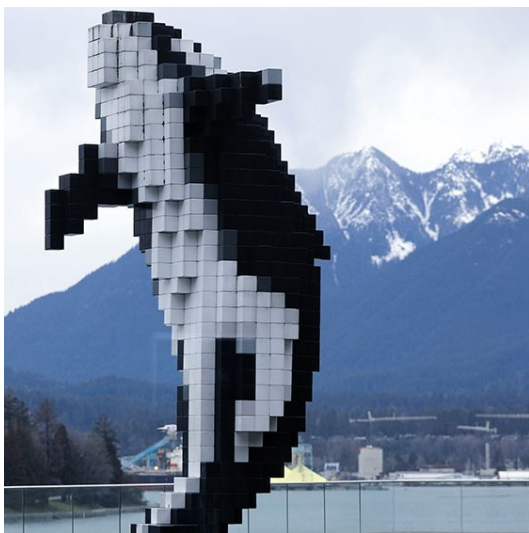


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### Sampling the fruits of success and innovation in the Maldives

Sometimes the fruits of success taste particularly sweet, as GEF CEO Carlos Manuel Rodríguez discovered on a visit to the Maldivian island of Meedhoo, where he witnessed an effort led by local women to revive a dying culinary art. “This GEF Small Grants Programme project is not only investing in preserving the rich tradition of Bondi-making in the Maldives but, more importantly, in its future generations,” said Rodríguez, who later visited two waste-related projects elsewhere in the Addu Atoll. [Read more >>](#)



### How to protect ocean life in 2,885 days (or less)

Countries have committed to protecting at least 30 percent of the world’s land and sea habitats by 2030. But how? At an event co-hosted by the GEF, World Resources Institute, and High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People during IMPAC5 in Vancouver, people leading, planning, and funding marine protected areas around the world shared ideas about how to make this happen with less than seven years on the clock. [Read more >>](#)

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### products

The governments of Gabon, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka have joined forces to fight back against damaging beauty practices, launching a joint \$14-million project to eliminate the use of mercury in skin lightening products. The project is led by UNEP, with funding from the GEF, and executed by the World Health Organization and the Biodiversity Research Institute. [Read more >>](#)



### Leaders gather at London event in support of COP15 agreement

"The world has come together in difficult times to embrace ambitious goals for the protection and restoration of nature by 2030. Our challenge now is to turn the Global Biodiversity Framework into needed action, with meaningful and lasting results for future generations. Financing from all sources will be critical for this, along with policy support and an inclusive approach. The GEF stands ready to help turn commitments into results," said Global Environment Facility CEO Carlos Manuel Rodríguez. [Read more >>](#)

## PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



### How Kiribati is shoring up food security and community resilience

The Government of **Kiribati** has developed and is now implementing a

### Protecting black-necked cranes in Ladakh, India

Living and breeding exclusively in and around high-altitude wetlands in **India**, **China**, and **Bhutan**, black-necked cranes play an important role in preserving these fragile ecosystems. Feeding on plants and small insects as a part of their diet, the cranes help prevent eutrophication, a process where the overgrowth of plants can decrease oxygen levels in the water and lead to a decline in water quality. The

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reducing disaster risk. Supported by the GEF **Least Developed Countries Fund** and **UNDP**, nine stakeholders from across the Government of Kiribati have worked closely with communities on three pilot islands - Maiana, Abemama, and Nonouti. The goals of the project have been to ensure sustainable management of lands and coastal fisheries, enhance food production and diversification, and improve the adaptive capacity and livelihoods of island communities. [Read more >>](#)

working with the Union Territory Administration of Ladakh to protect these species and their wetland habitat. [Read more >>](#)

## Reviving wetlands in the Western Indian Ocean

Efforts by **UNEP** and the GEF to safeguard and maintain invaluable wetlands in the Western Indian Ocean region are in full swing, from Chake Chake, **Tanzania**, where drainage capacity is being boosted; to **Seychelles**, where locals are being educated on wetland restoration; to the Limpopo estuary in **Mozambique**, where mangroves are being replanted; and to Mtwapa Creek in **Kenya**, where raw sewage is being treated through constructed wetland technology. [Read more >>](#)

## Somalia launches ambitious solar minigrids program

The recently launched **Somalia** project of the **Africa Minigrids Program (AMP)** aims to increase access to electricity and bring new development opportunities to rural communities while contributing to putting the country on a sustainable development path. Funded by the Global Environment Facility, the AMP is a regional energy access program - currently in 21 sub-Saharan African countries - led by **UNDP** in partnership with the **Rocky Mountain Institute** and the **African Development Bank**. [Read more >>](#)



## In wildlife conservation, gender equality brings win-win returns

The **Global Wildlife Program**, funded by the GEF and led by the **World Bank**, supports projects in over 30 countries that combat illegal wildlife trade, reduce human-wildlife conflict, and promote wildlife-based economies. For these projects, gender integration brings win-win returns. By enhancing gender equality, visibility is given to women's roles in

## Saving money and safeguarding futures in Uganda

Communities in **Uganda** are funding their own transformation through the establishment of Village Savings and Loans schemes that provide affordable and flexible rural financing options to stimulate investments into diversified sustainable livelihoods and enable small business development and strengthen food and income security for rural people. Led by **FAO** and **UNDP** with Global Environment Facility funding, the **Resilient Food Systems** Uganda project is being implemented in partnership with the government of Uganda's Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries. [Read more >>](#)



