

## UNOPS and the environment

### Facilitating global solutions

Environmental management is increasingly recognized as a key component of economic and human development. Translating that understanding into effective action is, unfortunately, not easy. Ecosystems and natural resources often straddle state borders, diminishing the incentive for individual countries to manage them sustainably. Therefore issues of global importance such as climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation and atmospheric and water pollution require international agreements and coordinated responses.

As the paramount vehicle for international cooperation, the United Nations plays a leading role in guiding environmental governance. UNOPS contributes to such efforts by working with international and non governmental organizations and national governments, providing specialized services to ensure project success.

### UNOPS capacity

As a neutral, transparent and accountable United Nations entity UNOPS has the status and expertise to coordinate international collaboration and help realize Millennium Development Goal 7 on environmental sustainability. Clients such as the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, the **World Bank** and numerous national governments have selected UNOPS to execute regional initiatives, manage projects, procure goods, recruit and contract personnel and supervise loans, grants and project implementation.

UNOPS offers clients significant added value through its knowledge of United Nations system, rules and regulations; its links to partner organizations within the United Nations family; and its experience working in post-conflict and post-disaster settings.

### Key environmental sectors

On behalf of clients UNOPS helps reverse environmental damage, mitigate environmental risks, raise local, regional and global awareness and facilitate better resource management. The value of UNOPS services is reflected in the volume of projects it supports in the sector, which averages more than \$100 million annually in recent years.

#### International waters

Collaborating closely with UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank, UNOPS facilitates international cooperation to prevent and reverse the environmental degradation of international waters caused by pollution, overfishing, drought, habitat changes, and invasive species. Clients employ UNOPS to execute their projects – recruiting and contracting expert consultants, training national staff, managing finances and human resources and providing procurement, legal and IT services.

UNOPS has administered numerous major international waters initiatives in recent years, including projects relating to the Black, Caspian and Yellow Seas, Lake Chad, the Nile River Basin, the Danube River and the Western Indian Ocean. The UNOPS International Waters Unit, based in Copenhagen, Denmark, also oversees projects with a global focus, such as the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** International Waters Learning and Exchange Network (IW:LEARN).



Testing water quality in the Black Sea

#### Post-conflict and post-disaster

War and natural disasters cause enormous environmental damage, jeopardizing the livelihoods of the many in developing countries that rely directly on natural resources. In recent years UNOPS has supported the work of the UNEP Post-Conflict Branch in Afghanistan, Albania, Iraq, Sudan and the former Yugoslavia. To allow UNEP to concentrate on substantive aspects of programme delivery, UNOPS

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ensures effective and efficient planning and administration, including contracting personnel, procuring goods and services and handling complex environmental remediation project design.

#### Biodiversity

UNOPS supports biodiversity conservation by administering international waters projects and regional initiatives, such as the Wings Over Wetlands programme, a multi-stakeholder effort led by Wetlands International to conserve migratory birds on Africa-Eurasia flyways. UNOPS also administers GEF funds and managing, contracting and reporting on GEF-funded activities.



The Danube River Basin, rich in biodiversity

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNOPS is implementing a GEF/UNDP-financed initiative to update conservation legislation, reform the national conservation institute and encourage rehabilitation and participatory community management of protected areas.

#### Small Grants Programme

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) provides grants to non-governmental and community-based organizations in developing countries to help them tackle climate change, conserve biodiversity, protect shared water resources, reduce the impact of persistent organic pollutants such as DDT, and prevent land degradation. Besides benefitting the environment, SGP projects also seek to generate sustainable livelihoods and reduce poverty in the world's poorest areas.

UNOPS has supported SGP since its inception in 1992. In that time UNOPS has executed more than 9,000

grants in 104 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

#### Climate change

In addition to supporting climate change projects under the Small Grants Programme, UNOPS provides services to other GEF-financed climate initiatives, such as UNDP's Community-based Adaptation Programme, which field tests small-scale projects and policy initiatives to generate knowledge about adaptation at the local level. These efforts also include various UNDP capacity-building and technical assistance projects that help countries develop adaptation policies and frameworks, climate risk analyses and management solutions.

UNOPS is supporting the use of renewable energy sources and increased energy efficiency by executing UNDP projects that strengthen the global solar water heating market and improve energy efficiency and conservation in small- and medium-sized enterprises in Kenya.

#### Environmental risk management

In addition to assisting emergency response efforts, UNOPS helps put in place systems to mitigate environmental risk. Following the 2002 eruption of Nyragongo Volcano in the Democratic Republic of the Congo UNOPS delivered emergency relief to affected populations in Goma City and its surroundings. Since then UNOPS has supported scientific monitoring by the Volcanic Observatory of Goma, has implemented an early-warning system and is helping establish a Volcano Risk Management Unit.

In Bangladesh UNOPS is an implementing agency for the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme, which supports significant policy and planning reforms and is shifting the focus of disaster management from response and relief to balanced and comprehensive risk reduction.

## The UNOPS advantage

As a United Nations organization UNOPS is non-profit and neutral, committed to achieving fundamental development goals. UNOPS ensures that project ownership rests with its clients – both partner organizations and national authorities.

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