Overview

The World Bank Group (WBG) vision to better integrate nature, climate and development is in full support of ambitions outlined in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). COP-15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity took place at a time when the world faces the triple environmental crises of i) nature loss, ii) climate change, and iii) pollution, as well as economic effects of conflict, which threaten hard-won development gains. Investing in nature, and including in marine resources, offers solutions to reducing poverty and inequality and protecting the climate system and critical ecosystems that support livelihoods, food and nutrition security, all of which are inherently linked.

The WBG has in invested in natural capital for decades. The World Bank supports conservation and mainstreaming of nature into economic policy, development programs, and strategic sectoral investments; IFC and MIGA bring in the private sector lens. Together, the WBG develops innovative, integrated financing solutions. Since 2018, with support of PROBLUE, the WBG has put a stronger focus on marine natural capital and has helped strengthen the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems by supporting policy.

The PROBLUE program is stepping up its financial, technical and knowledge support to countries as they seek to implement the GBF. PROBLUE grant financing plays a catalytic role to accelerate the adoption of ecosystem-based approaches in ocean-related sectors. PROBLUE’s overall portfolio of technical activities currently amounts to USD 134m in support of 187 activities in 81 economies. PROBLUE has been instrumental in supporting the expansion of the WBG’s blue portfolio which exceeds USD 7bn through core IBRD and IDA financing. Looking at biodiversity alone, the WBG is the leading multilateral financier of biodiversity and ecosystem services, reaching an active portfolio of USD 2.8bn in FY22. The PROBLUE program is stepping up its financial, technical and knowledge support to countries as they seek to implement the GBF.

How can the WBG through PROBLUE further support the Global Biodiversity Framework?

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Specific actions to accelerate the implementation of the GBF through the blue economy

Raising the blue biodiversity profile

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Whole-of-economy approach

For the WBG, nature is a development issue. Putting economies on more sustainable development paths requires a systemic shift to nature-smart planning and policy, to address the drivers of ecosystem loss taking a land-to-sea approach and promote more sustainable practices and nature-positive business models across the economic sectors. In addition to supporting the 30x30 target and scaling up conservation efforts, the WBG will ensure that its investment operations, analytics on the economics of marine natural capital and policy dialogue also support GBF targets pertaining to the repurposing of harmful fisheries subsidies, reducing marine pollution, and integrating nature-based solutions across sectors, to cover 100% of the seascape in the WBG’s portfolio.
Increase support for equitable and inclusive interventions

The GBF calls for broad-based action to achieve its targets, recognizing the roles and needs of women and men, youth, and indigenous peoples. PROBLUE will help ensure that WBG investments and policies that work for nature/biodiversity also work for the Indigenous Peoples and local communities who depend on marine biodiversity and are its stewards and include targeted measures that benefit the most vulnerable that depend on healthy marine and coastal ecosystems.

Mobilize blue finance

For oceanic sectors to be sustainable, ocean finance needs to integrate biodiversity considerations into financial decisions and business strategies. There are two complementary approaches that the WBG is undertaking to mobilize private finance for biodiversity: blueing finance and financing blue. Considering the 30 X 30 target alone, it is estimated that to get to the 10% target of Highly or Fully Protected areas it would require at least USD 7.7bn globally. PROBLUE activities have been catalyzing additional investments. Already, 21 closed PROBLUE activities, informed USD 1.25bn of WBG investments. Looking ahead, PROBLUE will expand its support for enhancing the enabling environment for biodiversity investments through policies and regulations and incubate a pipeline of bankable projects. Financial innovation will be sought - including blended mechanisms of concessional and commercial finance.

