

# GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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## General Project Information

### Project Title

The Freshwater Challenge: Accelerating Restoration and Conservation of Freshwater Ecosystems

|                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Region                     | GEF Project ID         |
| Global                     | 11833                  |
| Country(ies)               | Type of Project        |
| Global                     | MSP                    |
| GEF Agency(ies):           | GEF Agency ID          |
| WWF-US                     | G0072                  |
| Executing Partner          | Executing Partner Type |
| IUCN                       | CSO                    |
| Conservation International | CSO                    |
| The Nature Conservancy     | CSO                    |
| Wetlands International     | CSO                    |
| WWF-US                     | GEF Agency             |
| GEF Focal Area (s)         | Submission Date        |
| International Waters       | 11/21/2024             |

### Project Sector (CCM Only)

### Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Freshwater, International Waters, River Basin, Lake Basin, Biodiversity, Wetlands, Biomes, Rivers, Lakes, Climate Change, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Nationally Determined Contribution, Paris Agreement, Climate Change Adaptation, Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, National Adaptation Plan, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Climate resilience, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Sustainable Land Management, Land Degradation, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Development Goals, Stakeholders, Private Sector, Capital providers, Large corporations, Civil Society, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Equality, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Beneficiaries, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Generation, Training, Seminar, Theory of change, Learning, Adaptive management, Indicators to measure change, Knowledge Exchange, Capacity Development, North-South, Peer-to-Peer, Field Visit, South-South, Communications, Strategic Communications, Awareness Raising, Education, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Consultation

|                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Type of Trust Fund       | Project Duration (Months)   |
| GET                      | 48                          |
| GEF Project Grant: (a)   | GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)  |
| 4,400,000.00             | 0.00                        |
| Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c) | Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d) |

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 396,000.00                              | 0.00                               |
| Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)          | Total Co-financing                 |
| 4,796,000.00                            | 10,385,549.00                      |
| PPG Amount: (e)                         | PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)             |
| 150,000.00                              | 13,500.00                          |
| PPG total amount: (e+f)                 | Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f) |
| 163,500.00                              | 4,959,500.00                       |
| Project Tags                            |                                    |
| CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No |                                    |

### Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B “project description”. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Rivers and wetlands are the frontlines of the climate and nature crises. However, freshwater ecosystems are still undervalued, under-funded, and overlooked and their rapid loss is undermining any hard-won development, climate resilience, and conservation gains. To address this global threat, the Freshwater Challenge (FWC) was launched in March 2023. The FWC is a country-led initiative that aims to restore 300,000 kilometers of rivers and 350 million hectares of wetlands and conserve intact freshwater ecosystems by 2030. To date, 47 national governments and the European Union have joined, of which 36 are GEF recipient countries.

FWC member countries have indicated to the FWC Supporting Coalition that they would like support with integrating freshwater ecosystem objectives into policies and plans across key water-dependent sectors, unlocking resources, and building expertise to implement freshwater ecosystem restoration and protection. This project responds to their requests, with an objective of supporting country-led target setting and prioritization of specific places in policies and plans, learning, and communications that restore and conserve freshwater ecosystems and accelerate FWC progress, in line with 30x30 commitments in the Global Biodiversity Framework. Key components of work include recommending standard indicators and monitoring frameworks, supporting operationalization in national plans, supporting peer-to-peer learning, and communicating with stakeholders and the public to raise the profile of freshwater ecosystems. The project will benefit 600 direct beneficiaries and contribute to engagement in IW:LEARN through participation and delivery of key products. It will also contribute to countries’ international commitments on climate resilience, biodiversity, land degradation, disaster risk reduction, the SDGs, and relevant transboundary basin management plans or agreements.

### Indicative Project Overview

#### Project Objective

Support country-led target setting and prioritization of specific places in policies and plans, learning, and communications that strengthen country-level freshwater ecosystem restoration and conservation interventions and accelerate progress of the Freshwater Challenge.

## Project Components

### Component 1: Supporting Countries and Development Institutions to Monitor Freshwater Challenge Objectives

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Component Type             | Trust Fund        |
| Technical Assistance       | GET               |
| GEF Project Financing (\$) | Co-financing (\$) |
| 500,000.00                 | 1,173,965.00      |

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1: Improved guidance on indicators and tracking approaches for freshwater ecosystems

Output:

Output 1.1.1: Recommendations and guidance on a freshwater indicator framework developed and shared

Output 1.1.2: A recommended approach to tracking is developed and shared

Output 1.1.3: Indicators and tracking recommendations piloted with a subset of the project countries and development institutions

### Component 2. Supporting Countries to Operationalize their Freshwater Challenge Objectives from Source to Sea

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Component Type             | Trust Fund        |
| Technical Assistance       | GET               |
| GEF Project Financing (\$) | Co-financing (\$) |
| 1,551,119.00               | 3,641,918.00      |

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1: Increased operationalization of FWC objectives in national and sub-national plans and resourcing co-led with selected FWC member countries and country-based stakeholders

Outcome 2.2: Improved integration of Source to Sea targets and actions in country plans in selected FWC member countries

Output:

Output 2.1.1: Pipeline and gap analysis of freshwater restoration and protection interventions and resourcing co-led with selected FWC member countries and country-based stakeholders

Output 2.1.2: Selected FWC member countries supported with technical assistance to operationalize and report on FWC objectives

Output 2.2.1: Selected FWC member countries supported to integrate Source to Sea actions

### Component 3: Enabling Country Learning to Strengthen National Freshwater Challenge Objectives

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Component Type             | Trust Fund        |
| Technical Assistance       | GET               |
| GEF Project Financing (\$) | Co-financing (\$) |
| 924,394.00                 | 2,170,412.00      |

Outcome:

Outcome 3.1: Improved availability of knowledge and learning resources that supports effective integration, program design, and monitoring of FWC objectives by countries

Outcome 3.2: Improved knowledge among FWC member countries that supports effective FWC-related planning and implementation

Output:

Output 3.1.1: Online FWC Learning Hub with curated content established

Output 3.1.2: Country-led learning cases developed and shared in the Learning Hub

Output 3.2.1: In person and/or virtual group “Challenge Exchanges” held with FWC member countries

Output 3.2.2: In person and/or virtual peer-to-peer exchange and mentorship facilitated between FWC member countries

### Component 4: Communicating to Raise the Profile of Freshwater Ecosystems Locally, Nationally, in Transboundary Basins, and Globally

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Component Type             | Trust Fund        |
| Technical Assistance       | GET               |
| GEF Project Financing (\$) | Co-financing (\$) |
| 1,005,439.00               | 2,360,700.00      |

Outcome:

Outcome 4.1: Increased awareness of freshwater ecosystem challenges and solutions among the general public and decision makers

Outcome 4.2: Strengthened engagement of diverse stakeholders in FWC messaging and objectives

Output:

Output 4.1.1: FWC-related communications disseminated through multiple media channels

Output 4.1.2: Regional roundtables on freshwater challenges and solutions held

Output 4.2.1: New and diverse partnerships built in support of FWC communications

Output 4.2.2: Youth partners engagement in the FWC strengthened through “Youth Challenge Grants”

## M&E

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Component Type             | Trust Fund        |
| Technical Assistance       | GET               |
| GEF Project Financing (\$) | Co-financing (\$) |
| 209,524.00                 | 519,277.00        |

Outcome:

Effective on-going Monitoring and Evaluation.

Output:

ME1: Regular monitoring, reporting and independent project evaluation

## Component Balances

| Project Components | GEF Project Financing (\$) | Co-financing (\$) |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
|                    |                            |                   |

|   |                     |                      |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| Component 1: Supporting Countries and Development Institutions to Monitor Freshwater Challenge Objectives                           | 500,000.00          | 1,173,965.00         |
| Component 2. Supporting Countries to Operationalize their Freshwater Challenge Objectives from Source to Sea                        | 1,551,119.00        | 3,641,918.00         |
| Component 3: Enabling Country Learning to Strengthen National Freshwater Challenge Objectives                                       | 924,394.00          | 2,170,412.00         |
| Component 4: Communicating to Raise the Profile of Freshwater Ecosystems Locally, Nationally, in Transboundary Basins, and Globally | 1,005,439.00        | 2,360,700.00         |
| M&E   | 209,524.00          | 519,277.00           |
| <b>Subtotal</b>   | <b>4,190,476.00</b> | <b>9,866,272.00</b>  |
| Project Management Cost   | 209,524.00          | 519,277.00           |
| <b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>  | <b>4,400,000.00</b> | <b>10,385,549.00</b> |

Please provide justification

## PROJECT OUTLINE

### A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

#### **The global environmental problem and root causes**

Freshwater ecosystems are the world's life support systems, providing water, food, and livelihoods, while supporting biodiversity within and around them and buffering people against climate change-related impacts. However, rivers and wetlands have experienced the worst declines of all ecosystems globally. Since 1970, two-thirds of wetlands have been degraded or destroyed, only one-third of large rivers flow freely from source to sea, and freshwater species populations have fallen by 85%[1].

Although freshwater ecosystems cover less than 1% of the Earth's surface, humans are treating them as if they were a limitless resource. Surface water and groundwater resource use by and for growing populations, food production, industry, energy, and economic development is increasing and already exceeding sustainable limits in many parts of the world. Direct conversion of freshwater ecosystems to other uses is also a major threat – wetlands are drained for more “productive” uses and streams are channelized in an effort to control water flows and levels. Freshwater ecosystems are further threatened by land use practices that cause erosion and runoff of



toxic chemicals and nutrients, poorly planned infrastructure that changes flow regimes and causes fragmentation, and industrial and domestic use and discharge that impacts water quality.

