was designed with a comprehensive M&E plan and the various elements have been properly implemented during the course of the project to date. | S |
| M&E Design | The project documents and Inception report contain details of a comprehensive M&E and associated, roles responsibilities and budgets consistent with GEF and IA M&E policies. The Project Results Framework is fully elaborated and clear attempts have been made to make the Outcome indicators SMART[[5]](#footnote-5) although some are considered to be lacking in this respect. | S |
| M&E Plan Implementation | The Project Inception Report provided an updating of the projects results framework with some modification to targets and risks however not mid-term indicators were formulated. Although the quarterly reports have been produced as required some amendments are required and a mechanism put in place to provide feedback. | S |
| Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities | This appears to be adequate for a project of this size. | HS |
| Long-tem monitoring | The GEF Tracking provides for some long term monitoring. Nevertheless given the unusually long duration of the IW LEARN series of projects it is unfortunate that a formal system of monitoring and estimating project impacts against expectations has not been instigated. | MS |
| **Assessment of process that affected attainment of project results(overall rating)**  **Sub criteria (below)** | This is considered to be adequate. | S |
| Preparation and readiness | There project went through a detailed design phase involving a wide range of stakeholders and lessons taken from two previous full sized projects. However the large number of sub-components and outcomes and the lack of readiness of the IT platform has negatively affected project implementation. | MS |
| Implementation approach and adaptive management | The MTE has highlighted a number of issues that need addressing or are in the process of being addressed by the PCU and partners. The PCU components have adapted well to the split modality and multiple partners although not without some difficulties and PCU resources require further bolstering. The SCM needs to take a more proactive role in project support. | S |
| Stakeholders involvement | All key stakeholder groups have been actively involved in the IWC6, the Science Conference, workshops, regional meetings etc. Nevertheless a key objective of the project is that the face-to-face collaborative interventions be enhanced via the communities of Practice but as discussed elsewhere in this report this has not to date met with any real success. | S |
| Financial planning and management | Financial and administrative management have been carried out to the expected standards by both executing agencies. The PCU has monitored expenditures carefully throughout and has good controls in place. Co-financing requires to be kept more up to date especially with regard to in-kind contributions. | S |
| UNDP and UNEP Supervision and backstopping | The implementing agencies generally provide adequate supervision and backstopping. | S |

**Explanation of the GEF ratings utilised above.**

Rating of project objectives and results

* **Highly Satisfactory (HS):** The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives
* **Satisfactory (S):** The project had minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives,
* **Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives
* **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives,
* **Unsatisfactory (U)** The project had major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives
* **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives,

Ratings on sustainability

* **Likely (L):** There are no risks affecting this dimension of sustainability**.**
* **Moderately Likely (ML).** There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
* **Moderately Unlikely (MU):** There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability
* **Unlikely (U):** There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

Ratings of project M&E

* **Highly Satisfactory (HS):** There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Satisfactory(S):** There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Unsatisfactory (U):** There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.
* **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** The Project had no M&E system.

All other ratings will be on the GEF six point scale (HS – HU).

# Lessons Learned

1. The demand for IW LEARN services to the GEF IW Portfolio remains strong providing as they do critical knowledge management services both online and through the various face-to-face events. Without these the IW portfolio as a whole be much less cost effective as valuable knowledge would be lost or underutilised. However an overarching knowledge management strategy is lacking and should be developed if further IW LEARN projects are developed to better direct and focus the available resources and avoid some of the current fragmentation.
2. The IW biennial Conferences remain the jewel in the crown of IW:LEARN providing as they do an unrivalled opportunity for all stakeholders to meet and exchange experiences and ideas both formally and informally on the challenges of TWRM. There is little doubt that project implementation and formulation gain important benefits which are passed on to the ultimate beneficiaries, the governments and citizens of participating countries in the form of more effective and efficient IW projects.
3. A wide range of stakeholders, particularly project managers and their technical staff, benefit from IW LEARN but they are still far less forthcoming in contributing to IW LEARN. This is particularly apparent in the failure of the Communities of Practice to gain traction and whereas this may, in part, be owing to shortcomings in the ICT platform it seems to be largely because Project Managers do not feel there is sufficient benefit from participation such that they are willing to allocate their time which is in constant demand from immediate project exigencies. It is not clear how, or indeed if, these difficulties can be overcome and future IW LEARN projects should be wary of repeating the same model but rather seek alternative means of achieving the ends the CoPs were intended to meet.
4. Design specifications for all the ICT platform improvements should have been determined at the start of the project with clear agreement from all key stakeholders. Constant, changes and requests for alterations or new features seriously diverts resources from the pursuit of the projects main objectives.
5. Dual IAs and EAs while perhaps desirable from an internal UN perspective is inefficient if partnering agencies still have to adhere to their different operational modalities. Any future IW LEARN projects should have a single IA and single EA. Expertise and support from other UN agencies is better brought in via more straightforward interagency cooperation agreements.
6. A complex project structure with multiple sub-components and partner agencies is not a good model for maximum impact as the key management resources of the PCU become overstretched especially when these are limited. A structure more focused on the core services would yield greater cost benefits to the IW Portfolio as a whole.