Tracking nature finance with a dedicated methodology

In line with an IDA20 commitment, the WBG is developing a methodology to better track investments supporting nature. The new methodology seeks to capture WBG’s actions that reduce loss of and restore nature in marine and terrestrial ecosystems, supporting implementation of the GBF and contributing to green, resilient and inclusive development. Such investments are helping reduce the drivers of nature loss across economic sectors, scaling up nature-based solutions, conserving and restoring critical ecosystems, and creating enabling conditions for sustainable management of natural resources. The methodology will allow us to better account for the WBG support to marine biodiversity.

How can the WBG through PROBLUE further support the Global Biodiversity Framework?

- Raising the blue biodiversity profile
- Whole-of-economy approach
- Increasing support for equitable and inclusive interventions
- Mobilizing blue finance
- Tracking biodiversity with advanced methodology

Reducing threats to biodiversity

All areas under participatory integrated biodiversity including spatial planning by 2030

PROBLUE will continue to support Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as a means to reduce impacts of coastal and marine use on biodiversity, including through the PROBLUE financed MSP Toolkit and the Environmental and Social Framework for Offshore Wind Spatial Planning (ES-FOWSP). PROBLUE currently supports MSP in 3 regions (Eastern Caribbean, Gulf of Fonseca, and West Africa), and 18 countries² as well as Offshore Wind Spatial Planning in 3 countries².

1. List of Countries: Indonesia, Mozambique, Vietnam, Madagascar and Comoros, Morocco, Maldives, Mexico, Tanzania, Grenada. In FY23: Sao Tome e Principe, Ghana, Senegal, Kenya, Egypt, Bangladesh, Philippines, Jamaica, Argentina, Ecuador, and Palau

2. Colombia, Azerbaijan and the Philippines

PROBLUE will strengthen its support to marine and coastal ecosystem restoration by mapping ecosystem services, including their co-benefits, to increase support for this goal among decision-makers, identifying threats to their health, connectivity with other ecosystems, and human-ecosystem interactions. Among many projects, recent examples include the USD419m project in Indonesia for a large-scale mangrove restoration investment, and USD246m WACA Resilience Project 2 with co-financing from PROBLUE to support mangrove restoration and further blue carbon market development.

PROBLUE supports efforts to combat marine plastics pollution across all regions through a comprehensive set of solutions, at every stage of the plastic lifecycle. This includes filling knowledge gaps through analytics at the global, regional, and country levels, contributing to regional and national action plans, and informing policy development with innovative models such as the Plastics Policy Simulator and the Plastic Substitution Tradeoff Estimator. PROBLUE is supporting the application of these models in a growing number of countries.

In addition, through the study "Curbing the Flow", PROBLUE will help develop solutions to plastics pollution through informing the INC process on relevant topics and enhance knowledge and capacity on plastics pollution and circular economy issues. This will include amplifying the long-term sustainability of the models developed under "Pathways out of Plastics Pollution" analytic and other existing toolkits.
Mitigate and adapt to climate change with Nature-based solutions (NBS)

PROBLUE has a robust NBS portfolio, which focuses on coastal ecosystems like coral reefs, mangroves, salt marshes and seagrass beds, etc. and will continue to scale up this work. PROBLUE supports NBS work at the global, regional (Caribbean, Pacific Islands), and country levels (Ghana, Senegal, the Gambia, Pakistan, Morocco, Ecuador), through the development of guidelines and planning tools for NBS integration in different sectors (disaster risk management, ports, tourism), and the development of nature-positive markets including insurance products, and blue carbon. In addition, based on a WB collaborative effort to assess climate impacts on fisheries in Africa, PROBLUE is co-funding the roll-out of this piece of work at the national and sub-national level, analyzing the impact of climate change on specific stocks and, in turn, the impact of these changes – not least stocks’ poleward movements – on fisheries communities, and on the basis of which a range of adaptation measures are formulated – including specific fisheries-management measures. This work was first piloted in Indonesia and is being taken up in a number of additional countries.

