



UN Environment & the Global Environment Facility

# A natural partnership for our planet



Climate change, desertification, species loss, deforestation, floods and famine – these are the very real shared challenges we are facing as a planet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, challenges that cannot be ignored.

For over 40 years, UN Environment has been the world's leading environmental advocate, delivering scientific insight, setting the global agenda on the environment, offering solutions and providing leadership on critical environmental issues.

Our mission requires working closely with all stakeholders, from governments, the private sector and investors to civil society, scientists and individuals. But one particular partner that stands out is the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In a collaboration that spans more than 25 years, UN Environment and the GEF

have developed a strong alliance, building on our synergies to deliver urgently needed action and long-lasting change.

As a founding partner of the GEF, with the UN Development Programme and the World Bank, UN Environment has a close and enduring relationship with the Facility. Just some of the strengths underpinning the UN Environment- GEF partnership include:

- UN Environment hosts and administers many Multilateral Environmental Agreements, a number of which have designated the GEF as their financial mechanism
- UN Environment is the world's leading environmental authority, setting international standards for policy and providing direction to international initiatives based on scientific knowledge. The GEF is the single largest source of funding for action on global environmental concerns
- UN Environment hosts the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, which works with leading experts and practitioners around the world to provide vital know-how and advice to the broader GEF partnership

These linkages underpin a natural partnership. Together UN Environment and the GEF have financed and implemented a wide range of landmark environmental projects – projects that have set new standards, demonstrated new methodologies and transformed the environment and people's lives.

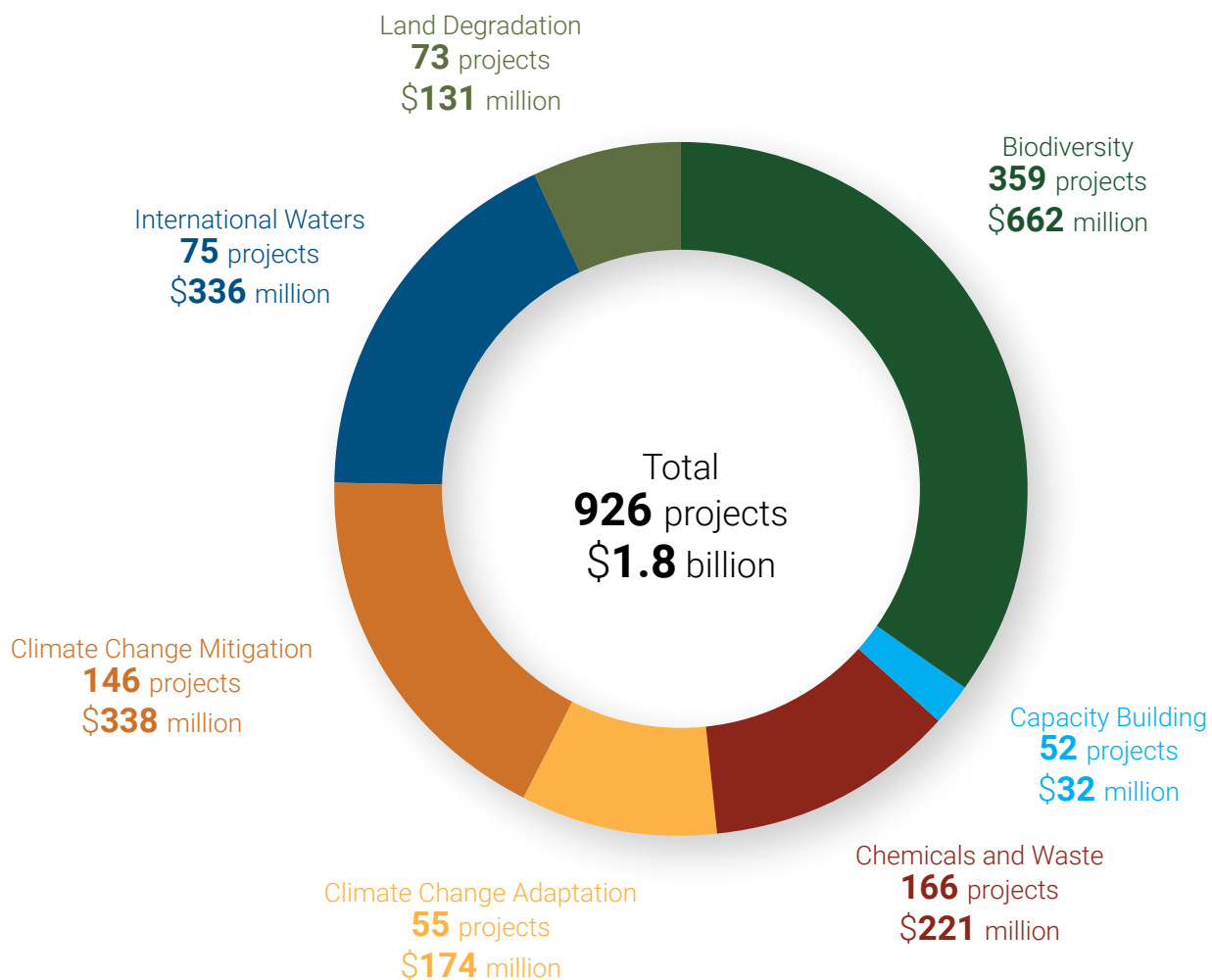
"We support UN Environment not only because it is an institution that is very dear to us, but most importantly, because it plays such a crucial role for the world."