Furthermore, climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of water-related natural disasters, namely droughts and floods. Natural disasters across the world, including those exacerbated by climate change, are overwhelmingly water-related (90%). 2024 alone has seen a number of record storms and temperature extremes. Nearly 2/3 of the global population (4 billion people) already experience severe water scarcity at least one month of the year[3]. By 2050, five times as much land is likely to face “extreme drought”, 5.7 billion people are likely to live in water-scarce areas[3], and the number of people at risk from floods is projected to rise to around 1.6 billion[4]. Water-scarce regions could see their growth rates decline by as much as 6% of GDP by 2050 due to water-related impacts on agriculture, health, and incomes[5].

While healthy rivers and wetlands are key to the response to the climate and nature crisis, and are recognized in important international development frameworks, freshwater ecosystems are largely undervalued, underfunded, and overlooked in national policies, plans, and investment strategies. Most of the economic value of freshwater ecosystems (US\$50 trillion annually) is taken for granted because they are in the form of indirect benefits– the natural processes of water purification, sediment delivery, biodiversity support, and protection from extreme events[6]. These are also overlooked when investments are made in built infrastructure for water management. This influences the lack of funding going into freshwater ecosystem protection and maintenance.

Freshwater ecosystems are also overlooked because they are cross-cutting– interacting with food, energy and water systems that each tend to focus narrowly on volume and quality with less attention to the rivers and wetlands providing the services. The interdependence of sustainable groundwater use and protection also receives limited attention. Although freshwater ecosystems are receiving increased attention as “nature-based solutions” to climate change, there are few examples of freshwater-related adaptation solutions implemented at scale. Altogether, this is leading to the rapid loss of freshwater ecosystem services and biodiversity, which is undermining any hard-won development, climate resilience, and conservation gains.

## **Barriers**

This project will tackle the key barriers to investment in, and implementation of, freshwater ecosystem restoration and protection at country level:

- Lack of awareness of the key role that freshwater ecosystems play and the value of freshwater ecosystem services in achieving diverse biodiversity, climate resilience, economic, and international development objectives.
- Lack of standard indicators and easy, transparent tracking to report on country commitments for freshwater ecosystems, aligned with indicator frameworks utilized by multilateral and bilateral institutions and the private sector.
- Insufficient policy coherence and prioritization of freshwater ecosystem targets in key water-dependent sector policies, plans, and regulations.
- Lack of technical knowledge and information on freshwater ecosystems (including their functioning, as well as their historical, current, and anticipated future status), and how to design, implement, regulate, and monitor freshwater ecosystem interventions - across government ministries and agencies.

## **Future Scenarios**

The following are simple future scenario narratives that describe how the future could unfold for freshwater resources under each IPCC's Shared Socioeconomic Pathways, developed to explore possible futures of global socioeconomic development:

### **SSP1: Sustainability ('Taking the Green Road')**

In a future shaped by SSP1, freshwater resources are sustainably managed through widespread adoption of water-saving technologies, strong environmental policies, and global cooperation on shared water basins. Governments prioritize ecosystem restoration, ensuring healthy watersheds and robust aquifers. Urban areas boast advanced water recycling systems, while agriculture shifts to precision irrigation methods, drastically reducing water waste. Public awareness campaigns foster conservation behaviors, and equitable governance ensures access to clean water for all, creating a resilient and balanced freshwater future.

### **SSP2: 'Middle of the Road'**

Under SSP2, freshwater management sees moderate improvements, but progress is uneven across regions. Some countries invest in upgraded water infrastructure and pollution control, while others struggle with inefficiencies and outdated systems. Population growth and climate change strain water supplies in vulnerable areas, leading to periodic shortages and local conflicts. While technological advancements help mitigate some challenges, limited global coordination and inconsistent policy implementation leave many regions grappling with water stress.

### **SSP3: Regional Rivalry ('A Rocky Road')**

In the fragmented world of SSP3, competition for scarce freshwater resources intensifies as countries prioritize self-reliance over collaboration. Over-extraction and mismanagement lead to the degradation of rivers, lakes, and aquifers, while pollution from unchecked industrial and agricultural activities further diminishes water quality. Poor regions face severe shortages, exacerbating public health crises and migration pressures. Without international cooperation, disputes over shared water basins become more frequent, heightening geopolitical tensions.

### **SSP4: Inequality ('A Road Divided')**

In SSP4, freshwater access becomes a marker of inequality, with wealthy regions leveraging advanced technologies like desalination and efficient irrigation systems, while poorer areas face growing water scarcity. Industrial water use and pollution disproportionately affect marginalized communities, as environmental regulations are lax in less developed areas. Urban elites enjoy uninterrupted water supplies, but rural populations struggle with droughts, contaminated sources, and limited infrastructure. This disparity in access fuels social unrest and exacerbates inequalities in health and economic opportunities.

### **SSP5: Fossil-fueled Development ('Taking the Highway')**

In the high-energy world of SSP5, economic growth enables large-scale engineering projects like dams and desalination plants to secure freshwater supplies in the short term. However, the continued reliance on fossil fuels exacerbates climate change, leading to more frequent droughts and extreme weather events that disrupt water availability. Intensive industrial and agricultural water use results in significant over-extraction and pollution, compromising ecosystems and long-term sustainability. While affluent regions mitigate some challenges through technology, poorer areas bear the brunt of water insecurity.

Under each of those scenarios, the project strategy is still relevant, although varied in its level of success or impact.

## Justification for the Project

To address the rapid decline of freshwater ecosystems, the Freshwater Challenge (FWC) was launched at the UN Water Conference (New York) in March 2023[7]. This country-led initiative aims to restore 300,000 km of rivers and 350 million ha of wetlands[8] and conserve freshwater ecosystems important for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, in line with “30x30” commitments in the GBF and complementary with the efforts of the High Ambition Coalition. As a country-led initiative, governments form the membership. To date, there are 47 national governments and the European Union[9] that have joined the FWC. Thirty-six of the FWC member countries are GEF recipient countries, including sixteen Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and two Small Island Developing States (SIDs).

The FWC is supported by a coalition of organizations and agencies: Conservation International (CI), IUCN, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Wetlands International (WI), WWF, FAO, UNEP, and the Secretariats of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and UNCCD. In addition to the supporting coalition of the FWC, multilateral development banks, the Green Climate Fund, and philanthropic organizations are committed to improving freshwater outcomes through the FWC. The FWC also requires the proactive support of water-dependent cross-sectoral actors from agriculture, infrastructure, finance, energy, urban planning, conservation, and other areas as well as stakeholder engagement from local to global levels. The FWC Supporting Coalition is already actively engaging a range of stakeholders in support of the FWC.

The FWC aims to *elevate* restoration and conservation of freshwater ecosystems in global, regional, transboundary, and national government strategies and processes; define and *substantiate* targets at a national scale and ownership of and contributions by country and locally-based stakeholders; and *accelerate* overall investment in, and implementation of, restoration and conservation of freshwater ecosystems. In addition, the FWC aims to make investments more effective and substantially increase the environmental, social and economic returns of those investments. The FWC aims to serve as a “matchmaker” for country members with potential funding sources to leverage greater investment towards meeting FWC commitments. By doing so, the FWC will support countries to reach their international commitments (e.g., on climate, biodiversity, land degradation, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and the SDGs) in synergy with their ambitions for a sustainable socioeconomic development.

This project responds to the requests by FWC member countries to the Supporting Coalition of the FWC. Member countries would like support to integrate freshwater ecosystem objectives into policies and plans across key water-dependent sectors, unlock resources and build expertise to implement freshwater ecosystem restoration and protection in their countries, and inspire and collectively engage stakeholders- like the private sector- to drive strategic basin-level investments and interventions. Therefore, in the context of the global environmental and resilience problem and barriers discussed below, this project’s objective is to support country-led target setting and prioritization of specific places, learning, and communications that strengthen their freshwater ecosystem interventions and accelerate progress towards the achievement of their 2030 FWC commitments.

## 2. Baseline and coordination opportunities

**Global:** The project will complement ongoing investments and actions aligned with numerous global frameworks and agreements, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the CBD-Ramsar Convention on Wetlands joint work plan, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification’s (UNCCD) goal for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Water Climate Pathway under the Marrakesh Partnership, the UNFCCC Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. This includes investments through MDBs, bilaterals and other development partners, and other financial mechanisms of UNFCCC, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund.

It will also complement transboundary actions under the two global water conventions, the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention[10] and the 1992 UNECE Water Convention[11]. The project will build off action by stakeholders at the global level, such as the UN Water Action Agenda, the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, the Mangrove Breakthrough, the Global Peatlands Initiative, the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA), and the CEO Water Mandate's Water Resilience Coalition. The project will also coordinate with and learn from the experiences and tools of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, an intergovernmental group of 120 countries working to achieve 30x30 commitments, particularly around land and oceans.

**National:** The project will leverage a number of existing & planned initiatives from national governments in countries selected for the project. For example, a number of countries have ongoing investments in freshwater management, other countries have investments in transboundary basin coordination and/or cooperation, and a number of countries have planned freshwater restoration and conservation interventions at the country level. The project will also leverage learnings and technical experience from other FWC member countries to support global recommendations and peer exchange.

**Private Sector:** The project will leverage the growing group of corporate supporters of the FWC[12]. These supporters are aligning to the FWC because they recognize the risks posed to their supply chains and the surrounding communities from not addressing water related risks, like floods and droughts. In some countries, they also recognise regulatory shifts are likely which means they need to be continuously improving their own water management performance, in particular around water quality impacts. Global corporate supporters - such as IKEA and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) - have supported the FWC already through co-financing of global events to engage the private sector on the FWC, providing in-kind support, and/or working with the Supporting Coalition on the systemic changes that will be needed to influence how freshwater is viewed and financed in their sectors. This includes coordinating with the Supporting Coalition on two private sector engagement events during Stockholm Water Week in August 2024 and the UN General Assembly in September 2024. These events engaged over 60 companies and gathered important inputs that will help shape engagement strategies with the private sector. Additionally, the Supporting Coalition has engaged various private sector platforms - such as the CEO Water Mandate, WEF, the Water Resilience Coalition (WRC), the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS), Business for Nature, and the UN High Level Climate Champions - to identify future alignment and collaboration opportunities for the FWC. The private sector supporters of the FWC will be important allies in raising the profile of the FWC across sectors and companies. They will be engaged in indicator discussions, case study development, and future country-level co-financing, implementation, and monitoring activities of interventions that contribute to national FWC commitments.

