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FOREWORD



ADRIANA DINU

The earth's water and ocean ecosystems provide mankind with a wide range of both market and non-market ecosystem services, such as food, drinking water, recreation, transport, energy resources, minerals and climate regulation. Billions of people depend on healthy marine and freshwater systems for their livelihoods and security. These vital ecosystems face a range of threats to their integrity, including pollution, overfishing, unsustainable water use, invasive species, habitat loss, and impacts from climate change such as ocean acidification. Despite numerous international commitments, the majority of these threats continue to increase, underscoring the urgency for taking immediate action to reduce stress on these ecosystems.

The majority of the earth's major freshwater and ocean ecosystems straddle the boundaries of two or more nations, underscoring the need for cooperative approaches among the countries sharing such resources. For over twenty years, UNDP-GEF's International Waters portfolio has been supporting groups of countries in their joint efforts to sustain the critical ecosystem services provided by many of the world's most significant transboundary lakes, rivers, aquifers and Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs). To date, UNDP-GEF has supported over 100 countries in efforts to sustainably manage 13 LMEs, 13 river basins, six lakes and three aquifers. Over this period, the UNDP-GEF Water and Ocean Governance Team has cumulatively mobilised \$641 million in GEF International Waters grant resources in support of these initiatives.

UNDP-GEF has developed and applied a series of strategic planning methodologies that have proven highly effective not only at facilitating regional and national governance reform to improve management of these transboundary systems, but, in many cases, at catalysing sizeable quantities of public and private finance to address priority transboundary issues. These instruments include the GEF's Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme process; Integrated Coastal and Water Resources Management; and building on regional and global legal frameworks. Each approach follows a similar overall process of prioritising water or ocean issues; identifying barriers to sustainable use; determining appropriate mixes of policy instruments to remove barriers; and implementing agreed reforms and investments. For more detail on each methodology, and a series of case studies documenting their impacts, see the 2012 UNDP-GEF publication, 'Catalysing Ocean Finance: Volumes I and II'.

This publication highlights UNDP-GEF International Waters portfolio results achieved across four UNDP-GEF 'signature' programmes: Large Marine Ecosystems; Transboundary Lakes, Rivers and Aquifers; Integrated Water Resources and Coastal Area Management; and Global Programmes. A series of project case studies review delivery of results in the context of the GEF International Waters focal area's Results Indicators framework: 'Process, Stress Reduction and Environmental and Socioeconomic Status Indicators'. See page 7 for an overview of cumulative results

delivery across the entire UNDP-GEF International Waters portfolio since 1991. This results 'snapshot' documents the tremendous progress the portfolio has made in helping move some of the world's most significant shared waters systems on the path towards sustainability.

In September 2015, the international community completed a series of negotiations leading to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations General Assembly, setting a new 'post-MDG' development agenda for the 2015 - 2030 period. These 17 goals, and their 168 targets, represent an ambitious integrated set of global priorities for sustainable development. Two SDGs: SDG6 'Ensure access to water and sanitation for all'; and SDG14 'Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources'; are of particular relevance to UNDP-GEF's work on International Waters. As this volume demonstrates, UNDP-GEF's International Waters portfolio directly supports achievement of the majority of SDG6 and SDG14 targets. For SDG6, these include: reducing pollution to improve water quality; increasing water use efficiency; implementing integrated water resources management; protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems; and expanding international cooperation and capacity building for developing countries. For SDG14, these include: reducing marine pollution; sustaining marine and coastal ecosystems; reducing unsustainable fishing practices; conserving 10 percent or more of coastal areas; and increasing economic benefits to SIDS. Many of the projects also support implementation of SDGs with close linkages to SDG6 and SDG14 such as Food Security (2), Sustainable Consumption/Production (12), Climate Change (13), and Sustainable Cities (11).

International Waters – Delivering Results 2016 clearly demonstrates how a suite of proven strategic planning instruments can be used to deliver both the governance reforms and investments needed to reverse the degradation of the world's principal transboundary water systems. These methodologies are not only effective but also highly replicable and scalable, underscoring the importance of continued GEF and partner investment in sustaining the world's most significant water and ocean systems in support of achieving the Water, Ocean and other SDGs.



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INTRODUCTION



Transboundary freshwater and ocean ecosystems are the norm, not the exception. Globally, there are 263 watersheds that cross the political boundaries of two or more countries; these watersheds represent about one half of the earth's land surface and 40 percent of global population. Around 55 percent of the world's 64 Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) are shared by two or more countries. As a result, multi-country cooperation on the management of shared water and ocean ecosystems is essential if sustainable, integrated and ecosystem-based management of these vital ecosystems is to be achieved. The benefits that can be realised through multi-state cooperation on water and oceans go 'beyond the shared waters' and include increased regional cooperation, economic integration and investment, and enhanced trust, peace and security.

Since 1991, UNDP-GEF's International Waters Programme has been supporting over one hundred countries that share some of the world's largest and most important aquatic ecosystems to work cooperatively in addressing the agreed priority environmental and water resource concerns facing such waterbodies. UNDP-GEF's International Waters portfolio is divided across four 'signature' programme areas:

- Large Marine Ecosystems
- Lakes, Rivers and Aquifers
- Integrated Water Resources and Coastal Area Management
- Global Programmes

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