



# PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

PROJECT TYPE: Full-sized Project

THE GEF TRUST FUND

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## PART I: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 3519

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: 4055

COUNTRY(IES): Argentina, Uruguay

PROJECT TITLE: Reducing and preventing land-based pollution in the Rio de la Plata/Maritime Front through implementation of the FrePlata Strategic Action Programme

GEF AGENCY(IES): UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNER(S): CARP and CTMFM in coordination with other agencies involved with the SAP

GEF FOCAL AREA (S): International Waters

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(S): IW SP-2

INDICATIVE CALENDAR	
Milestones	Expected Dates
Work Program (for FSP)	April 2008
CEO Endorsement/Approval	March 2009
GEF Agency Approval	May 2009
Implementation Start	June 2009
Mid-term Review (if planned)	June 2011
Implementation Completion	June 2013

## A. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

**Project Objective:** To facilitate restoration of the Rio de la Plata/Maritime Front ecosystem through regional and national governance reforms and demonstrations which target reduction of land-based pollution

Project Components		Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Indicative GEF Financing*		Indicative Co-financing*		Total (\$)
				(\$)	%	(\$)	%	
1. Implementation of agreed regional and national institutional reforms to address priority transboundary land-based pollution by nutrients, heavy metals, POPs and other PTS	TA	- Nat'l Intersectoral Units (NIUs) for SAP implementation formalized - Bi-national commissions strengthened - Coordination mechanisms/partnerships with other Plata Basin Commissions established - Municipal/provincial governments enabled to develop multi-sectoral PPP	- NIUs actively supporting resource mobilization for NAP implementation - CARP <sup>1</sup> mandate revised - Sustainable financial mechanisms in place to support Commissions' work - CARP & CTMFM jointly providing for enhanced ecosystem-based management of project area - Number of innovative PPP schemes negotiated by municipal/provincial governments	0.45	14	2.8	86	3.25
2. Policy and legal frameworks strengthened and harmonized to achieve SAP objectives for prevention and reduction of pollutant loads from point (industrial and sewage effluents) and non-point sources	TA	- Strategies for adoption of harmonized bi-national environmental management tools for reduction of nutrients and PTS agreed - Bi-national agreement on development of policy frameworks in support of Cleaner Production - Policy frameworks in support of PPP developed - Strategies and policies to improve treatment of urban & industrial discharges strengthened	- Bi-national agreement and adoption of the technical protocols for EIA and SEA already developed - Joint application of WQO methodology already developed - C+P schemes under implementation in critical basins - PPP supported through established policy framework - Improved strategies and policies for discharges reflected in more targeted and effective interventions and investments in project area	0.3	25	0.9	75	1.2
3. On-the-ground demonstration	TA	- Generation of targeted information related to the on-the-	- Further characterization of main polluters characterized, update of	1.05	25	6.9	75	7.95

<sup>1</sup> Rio de la Plata Administrative Commission (CARP) - Bi-national Technical Commission for the Maritime Front (CTMFM)