Franz Perez, Head of International Affairs, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment

# The UN Environment-GEF partnership

The partnership between UN Environment and the GEF goes back to 1991, on the eve of the first Rio Summit, when UN Environment, together with the UN Development Programme and the World Bank, created the GEF as a three-year pilot facility. A quarter-century later, the GEF is a mature and well-established financial mechanism for five Multilateral Environmental Agreements, providing a key source of funding for projects implemented by 18 GEF agency partners.

Since its formation, the GEF has entrusted over \$1.8 billion to UN Environment to implement more than 900 projects across all the Facility's focal areas – biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change adaptation and mitigation, international waters, and land degradation – and in capacity development.



All dollar (\$) amounts refer to US dollars.



# Why UN Environment?

At UN Environment, we help catalyze action by bringing together policy, scientific, and traditional knowledge from around the world. In doing so, we build on our extensive experience and capacity in project implementation, including over 1,200 expert UN Environment staff and active networks bringing together the world's leading environmental actors.

## Global policy



UN Environment has been integral to the negotiation and implementation of a range of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, bringing together nations and the environmental community to tackle the greatest challenges of our time. We currently host the

secretariats of 11 Conventions and Protocols, including three for which the GEF is the financial mechanism, in addition to the secretariats of six Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. These include:

**Abidjan Convention**  
(Regional Seas Convention)



**Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**

**Action Plan for the East Asian Seas Region**  
(Regional Seas Convention)



**Convention of Migratory Species**

**Action Plan for the Northwest Pacific Region**  
(Regional Seas Convention)



**Minamata Convention**  
(with GEF as the financial mechanism)



**Bamako Convention**

**Montreal Protocol**  
(Ozone Secretariat)



**Barcelona Convention & Mediterranean Action Plan**  
(Regional Seas Convention)



**Nairobi Convention**  
(Regional Seas Convention)



**Basel Convention**

**Rotterdam Convention**

**Carpathian Convention**

**Stockholm Convention**  
(with GEF as the financial mechanism)



**Cartagena Convention & Caribbean Environment Programme**  
(Regional Seas Convention)



**Tehran Convention**  
(Regional Seas Convention)



**Convention on Biological Diversity**  
(with GEF as the financial mechanism)



**Vienna Convention**  
(Ozone Secretariat)



## Technical expertise and resources



With our dedicated team of scientists and experts, UN Environment has both the mandate and the capacity to effectively monitor the world's environmental resources. The knowledge and information gained from our work is shared through a range of platforms including:

- **UN Environment Assembly:** The 'parliament for the environment' brings together all 193 UN member states, as well as representatives from civil society and the private sector. Hosted by UN Environment, it is the world's highest-level environmental decision-making body. The Assembly builds on the work of regional fora, which identify and escalate issues for international debate
- **International Resource Panel:** Established by UN Environment in 2007, the Panel includes scientists, governments, industrial and international organizations, and civil society. Evaluating the latest scientific, technical and socio-economic information, eminent scientific experts advise policymakers on how to achieve sustainable resource management
- **Global Environment Outlook:** This flagship UN Environment publication is a periodic analysis and assessment of the state of the environment, linking science to policy, and informing decision-making at multiple levels. More than 1,200 scientists and 160 governments provide assessments that are then reviewed by science and policy experts before being compiled into the Global Environment Outlook report
- **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:** More than one thousand scientists around the world contribute to this forum that promotes the effective use of science in decision-making to conserve biodiversity and encourage sustainable development. UN Environment was instrumental in its establishment, including facilitating the negotiations and hosting the interim secretariat, and now co-administers the Platform with the UN Organization for Education, Science and Culture, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations Development Programme
- **Climate and Clean Air Coalition:** Launched in 2012, the Coalition addresses short-lived climate pollutants such as methane, black carbon and hydrofluorocarbons. UN Environment hosts the secretariat and helped create the coalition, which now has over 100 members. A panel of 13 scientists keeps the Coalition abreast of new scientific developments on short-lived climate pollutants. The fast hydrofluorocarbons phasedown prescribed in the Montreal Protocol's Kigali Amendment, which came partly as a result of advocacy by the Coalition and member nations, is just one example of the Coalition's impact
- **Climate Technology Centre and Network:** Hosted by UN Environment and the UN Industrial Development Organization, the Centre promotes the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for low-carbon and climate-resilient development. It provides developing countries with technical solutions, capacity building and advice on legal, policy and regulatory matters
- **Online Courses:** UN Environment has helped develop a number of online courses that are available to all free of charge. Topics include: *Wicked Problems*; *Dynamic solutions: The Ecosystem Approach and Systems Thinking*; *Safe and Resilient Cities*; *The E-waste Challenge*; *Environmental Security and Sustaining Peace*

The wide range of relevant knowledge and experience provided by UN Environment represents a reliable foundation upon which the GEF and countries can depend for project implementation.



# Examples of UN Environment-GEF projects that set new standards:

- **Millennium Ecosystem Assessment:** This landmark report was the first to demonstrate the link between natural resources, sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation. Tapping the knowledge of a large group of social and natural scientists, the assessment provided a crucial baseline appraisal of the world's ecosystems, the services they provide, and the threats to human wellbeing posed by their degradation. The report popularized the concept of ecosystem services and has been a global catalyst for action to protect and restore our environment

"The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is a very powerful consensus about the unsustainable trajectory that most of the world's ecosystems are now on."

Professor Sir John Lawton, former chief executive, Natural Environment Research Council

- **Integrated Management of Peatlands for Biodiversity and Climate Change:** This project helped rehabilitate more than 30,000 hectares of peatlands in the Russian Federation, China and Indonesia, and inspired national and regional initiatives aimed at protecting hundreds of thousands more
- **Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions with Bus Rapid Transit and Non-Motorized Transport:** Creating more than 5,000 jobs and attracting \$150 million in

investment, this project established a Bus Rapid Transit system in Cartagena, Colombia, and spawned similar initiatives in major cities in Indonesia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya

- **Total Sector Methyl Bromide Phase-Out:** This project successfully eliminated the use of the ozone-depleting chemical methyl bromide in agriculture and food storage and helped develop the use of non-chemical alternatives across seven countries. Follow-up projects are now successfully scaling up these results elsewhere
- **Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand:** Resource-rich, politically contested and vital to the livelihoods of millions of people in its 10 surrounding countries and territories, the South China Sea is one of the world's richest marine ecosystems. By creating national management plans and databases on mangroves, non-oceanic coral reefs, seagrass and coastal wetland habitats, this project developed a framework for the joint management of the coastal areas and waters of seven countries in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, guiding the transboundary cooperation needed to protect and preserve these ecosystems and the services they provide
- **Desert Margins Programme:** Focused on combatting land degradation in nine African countries, this project achieved the restoration of 3,000 hectares of degraded land in Zimbabwe and Kenya, and the introduction of community management for 150,000 hectares of rangeland in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa



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