**FWC Supporting Coalition of Global Organizations:** This project will also build on the freshwater conservation work by the supporting coalition of the FWC. This coalition has come together to contribute resources and insights to help the FWC during its co-creation based on a shared dedication to the goals of the FWC and to supporting countries to be able to meet their commitments. In particular, the project will be carried out by WWF (GEF Agency), IUCN (Lead Executing Agency), Conservation International (CI), TNC, and Wetlands International, in coordination with FAO, UNEP, and the Secretariats of the Ramsar Convention and UNCCD. The supporting coalition brings leading expertise and experience from their current work to support FWC member countries. Each organization offers expertise, working together to provide coordination, capacity building, financial support, and leadership to turn ambition into action. Strategic coordination aligns efforts for maximum impact, while global communications amplify the urgent need for freshwater restoration and protection to garner widespread support. The supporting coalition is committed to assisting countries to effectively implement the Freshwater Challenge by delivering on country-requested support for facilitation and coordination, capacity building, communications and engagement, resource mobilization for national implementation, global thought leadership and advocacy.

WWF has a portfolio of work focused on freshwater-related NBS and restoration for climate resilience and biodiversity benefits, including large projects such as the US\$77 million Green Climate Fund's Recharge

Pakistan Project approved in 2024. WWF has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Investment Bank in October 2024 at CBD COP16 for a water-related NBS project incubator. The coalition partners of the FWC also have relevant on-going projects globally and within FWC member countries. This includes a Global Wetlands Mapping for policy makers and investors led by Wetlands International and IUCN's global efforts to promote good water governance and implement nature-based solutions. TNC has led on the development of new guidance for protecting and conserving inland waters and is supporting several FWC members as they undertake the NBSAP/NDC update process, and developing general guidance on the design of national targets for freshwater ecosystems protection and restoration. Additionally, CI's work on estimating the potential carbon, freshwater, and biodiversity gains that could come from restoration of degraded high value freshwater ecosystems globally can support the FWC knowledge base and messaging.

The project will also coordinate with a remote real-time sensing of freshwater ecosystem change led by UNEP[13] and freshwater restoration reporting under the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM) registry led by FAO[14]. Additionally, the project will support and coordinate with the Action Platform on Source-to-Sea Management currently hosted by SIWI with involvement from several FWC supporting coalition partners, as well as the GEF.

**Coordination with other GEF Projects and Programs:** The project will also coordinate with the GEF IW:LEARN Project, which shares knowledge and innovations across GEF's International Waters portfolio. Additionally, the project will coordinate closely with the GEF 8 Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program (ERIP), led by CI. In particular the project will coordinate around freshwater restoration knowledge, tools, and country support. As part of country selection, the project will consider ERIP countries[15] and other GEF projects in the country or supporting their transboundary basins, to build on successes while also ensuring there is not direct overlap.

**Coordination and Collaboration with Stakeholders:** To achieve freshwater ecosystem restoration and conservation at scale by 2030, the Challenge requires the active support of all actors involved in water-related activities and across sectors. This includes government agencies, civil society, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and local communities (LCs), multilateral development banks, and the private sector engaged in agriculture, infrastructure, finance, energy, urban planning, conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and many other areas. Only through the combined efforts of all stakeholders working at different levels, from high-level policy reforms to local grassroots projects, will rivers and wetlands be revived and conserved for the benefits and resilience of people and nature.

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[1] WWF (2024) Living Planet Report 2024 – A System in Peril. WWF, Gland, Switzerland.

[2] Global Commission on the Economics of Water (2024). The Economics of Water: Valuing the Hydrological Cycle as a Global Common Good. Paris, OECD Environment Directorate.

[3] UNCCD (2022) Drought in numbers 2022 - Restoration for readiness and resilience.

[4] UNESCO, UN-Water (2020) United Nations World Water Development Report 2020: Water and Climate Change. Paris, UNESCO.

[5] World Economic Forum (2015) Global Risks 2015, 10th Edition. WEF, Geneva, Switzerland.

[6] WWF (2023) High Cost of Cheap Water: The True Value of Water and Freshwater Ecosystems to People and Planet. WWF, Gland, Switzerland.

[7] Beyond the leading countries (Colombia, DRC, Ecuador, Gabon, Mexico and Zambia) and supporting coalition, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Romania, The Netherlands, Singapore and USA attended the event at political level and committed to engage in the initiative.



[8] This equals 30% of degraded rivers and 30% of degraded or lost wetlands. Freshwater Biodiversity Observation Network, Inland Waters, Science Brief for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, December 2022. [https://geobon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/InlandWaters\\_Brief.pdf](https://geobon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/InlandWaters_Brief.pdf)

[9] Current FWC Member Countries include: Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, DR Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Guinea, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, Tajikistan, Tanzania, UAE, Uganda, UK, USA, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and the European Union. The Freshwater Challenge. <https://www.freshwaterchallenge.org/joining>

[10] Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses

[11] Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

[12] The Supporting Coalition is developing a 'Business Supporter Program' aimed to increase private sector support for and engagement in the FWC. The Business Supporter Program builds on the well-established ACT-D (Assess, Commit, Transform, Disclose) framework and aims to align with existing private sector asks, while still accelerating private sector investment in freshwater ecosystem restoration and conservation and increasing public accountability. It will foster public-private collaboration and help to effectively leverage existing private sector efforts through better alignment with national strategies and plans. Additional details will be available during the project preparation stage.

[13] UNEP DHI Partnership - Centre on Water and Environment. SDG 6.6.1 - Freshwater Ecosystem Explorer. <https://unepdhi.org/sdg-6-6-1-freshwater-ecosystems-explorer/>

[14] FAO. Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring. <https://ferm.fao.org/>

[15] There are 10 countries that are members of the FWC and part of GEF's ERIP.

## B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

The aim of this 4 year project is to support country-led actions that build towards the achievement of the 2030 Freshwater Challenge goal and generate global environmental benefits and enhance resilience- supporting, integrating and accelerating the restoration of 300,000 km of degraded rivers and 350 million hectares of degraded wetlands by 2030, as well as conserving freshwater ecosystems in line with "30x30" commitments in the GBF.

The specific project objective is to support country-led target setting and prioritization of specific places in policies and plans, learning, and communications that strengthen their freshwater ecosystem interventions and accelerate progress towards the achievement of their 2030 FWC commitments. In doing so, the project will also contribute towards countries' international commitments on climate resilience, biodiversity, land degradation, DRR, the SDGs, and relevant transboundary basin management plans or agreements.

The project will support a group of three to six countries, with selection during project development phase, based on criteria to be further defined during project preparation and including e.g.: GEF eligibility (35 FWC countries); regional balance; inclusion of LDCs and SIDS; evidence of active commitment to FWC operationalization (readiness) in the country; relevant co-finance from the country; potential to generate future global environmental benefits and enhance resilience; gender balance approach; and where relevant, evidence

of commitment to transboundary collaboration (i.e., part of a transboundary River Basin Organization, a signatory of one of the two global water conventions, or has a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) in place). Selection will also take into consideration countries interested in undertaking efforts at national or transboundary basin scales. Further, it will consider which countries are already supported under the GEF 8 Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program (ERIP) (10 countries in both FWC and ERIP), so this project leverages potential complementarities in some countries.

The theory of change presents the interconnected pathways this project will take to achieve its objective. Each component captures the enabling conditions that will support countries to prioritize, invest, and effectively implement freshwater restoration and conservation interventions that support several global environmental goals. By developing indicator frameworks (Component 1) that are more standardized, well understood, and accessible, the project can encourage their use by countries and bilateral and multilateral development agencies as they prioritize their strategic focus and investment strategies. Moreover, a streamlined approach to reporting on the benefits of freshwater ecosystem conservation and restoration will aid development agencies and countries in communicating the value of these approaches, and to understand where there are gaps in investments or potential duplications of effort.