Meeting people’s needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing

Several countries have recently received support to develop sustainable aquaculture and seaweed farming including Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Argentina, Palau, among others. In addition, a global Biodiversity in Agriculture flagship study is commencing, which will explore how agriculture and food systems can be transformed to arrest the alarming rate of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. It will identify policies, public investments and capacity building measures needed to address the loss of nature and assist countries in meeting targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework. The study will benefit from the PROBLUE-funded activity on ‘Actions and Policies to Reduce Coastal Zone Agricultural Nutrient Pollution in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia’, which is ongoing.

Implement biodiversity-friendly practices in agriculture and other production systems

A large fraction of the global population (41%) and world’s megacities (60%) are located in coastal zones. Climate change and environmental degradation are compounding risks to coastal population, economic activities, infrastructure and ecosystems. Expanding NBS as part of more sustainable coastal management can help reduce risks while contributing to meeting environmental goals. The WBG is working with countries to incorporate climate and nature themes into development plans. NBS are integrated into WBG operations at the community and project level, through country-level prioritization in the WBG new core diagnostic, Country Climate and Development Reports, and Country Partnership Frameworks, and at the global level in the World Bank’s Climate Change Action Plan. PROBLUE has supported the blue NBS integration in several CCDRs, and is expected to accelerate this incorporation in the ones to be prepared in the next FYs.

More than 100 projects (for a total of USD5.5b) used nature-based solutions from fiscal years 2012 to 2021, and the number has increased significantly since 2018, according to the World Bank NBS solutions portfolio analysis. The environment global practice leads the NBS commitments, under which PROBLUE supports NBS efforts at the global, regional (Caribbean, Pacific Islands), and country levels (Ghana, Pakistan, Ecuador), through the development of guidelines and planning tools for NBS integration in different sectors (disaster risk management, ports, tourism, and aquaculture), and the development of nature-positive markets including insurance products, and blue carbon.

Moreover, the with support from the GEF, the WB will work on Least Developed Countries to accelerate investments in nature-based solutions to help address climate adaptation, and integrate biodiversity in these natural solutions.

Incorporate biodiversity in cities with green and blue spaces

Considering the large fraction of the global population living within 100km of the coast, PROBLUE collaborates with different TFs and sectors (DRM, tourism, finance) in the development of global and national tools to increase climate resilience in coastal cities, and enhance biodiversity and connectivity across urban-rural areas. Tools include the coastal NBS opportunity scan tool (NBSOS) to assess NBS based on existing typologies, include flood mapping and shoreline erosion capabilities. Coastal urban work is conducted in Haiti, Senegal, the Gambia, the Pacific Islands, and the Philippines.

Ensure sustainable use of wild species for the vulnerable

The WBG with support from PROBLUE are identifying and assessing the role of and need for social-protection and labor-market measures for fishers, fish workers and their communities to mitigate potential short- to medium term negative impacts of fisheries-management measures, and to help a transition out of the sector as appropriate; case studies are currently underway in the Solomon Islands, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Costa Rica.

Restore Nature’s Contributions to People through Nature-based Solutions

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14 Adopt a whole-of-government and -society approach

The WBG with support from PROBLUE emphasizes coordinated, collaborative work across institutions and sectors, including finance and economics ministries. PROBLUE is increasingly emphasizing the need for integration and coordination across sectors which is critical for these inter-connected / interdependent natural systems. PROBLUE has developed integrated seascape management tools such as Blue Public Expenditure Review to assesses how public expenditures address issues related to coastal and marine resources and to guide future government allocation. PROBLUE has financed the application of Blue PER in 5 countries.

15 Disclose business and finance dependencies and impacts on biodiversity

The World Bank will strengthen its support to improve transparency, in particular in the Fisheries Sector. In particular, through readiness to implement the WTO Agreement on fisheries subsidies with regards to its transparency, as well as to countries interested in joining the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). This includes further support to 25 countries that have enhanced fisheries data management and/or disclosure, and through PROBLUE support to the FiTI Secretariat as well as to Cape Verde to join the initiative.

