IWC11 Pre-Conference Workshops

Concept Note

Workshop 1: **From GEF Grants to Sustainable Investments: Financing the Future of Transboundary Waters and Shared Ecosystems**

17 October 2026

08:15 – 17:30 Kuta, Bali

12.10.2026

About IWC11 Pre-conference Workshops

The pre-conference workshops will provide the opportunity for hands-on learning and experience sharing, targeting GEF International Waters (IW) project managers, thematic specialists, and country representatives. Three workshops will take place on 17-18 October 2026 at Anvaya Beach Resort in Kuta, Bali, Indonesia, as follows:

Day 1 - 17 October 2026, 08:15-17:30

1. Sustainable Financing – *Jimbaran Room*

Day 2 - 18 October 2026, 09:00-15:30

2. Strategic Communications – *Jimbaran Room*
3. SIDS Inter-regional Dialogue – *Kuta Room*

Pre-conference Workshop 1 - From GEF Grants to Sustainable Investments: Financing the Future of Transboundary Waters and Shared Ecosystems

Over the last three decades, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) International Waters (IW) portfolio has invested more than US$3 billion and leveraged over US$8 billion in co-financing to strengthen transboundary water cooperation, support regional institutions, and protect globally significant freshwater, groundwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. The portfolio has generated substantial global environmental benefits through the development of Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDAs), Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs), regional governance frameworks, basin and marine commissions, monitoring systems, and institutional mechanisms that enable countries to jointly address shared water challenges.

While significant progress has been achieved in establishing governance frameworks and cooperative institutions, implementation experience across the portfolio reveals a persistent challenge: sustaining cooperation and financing implementation beyond the duration of GEF grants.

Many regional institutions continue to face structural financing constraints, including:

- Dependence on external project financing;
- Insufficient national budget allocations;
- Limited mechanisms for financing SAP implementation;
- Weak capacity to mobilise public and private investment;
- Limited engagement with development finance institutions;

- Difficulty translating governance achievements into long-term investment programmes.

These challenges are becoming increasingly important as transboundary systems face growing pressures from climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, water scarcity, and competing demands across sectors.

Recognizing these challenges, recent GEF policy and programming directions have placed increased emphasis on sustainable financing, catalytic capital, blended finance, private sector engagement, and strategic partnerships with multilateral development banks (MDBs).

This workshop will provide IW project teams with practical tools and examples to move from dependence on grants toward sustainable financing and investment strategies. By bringing together IW practitioners, regional institutions, MDBs, and financing experts, the workshop will help position financing not as a standalone activity, but as a core component of transboundary governance, institutional sustainability, and long-term ecosystem resilience. Hence, this workshop reframes financing as a core element of SAP implementation and institutional sustainability — not an add-on — and brings practical blended-finance, MDB, fiscal and investor perspectives to help IW project teams design time-bound, investor-oriented transitions from grant dependency to sustainable public/private finance. The event prioritises actionable tools and commitments that projects and PMUs can apply immediately to improve bankability, secure fiscal recognition, and mobilise catalytic capital.

Workshop Objectives

1. Equip participants with practical, investor-oriented introduction and initial skills to make SAP investments bankable and attractive to public and private financiers.
2. Demonstrate and evaluate sustainable financing pathways and instruments (including GEF-backed, blended, MDB, private and public options) appropriate for transboundary contexts—river basins, LMEs, coastal zones, fisheries, and resilience.
3. Identify capacity building priorities and MDB-led catalytic actions that unlock long-term finance for SAP implementation.

Main Outputs (practical, time-bound):

1. Workshop Synthesis Note: concise workshop summary based on google.doc templates for breakouts and plenary recording

2. Inputs for IW:LEARN Sustainable Finance Manual and Guidance note annexes.
3. Recommendations for GEF-9 projects regarding support in mobilizing innovative financing for GEF IW SAP implementation.