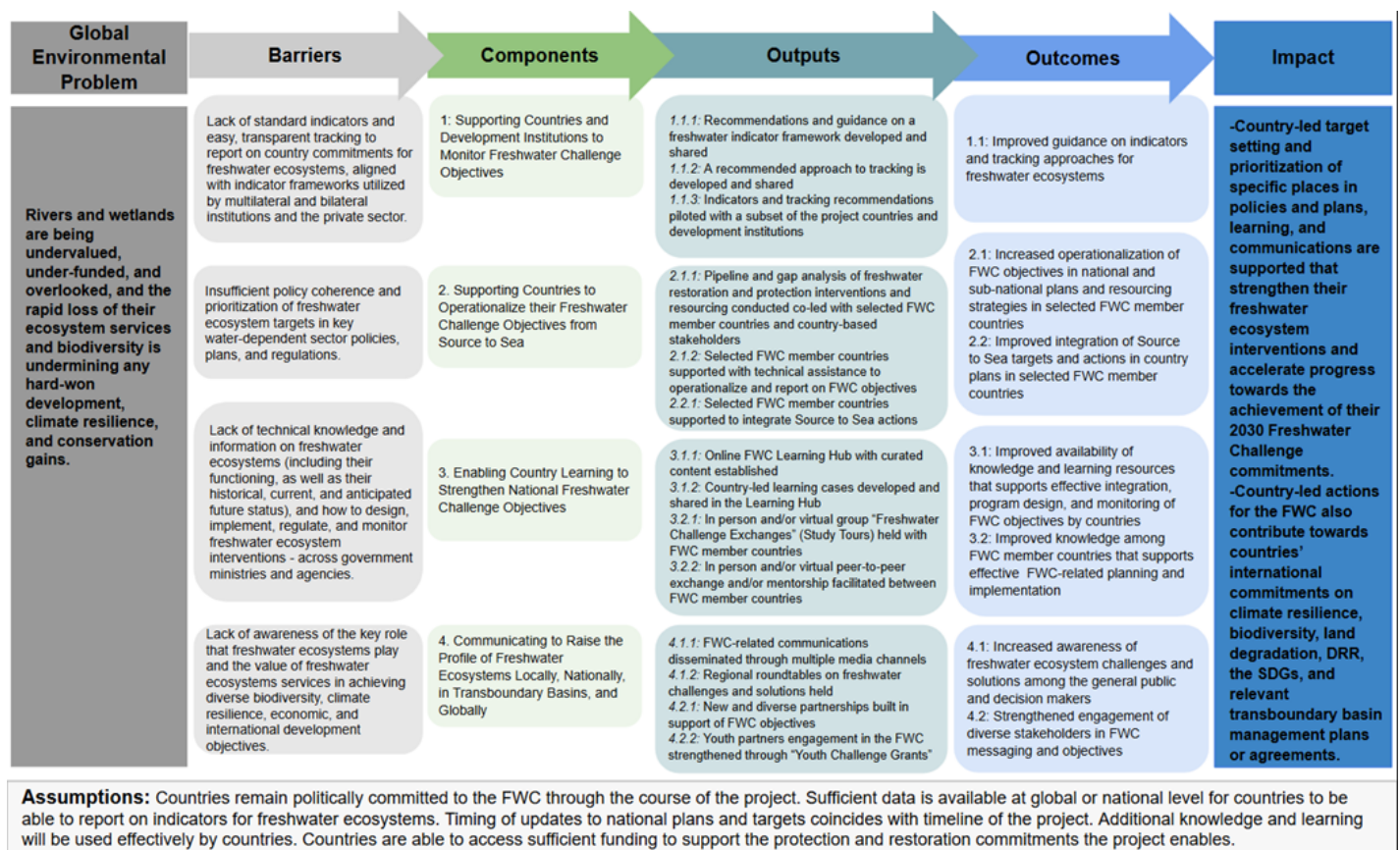
The indicator and monitoring work (Component 1) will directly feed into support to selected FWC member countries to operationalize and prioritize FWC commitments in their policies, plans, and regulations (Component 2). Component 1 will provide a “common language” for evaluating freshwater protection and restoration and their impacts. The goal of having this common language will be to take it beyond the domain of any single convention and/or sector, and to provide the “translation” of, for example, ‘kilometers of river restored’ that might be a metric for a Ministry of Natural Resources, into ‘flood risk reduced’ for a Ministry of Public Works, contribution to GDP for a Ministry of Finance, or protection of crucial supply chain resources for a private company. This will support Component 2 efforts on policy coherence and prioritization within FWC member countries. In particular, it will support better understanding of why and how to integrate freshwater ecosystem interventions across sectors, from source to sea, and from local to national or transboundary level for conservation, climate, and social and economic development benefits. Supporting an inclusive all-of-government approach will be one of the ways to ensure freshwater’s cross-sectoral benefits and impacts are planned and prioritized coherently and misaligned plans and investments are reduced.

The project will also help FWC member countries to strengthen their in-country technical expertise so they can design and implement effective freshwater restoration and conservation interventions now and into the future (Component 3). This project will focus on facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges, so that country officials can work together on real-time challenges and have a network of peers they can return to over time. Further, the project will generate a knowledge hub that will provide key resources that countries can continue to use into the future as they develop integrated plans, as they implement interventions, or as they monitor impacts over time.

The above components will all be strengthened as general awareness on freshwater ecosystem challenges and solutions improve (Component 4). The project will communicate with decision makers and the general public on the challenges facing freshwater ecosystems, the risks of not acting to restore and conserve intact ecosystems, the multiple benefits (including economic benefits) of freshwater ecosystems, and the role of the FWC in supporting transformational change. Raising awareness among decision makers across sectors and levels of government, as well as in the private sector, will be particularly important for translating opportunities into interventions that are prioritized and invested in. The messages and engagement of decision makers can be particularly powerful when coming from their own communities, particularly from underrepresented voices. The project will focus on inclusion and promotion of diverse voices, particularly messaging developed by youth, to influence decision makers at regional and global levels to accelerate action. Additionally, the project will

engage the public through traditional and social media channels, to generate more awareness of the value and spark interest in freshwater ecosystems and an urgency to act to conserve and restore them.

Together, the outputs of this project will enable a transformational shift in the importance of freshwater ecosystems in FWC member countries, accelerating more substantial interventions in the near future that will lead to long-term global environmental benefits for freshwater ecosystems, the biodiversity they support, and the resilience benefits they provide to people. This will directly contribute to 30x30 commitments in the GBF. The project’s theory of change is also adaptive to the potential scenarios of the Future Narratives. The project will consider both current and projected climate and economic/agricultural expansion scenarios. Indicator frameworks will help track climate change and economic impacts on freshwater ecosystems, while planning frameworks and policy assistance will be tailored to anticipate and mitigate any impacts of increased economic growth and intensified climate change, and address the threat of competing government priorities in the face of extreme climate events. Once countries are selected in the preparation phase, the project will also develop future narratives for each that explore the range of possible response options and to ensure they are robust to changes in climate and economic drivers.



### Component 1: Supporting Countries and Development Institutions to Monitor Freshwater Challenge Objectives

To encourage more focus and prioritization of freshwater ecosystems in national plans and bilateral and multilateral development institution strategies, and with the private sector the project will develop recommendations for a FWC-related indicator framework. Additionally, to encourage monitoring of these indicators by countries and development institutions, enabling a better understanding of progress towards the FWC 2030 targets, aligned with 30x30 goals, and climate resilience targets, the project will also develop a



tracking approach. The indicator framework and tracking recommendations will work from what already exists, as to 1) not create additional burden for countries and development institutions and 2) ensure indicators and tracking approaches are practical and easy to use for reporting on commitments and understanding the freshwater ecosystem outcomes and impacts from national, donor, and private sector investments. The indicator framework and tracking approach will be piloted with a subset of FWC member country stakeholders and discussed with private sector platforms/initiatives. Opportunities to coordinate with bilateral agencies in FWC member countries, multilateral institutions on their indicators and monitoring frameworks will also be explored. This work will provide a “common language” for evaluating freshwater protection and restoration and their impacts among countries and development institutions, helping to take freshwater restoration and conservation beyond the domain of any single convention and/or sector and making it easier to translate needs into well-designed interventions and resourced investments across institutions and sectors.

### Outcome 1.1: Improved guidance on indicators and tracking approaches for freshwater ecosystems

#### *Output 1.1.1: Recommendations and guidance on a freshwater indicator framework developed and shared*

The project will review result and process indicators and sub-indicators (including for policy enabling conditions) already in use or under development for freshwater ecosystems. This review will include indicators under relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), sustainable development frameworks such as the SDGs, MDB standard monitoring frameworks, indicator frameworks from bilateral agencies in countries supporting the FWC, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration[1], the FAO/UNEP FERMS Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring, and approaches and datasets being used by FWC members. It will place an emphasis on impact indicators, i.e. the benefits that freshwater ecosystem protection and restoration provides to climate change adaptation and mitigation, flood and drought risk reduction, water quality regulation, biodiversity and social inclusion. The framework will be accompanied and illustrated by global and regional assessments (case studies) that will also provide early content for output 4.1.1 to increase awareness of the value of freshwater ecosystems for decision making frameworks that cover different sectoral water needs and impacts, national economic decision making and investment options.

The indicator recommendations will be broad to address country stakeholder, development partner, private sector and public information needs. It will also seek to be aligned with those endorsed in other global policy processes (e.g., the GBF, NBSAPs, Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), NDCs, LDN, and SDGs) and with relevant national plans. The recommendations will be designed in line with the *Evaluation of the GEF's Approach and Interventions in Water Security (2023)*, which recommends that explicit language on freshwater resources that “are key to each GEF focal area are represented in the results measurement framework and project and program design.”[2]

The project will particularly coordinate with the FAO Expert Working Group on Ecosystem Restoration, the GEF ERIP, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and relevant multilateral development institutions on alignment of existing indicator methodologies and frameworks with FWC recommendations. This includes identifying entry points for alignment of the indicator recommendations in MEAs, to raise the importance of freshwater and the ability of member countries to make the case for freshwater investments. Where possible, the project will engage with bilateral agencies in countries supporting the FWC (e.g., United States, Sweden, Germany, UK, France, and the European Commission) to identify entry points for freshwater ecosystems in bilateral development frameworks and priorities. This may support more opportunities to resource freshwater ecosystem interventions and monitor their effectiveness in countries that partner with these bilateral agencies

Engagement of the private sector on alignment and use of the recommended indicator framework will also be an important project element. Freshwater ecosystem restoration and protection are recognized as ‘responses’

(in Step 4: act) to deliver on corporate Science Based Targets Network (SBTN) freshwater targets (both quality and quantity), and have the ability to address material impacts, risks and dependencies related to freshwater through e.g. the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) or the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). As such, reporting on the impacts and (co-)benefits of freshwater ecosystem restoration and conservation using standardized and appropriate indicators will increasingly become important to the private sector.

