



Introducing IW:LEARN “Structured Learning” and the Partnership Activity Leader for Large Marine Ecosystems

Introducing IW:LEARN “Structured Learning”

The operational phase of the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) project includes “Structured Learning” activities for aquifers, lake basins, river basins and large marine ecosystems. IUCN-Global Marine Programme (GMP) will serve as the Partnership Activity Leader (PAL) for Structured Learning related to large marine ecosystems. This initiative intends to enhance transboundary waters management of planned and ongoing LME and river basin projects through sharing experiences among partners within the GEF IW portfolio. To achieve this, the IUCN-Global Marine Programme is coordinating a series of topic-based learning activities through face-to-face meetings and an electronic internet forum between regional projects around the world.

Face-to-face meetings – Large marine ecosystem-focused discussions will take place during sessions of at least two IW Conferences over the four-year period of the project. The first meeting will be held this coming 20-25 June in Salvador, Brazil, where GMP will be facilitating the “LME Working Group” sessions. This event gives participants the opportunity to tailor the learning project to their specific needs and interests. It will also allow them to adapt to planning aspects such as the TDA and SAP processes or project monitoring and evaluation. Other issues may be taken on board when working group members consider it necessary.

e-Forum – The e-Forum dialogue will complement and increase the impact of the conference outcomes, and thereby of the learning initiative as a whole. It will focus on an exchange of practical experiences related to a specific topic within a small group of project managers working on the same thematic issue in different LMEs. Consecutive topics for discussion will be determined by the needs of the participating group and are envisaged to change on a quarterly basis. Initially, the e-Forum will be used to prepare for the upcoming IW Conference in June.

3rd GEF International Waters Conference

The 3rd IW Conference aims to (1) foster learning, knowledge sharing and collaboration among GEF IW projects, GEF agencies, participating governments, and others, and (2) identify and disseminate lessons and experiences to improve IW management world-wide. The conference will also serve as a launch phase for three years of peer-to-peer structured learning within various subsets of the IW community: groundwater, rivers, lake basins, coastal, and marine areas. Specific sessions of the conference will help to (1) refine indicators for IW management impact, (2) explore approaches for promoting integration across GEF focal areas, and (3) examine sustainable financing mechanisms to support continuing progress when GEF projects end. The IW:LEARN Project is organizing the conference, and IUCN will facilitate the LME Working Group.

About the Partnership Activity Leader for LMEs

The **IUCN Global Marine Programme (GMP)** since its inception in 1985 has been responding to the need to conserve our marine and coastal resources. Responding to the global need to conserve our marine and coastal resources, the IUCN Global Marine Programme (GMP) is working across Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Mediterranean, and Central and South America. Its programmes cover multiple thematic areas, such as: fisheries, marine protected areas (MPAs), deep and high seas, large marine ecosystems, marine invasive species, pollution, coral reef rehabilitation, and the effects of bleaching and climate change on corals. The GMP contributes to the conservation of marine biodiversity by promoting, influencing and catalyzing sustainable uses and equitable sharing of resources, as well as protecting ecosystems. The GMP provides vital linkages for the Union and its members to all IUCN activities that deal with marine issues, including projects and initiatives of the Regional offices and the 6 IUCN Commissions. In addition to serving as the hub for marine issues within the Union, the GMP also provides policy advice and guidance to governments, communities, NGOs and the private sector. The GMP directly implements pilot initiatives, in collaboration with partners, in various parts of the world's oceans.

Resources Available from IUCN-GMP

- Access to a wide range of IUCN **publications and tools**.
- Provide information about **events, training courses and workshops** relevant to LME management. An example is a LME socioeconomics and governance training activity to be hosted by the University of Rhode Island/NOAA in 2006. It aims to enhance the capacity of scientists, policy makers and managers involved in LME initiatives.
- Technical advice in planning and establishing **representative networks of MPAs** within LME areas.
- Access to and participation in an active **network of experts**, specifically through the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN Species Survival Commission, and the IUCN Environmental Law Commission.