

SUPPORTING SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

The marine and coastal environments and natural resources of small island developing states (SIDS) are among the richest in the world. Yet, they confront an array of challenges arising from their remote locations, poor economic diversification, vulnerability to climatic fluctuations, and great economic dependence on the outside and increasingly globalized world.

SIDS face such similar issues in economic, environmental, and social development that they have joined together to find common solutions and solicit greater attention from the international community, most notably through the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Since 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been collaborating with SIDS and their networks in addressing global environmental concerns through action-oriented projects that also promote opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for island residents. The Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNet), initiated in 1997, helps SIDS stakeholders communicate with each other about shared concerns and coordinate globally dispersed members of AOSIS.

With GEF support, the *Capacity Building for Small Island Developing States through SIDSNet* project was designed to improve the functioning of SIDSNet as well as to expand its links with GEF's portfolio of SIDS projects. The project is working to strengthen SIDSNet by improving the collection, organization, and dissemination of information among AOSIS member states on good practices addressing biodiversity conservation, climate change responses, and international waters management issues. The project has fostered the sharing of experiences among SIDS on the use of

information technology as a sustainable development tool for ecosystem management as well as virtual capacity development workshops.

Oceans and seas are fundamentally important to island life and culture. Among the greatest challenges for SIDS is sustaining their fragile freshwater and coastal water resources in the face of fluctuating climatic events. Droughts, flood, and storms exacerbate stresses from population growth, tourism, and agriculture. Groupings of SIDS from the Caribbean, Pacific, and Western Indian Ocean have requested and received assistance under GEF's international waters focal area for improved management of coastal and ocean fisheries, integrated coastal management, and watershed protection.

Since its inception, GEF has allocated more than \$76.9 million for international waters projects in small island developing states. These projects have attracted \$125.6 million in cofinancing from other sources. A significant number of GEF projects for SIDS in this focal area are still under preparation, representing \$107.7 million of additional funding from GEF.

GEF recently approved the project, *Addressing Land-Based Activities in the Western Indian Ocean*, which will focus on protecting reefs and bays from land-based pollution sources through demonstration measures as well as regional and national institutional reforms needed for coastal protection. The project is employing broad stakeholder participation to work toward objectives, whose achievement will form a strong basis for sustainable environmental management in the Western Indian Ocean region. The project

benefits from a previous GEF intervention supporting an African process to conserve coastal areas, which has now been integrated into the Environment Action Plan of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

In 1999, GEF funded the *Demonstrations of Innovative Approaches to the Rehabilitation of Heavily Contaminated Bays in the Wider Caribbean* project, as a follow up to a pilot in Havana Bay (Cuba), Puerto Limon (Costa Rica), Cartagena Bay (Colombia), and Kingston Harbour (Jamaica). The pilot project resulted in plans for investment and institution strengthening, and identified financing sources for implementing remedial actions. The follow-up project has raised cofinancing to help Cuba overcome a number of key barriers to adopting best practices that limit contamination of national and adjacent international waters. The project is working to reduce inputs of nitrogen and phosphorus in Havana Bay by building an innovative sewage treatment plant system midway along the Luyanó River.

GEF's *Integrated Catchment Area and Coastal Management in SIDS in the Caribbean* project involves two regional institutions, the Caribbean Environment Program and CARICOM's Caribbean Environmental Health Institute. National interministerial committees are developing water-related reforms as well as piloting on-the-ground improvements in the integrated management of watersheds and coastal resources.

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

SIDS have a special dependence on their coasts, whose living resources are important for livelihoods and food security and as sources of foreign exchange. Many of these resources are transboundary in nature; even the life populating coral reefs may move with currents to live in other reefs. Both Pacific and Caribbean SIDS have requested GEF assistance for sustainable management of their fisheries.

Pacific Ocean. The Western Tropical Pacific Warm Pool Large Marine Ecosystem—whose rich tuna fisheries provide one-third of the world's tuna supply—is the lifeblood of Pacific SIDS' economies. After adopting a GEF joint Strategic Action Plan in 1997, the 13 Pacific SIDS began work on GEF's *Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme of the Pacific Small Island Developing States* project.

The project assisted Pacific SIDS in negotiating a landmark international treaty for sustaining valuable tuna fisheries in the Pacific. The project also helped the SIDS' Forum Fisheries Agency negotiate the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Signed in September 2000, the convention is the first agreement to be successfully negotiated on the basis of the 1995 U.N. Fish Stocks Agreement.

GEF has since approved assistance to establish a commission for this convention and complete the necessary international legal and institutional framework for conserving and managing transboundary oceanic fish stocks within an ecosystem approach. The project, entitled *Oceanic Fisheries Management: Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme of the Pacific SIDS*, is intended to help build the capacity of the commission and its regulatory apparatus on both regional and national scales.

Caribbean. GEF is supporting the *Sustainable Management of the Shared Marine Resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem and Adjacent Regions* project, which will help the countries of the Wider Caribbean meet the World Summit for Sustainable Development fisheries targets for 2010 and 2015. In doing so, the project will assist countries as they implement management reforms to reverse the continuing trend of living resource depletion.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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