The project will engage with private sector platforms/initiatives- including SBTN, TNFD, CSRD, and the CEO Water Mandate - and their members around harmonizing private sector results, impacts, and lessons learned including their disclosures on freshwater ecosystem-relevant contributions using recommended indicators from the indicator framework discussed above.[3] Where indicators deviate from existing asks in these most commonly used frameworks, the project will discuss opportunities for alignment with the recommended indicators. Beyond ‘disclosure’, the project will engage the platforms around a high degree of alignment holistically, across target setting processes. For example, freshwater ecosystems and related interventions can be considered when asking companies to assess their impacts, risks and dependencies across the scope of their ‘value chain’ as part of SBTN Steps 1 and 2 guidance. Working across these processes will also create opportunities to connect national governments and the private sector on opportunities for co-investment, co-finance, and/or private sector-led interventions that can be captured in country-level monitoring (linked to Output 1.1.2). The project will also actively engage with other platforms/initiatives, such as WRC and AWS, to explore how the FWC objectives can be adopted and endorsed, e.g. as part of Net Positive Water Impact (NPWI), the Water Action Hub, the AWS Collective Action Accelerator, and AWS standard, among others.

*Output 1.1.2:* A recommended approach to tracking is developed and shared

The project will work with member countries to streamline their reporting on progress against the indicators recommended in Output 1.1.1, which will also support overall monitoring of the FWC 2030 targets. To reduce the burden on countries, the project will explore ways to extract needed information from national reports to relevant global conventions. This information will then be collated and made accessible, e.g., as a regularly updated table on the FWC website. Development will include consultation with multilateral institutions and bilateral agencies so that indicator tracking can be easily accessed and used by them and their project partners. The project will engage the GEF ERIP for alignment, as well as relevant private sector platforms/initiatives and current private sector supporters of the FWC to align on ways companies can monitor and disclose their contributions.

*Output 1.1.3:* Indicators and tracking recommendations piloted with a subset of the project countries and development institutions

The recommended indicator framework and tracking approach will be piloted with a subset of the project’s countries and their key bilateral development agency and multilateral institution partners and adapted based on the learnings and feedback. The final guidance on rollout will be included in the Learning Hub and shared with all FWC member countries, as well as any other interested countries. It will also be shared with other key stakeholders, like MDBs and private sector platforms.

## ***Component 2. Supporting Countries to Operationalize their Freshwater Challenge Objectives from Source to Sea***

The project will support a selected group of FWC member countries to 1) operationalize and prioritize FWC objectives in water-dependent plans and investment strategies (such as agriculture, forestry, energy, and wastewater), including for climate resilience and 2) support integration of source to sea actions. This focus on

policy coherence across sectors, from source-to-sea (longitudinally and laterally), locally to nationally, and across government departments will be one of the more effective ways to ensure freshwater's cross-sectoral benefits and impacts are planned and prioritized coherently and misaligned plans and investments are reduced. With this support, and standard indicators developed in Component 1, the project also encourages water-dependent sectors to identify how freshwater ecosystem restoration and conservation benefits them and how sustainability in their sector supports freshwater and climate change targets for the country when planned in an integrated data-driven way. This support model aligns with the needs of some FWC member countries captured during supporting partner discussions.

The project will support a group of three to six countries as the main stakeholders for this component. Selection will be based on developed criteria to be further defined during project preparation and including e.g.: GEF eligibility (35 FWC countries); regional balance; inclusion of LDCs and SIDS; evidence of active commitment to FWC operationalization (readiness) in their country; relevant co-finance; potential to generate future global environmental benefits and enhance resilience; gender balance in the staff being supported; and where relevant, evidence of commitment to transboundary collaboration (i.e., part of a transboundary River Basin Organization, a signatory of one of the two global water conventions, or has a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) in place). Selection will also take into consideration countries interested in undertaking efforts at national or transboundary basin scales. Further, it will consider which countries are already supported under the GEF's ERIP (10 countries in both FWC and ERIP), so this project does not directly overlap all countries but takes advantage of potential complementarities.

#### Outcome 2.1: Increased operationalization of FWC objectives in national and sub-national plans and resourcing strategies in selected FWC member countries

##### *Output 2.1.1: Pipeline and gap analysis of freshwater restoration and protection interventions and resourcing co-led with selected FWC member countries and country-based stakeholders*

The project will begin with a 'state of play' pipeline analysis in selected FWC member countries of current and planned country resourcing and interventions for freshwater restoration and/or protection across water-dependent sectors and within international commitments. This will include a gap analysis of what will be needed (e.g., in terms of science, institutional capacity, policy coherence, cross-sector policies, plans, and regulations) to set and meet existing or planned national FWC objectives. The project will also leverage the data from GEF ERIP's prioritization of rivers and wetlands for restoration actions.

##### *Output 2.1.2: Selected FWC member countries supported with technical assistance to operationalize and report on FWC objectives*

The project will provide tailored support to selected FWC member countries to make their existing and planned freshwater ecosystem-related objectives operational and a higher priority within existing water-dependent sector plans and country investment strategies, paving the way for implementation. Based on the June 2024 member country survey, completed by 23 respondents, this may include: support for objective and target setting within existing water-dependent sector plans (policy coherence), supporting prioritization of indicators and interventions, benchmarking, baseline assessments of ecosystem status in support of climate resilience and/or biodiversity intervention planning, or identification of monitoring tools and approaches. For some countries it may include matching and/or development of financial mechanisms for already identified freshwater ecosystem interventions. Additionally, learnings from the indicator framework pilots (under Component 1) can feed into country support as they look to strengthen their indicators and reporting on climate, biodiversity, and in water-dependent sectors.

As there will be varying needs identified in the ‘state of play’ analysis, the project will nimbly deploy relevant technical assistance to the selected countries. This support may come in the form of written guidance, policy analyses and recommendations, virtual or in-country technical assistance and workshops, or capacity-building.

Outcome 2.2: Improved integration of Source to Sea targets and actions in country plans in selected FWC member countries

*Output 2.2.1: Selected FWC member countries supported to integrate Source to Sea actions*

As part of operationalization support, the project will support countries to recognize and include actions that use a Source to Sea framing and improve Source to Sea actions. This is important because it helps strengthen policy coherence, design of effective and scalable interventions, and reduce maladaptation by looking at hydrological and sedimentation dynamics longitudinally (down river systems) and laterally (across riparian areas and floodplains). This includes identifying climate, environmental, and societal risks, opportunities, and indicators at a basin scale, while showing municipalities and local governments how their development across sectors work with or harms the system. The project will also support the Action Platform on Source to Sea in mobilizing its wider membership to support the integration of targets in their countries and engaging their stakeholders in the process.

***Component 3. Enabling Country Learning to Strengthen National Freshwater Challenge Objectives***

Responding to the requests of FWC member country stakeholders made during consultations and a member country survey in June 2024, the project will support learning and knowledge exchange that supports coherence across water-dependent sector plans and design of programs and interventions. In particular, the project will 1) support a global hub that curates existing guidance and expertise for FWC member countries, in cooperation with IW:LEARN and GEF ERIP, and 2) facilitate peer-to-peer learning among FWC member countries.

Outcome 3.1: Improved availability of knowledge and learning resources that supports effective integration, program design, and monitoring of FWC objectives by countries

*Output 3.1.1: Online FWC Learning Hub with curated content established*

The project will develop a FWC Learning Hub as an easy-to-use tool to find existing resources related to policy, planning, program design, and management of freshwater ecosystem restoration and protection interventions in support of freshwater, climate resilience, and biodiversity targets. The FWC website will be updated and the Learning Hub included. Website redesign will allow for seamless integration of the Learning Hub and an improved user experience and visual design across the board, to convey a compelling vision, storyline, and value proposition, in line with the objective of attracting large and diverse donors and partners. A redesign and refresh of the existing freshwaterchallenge.org website will improve user experience by prioritizing improved and simplified navigation and evolving design trends, as well as increase SEO optimization to match current algorithms and mobile compatibility challenges. Additional website needs will include continued maintenance and updates based on Freshwater Challenge progress and new partners, as well as providing expanded resources for countries and companies who have joined the challenge. Resources will be curated and site design will be based on the needs expressed in the survey results conducted by the supporting partners with the FWC member countries in June 2024 and through continuing discussions to ensure content and form will respond to country needs and remain fresh and useful. The FWC member countries particularly expressed an interest to have guidance materials relevant to freshwater ecosystems curated around: inclusive and integrated planning processes (including on (i) setting objectives for restoration outcomes that link to strategic development priorities, and (ii) prioritization of ecosystem restoration options), innovative financing, technical assessments to prioritize protection and restoration with quantification of co-benefits, restoration project design, indicator

selection, and efficient, cost-effective, and innovative monitoring. The hub will also include case studies developed with countries. This work will be coordinated with IW:LEARN and GEF ERIP.

*Output 3.1.2: Country-led learning cases developed and shared in the Learning Hub*

The project will facilitate the FWC member countries involved in the project and the wider membership to develop case studies of their learnings or challenges from their interventions and use of restoration guidance, such as through interviews and videos. The project will work to achieve gender balance in the interviewees. When appropriate, the Hub will also develop case studies with corporate partners on how they contribute to the FWC in FWC member countries. The content will also be coordinated with IW:LEARN, GEF ERIP, initiatives by FWC supporting coalition partners, and with youth engagement groups like the World Youth Parliament for Water, Youth Engaged in Wetlands, and Global Youth Biodiversity Network.

Outcome 3.2: Improved knowledge among FWC member countries that supports effective FWC-related planning and implementation

*Output 3.2.1: In person and/or virtual group “Freshwater Challenge Exchanges” held with FWC member countries*

The project will organize bespoke “Freshwater Challenge Exchanges” that support country-to-country learning and exchange. The Exchanges will be organized with a group of countries that are facing or have faced a similar challenge, have hydrological similarities, and/or share a transboundary basin. The project plans to achieve 50-50 gender balance in participants and will coordinate with GEF ERIP on restoration exchanges. Where relevant, the exchanges may also include sessions with youth and other vulnerable groups to encourage wider learning and collaboration.