pilots that reduce agreed priority pollutants (nutrients and/or PTS) implemented that measurably contribute to improved ecosystem health and thereby deliver global benefits		<p>ground activities and exchange of experiences on C+P</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information Exchange Network of Rio de la Plata Governments expanded (RIIGLO)</li> <li>- Capacities within the Coastal-Marine Network strengthened</li> <li>- Montevideo Effluent Unit pilot replicated</li> <li>- Nutrient loads in Carrasco Wetland reduced significantly in relation to defined baseline values</li> <li>- Nutrient loads in Samborombón Bay Wetland reduced significantly in relation to defined baseline values</li> </ul>	<p>pollution loads discharged to coastal zones and C+P disseminated to critical industrial sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consolidation and upscaling of RIIGLO including the development and implementation of an “early response” network for HABs</li> <li>- Capacity of the Coastal-Marine Network enhanced to enable application of ICZM</li> <li>- Montevideo Effluent Unit replicated by participating industries in both countries</li> <li>- Pilot projects in Carrasco and Samborombón Wetlands demonstrate cost-effective, multi-use options for addressing urban/industrial discharges such as of nutrients and other PTS</li> </ul>					
4. Compelling public involvement in SAP implementation through communication strategy and improved FREPLATA Integrated Information System	TA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen GIS systems as a management tool to support decision-making by stakeholder groups strengthened</li> <li>- Data and info needs identified and integrated to update the TDA</li> <li>- Analysis of potential climate change impacts on the RPMF and on SAP investments and objectives</li> <li>- Robust Communication and Education Strategy developed that enables engaged participation by stakeholders and supports PPP and Cleaner Production (C+P) objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broad range of stakeholders access GIS System to inform decision making and provide for informed participation.</li> <li>- Updated TDA, coordinated with Patagonia Shelf LME TDA is effective policy tool widely used by decision makers in broad range of sectors</li> <li>- Climate change analysis provides basis for forecasting impacts and adjusting policy decisions and proposed investments</li> <li>- Fully engaged participation of stakeholders provides for robust SAP and NAPs implementation</li> <li>- Updated SAP with new information, emerging issues and country commitments</li> </ul>	0.55	25	1.68	75	2.23
5. M&E system and indicators developed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- M&amp;E mechanisms, including an M&amp;E system for project, set up</li> <li>- Continued development of a suite of M&amp;E P, SR and ES indicators to monitor SAP implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- M&amp;E mechanisms set up including an M&amp;E system for the project</li> <li>- Suite of GEF M&amp;E indicators developed</li> </ul>	0.2	18	0.9	82	1.1
6. Effective project coordination achieved		-Regional Project Coordination Unit established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional PCU effectively implements project</li> <li>- SAP Coordination Committee formalized to support long-term SAP Implementation</li> <li>- Portfolio-wide knowledge sharing through IW:LEARN</li> <li>- Effective linkages and coordination with other relevant initiatives in adjacent LMEs and coastal areas*</li> </ul>	0.3	17	1.44	83	1.74
<b>Total project costs</b>				2.85	16	14.62	84	17.47

\* Proposed GEF UNDP MSP *Implementing Pilot Climate Change Adaptation Measures in Coastal Areas of Uruguay*; proposed GEF FAO MSP *Piloting of an Ecosystem-based Approach to Uruguayan Coastal Fisheries*; World Bank GEF *Patagonia Marine Project: Coastal Contamination Prevention and Sustainable Fisheries Management*; UNDP GEF *Patagonian Coastal Management Plan Project*

## B. INDICATIVE FINANCING PLAN SUMMARY FOR THE PROJECT (\$)

	Project Preparation*	Project	Agency Fee	Total
GEF	.15	2.85	.3	3.3
Co-financing	.4	14.62		15.02
<b>Total</b>	.55	17.47	.3	18.32

**C. INDICATIVE CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT** (including project preparation amount)

Sources of Co-financing	Type of Co-financing	Amount
Project Government Contribution	Grant	3,27
Private Sector	Grant	1,50
NGO	Grant	0,75
Others	Grant	9,50
<b>Total co-financing</b>		15.02

**D. GEF RESOURCES REQUESTED BY FOCAL AREA(S), AGENCY (IES) SHARE AND COUNTRY(IES)**

GEF Agency	Focal Area	Country Name/ Global	(in \$)			
			Project Preparation	Project	Agency Fee	Total
UNDP	International Waters	Argentina, Uruguay	.15	2.85	.3	3.3
<b>Total GEF Resources</b>			.15	2.85	.3	3.3

**PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

**A. STATE THE ISSUE, HOW THE PROJECT SEEKS TO ADDRESS IT, EXPECTED GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:**

The Río de la Plata and its Maritime Front (RPMF) constitute a transitional water system whose resources are shared between the Argentine Republic and the Oriental Republic of Uruguay. At a global level it is a unique system, as one of the leading fluvial and river-marine systems in the world, connecting the Río de la Plata Basin (the second largest basin in South America and fourth largest worldwide) to the Atlantic Ocean. It is an integral part of the Patagonian Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) of the south-western continental shelf of South America, and contains globally significant biodiversity. The Río de la Plata is among the richest, most singular and endangered natural areas in the planet.

