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<b>Implementing Agency</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>Region</b>	Global
<b>Focal Area</b>	International Waters
<b>Project Title</b>	Global International Waters Assessment
<b>GEF Allocation</b>	US \$6.79 million
<b>Total Financing</b>	US \$13.165 million
<b>Dates</b>	November 1998–December 2002
<b>Environmental Problem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty identifying priorities among different international water bodies and threats due to the lack of comprehensive information on ecological status and causes of degradation of international water bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Project Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop comprehensive strategic framework for identifying action priorities for international waters</li> </ul>

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Deciding which bodies of water should receive priority in GEF's international waters focal area has been difficult in the absence of a comprehensive assessment of the nature, extent, and distribution of issues and problems affecting international waters. A 1997 freshwater assessment by relevant U.N. organizations and the Stockholm Environment Institute did not adequately assess transboundary freshwater basins and associated transboundary groundwater. Other assessments completed have generally lacked the holistic systems approach advocated by GEF and have concentrated on specific thematic issues or regions. GEF is in a unique position to facilitate a comprehensive global assessment of international waters because of its ability to assemble groups of specialists at a regional level, following compatible methodologies to investigate the ecological status of international waters and the causes of degradation.

**The Project** This project is developing a comprehensive, strategic framework to assist GEF and its partners in identifying priorities for remedial and mitigating actions that will achieve significant environmental benefits for international waters at national, regional, and global levels. Implemented by regional intergovernmental bodies and national institutions, the project will produce a comprehensive and integrated report, entitled the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA). The assessment will cover the ecological status and causes of environmental problems of transboundary freshwater basins and their associated coastal and ocean systems.

- Activities**
- *Preproject preparation.* This preproject phase defined the thematic analytical scope of GIWA and established the operational geographic units of assessment.
  - *GIWA network and assessment protocol* (first year). This phase establishes the GIWA network of national experts and institutions and regional and global collaborating bodies that will carry out the work of GIWA. A core team will develop an assessment protocol and convene regional teams to review it.
  - *Analysis* (second year). This phase gathers and analyzes the information needed to apply the GIWA assessment protocol at the subregional level.
  - *Predictive/policy options analysis* (third year). This phase evaluates alternative scenarios developed on the basis of projected actions taken to address the identified societal causes of environmental degradation.
  - *Dissemination of GIWA products.* This last phase prepares and disseminates global and regional GIWA products, emphasizing their comprehensibility to various sectors of society.

- Benefits**
- Add to the value of international waters programs by providing interregional comparisons of findings on ecological status and root causes of degradation
  - Reduce cost of scoping studies for GEF, partner agencies, and many donors, enabling application of more funds to direct action.
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The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a financial mechanism that provides grants and concessional funds to developing countries for projects and activities designed to protect the global environment. GEF resources address climate change, biological diversity, international waters, and depletion of the ozone layer. Activities concerning land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation as they relate to the four focal areas, are also eligible for funding.

GEF is a joint venture of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank. These three agencies implement GEF projects.

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