*Output 3.2.2: In person and/or virtual peer-to-peer exchange and/or mentorship facilitated between FWC member countries*

Participating countries will be brought together virtually and/or in person with additional experts to work on the identified challenge and barriers to restoring freshwater ecosystems at scale. The project will encourage 50-50 gender balance in participants from the countries. This approach particularly responds to the requests from FWC member countries to learn from their peers and solve similar challenges. Country-to-country mentorship and/or direct technical exchange visits will also be explored.

***Component 4. Communicating to Raise the Profile of Freshwater Ecosystems Locally, Nationally, in Transboundary Basins, and Globally***

The project will elevate global and in-country awareness of the role of freshwater ecosystems in meeting biodiversity, climate resilience, and development objectives through new partnerships that generate momentum for the FWC. Communications activities and messaging will be co-developed and coordinated with youth and other marginalized stakeholder group representatives (with at least 50% representation of women and girls), targeting decision-makers from the public and private sector through in-person events and through media channels with clear messaging on the urgency and benefits freshwater ecosystems bring. It will also build on private sector networks and ongoing policy engagement activities, such as Business For Nature, UN High-Level Climate Champions, and others. Raising awareness among decision makers across sectors and levels of government, as well as in the private sector, will be particularly important for translating opportunities into interventions that are invested in. The messages and engagement of decision makers can be particularly powerful when coming from their own communities, particularly from underrepresented voices. Additional messaging will be co-developed to target the general public through traditional and social media channels from



national to global level, to raise awareness on where water comes from and the benefits of freshwater ecosystems beyond biodiversity, as well as an urgency to engage their decision makers to act now on restoration and conservation.

Outcome 4.1: Increased awareness of freshwater ecosystem challenges and solutions among the general public and decision makers

*Output 4.1.1: FWC-related communications disseminated through multiple media channels*

The project will communicate on the challenges facing freshwater ecosystems, the risks of not acting to restore and conserve intact ecosystems, the opportunities and solutions, and the role of the FWC. The project will use storytelling at different levels and through diverse voices. This will include communication activities through national and international mainstream media, social media, private sector supporters and platforms, and national and global events. The project will explore multi-media communications approaches to promote awareness of the multiple values and benefits of freshwater systems to diverse stakeholders. It will also be coordinated with other platforms, like the S2S Platform. Pieces will also be targeted for different audiences - including youth, decision makers, and the private sector - and around different conventions and development challenges.

*Output 4.1.2: Regional roundtables on freshwater challenges and solutions held*

The project will hold regional roundtable discussions where countries can discuss freshwater challenges and solutions, particularly as linked to climate and nature resilience. These events will be used to engage both members and non-members of the FWC, as well as the private sector, with champions from FWC countries promoting their learnings. Regional events will also be a forum for youth representatives to engage with decision makers on freshwater challenges and solutions. From these events, the project aims to encourage wider integration of freshwater restoration and protection into national and regional commitments, even among countries that have not signed up to the FWC.

Outcome 4.2: Strengthened engagement of diverse stakeholders in FWC messaging and objectives

*Output 4.2.1: New and diverse partnerships built in support of FWC objectives*

The project will explore and build partnerships to enable and expand storytelling by diverse voices. This may include the Earth Journalism Network, Circle of Blue, World Youth Parliament for Water, Youth Engaged in Wetlands, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, UNCCD Youth Caucus, and national organizations supporting grassroots organizations, IPs and LCs, and the Women for Water Partnership. Activities may include journalism training and activating women, youth, IPs, and LCs (with at least 50% representation of women and girls) to engage with their national governments and at global events. Through these activities, the project will reach a large audience, while also specifically targeting decision-makers.

*Output 4.2.2: Youth partners engagement in the FWC strengthened through “Youth Challenge Grants”*

Youth are essential stakeholders in freshwater ecosystem management. The project will collaborate with youth partners to strengthen the voices of young women and men in the FWC globally and in national and sub-national processes. The project will provide youth partner organizations small grants to enable their participation of their members (with at least 50% young women) in project activities, including, but not limited to, co-design and co-implementation of global and national communications and messaging (Output 4.1.1, Output 4.2.1) design of engagement approaches and workshop sessions during regional round tables (Output 4.1.2), and co-facilitation and participation in country “Challenge Exchanges” (Output 3.2.1).

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## Proposed Executing Arrangement

WWF will be the GEF Agency, while the Lead Executing Agency will be IUCN, which will host the project management unit. Sub-grants for execution of specific outputs will be agreed with additional members of the FWC Supporting Coalition - including CI, TNC, and WI - based on relevant country presence and relationships, demonstrated areas of experience and leadership, as well as strong experience executing GEF projects to ensure rapid project mobilization. The project will also work through country governments and key partners in-country and explore opportunities with new partners like Circle of Blue, World Youth Parliament for Water, Youth Engaged in Wetlands, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, UNCCD Youth Caucus.

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<sup>[1]</sup> FAO is convening an Expert Working Group on Freshwater Restoration to design a methodology for reporting on area under restoration and initiate thinking on related indicators, which includes FWC partners

<sup>[2]</sup> Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF, (June 2023), “Evaluation of the GEF’s Approach and Interventions in Water Security,” 64th GEF Council Meeting, June 26-30, 2023, Basilia, Brazil.

## Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

Yes

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing

The proposal includes a self-execution function, which has been agreed with IUCN. The self-execution request is based on the existing governance structure and agreed technical capacities and roles of the FWC supporting coalition that was established in 2023. Roles within the Supporting Coalition are based on the expertise of each partner organization relevant to supporting the member countries. Therefore, the governance principles spread leadership of work streams across members, give members equal voice, and ensure high transparency in decision-making.

WWF’s Freshwater Team Co-Chairs the FWC’s Technical Assistance Working Group and has expertise, and the pre-established leading role, in indicator development, monitoring, and benefits assessment. For example, WWF US helped the GEF develop a guideline for basin management indicators, based on experience in implementing Basin Report Cards around the world: “Using Indicators for Improved Water Resources Management: Guide for basin managers and practitioners.” WWF US is also developing guidance to standardize monitoring of water-related benefits for its Green Climate Fund projects, and this is designed to be adaptable to other large ecosystem restoration and resilience projects. Output 1.1.1 and Output 1.1.2 of this proposed GEF project focus on ongoing global work to estimate benefits (in terms of climate change mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity impacts, etc) and deliver guidance to countries on a systematic way to monitor and communicate these impacts (also providing early content for output 4.1.1). This work responds to expressed demand for this actionable information from FWC countries. Based on this expertise and the pre-established roles, and under the coordination of IUCN as the Lead Executing Agency, it is requested that WWF execute the delivery of Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. The anticipated budget of the two outputs is approximately \$300,000 (8% of the total project budget).

All supporting coalition partners that are part of this project are already actively engaged and coordinating on the FWC. Based on organizational expertise, partners support member countries through technical assistance and knowledge sharing, resourcing, and private sector engagement. The existing governance of the FWC supporting coalition, as mentioned above, will enable the project to share expertise and staff for delivery of the outputs. The project will also be able to leverage the global thought leadership, data, science, approaches and tools developed by the supporting coalition partners.

For example, WWF has a portfolio of work focused on freshwater-related NBS and restoration for climate adaptation and biodiversity benefits. This includes a global initiative on Connected Rivers of Resilience and regional initiatives supporting large-scale NBS for adaptation. IUCN supports global efforts to promote good water governance and implement nature-based solutions; Wetlands International developed a Global Wetlands Mapping for policy makers and investors; TNC is supporting several FWC members as they undertake the NBSAP/NDC update process and developing general guidance on the design of national targets for freshwater ecosystems protection and restoration; and Conservation International is estimating the potential carbon, freshwater, and biodiversity gains that could come from restoration of degraded high value freshwater ecosystems globally. The project will also coordinate with a remote real-time sensing of freshwater ecosystem change led by UNEP and freshwater restoration reporting under the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM) registry led by FAO. Additionally, the project will support and coordinate with the Action Platform on Source-to-Sea Management that involves several FWC supporting coalition partners.

Furthermore, the project builds on the partner’s strong relationships with member country governments and the existing and planned initiatives of member countries. It will also coordinate with relevant GEF projects, as mentioned in Section A, in particular IW:LEARN and the GEF 8 ERIP led by Conservation International.

## Core Indicators

### Indicator 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

|                        | Number (Expected at PIF) | Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Number (Achieved at MTR) | Number (Achieved at TE) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Shared water Ecosystem |                          |                                      |                          |                         |
| Count                  | 1                        | 0                                    | 0                        | 0                       |

### Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

| Shared Water Ecosystem | Rating (Expected at PIF) | Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Rating (Achieved at MTR) | Rating (Achieved at TE) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|                        | 1                        |                                      |                          |                         |

### Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

| Shared Water Ecosystem | Rating (Expected at PIF) | Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Rating (Achieved at MTR) | Rating (Achieved at TE) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|                        |                          |                                      |                          |                         |



**Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministeral Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)**

| Shared Water Ecosystem | Rating (Expected at PIF) | Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Rating (Achieved at MTR) | Rating (Achieved at TE) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|

**Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN through participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)**

| Shared Water Ecosystem | Rating (Expected at PIF) | Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Rating (Achieved at MTR) | Rating (Achieved at TE) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|                        | 4                        |                                      |                          |                         |

**Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments**

|               | Number (Expected at PIF) | Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Number (Achieved at MTR) | Number (Achieved at TE) |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Female</b> | 300                      |                                      |                          |                         |
| <b>Male</b>   | 300                      |                                      |                          |                         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>600</b>               | <b>0</b>                             | <b>0</b>                 | <b>0</b>                |

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Core Indicator 7- Number of shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management: In-country project activities will support the implementation of, at least, 1 SAP's priorities.