The RPMF faces considerable threats due to the extensive economic activities located in the coastal areas of both countries. In Argentina the coastal area concentrates 45% of all industrial activity and 35% of its population, while in Uruguay it contains approximately 70% of its total population and most of its economic, industrial and port activities. The waterbody is therefore a sink for substantial urban, agricultural and industrial pollution, and suffers from habitat degradation due to dredging, sedimentation and physical alteration. Despite an average flow of 22,000 m<sup>3</sup>/sec, pollution hot spots, increasing incidents of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), and the emergence of potential “dead zones” signal the considerable stress that the system is under. The FREPLATA GEF project, which prepared a comprehensive Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)<sup>2</sup>, concluded that coastal land -based pollution (point and non-point) by nutrients, heavy metals, POPs and other PTS, and destruction of natural habitats are priority transboundary issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible in order to achieve human and ecosystem health objectives agreed in the SAP. The system is very dynamic and pollutants are transported by currents, vertical advection, winds, sediments and living organisms. As the TDA concluded, dynamics can rapidly transport contaminants introduced in the coastal zone to distant parts of the system.<sup>3</sup> FREPLATA confirmed that cross-sectoral, integrated approaches and commitments, based on an informed understanding of shared ecosystem management approaches, are required to address these identified priority transboundary issues. Unless addressed, the magnitude of these problems will increase over time.

The current proposal builds upon the GEF-sponsored FREPLATA program which is now nearing completion. The FREPLATA program is a bi-national initiative that has culminated in the endorsement of a Strategic Action Program (SAP) by a comprehensive range of 37 key stakeholders including 9 ministries, the navy, coast guards, provincial and local authorities, and private sector representatives. This constitutes the broadest SAP endorsement in UNDP’s IW history

<sup>2</sup> 206 technical reports were elaborated, which were integrated and summarized in the TDA Technical Document and the TDA for Decision-Makers

<sup>3</sup> TDA for Decision-Makers, 4.1. *Why are the problems transboundary?*, p. 28

and is a significant achievement for the GEF IW portfolio. FREPLATA is a pioneering initiative in the region and has generated a huge body of integrated information suitable for an ecosystem approach to sustainable management. It has built capacities across a range of sectors, and enhanced regional cooperation both in public and private spheres to unprecedented levels. *It is noteworthy that despite current bi-national tensions, both countries overwhelmingly endorsed the SAP as evidence of their commitment to working jointly to address shared concerns.*

### **HOW THE PROJECT SEEKS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE**

Currently there are calls from both governments to consolidate the considerable achievements of FREPLATA, which include a firm foundation of policy and legal reforms, detailed biogeophysical assessments, and comprehensive project portfolios including both baseline contributions and additional initiatives in support of the SAP and associated NAPs, and build upon them in order to capitalize on the extensive political and technical bi-national and intra-national networks that have been established - as well as the significant commitment and will of both countries.

The SAP and two associated NAPs identified an impressive portfolio of projects required to effectively achieve the Common Vision of “*improvement in the standard of living of the population of the RPFM by restoring and preserving its water quality, biodiversity, and the sustainability of its uses and resources*”. As evidenced in the NAPs, both are committed to providing long-term funding and multi-sectoral support, with Argentina contributing over \$1.3 billion and Uruguay \$125 million. Countries are requesting funding from the GEF to catalyze implementation of the RPFM SAP and NAPs through 5 key components:

#### **1. Implementation of agreed regional and national institutional reforms to address priority transboundary issues**

Underpinning the successful implementation of the SAP and associated NAPs is the need to strengthen existing institutional arrangements and the involvement of critical stakeholder sectors. Given the scope of the agreed commitments, a two pronged strategy is envisioned. Priority will be assigned to the establishment of multi-sectoral partnerships between private sector, local/provincial governments and civil society for review, planning, and mobilization of new and additional resources in support of the Project Portfolios that focus on pollution reduction/prevention in the respective NAPs. In order to achieve this, municipal and provincial governments need to be strengthened and enabled to develop public-private partnership (PPP) projects and leverage private sector investments including through the creation of appropriate policy and investment environments. This will be partly achieved by building upon ongoing Cleaner Production schemes in both countries and innovative, successful programs such as Information Exchange Network of Rio de la Plata Governments-RIIGLO (see below).

