

Press Release

Leading International Organizations Unite to Advance Sustainable Management of the World's River Basins



STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN – As part of World Water Week’s celebration of *Water Cooperation - Building Partnerships*, The Nature Conservancy’s Great Rivers Partnership (GRP) announces the launch of the Global Network to Advance Integrated River Basin Management. The GRP joins six other Support Partners in this effort to leverage resources and address the unprecedented, long-term challenges to viability of the world’s river basins in the 21st century.

“Large river basins provide entire nations with food, drinking water and energy. They are central to building stable and equitable economies, feeding growing populations, and improving the health and well-being of people, especially the poor,” said Dr Rebecca Tharme, Senior Freshwater Scientist with The Nature Conservancy. “Unfortunately, these vital services often compete with one another and jeopardize the health of our river ecosystems. As the natural infrastructure of these systems declines, so does our ability to secure access to the water resources needed to sustain our future.”

Together with the International River Foundation (IRF), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Global Water Programme of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), the Global Environment Facility’s (GEF) International Waters Learning Exchange and Research Network (IW:LEARN), and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the GRP will foster an open learning exchange to share and leverage best practices in river basin management across organizations and geographies.

The core objective of the Network’s collaboration is to facilitate, in all regions of the world, the emergence of more effective and efficient governance and sustainable development of water resources by integrating management at the basin level.

“The GEF’s role is to support countries in finding common ground and creating sustainable institutional mechanisms to work together on their shared water and related resources, to demonstrate that conflicts over these shared resources can be addressed through cooperation and that this can be done cost effectively. Integrated river basin management (or IWRM) is an approach adopted in many basins containing International Waters projects. By engaging with this Network, our capacity to assist these projects will expand exponentially to reach a much wider range of stakeholders and realize greater results around the world,” said Mr Mish Hamid, Project Manager of GEF IW:LEARN.

Through an official Memorandum of Understanding and other avenues of support, the seven organizations have committed to invest time and resources to advance IRBM. In the first year, in addition to collectively supporting one other’s activities at river basin and global levels, they will take on joint activities, including online knowledge and information sharing; event collaborations; and technical exchanges to develop capacity and build synergies, particularly in developing countries..

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International RiverFoundation (IRF) works in partnerships around the world to fund and promote the sustainable restoration and management of river basins. riverfoundation.org.au

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) works with many partners in its freshwater conservation efforts aimed at securing water for people and nature, focused around the central themes of habitat protection, water security and water stewardship. worldwildlife.org

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Global Water Programme brings together its extensive network of IUCN members, experts, government and private sector partners to develop sustainable solutions to preserve our water resources and the ecosystems they depend on. iucn.org

International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) aims to promote basin management as an essential tool for sustainable development at level of local, national or transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers and to support creation and strengthening of basin organizations all around the world. (inbo-news.org)

The Great Rivers Partnership (GRP) is a global effort, spearheaded by The Nature Conservancy, to create a new model for sustainable management of the world's Great Rivers for people and nature. greatriverspartnership.org

Global Environment Facility's (GEF) International Waters Learning Exchange and Research Network (IW:LEARN) exists to strengthen global GEF IW portfolio experience sharing and learning, dialogue facilitation, targeted knowledge sharing and replication in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of GEF IW projects to deliver tangible results in partnership with other IW initiatives. iwlearn.net

International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) works to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of waters and freshwater resources in the Danube River Basin. icpdr.org