

GEF-UNDP-IMO *GloBallast Partnerships Project*

Project Update

Funding for the *GloBallast Partnerships* project was approved by the intergovernmental council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) during the June 2007 Council meeting. This event enabled the full-size project designed to assist developing countries in reducing the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms in ship ballast water, to enter the implementation phase. The full-size project was endorsed by the GEF CEO on 31st August 2007, resulting in the delegation of the project implementation responsibility to UNDP. The full-size project document is posted at the GEF website (<http://www.gefweb.org>), and will be executed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, through a dedicated Programme Co-ordination Unit located at the IMO headquarters in London, UK (please visit <http://globallast.imo.org> for contact details).

The main objective of the Project (full title: *Building Partnerships to Assist Developing Countries to Reduce the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms in Ships' Ballast Water: GloBallast Partnerships*) is to assist particularly vulnerable countries to enact legal, policy and institutional reforms to meet the objectives of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), adopted by IMO in February 2004. *GloBallast Partnerships* will build on the pilot project which was executed by IMO during 2000-2004 and will focus on the implementation of the BWM Convention by assisting developing countries to enact legal, policy and institutional reforms to minimize the impacts of aquatic invasive species transferred by ships' ballast water. This will be a five-year project with a total GEF funding of US\$5.68 million. Significant in-kind contributions from the participating countries, Regional Co-ordinating Organizations (RCO) and strategic partners, including the private sector have been mobilized. The Project will assist 14 developing sub-regions and will include 13 Lead Partnering Countries (LPC) from 5 high priority sub-regions, namely Wider Caribbean, Mediterranean, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, the Pacific coast of South America, and the West Coast of Africa. In addition, all member countries in the sub-regions who have officially expressed interest in participating in the Project will be invited to participate in the regional capacity building activities such as training activities hosted by the LPCs. Also, linkages will be established with the six pilot countries of the pilot project (Brazil, China, India, I.R. Iran, South Africa and Ukraine), who's expertise and capacities will be drawn on for this global replication and scale-up effort.

Currently, four countries have been identified as LPCs in Wider Caribbean Region, namely Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela. Identification of LPCs were based on substantial bilateral discussions with the countries in the region and the Regional Coordinating Organization (REMPEITC) and took into account the interest and commitment by the countries to take a fast-track approach in undertaking legal, policy and institutional reforms for ballast water management, the interest and commitment to share and transfer the experiences within the region and to other regions and importantly the significant co-financing commitment by the countries to undertake the national level activities. It is expected that other Partnering Countries in the region will participate in the regional level activities, thus facilitating development of uniform policies and implementation of the Convention.

The Ballast Water Management Convention that was adopted in 2004 is an international treaty aimed at preventing the potentially devastating effects of the spread of aquatic invasive organisms inadvertently transported through ships' ballast water. When in force, the BWM Convention will require all ships to implement a Ballast Water and Sediments Management Plan. All ships will have to carry a Ballast Water Record Book and will be required to carry out ballast water management procedures to a given standard. Existing ships will be required to do the same, but after a phase-in period (for more details please visit <http://www.imo.org> or <http://globallast.imo.org>)