Public-private partnerships will be complemented by National Coordination Units for NAPs implementation that will support the inter-sectoral committees to coordinate actions and approaches at all government levels (federal/national, provincial/municipal, and city) in order to address specific land-based sources of pollution, particularly nutrients, POPs and other PTS. Capacity for enhanced transboundary pollution regulatory and monitoring functions will principally be achieved by strengthening the two permanent bi-national Commissions (CARP and CTMFM) that have jurisdiction over the Common Use Waters and the Common Fishing Zone. The project proposes to revise, in consultation with relevant authorities, CARP’s mandate to enable it to issue legally binding regulatory norms (hard law) applicable within the Common Use Waters thereby achieving effective regulation and monitoring of transboundary pollution impacts arising from coastal areas (as well as from dredging activities).

Although the project will not directly address issues related to fisheries management, strengthened Commissions will contribute to achieving ecosystem based fisheries management approaches. The bi-national Treaty that governs the RPFM gave the CTMFM the mandate “*to establish rules and measures related to the rational exploitation of the species existing in the common interest zone and to prevent and eliminate pollution*”, and FREPLATA enabled both Commissions to achieve unprecedented levels of cooperation and joint approaches. The project will continue working closely with organizations such as the *Patagonia Marine Project: Prevention of Coastal Pollution and Management of Marine Biodiversity* and the proposed MSP that Uruguay is seeking to develop with the FAO on *Piloting of an Ecosystem-based Approach to Uruguayan Coastal Fisheries*, thus ensuring that the bases are laid for ecosystem-based fisheries management approaches in the project area.

Strengthening the Commissions will also have significant regional benefits as they can act as models for other commissions in the Plata Basin and disseminate good practices for coordination with and between national entities in the Basin. It is also proposed that coordination mechanisms/strategic partnerships, modeled on those used in other GEF initiatives (such as the Danube/Black Sea Strategic Partnership) are established with other commissions in the Plata Basin in order to develop integrated management in the Plata Basin. Robust cooperation is envisaged with the *Plata Basin4*

*Framework Program* through sharing experiences and lessons learned. In addition, portfolio-wide knowledge sharing will be fostered through IW:LEARN including through project support for participation of the CTA and two government representatives at the International Water Conferences in 2009 and 2011.

## 2. Strengthening and harmonization of the policy/legal frameworks needed to achieve SAP pollution reduction objectives

As agreed in the SAP, both countries are committed to strengthening and harmonizing their respective regulatory frameworks as required for setting in place frameworks for coordinated, comprehensive management approaches to address point and non-point sources of pollution. It is proposed that harmonized bi-national technical protocols for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) developed be adopted for the evaluation of transboundary pollution impacts of future projects. Furthermore, the joint application of a methodology for the development of water quality objectives for the exclusive jurisdictions, for Common Use Waters and the Common Fishing Zone will be encouraged. Policy frameworks will also be developed to support public-private partnerships (PPPs) and to promote Cleaner Production through the use of economic incentives. One of the key findings of the TDA was that high concentrations of nutrients, heavy metals, PCBs and hydrocarbons from land-based sources were having a detrimental effect on the RPMF. It concluded that unless addressed, the magnitude of these impacts will increase over time. Accordingly, in order to reduce this impact there is an urgent need to review, develop and implement existing strategies and policies to improve the treatment of urban and industrial discharges, supported by national water, sediment and biota monitoring plans to optimize control of polluting loads and to define water quality objectives. The challenges of addressing inherent asymmetries in the project given that Argentina has a federal structure and Uruguay a centralized government, were ably addressed by the project which laid the bases for harmonization of regulatory, policy and legal frameworks through an extensive legal review. These policy efforts will therefore enable the project to encompass a broad range of sectoral activities that impact on the RPMF.

## 3. On-the-ground demonstration pilots that reduce agreed priority pollutants (nutrients and/or PTS) implemented that measurably contribute to improved ecosystem health and thereby deliver global benefits

Critical to any GEF intervention is the implementation of tangible, on-the-ground activities that contribute to reducing transboundary pollution, improve ecosystem health and thereby deliver global benefits. FREPLATA II will propose a raft of measurable project activities that will ensure that the project is fully aligned with GEF. These coordinated regional efforts will strengthen capacities at sub-national levels in order to effectively monitor, control and reduce pollution sources and recover degraded coastal areas of global importance. Experience and expertise in this matter is uneven, and there are significant opportunities for cross-fertilization between the two countries to develop tailored management approaches for critical industries.