Sub-indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IW:LEARN through participation and delivery of key products. The project will ensure the learning hub aligns with IW:LEARN guidance, participate in training/twinning events, produce experience notes, and participate in the IW Conference. Contributions to additional Core Indicator 7 targets and sub-indicators will be assessed during the project preparation stage.

Core Indicator 11- Each component supports the FWC member countries, the project's direct beneficiaries. The project expects to engage with at least 100 people in each of the selected countries, as well as global participants. The project expects to engage at least 600 direct beneficiaries (aiming for a 50-50 gender balance).

During the PPG phase, additional Core Indicator targets will be explored (e.g., Core Indicators 3 and 4).

**Key Risks**

|         | Rating | Explanation of risk and mitigation measures |
|---------|--------|---|
| CONTEXT |        |   |

|                          |          |   |
|--------------------------|----------|---|
| Climate                  | Low      | Climate change presents a risk to wetlands and river ecosystems (hydrological changes), while rivers and wetlands are also important for climate resilience. Climate change is not expected to impact project operations at global level, but addressing climate change is part of the project's solutions. Countries will be supported to integrate freshwater ecosystem interventions into plans and indicator frameworks for climate adaptation at the country level.  |
| Environmental and Social | Low      | An environmental and social pre-screen has been completed, and resulted in a Category C (low) rating, and an additional screen will be completed during project development once the countries have been selected. Project strategies are expected to contribute to global environmental benefits for freshwater ecosystems and resilience benefits. A Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be developed during project development phase to facilitate participatory and inclusive approaches.   |
| Political and Governance | Moderate | There may be some risks around loss of commitment to the FWC due to government turnover during elections or unforeseen political instability. At the global level this may slow down FWC progress, but it will not necessarily delay this project's activities. To mitigate, the project will work with member countries who have already signed on to the FWC and shown commitment to participate, however, even after this mitigation some residual risk remains. Specific country support will be determined through selection criteria. Additionally, the Supporting Coalition's long-established relationships across multiple levels of government and with civil society help build strong consensus for the work. The project will also take this into account when developing the stakeholder engagement plan. |

#### INNOVATION

|                              |     |  |
|------------------------------|-----|--|
| Institutional and Policy     | Low | The project intends to strengthen and build coherence across policies and strategies, so that freshwater ecosystem restoration and conservation are integrated across rather than working in a silo and have resources behind it. The project does not intend to create new policies or institutions or to reform existing institutions but to deliver institutional and policy support, including capacity building, cross-sectoral integration strategies and development of resourcing plans where needed.. |
| Technological                | Low | While technology will be important for capacity building through the learning hub and peer-to-peer exchange, as well as for communications activities, the proposed strategy does not include significant technological innovations, and as such this risk is rated low.   |
| Financial and Business Model | Low | The project does not include innovative financial or business models, so the risk is rated low.  |

#### EXECUTION

|          |     |  |
|----------|-----|--|
| Capacity | Low | The project builds on strong technical and management capacities of the Supporting Coalition, in particular the GEF Agency (WWF) and Lead Executing Agency (IUCN). Both organizations bring years of experience managing GEF and freshwater projects at global and country level. The project will also build on the already established governance structure of the FWC |
|----------|-----|--|

|                     |     |   |
|---------------------|-----|---|
|                     |     | supporting coalition. This will promote a strong partnership for execution. To mitigate at country level, as part of selection criteria for countries for technical assistance, capacity assessments will take place to ensure commitment, co-finance, and ability to continue work after the end of this project. Strong Implementing Agency oversight, a well designed monitoring plan, and adaptive management workshops during the project will also ensure the technical design is being implemented according to plan.  |
| Fiduciary           | Low | The project builds on strong financial management capacities of the GEF Agency (WWF) and Lead Executing Agency (IUCN). Both organizations bring years of experience managing GEF and medium and large size freshwater projects from bilateral and philanthropic donors. The additional Supporting Coalition partners that will execute also have strong capacity and experience in managing project finances against set deliverables. Each organization also follows sound financial management and procurement policies. A due-diligence process will also be undertaken during project development.  |
| Stakeholder         | Low | Stakeholder engagement is an important element that cross-cuts all components of the project. The project has been designed based on the survey results conducted by the supporting coalition with the FWC member countries in June 2024 and through continuing discussions as of November 2024. There will also be new stakeholders, like youth groups, women’s groups, and IP and LC representatives the Supporting Coalition plans to engage. This project will develop a stakeholder engagement plan during the project preparation stage that ensures an inclusive, participatory, and effective strategy with stakeholders in the project. This will include project-specific consultations with FWC member countries and co-design of activities where possible- like communication and influencing activities led by youth in Component 4. The stakeholder engagement plan will be regularly reviewed and feedback from stakeholders sought during the project. |
| Other               | Low | None identified.  |
| Overall Risk Rating | Low | The overall risk rating is low, based on the majority of the above risks being rated low, and due to the mainly technical assistance nature of this project.  |

### C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project aligns to the International Waters Focal Area (IW FA), that recognizes the pivotal role for development of FW ecosystems, their critical situation and the importance of overcoming barriers related to knowledge and management of FW in developing countries. The IW FA emphasizes the need for countries to step up national and regional actions to safeguard their marine and freshwater ecosystems to ensure continued growth, prosperity and unlock new economic opportunities. This MSP project will help participating countries advance towards this goal.

The FWC project will support achievement of the IW FA objective by facilitating a global cooperation initiative, across political borders and between sectors, that will deliver increased knowledge and joint action to implement freshwater ecosystems restoration and management objectives and to track progress against them, aligned to multilateral environmental agreements (MEA) commitments. To achieve this objective, the project will implement investments prioritized by IW FA Objective 3 (Enhance water security in shared freshwater ecosystems), related to, but not limited to, the improvement of policy formulation processes, the improvement of capacities to gather and synthesize scientific, local and people science and to mainstream it into decision making processes to further environmental and water security. The project will work on developing freshwater ecosystem recommended indicators and a tracking approach for countries to track freshwater ecosystem status and progress towards achieving MEA commitments that could contribute to GEF-9 IW FA design. Finally, the project will have a strong knowledge management component, to ensure that knowledge generated and captured by the project and participating countries is shared across the FWC member countries and partners and with the IW:LEARN community through specific IW:LEARN knowledge management products and activities. The lessons learned and experiences from the national and bi-national work will also support replication and scale in other FWC member countries, including through the integration of recommendations and learnings into future basin-wide SAPs.

There is alignment of the project strategy cutting across the GEF focal areas and programs in the GEF-8 Strategy (International Waters, Biodiversity, Land Degradation, Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Change Adaptation, Chemicals and Waste, the Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program, among others). Specifically with GEF ERIP, the project will coordinate on knowledge sharing, learning exchanges, indicator and monitoring guidance, and sharing of lessons across projects. This project will also be able to collaborate and leverage new products through GEF ERIP like a prioritizing of rivers and wetlands for restoration action. Collaboration with the GEF-8 Plastics IP (Plastic Reboot) will also be explored. Additionally, early investment in effective planning and indicator-setting for the Freshwater Challenge can help countries lay the groundwork for strong, aligned restoration and conservation projects in GEF-9 and projects that support freshwater and terrestrial biodiversity reliant on freshwater ecosystems under the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF). The project can also support the GEF in defining and monitoring GEF programming targets and sub-targets to monitor progress on freshwater ecosystem restoration and protection in GEF-9, the GBFF, and beyond.

#### D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

##### **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:**

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

##### **Stakeholder Engagement**

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PIF development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

**Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:**

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities:

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

**Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations**

The proposal has been designed based on the survey results conducted by the supporting coalition with the FWC member countries in June 2024 and through continuing discussions as of November 2024. The survey was completed by 23 representatives of their countries. The results of this survey also informed the model of support the Supporting Coalition has developed. The Supporting Coalition, particularly Conservation International, IUCN, TNC, and Wetlands International, have been highly engaged in the design of this project between August and November 2024, including regular reviews and inputs on technical design and co-finance. During the project preparation phase, youth organizations and IP and LC representatives will be consulted on the project as possible partners in Component 4 and supporters of the other components. Following country selection, additional local stakeholders will be consulted on the specific support proposed in those countries.

The private sector has also been consulted on the Freshwater Challenge, particularly on how they can be involved and support the FWC commitments in countries and at global level, which aligns with the private sector activities described in this project. The FWC Supporting Coalition has had ongoing conversations with a number of private sector supporters, such as the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), AB InBev, and IKEA, throughout 2023 and 2024. BCG has coordinated closely with the Supporting Coalition on the global strategy and networking. AB InBev and IKEA were mostly recently consulted August through November 2024 on the private sector's role in the FWC, particularly around member country and non-FWC country reporting and aligned metrics, harmonization of reporting, and private sector-led contributions. Various private sector platforms, such as the CEO Water Mandate, WEF, AWS, Business for Nature, UN High Level Climate Champions and others have also been consulted on the FWC to identify future alignment and collaboration that will help to progress and accelerate the activities described in this project. In addition, the Supporting Coalition has held two private sector engagement events during Stockholm Water Week in August 2024 and the UN General Assembly in September 2024. These events engaged over 60 companies and gathered important inputs that have contributed to project design, including the need for a better understanding of the value and benefits of freshwater ecosystems and conservation, and the need to make a clearer and stronger link between freshwater, biodiversity, and climate for companies, the need for alignment between countries and private sector, and the need for clear indicators for reporting on FWC contributions. More focused discussions with private sector supporters and platforms/initiatives will continue during the project preparation phase.