16 Promote sustainable consumption

17 Implement biosafety protocols

Amid the COVID19, the World Bank with support from PROBLUE and the CWS developed the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions in fisheries and aquaculture Guidance Note and associated tools to help improve the health and nutritional status of workers and communities and improve the safety of food products produced. These tools are being piloted as part of the Resilient Tourism and Blue-Economy Development in Cabo Verde Project, with the help of a PROBLUE grant.

18 Reduce harmful incentives by USD500bn per year by 2030

In response to the WTO agreement on fisheries subsidies (2022), the WBG with support from PROBLUE will help countries in getting ready to ratify and implement the Agreement. In particular the WBG will expand its support to the identification of harmful subsidies through Public Expenditure Reviews and will support countries in repurposing these subsidies while mitigated impacts on fishing communities who were benefiting from them. A number of PROBLUE-financed tools under FSAT will support this target. Currently PERs are being conducted or planned in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh. The Bank through PROBLUE is also collaborating and coordinating with the WTO Secretariat.

19 Mobilize finance of all kinds: international, domestic, private, blended, climate

The WBG will continue to unlock barriers and develop blue finance & joint WB & IFC engagements. The WBG draws on its financial instruments, convening power, and technical expertise to support its client countries as they address biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation. It operates through a diverse set of financing modalities, often blending resources from IDA, IBRD, and multilateral and bilateral trust funds, such as PROBLUE, PROGREEN, SPFR, SCALE, and CWS, as well as the private sector for greatest impact (see brief Scaling up Finance for Nature). PROBLUE will continue to support innovative financing mechanisms at the country level such as the COAST fisheries insurance, social protection schemes, Seychelles Blue Bond and others, and work collaboratively with IFC, the private arm of the WBG that has already supported blue bonds in Philippines, Thailand, South Africa, and Ecuador.
20 Strengthen technological, technical and scientific international cooperation

PROBLUE has been and will continue to be an active player in the international arena, supporting countries to implement high level international commitments, and use the WBG’s convening power for international cooperation. Efforts include Global Plastic Action Partnership, UN Restoration Finance Taskforce, Decarbonizing the Shipping Industry, Offshore Wind development, Tourism Action Coalition for a Sustainable Ocean, High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, among others.

21 Make data, knowledge and education widely available

The World Bank’s Policy on Access to Information has enabled the organization to become a global leader in transparency and has made a groundbreaking change in how the World Bank makes information available to the public. Since the beginning of the Blue Economy business line, which includes the PROBLUE MDTF, data, reports, tools, and project information have been disclosed to the public. PROBLUE funded resources can be found here. With regards to country support, PROBLUE continues to support the Fisheries Transparency Initiative – transparency being a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable fisheries. Further support will be provided for countries interested in joining the FiTI as well as for countries to comply with the transparency clauses of the GBF and WTO Agreement on fisheries subsidies.

22 Guarantee representation and implication of IPLC, women, youth and the disabled

The blue economy must put people at its center, working for everyone, enabling human rights, facilitating the equitable distribution of ocean wealth and ensuring equality of opportunity for all. PROBLUE’s work focuses on the links between ocean development, climate and biodiversity while considering the full inclusion of vulnerable communities, including indigenous populations, women and girls, and other marginalized groups as active drivers of the ocean economy. Practical guidelines, and analytical work are also developed by the World Bank with support from PROBLUE, including Gender, Marginalized People, and Marine Spatial Planning.

23 Ensure gender-equal access to biodiversity

Through PROBLUE, the World Bank has produced many knowledge products on the Blue Economy and Gender, including but not limited to Gender Integration in the Blue Economy Portfolio: Review of Experiences and Future Opportunities, PROBLUE and Gender Equality, and Gender, Marginalized People and Marine Spatial Planning. In FY22, 92 percent of funded activities included a gender component. Gender inclusion is a priority for PROBLUE, especially in relation to equal access to biodiversity benefits.