In the first instance, objective information for developing targeted on-the-ground responses to pollution issues will be generated, together with a detailed exchange of experiences between all stakeholders involved. This will include the update of the identification and characterization of the main polluters (industrial and waste waters) and quantification of pollution loads in critical areas (hot spots analysis). In order to achieve Cleaner Production targets within critical industrial sectors located in basins that suffer severe pollution problems, TEST approaches will be adapted and applied.

It is intended that FREPLATA II will then strengthen and upscale a number of existing successful initiatives that are currently operating in the Rio de la Plata Basin and its Maritime Front. During the first phase of the project, an Information Exchange Network of Local Rio de la Plata Governments (RIIGLO) was initiated which actively involved local authorities in monitoring and controlling water quality and the application of environmental management tools and protocols; this project proposes to consolidate and broaden its ambit. This initiative includes the development and implementation of a bi-national “early response” network for pollution control of harmful algal blooms (HABs).

For its part, Argentina has developed a Coastal-Marine Network, integrated by local Governments and coordinated by the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires. The proposed project will enhance the capacity of the Coastal-Marine Network to enable local authorities and communities to apply ICZM approaches, control land based sources of pollution, improve water quality, and recover of globally-important degraded coastal areas. This output is directly related to the activities carried out by the Patagonian Marine project, and will complement the two proposed pilot projects. Uruguay’s NAP highlights the work of the Unit for Industrial Effluents of the Municipality of Montevideo, which over a 10 year period has successfully achieved compliance with pollution ceilings by critical industries through a mix of diligent monitoring and incentive packages. The Montevideo Effluent Unit pilot’s scope needs to be broadened by replicating it in participating industries through the application of economic incentives and PPPs schemes, in both countries.

Given that the original GEF project and the SAP encompassed pollution control and reduction objectives as well as biodiversity conservation goals, the proposed project also aims to implement two clearly defined demonstration projects<sup>5</sup>

to advance SAP implementation during the execution of the full project. The pilot projects are fully incremental and will assist both countries to strengthen regional approaches to ecosystem-based management of the RPMF. The projects, located in the Carrasco Wetland in the border of the Montevideo Department of Uruguay and Samborombón Bay in Argentina, will aim to recover and preserve critical coastal/marine habitats (wetlands) given that they have nutrient and pollutant filtration capacity and are important in the life cycles of globally important biodiversity such as migratory birds and commercially important species of fishes and crustaceans.

#### 4. Compelling public involvement in the achievement of SAP operational objectives through a dynamic communications strategy and improved FREPLATA Integrated Information System (IIS)

In order to effectively implement the SAP and associated NAPs, the project must actively and effectively involve all stakeholders in the process. Consequently, the project will develop a dynamic communication strategy and an improved FREPLATA IIS for informed participation. This will be supported through strengthened GIS systems with user-friendly interfaces, underpinned by the development of ecological sensitivity maps and charts that will enable stakeholder groups to deliver informed decision-making. A highly successful output of the original FREPLATA project was the comprehensive and informed TDA that was developed by a large array of key stakeholders. During the proposed project, it will be strategically updated based on the integration of physical, chemical, sediment, biological, and fisheries data generated through the project. Given that the Patagonia Marine project is also completing a TDA, coordination between the two processes will be sought to provide for a comprehensive understanding of transboundary issues. Moreover, the project's emphasis on PPPs and Cleaner Production schemes also demands a robust communications and dissemination strategy that effectively enables stakeholder groups to appreciate ecosystem-level impacts of pollution, including nutrients and hazardous substances, and recovery measures that require their participation and commitment.