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

**Private Sector**

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

### Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

### Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

| PIF | CEO<br>Endorsement/Approval | MTR | TE |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----|----|
| Low |                             |     |    |

## E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

## ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

### GEF Financing Table

#### Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

| GEF Agency                      | Trust Fund | Country/<br>Regional/<br>Global | Focal Area              | Programming<br>of Funds       | Grant /<br>Non-Grant | GEF Project<br>Grant(\$) | Agency<br>Fee(\$) | Total GEF<br>Financing<br>(\$) |
|---------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| WWF-<br>US                      | GET        | Global                          | International<br>Waters | International<br>Waters: IW-3 | Grant                | 4,400,000.00             | 396,000.00        | 4,796,000.00                   |
| <b>Total GEF Resources (\$)</b> |            |                                 |                         |                               |                      | <b>4,400,000.00</b>      | <b>396,000.00</b> | <b>4,796,000.00</b>            |

### Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

150000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

13500

| GEF Agency                   | Trust Fund | Country/<br>Regional/<br>Global | Focal Area              | Programming<br>of Funds       | Grant / Non-<br>Grant | PPG(\$)           | Agency<br>Fee(\$) | Total PPG<br>Funding(\$) |
|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| WWF-<br>US                   | GET        | Global                          | International<br>Waters | International<br>Waters: IW-3 | Grant                 | 150,000.00        | 13,500.00         | 163,500.00               |
| <b>Total PPG Amount (\$)</b> |            |                                 |                         |                               |                       | <b>150,000.00</b> | <b>13,500.00</b>  | <b>163,500.00</b>        |

Please provide justification

### Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

| GEF Agency                 | Trust Fund | Country/<br>Regional/<br>Global | Focal Area | Sources of Funds | Total(\$)   |
|----------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Total GEF Resources</b> |            |                                 |            |                  | <b>0.00</b> |

### Indicative Focal Area Elements

| Programming Directions    | Trust Fund | GEF Project Financing(\$) | Co-financing(\$)     |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| IW-3                      | GET        | 4,400,000.00              | 10385549             |
| <b>Total Project Cost</b> |            | <b>4,400,000.00</b>       | <b>10,385,549.00</b> |

### Indicative Co-financing

| Sources of Co-<br>financing   | Name of Co-financier       | Type of Co-<br>financing | Investment<br>Mobilized   | Amount(\$) |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| GEF Agency                    | WWF-US                     | In-kind                  | Recurrent<br>expenditures | 917619     |
| GEF Agency                    | WWF-US                     | Grant                    | Investment<br>mobilized   | 750000     |
| Civil Society<br>Organization | WWF - International        | In-kind                  | Recurrent<br>expenditures | 350000     |
| Civil Society<br>Organization | IUCN                       | In-kind                  | Recurrent<br>expenditures | 300000     |
| Civil Society<br>Organization | Conservation International | In-kind                  | Investment<br>mobilized   | 75000      |

|                            |  |         |                        |                      |
|----------------------------|--|---------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Civil Society Organization | Conservation International                               | Grant   | Investment mobilized   | 200000               |
| Civil Society Organization | Wetlands International                                   | In-kind | Recurrent expenditures | 300000               |
| Civil Society Organization | Wetlands International                                   | Grant   | Investment mobilized   | 50000                |
| Civil Society Organization | TNC  | In-kind | Recurrent expenditures | 245000               |
| Private Sector             | BCG  | In-kind | Recurrent expenditures | 250000               |
| Private Sector             | IKEA   | Grant   | Investment mobilized   | 25000                |
| Private Sector             | Reckitt  | Grant   | Investment mobilized   | 150000               |
| Civil Society Organization | Walton Family Foundation                                 | Grant   | Investment mobilized   | 170000               |
| Donor Agency               | UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Offices (FCDO) | Grant   | Investment mobilized   | 4752930              |
| Others                     | UNCCD  | Grant   | Investment mobilized   | 50000                |
| <b>Total Co-financing</b>  |  |         |                        | <b>10,385,549.00</b> |

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

In-kind co-finance, mostly staff time, will come from the Supporting Coalition organizations - WWF-US, WWF-International, and IUCN and provisionally (to be confirmed in project preparation) from CI, TNC, and Wetlands International. BCG will also provide in-kind support as staff time to overall FWC-related work.

Investment mobilized co-finance: WWF-US: \$750,000 is GCF grant funding for global work, which is part of a larger, country-focused GCF project. This global work is a regional/global evidence base of climate change adaptation benefits of ecosystem based adaptation and green infrastructure and developing a standardized way to evaluate economic benefits of wetland restoration and Ecosystem-based adaptation; with use value for any country. Conservation International: grant funded by an unnamed foundation that supports implementation of freshwater restoration in three basins that will bring learnings to this project. Wetlands International: grant funded by an unnamed private donor for the Wetland Gap Map project during this project's time frame. IKEA and Reckitt: partnership funds allocated via a grant for global FWC-relevant support through WWF, which will especially contribute to private sector engagement elements of indicator alignment and global/regional advocacy and influencing. Walton Family Foundation: grant funds for development of a Basin Threshold Tool, a global database of local to regional scale data, methods, and processes for ecological health of freshwater systems, managed by WWF-US as part of Science Based Targets for Nature. FCDO: grant funds for the Just Transitions for Water Security Programme, particularly the Water Tracker, is aligned with



this project because it supports countries to assess water resilience in their national climate plans. This programme is coordinating with the FWC Supporting Coalition on opportunities to scale. UNCCD: grant in support of global coordination for the FWC.

The current table represents globally-relevant co-finance, and additional globally-relevant sources will be assessed during project preparation. During project preparation, country selection will take place including a selection criteria on co-finance commitments. With the inclusion of countries, country-specific co-finance will be added by CER submission.

## ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

### GEF Agency(ies) Certification

| GEF Agency Type        | Name            | Date       | Project Contact Person | Phone        | Email                      |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| GEF Agency Coordinator | Renae Stenhouse | 11/21/2024 | Isabel Filiberto       | 202 766 9372 | isabel.filiberto@wwfus.org |

### Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

| Name | Position | Ministry | Date (MM/DD/YYYY) |
|------|----------|----------|-------------------|
|------|----------|----------|-------------------|

## ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Global

## ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title

WWF GEF Freshwater Challenge ESSF PIF pre-screen

## ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

| Climate Change Mitigation | Climate Change Adaptation | Biodiversity            | Land Degradation        |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| No Contribution 0         | Significant Objective 1   | Significant Objective 1 | Significant Objective 1 |

## ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1

Level 2

Level 3

Level 4

| Focal Areas/<br>Theme |                             |   |  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
|                       | <b>Biodiversity</b>         |   |  |
|                       |                             | Biomes  |  |
|                       |                             |   | Rivers   |
|                       |                             |   | Lakes  |
|                       |                             |   | Wetlands   |
|                       | <b>International Waters</b> |   |  |
|                       |                             | Freshwater  |  |
|                       |                             |   | Aquifer  |
|                       |                             |   | Lake Basin                                       |
|                       |                             |   | River Basin                                      |
|                       |                             | Strategic Action Plan Implementation                  |  |
|                       |                             | SIDS : Small Island Dev States                        |  |
|                       | <b>Climate Change</b>       |   |  |
|                       |                             |   |  |
|                       |                             | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |  |
|                       |                             |   | Paris Agreement                                  |
|                       |                             |   | Nationally Determined Contribution               |
|                       |                             | Climate Change Adaptation                             |  |
|                       |                             |   | Least Developed Countries                        |
|                       |                             |   | Small Island Developing States                   |
|                       |                             |   | National Adaptation Programme of Action          |
|                       |                             |   | Ecosystem-based Adaptation                       |
|                       |                             |   | Climate Resilience                               |
|                       | <b>Land Degradation</b>     |   |  |
|                       |                             | Sustainable Land Management                           |  |
|                       |                             |   | Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands |

|   |  |                              |   |
|---|--|------------------------------|---|
|   |  |                              | Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques |
|   |  |                              | Sustainable Agriculture                       |
|   | <b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>                         |                              |   |
| <b>Influencing models</b>               |  |                              |   |
|   | <b>Transform policy and regulatory environments</b>          |                              |   |
|   | <b>Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making</b> |                              |   |
|   | <b>Convene multi-stakeholder alliances</b>                   |                              |   |
| <b>Stakeholders</b>                     |  |                              |   |
|   | <b>CSO</b>   |                              |   |
|   | <b>Private Sector</b>  |                              |   |
|   |  | Capital providers            |   |
|   |  | Large corporations           |   |
|   | <b>Type of Engagement</b>                                    |                              |   |
|   |  | Partnership                  |   |
|   |  | Consultation                 |   |
|   | <b>Communications</b>  |                              |   |
|   |  | Awareness Raising            |   |
|   |  | Strategic Communications     |   |
|   |  | Education                    |   |
|   | <b>Beneficiaries</b>   |                              |   |
| <b>Gender Equality</b>                  |  |                              |   |
|   | <b>Gender Mainstreaming</b>                                  |                              |   |
|   |  | Sex-disaggregated indicators |   |
|   |  | Gender-sensitive indicators  |   |
|   |  | Beneficiaries                |   |
| <b>Capacity, Knowledge and Research</b> |  |                              |   |
|   | <b>Learning</b>  |                              |   |
|   |  | Adaptive Management          |   |
|   |  | Indicators to Measure Change |   |

|  |                             |                  |  |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------|--|
|  |                             | Theory of Change |  |
|  | <b>Knowledge Generation</b> |                  |  |
|  |                             | Training         |  |
|  |                             | Seminar          |  |
|  |                             |                  |  |
|  | <b>Capacity Development</b> |                  |  |
|  | <b>Knowledge Exchange</b>   |                  |  |
|  |                             | Peer-to-Peer     |  |
|  |                             | Field Visits     |  |
|  |                             | North-South      |  |
|  |                             | South-South      |  |