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the same time, it also improves the effectiveness of projects by incorporating gender-informed analysis of the actors and drivers of illegal wildlife trade. [Read more >>](#)

### Bringing women's empowerment to markets: A chat with W+ founder Jeannette Gurung

Jeannette Gurung, Founder and Executive Director of WOCAN, developed a unique certification framework, the W+ Standard, which provides metrics and procedures to quantify, verify, and monetize women's empowerment results within projects and supply chains. The **World Bank**, through its PROGREEN program that works closely with the GEF-funded **FOLUR** program, is supporting WOCAN in developing training materials and other approaches aimed at building local capacity to apply the W+ Standard. [Read more >>](#)

### 'Audacious' reforestation effort grows in Brazil

A bold initiative to regrow 73 million trees in the **Brazilian Amazon** has made substantial progress despite some unexpected hurdles, according to an upcoming report. The initiative comprises two efforts: Amazonia Live, an effort led by the Rock in Rio music festival in collaboration with **Conservation International** and Brazilian nonprofit Instituto Socioambiental; and the **Amazon Sustainable Landscapes** project, a collaboration among Conservation International, the Brazilian Ministry of Environment, the GEF, the **World Bank**, and the **Brazilian Biodiversity Fund**. [Read more >>](#)



### A voice from the 5th International Marine Protected Area Congress

Over five days, participants came together to exchange knowledge, best practices, and innovative ideas to ensure the full and effective implementation of the new Global Biodiversity Framework. High-level discussions at IMPAC5 - which was co-hosted by **IUCN** and supported by the GEF - showed growing momentum for marine nature-based solutions and a high level of political will for their implementation. [Read more >>](#)



### Agriculture project in Madagascar boosts farmers' income

In **Madagascar**, the South-West Region Agricultural Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project, funded by the **African Development Bank Group** and the GEF, has provided a new boost to agriculture, resulting in enhanced farmers' incomes. The project recorded significant achievements: increased production, rehabilitated lowlands, strengthened value chains, and others. [Read more >>](#)

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### Safeguarding Iran's wetlands through culture-based solutions

Over 4,500 community members from the villages of Ramnet and Aghuzben in **Iran** partnered with the **GEF Small Grants Programme** in 2019, through the Global Support Initiative to territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCA-GSI). Together they embarked on a project to document wetlands biodiversity, traditional conservation knowledge and practices, and the factors leading to biodiversity loss.

[Read more >>](#)



### Cable cars: a low-carbon transit solution for growing cities

The GEF-funded and **UNEP**-led **UrbanShift** and the C40 Cities Finance Facility organized a Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Exchange in Medellín in November 2022, bringing together local representatives from Freetown, Sierra Leone and Lima, Peru, as well as national government representatives from Sierra Leone, to learn from the City of Medellín, **Colombia** about their experience planning, financing, and implementing cable cars in an integrated transport system. [Read more >>](#)



### Sudan's water crisis and the women fighting back

A project funded by the GEF, led by **UNEP**, and executed by Sudan's Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources is helping 43 communities across White Nile State, **Sudan** build resilience to climate change, with a particular focus on women and nature-based solutions. [Read more >>](#)



### Upgrading a water treatment plant in the Solomon Islands

A new project - funded by **ADB**, the **World Bank**, the GEF, and the **European Union** - kicked off the construction of a new water treatment facility that will improve the quality and reliability of the water supply and sanitation in the **Solomon Islands** capital Honiara. [Read more >>](#)



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### risks

A new e-learning course was developed by the **International Maritime Organization** and the GEF-funded **GloFouling Partnerships** project. The course provides a detailed introduction to multiple aspects related to ships' biofouling, its role as a vector for the introduction of invasive aquatic species, and the management solutions and technologies that are available. [Read more >>](#)

### knowledge

Organized by the **Coastal Fisheries Initiative** and funded by the GEF, the event examined strategies for economic, environmental, and social sustainability in artisanal fisheries. Participants from **Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Indonesia, Peru, and Senegal** presented their work, shared their experiences, and discussed good practices and lessons learned on sustainable fisheries and mangroves co-management. [Read more >>](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **GEF Introduction Seminar** | Virtual | February 27 - March 2
- **One Forest Summit** | Libreville, Gabon | March 1-2
- **Our Ocean Conference** | Panama | March 2-3
- **Southern Africa Expanded Constituency Workshop** | Mozambique | March 20-24
- **BRS Conventions COPs** | Geneva | May 1-12
- **64th GEF Council Meeting** | Brasilia | June 26-30

## FEATURED VIDEOS

**Dispatches from the Field: Helping miners access financing in Peru**

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The fifth episode in planetGOLD's Dispatches from the Field video series looks at innovative approaches the planetGOLD Peru project is piloting to unlock flows of formal finance for small-scale miners, which is critical for them to make the transition to mercury-free.

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### **The CFI in Action: Exchange visit between women seafood processors in Senegal**

During an exchange visit in Senegal's Saloum Islands, women seafood harvesters and processors learn new techniques for manufacturing dried and semi-conserved products that can reach wider markets and improve their livelihoods.

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