The project will also spearhead effective coordination with other relevant initiatives in adjacent coastal and marine areas to provide for harmonized approaches to address common issues, namely the proposed GEF FAO MSP *Piloting of an Ecosystem-based Approach to Uruguayan Coastal Fisheries*, the proposed GEF UNDP MSP *Implementing Pilot Climate Change Adaptation Measures in Coastal Areas of Uruguay*, World Bank GEF *Patagonia Marine Project: Coastal Contamination Prevention and Sustainable Fisheries Management*, and UNDP GEF *Patagonian Coastal Management Plan Project*. A “*Comprehensive Package of Interventions*” will be piloted that provides for an innovative way of achieving integration across focal areas, between countries, and among agencies.

With regards to global benefits, as one of the leading fluvial and river-marine systems in the world, the Río de la Plata and its Maritime Front (RPMF) constitutes a unique system that is under significant stress as evidenced by the emergence of potential “dead zones” and increasing HAB incidents. The RFMP is part of the Patagonian Shelf LME which contains globally significant biodiversity and has been included by the WWF Global 200, among one of the richest, rare and endangered natural areas in the planet. The convergence of the Río de la Plata with the Subtropical Convergence Ecosystem has physical, meteorological and biological impacts for the entire LME. The productivity (biomass production) of the coastal, estuary and marine ecosystems of the RPMF has the highest values according to the NASA world vegetation map. The project area also contains high habitat diversity including Ramsar sites, one of which has been classified by Conservation International as one of the Earth's Last Wild Places of the wetlands biome and is a crucial link in the migratory chain of sites of hemispheric importance for species of migratory shorebirds. In addition to commercial species of high economic value, the system also harbors other biodiversity of outstanding global significance. The project strategy will mitigate coastal land based pollution (nutrients, PTS) threats to this ecosystem and so reduce pollution export to international waters and generate additional global benefits. In addition to this, building upon the broad and effective support and networks established during the first GEF initiative, this proposed project will deliver relevant lessons for upper watershed governance frameworks that can be replicated in other shared watersheds and estuaries around the globe.

#### **B. DESCRIBE THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES/PLANS:**

Representatives of key stakeholder groups in both countries - including 9 ministries, the navy, coast guards, provincial and local authorities, and private sector representatives - have decisively endorsed a Strategic Action Program (SAP) that resulted from the GEF FREPLATA project that details requirements and arrangements for its implementation. The SAP is complemented by two respective National Action Programs that each contain a Portfolio of Projects organized around jointly agreed priority issues that build upon robust baseline investments and efforts, and that explicitly contribute to addressing identified transboundary impacts. Several projects are “unified” to bring together a suite of trans-sectoral institutions to address a common issue. GEF support is requested by both countries in order to catalyze commitments required for SAP implementation. The Project Portfolio represents government budgetary allocations that jointly total over \$1.3 billion.

**C. DESCRIBE THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH [GEF STRATEGIES](#) AND STRATEGIC PROGRAMS:**

Building upon the solid foundations laid by the GEF FREPLATA project, this proposed initiative will serve to “catalyze transboundary action addressing water concerns” as defined in both the SAP and the respective NAPs. The FREPLATA project amply fulfilled its objective under SO1, and the current proposal therefore conforms to SO2. The focus of the project will be on reduction of land-based coastal pollution as called for under SP2, in order to halt and reverse increasing pollution by nutrient loads and hot spots that already result in potential “dead zones”. In keeping with GEF guidance, given that foundational capacities were already built and collective action agreed upon, the project would focus on policy, legal and institutional reforms to reduce land-based inputs of nitrogen, phosphorus and other priority pollutants as well as on-the-ground pilots and concrete programs that will strengthen and develop innovative public-private partnerships. By establishing the bases for cross-sectoral, bi-national processes that result in controlled and reduced land-based pollution the project will contribute to GPA goals. Moreover, through the two pilots sited in wetlands ecological options for addressing sanitation issues will be explored, while delivering benefits for globally important biodiversity.