# Recommendations

The MTE makes the following recommendations to help ensure the project achieves its objectives:

1. Decisions and agreed actions from the January 2013 SCM should be rigorously followed up by the PCU and partner agencies. SC members should be kept informed of progress and take a pro-active role response to requests for support and or action from PCU. Key among these are:

1. UNEP IWL PCU to complete improvements to the Community space by 22 Feb. DECISION: If improvements are not sufficiently completed, UNESCO will move the Groundwater CoP to the AKVO platform and work with UN IGRAC.
2. IUCN to prepare a schedule of content to be showcased on the Community platform. This will include a monthly topic of conversation, led by an expert on a specific topic to catalyse participation.
3. UNEP IWL to hire a consultant to have an independent review of the website and the different platforms of which it is composed by 15 Feb.
4. IWL will organize a technical design (knowledge management strategy) concept note to guide the website enhancements.
5. IWL Work with specific projects from each region (IWCAM, BCLME/Orange River, PEMSEA/South China Sea, Danube/Black Sea) to mine for information to pilot the visualization, particularly from TDA datasets. Acquire datasets, maps, videos and photos.
6. COPs and WGs to be asked for comments on the ecosystem specific guidance for the TDA/SAP Methodology. Martin to prepare questions to ask. IWL to organize by 31 Jan.
7. DECISION: Cancel the index insurance activity.
8. All partners to complete a one-page document with a preliminary indication of how their respective activities will be sustained after June 2014 by 15 Feb, with full plans by 15 Oct.
9. DECISION: IWL to look into further collaboration with NOAA including sharing their blog, working on visualization, sending projects to existing NOAA trainings.
10. IWL PSC to conduct a teleconference meeting in mid-February to review MTE findings. A face-to-face PSC meeting will be conducted to review progress in 6 to 7 months (likely as a one-day meeting after the IWC7 but ideally elsewhere).
11. IWL PSC should prepare a “what is” IW:LEARN publication and also include it in PM manual (including how projects might allocate their 1% and other related issues)
12. Requests to GEF-SEC and IWTF for comment or approval on documents sent from PCU should be dealt with in a more timely manner to enable activities to be completed and resources concentrated on outstanding tasks.
13. Quarterly progress reports should contain financial summaries including information regarding and delivery of expected co-financing and leveraged additional co-financing and should more clearly and with some detail highlight outstanding issues. The reports should be distributed directly to SC members who should in turn make comment and if possible take action. It is demoralising and wasteful for the PCU to produce reports which are seemingly read by very few of the intended recipients.
14. A system should be set up within the PCU to better capture catalytic and replication effects of project interventions. And future IW Learn project should specifically seek to collect and collate impacts of IW LEARN interventions over the period since their inception in 1998.
15. The project should develop an introductory package for new and recent project managers and technical staff. Possible in the form of a simple brochure style how-to guide to explain IW LEARN and the services it provides, draw attention to the obligations projects and their staff have to IW LEARN activities and to solicit their support.
16. The mandatory allocation of 1% of new project budgets to be targeted to IW LEARN should be increased to 2% and clear guidelines provided for the sort of activities that should be conducted with these funds. Ideally a separate project specific IW LEARN Component should be established within each project’s results framework.
17. Building on 1.h above the PCU and partners with input from GEF-SEC and IAs should develop a comprehensive fully costed (as far as feasible) sustainability plan for the project to be presented at the next SCM. To be feasible such a plan will probable require the outline of a future IW:LEARN project and some commitment from GEF to cover the incremental costs.
18. The more practicable recommendations contained in the Report of the Science Conference should be extracted and submitted to GEF in a separate note which should lead to a considered response by GEF and or IAs of each of the recommendations. Recommendations and responses should be published on the IW LEARN web site.
19. In order to encourage Project Managers to participate more in the CoPs and thereby more thoroughly test the concept before the end of the project it is recommended that GEF-SEC and IAs actively encourage PMs to participate by more clearly explaining the mutual benefits of so doing. This could be promulgated via the regular e-bulletins prepared by the PCU.
20. Consideration should be given to increasing the personnel available to the PCU Bratislava to enable a more proactive approach for the remainder of the project. This is particularly important in view of the forthcoming IWC7 that is already taking resources away from this project. Funds for IWC7 should be used to substitute resources diverted from IW LEARN III particularly with regard to dedicated managerial support.
21. A system should be implemented to collect, collate and feedback into the online versions of the TDA/SAP methodology and the PM Manual useful suggestions for improvements that users may post onto the website in the spaces already provided. A person or persons needs to be given the responsibility for this and provided with clear guidance.
22. Compliance by projects with completing the GEF tracking tool should be checked by GEF-SEC and if deficient steps taken to ensure better compliance in the future to aid IW LEARN impact tracking.
23. To ensure that Project Managers are aware and make full use of the guidance provided by the online Project Managers Manual each PM should be required take a short test based on the material which would lead to Certification of the PM when successfully completed.
24. Any future IW LEARN project should include a component to investigate, and report on previous IW LEARN impacts both directly on the GEF IW portfolio and on related programmes via catalytic influences

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Mid-Term Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex 2 – Distributed Questionnaires

Annex 3 – Minutes of SCM meeting held 15-16 January 2013

Annex 4 – List of stakeholders involved in MTE

Annex 5 – Documents reviewed

1. **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Paisley, Richard Kyle., (2010). Terminal Evaluation of the Joint UNDP/UNEP GEF ProjectGF/1020-04-03 (4813): Strengthening Global Capacity to Sustain Transboundary Waters: The International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:Learn) Operational Phase (UNDP and UNEP components).* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. GEF IW:LEARN ,0-31 Commission, Sustainability Plan (Draft 03 July) 2008 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound [↑](#footnote-ref-5)