Target audience

- GEF IW project managers
- River Basin and Aquifer Organizations
- Regional Commissions
- GEF Agencies
- GEF Secretariat

Co-organisers

- *IW:LEARN/UNESCO-IOC - Konstantina Toli & Maria Camila León; Ger Bergkamp (external consultant, ARCOWA)*
- *ADB: Arun Abraham, Mary Kim*
- *AfDB: Gareth Philips, Nyasha Nyagwambo*
- *CAF: Ignacio Lorenzo, Sebastian Rodriguez*
- *EBRD: Claudia Neuschulz*
- *IDB: Gmelina Ramirez*
- *WB: Kanako Hasegawa*
- *GEF SEC: Daichi Tsuchihashi, Andrew Hume*

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Workshop 2. Agenda

Saturday 17 October 2026

Venue: The Anvaya Beach Resort Bali, Kuta, Bali

Room: Jimbaran

Time	Topic	Lead / Contributors
08:15-09:00	**Registration, coffee & networking**	
09:00-09:15	**Welcome, Opening & Objectives** • Organiser welcome, practical aims, logistics • Setting the scene: incl. Why Financing Matters for Transboundary Cooperation and questions such as: Why do regional institutions struggle after project closure? How can SAP implementation be financed over decades? What lessons emerge from successful financing models? Walk through the programme, workshop flow and expected outputs.	Konstantina Toli, IW:LEARN, UNESCO-IOC Taylor Henshaw, GEF Secretariat
09:15-09:40	**Opening Keynote — Financing the bridge from pilot to scale** • Overview of financial instruments and matching with IW type interventions	*Dr Ger Bergkamp (ARCOWA, IW:LEARN)*
09:40-10:30	**Session 1: Plenary — Practical innovative finance snapshots** *Moderator: Daichi Tsuchihashi, GEF Sec* Demonstrates the physical and economic viability of SAP infrastructure targets. De-risking non-bankable transboundary zones by utilising public/donor first-loss facilities to crowd in early private commercial investors. ▪ 4 short case studies (7' presentation) ***I- CAF's First Blue Bond*** ***II - Blue Economy SME Financing*** ***III - Plastic Waste Reduction-Linked Bond*** ***IV - Blue Nature Alliance*** ▪ Panel discussion and Q&A synthesizing de-risking mechanisms and replication potential	I. *Sebastian Rodriguez / Irene Arroyabe, CAF* *II. Arun Abraham, ADB* III. Kanako Hasegawa, WB IV. Madeline Beattie
10:30-10:55	**Coffee & networking**	

10:55-12:00	**Session 2: Breakout Groups – Matching financial instruments to IW interventions** Objective: apply financial instruments' to project (ideas) and surface practical next steps to prepare sustainable financing pathways **4 themes:** Theme 1: **River Basin pollution control** – *Jimbaran Room* Theme 2: **Coastal and marine protected areas and habitat restoration** – *Beratan Room* Theme 3: **Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture transition** - *Jimbaran Room* Theme 4: **Stormwater Management & Coastal Resilience (Nature-Based Solutions)** – *Batur Room*	1- CAF 2- WB 3- AfDB 4- ADB
12:00-12:30	**Session 3: Reports from participatory breakouts**	Group Rapporteurs
12:30 –13:45	**Lunch & networking**	Event team
13:45 – 14:30	**Session 4: Plenary - Enabling conditions and long-term financing** Moderator: Christina Leb, WB 4 case studies (30') ***I. Policy-Based Lending for Ocean, Water, and Blue Economy Reforms: Lessons from the Philippines and Indonesia*** ***II. Cubango - Okavango River Basin Fund (CORB Fund)*** ***III. Debt Swap for Adaptation in the Lempa River Basin, El Salvador*** ***IV. Caribbean Biodiversity Fund*** ▪ Panel discussion and Q&A (15')	I - Mary Kim, ADB II. Phera Ramoeli, OKACOM III. Franz Rojas (video)/ Sebastian Rodriguez, CAF IV. Tanja Lieuw, CBD
14:30-16:00	**Session 5: Breakout Groups – Towards investor-facing deliverables** (90') Objective: convert morning insights into investor-oriented deliverables focused on bankability **4 themes (same as session 2):** Theme 1: **River Basin pollution control** – *Jimbaran Room* Theme 2: **Coastal and marine protected areas and habitat restoration** – *Beratan Room* Theme 3: **Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture transition** - *Jimbaran Room*	1- CAF 2- WB 3- AfDB

	Theme 4: **Stormwater Management & Coastal Resilience (Nature-Based Solutions)** – *Batur Room*	4- ADB
16:00 -16:20	**Coffee & Tea break**	
16:20 – 17.10	**Session 6: Plenary - Reports from participatory breakouts** *Moderator: Ger Bergkamp, ARCOWA*	Group Rapporteurs
17:10–17:30	**Closing plenary - Final remarks & outputs circulation**	Konstantina Toli, IW:LEARN GEF Sec
17:30	**Closure**	