**D. OUTLINE THE COORDINATION WITH OTHER RELATED INITIATIVES:**

The project will ensure close linkages with a suite of ongoing initiatives funded by both GEF and the respective governments. As noted above, in support of ecosystem-based management approaches that address pollution issues and biodiversity and fisheries concerns, the project will coordinate with the World Bank GEF *Patagonia Marine Project: Coastal Contamination Prevention and Sustainable Fisheries Management* and the UNDP GEF *Patagonian Coastal Management Plan Project* as well as the MSPs proposed by Uruguay with FAO on *Piloting of an Ecosystem-based Approach to Uruguayan Coastal Fisheries*. Once the former finalizes its TDA it is envisioned that the two Analyses can be brought together. Additionally, the proposed initiative will build upon the contacts established during the TDA-SAP process with the *La Plata Basin Framework Program*. Similarly, the project aims to work closely with the GEF SPA project on *Implementing Pilot Climate Change Adaptation Measures in Coastal Areas of Uruguay* particularly with regards to the incorporation of climate change risks into policy and regulatory frameworks and pilot adaptation measures to be implemented at local levels. As noted above, a *Comprehensive Package of Interventions* will be piloted.

SAP implementation calls for active coordination with the ECOPLATA and PROBIDES projects (Uruguay) which focus on coastal and wetland management, as does the Land Use Plan of the Buenos Aires Province. These are linked to the Information Exchange Network on control and exchange of water quality information of both coasts of Río de la Plata in which local governments participate since 2004. Cooperation during the FREPLATA project will be broadened to further consolidate these municipal networks. The SAP has established a cooperation framework with these initiatives for addressing issues such as treatment of urban effluents, reduction in pollutant loads, and water treatment plans. Similarly, the project will coordinate with many NAP activities including those addressing Cleaner Production (C+P). C+P is official state policy in both countries, and activities related to it as well as treatment of urban effluents and reduction of pollutant loads will be coordinated at national, sub-national and local levels as with the Matanza-Riachuelo Basin Program and the Reconquista Committee Basin – the most polluted tributaries of the basin - and Sanitation Master Plan of Buenos Aires and Montevideo which represent investments of over \$1.3 billion.

**E. DISCUSS THE VALUE-ADDED OF GEF INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT THROUGH [INCREMENTAL REASONING](#) :**

The catalytic role that GEF can play in SAP implementation cannot be overemphasized. The FREPLATA project enabled a diverse suite of key institutions and stakeholders at both bi-national and intra-national levels, to come together to coordinate, exchange, and harmonize cross-sectoral/ministerial actions thus setting the bases for effective ecosystem based management approaches for the RPMF. Moreover, decision making processes now have the potential to be based on sound science, an integrated information system, and shared databases. In order to consolidate the sustainability of long-term, comprehensive commitments jointly agreed by both countries that resulted from this process, the Project aims to provide continued support to build further capacity and public-private partnerships to achieve agreed objectives.

In the absence of continued GEF support, the technical and political National Coordination Units for SAP implementation will not be formalized and their potential as instruments to direct reforms and investments within ecosystem-based management approaches in the project area will not be realized. The mandate of the CARP will remain unchanged thereby limiting the Commissions’ ability to regulate transboundary impacts on the Common Use Area and the sustainable development of the uses and resources of the RPMF. Without additional, sustainable financial resources, the Commissions’ scope of action will be limited. In addition, without GEF intervention, potential regional and global benefits accrued from strengthening the Commissions, will be lost, namely: as examples of good practice and potential models for other commissions in the Plata Basin; and in the development of coordination mechanisms/strategic

partnerships, modeled on those used in other GEF initiatives (such as the Danube/Black Sea Strategic Partnership). PPP has the potential to be implemented without GEF intervention but currently there is a lack of capacity within Municipal and Provincial governments to fully capitalize on these potentially critical economic activities. Ground work laid for regional harmonization of policies and regulations are unlikely to be realized, particularly those related to C+P, PPP and the treatment of urban & industrial discharges. Implementation of initiatives agreed in the SAP and NAPs will proceed in an ad hoc, non-articulated manner and the great strides made in initiatives such as the Information Exchange Network of Rio de la Plata, the Coastal-Marine Network and the Montevideo Effluent Unit are unlikely to be upscaled and replicated in other parts of the RPMF. Furthermore, despite the very considerable baseline investments programmed by both countries, these will be implemented from a narrow sectoral perspective and without a regional, transboundary focus, thereby limiting opportunities for knowledge sharing, cross-fertilization of best practices and technologies, and ecosystem-based management approaches.

**F. INDICATE RISKS AND RISK MEASURES THAT WILL BE TAKEN:**

- *Countries' commitment to SAP and respective NAPs implementation, including needed sectoral, institutional, legal and economic reforms is not forthcoming* ~ The wide endorsement of the SAP indicates that there is significant multi-sectoral support for the process. However, this engagement will be enhanced through a robust and targeted communications strategy that will feed into the public-private partnerships to be developed and promoted, as well as the C+P schemes. The National Coordination Units for NAP implementation are fora that will serve to address emerging priorities, concerns and needs ~ Low risk
- *Differing positions regarding proposed foreign investments in the upper watershed of Río Uruguay will affect support for regional approaches* ~ The proposed project is understood by both countries to be an ideal venue for defining and pursuing a joint agenda that cements bi-national relations despite divergences in other areas. ~ Low risk
- *Continued cooperation among key institutions and partners will weaken* ~ During the TDA and SAP processes, very dynamic networks were established at both intra-national and bi-national levels. This is reflected in the high levels of SAP endorsement. Interest in the continuation of FREPLATA is strong and therefore it can be expected that not only will institutions/partners that participated initially be maintained, but that a host of new stakeholders, particularly from the private sector, will gravitate towards the project. Already Agua y Saneamientos Argentinos S.A (AySA) which is planning sanitation investments of \$1.821 billion in the Buenos Aires area by 2011, has expressed interest in participating in the RIIGLO network. ~ Low risk

**G. DESCRIBE, IF POSSIBLE, THE EXPECTED COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT:**

FREPLATA II will ensure the cost-effectiveness of its activities by building upon the targeted transboundary problems identified in the TDA and the detailed pollution reduction Project Portfolios identified in the NAPs which already prioritize cost-effective solutions. Based on the extensive political and technical bi-national and intra-national networks that have been established, cross-sectoral responses that bring together public and private partners will be developed. The dynamism and momentum that lead to the widely successful SAP endorsement will be leveraged to mobilize additional resources in support of SAP implementation, in addition to benefiting from the significant political and economic commitment from both countries including long-term funding in the region of over \$1.3 billion. Support for SAP implementation at this juncture therefore represents an investment with very high rate of return. Moreover, the project will implement tangible, on-the-ground activities including the strengthening and upscaling of a number of existing successful initiatives that are currently operating in the Rio de la Plata Basin, thus contributing to short-term impact in terms of improved ecosystem health that delivers global benefits.

**H. JUSTIFY THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF GEF AGENCY:**

UNDP-GEF has implemented a suite of projects that have resulted in the high-level adoption of 11 SAPs, of which seven are now under implementation. In addition to this, it has assisted in the creation or strengthening of 14 multi-country marine/coastal, river and lake basin Commissions, including establishment of the world's first two Large Marine Ecosystem Commissions in 2006 (Benguela Current & Guinea Current LMEs). Its efforts to achieve nutrient reduction goals have led to the establishment of the innovative Strategic Partnership with the World Bank, European Union and other partners on nutrient reduction in the Danube/Black Sea basin which has resulted measurable reductions of nutrient and other pollution loads. In addition to this, the merger of the UNDP-GEF IW cluster with UNDP's Water Governance Programme means that the agency is well positioned to provide support in integrated water resources management, and water supply and sanitation. Thus it can be stated that UNDP has established itself as one of the leading international organizations supporting the improved governance of transboundary waterbodies.




**PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)**

**A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S):**  
 (Please attach the [country endorsement letter\(s\)](#) or [regional endorsement letter\(s\)](#) with this template).

<i>Miguel Enrique Pellerano</i> <i>Sub-secretariat for Environmental Planning and Policy</i> <i>Argentina</i>	Date: <i>11 October 2007</i>
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<i>Roberto Elissalde</i> <i>Counselor to the Minister</i> <i>Ministry of Housing, Land Use and Environment</i> <i>Uruguay</i>	Date: <i>11 October 2007</i>
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**B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION**

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies and procedures and meets the GEF criteria for project identification and preparation.	
 John Hough UNDP-GEF Deputy Executive Coordinator, a.i.	Paula Caballero UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor Project Contact Person
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