1. Country and sector issues

**Background:** The Nile River, which is 6600 km long, is the longest river in the world. It has a drainage area of nearly 3.1 million sq. km, covering the following 10 countries- Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The Nile River basin can be divided into two sub-basins – the Eastern Nile and the Equatorial Lake Sub-basins. The Eastern Nile Sub-Basin is considered to include four river systems, Abay-Blue Nile; Tekeze-Setit-Atabara; Baro-Akobo-Sobat, and the Main Nile. The headwaters of the first three tributary systems rise in the Ethiopia highlands, while the Main Nile traverses through Sudan and Egypt. The Abay-Blue Nile alone accounts for 30 – 90% of all Nile waters reaching Egypt, depending on the season. The countries in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin are Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

The Equatorial Lakes Sub-basin comprises a complex of lakes, wetlands, and rivers, including Lake Victoria, the second largest freshwater lake in the world, Lake Albert, Lake Edward, Kagera River, Mara River, and the Malakisi-Malabi-Soi River.

A variety of ecosystems occur in the Nile Basin and they include tropical forest, woodlands, savannas, wetlands, arid lands and deserts, and a large delta. These ecological systems support a wide diversity of habitats, flora and fauna, including the following: (a) Lake Victoria and its surrounding wetlands alone support more than 430 fish species, 350 of which are endemic; (b) the savanna ecosystems are the richest grasslands in the world in terms of very high flora and fauna diversity; and (c) the savanna supports the biggest concentration of large mammals in the
world. Also, at least 125 migratory bird species use the Nile basin as a flyway between Africa, Europe and Asia.

The Nile River plays a major role in the economies of the riparian countries, particularly in the development of key economic infrastructure such as irrigation schemes and hydropower dams, driving industrialization and urbanization. The Nile basin also supports the local livelihoods of about 160 million people who are involved in rain-fed agriculture (mainly in Ethiopia and Sudan), irrigated agriculture, fisheries, and livestock production (mainly through agro-pastoralism; transhumants pastoralism, etc.).

**Land degradation in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin:** The main environmental challenge in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin, the focus of the proposed project, is land degradation, which has major implications for agricultural productivity, water quality, and biodiversity conservation. The most degraded parts of the Eastern Nile Basin are the Ethiopia highlands. About 20,000 sq. km of land in this area is severely degraded because of accelerated soil erosion, leaving only a topsoil depth of less than 10 cm. This situation is expected to worsen if no action is taken, with the size of the severely degraded areas growing to 100,000 sq. km. by 2010. This rate of soil fertility loss cannot sustain agricultural production, making the country more vulnerable to food insecurity.

In addition to the Ethiopian highlands, the other “hotspots” of land degradation in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin are the forest and woodland areas south of Khartoum, and the Atbara and the Blue Nile basins in Sudan. In the case of wetlands, the following major ones are: (a) the Lake Nasser basin, Nile delta, Qarun, and Rayan in Egypt; (b) the Gambella floodplain, Lake Tana, Finchaa area, Dobus swamp/Alatish River in Ethiopia; and (c) the Sudd, Machar marshes, and Dinder wetlands in Sudan.

The main causes of land degradation in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin are: (a) clearing of forests, woodlands, and wetlands for large-scale and smallholder agriculture; (b) overgrazing of rangelands by livestock; and (c) overexploitation of forests and woodlands for fuelwood and charcoal. Underlining these proximate causes are macro-level policies that are beyond the scope of the proposed project, such as agricultural and land tenure policies that favor the expansion of semi-mechanized agriculture in Sudan.

The most significant impact of land degradation in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin are the loss of soil productivity because of accelerated erosion of the top soil, and deteriorating water quality due to increased sedimentation. As a result, there is increased siltation of major reservoirs for irrigation and hydropower generation, reducing their efficiency. This situation sometimes leads to costly de-silting operations. The most critical areas adversely affected by increased siltation in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin area are the Aswan High Dam in Egypt; the Finchaa and Tekeze hydropower dams in Ethiopia; and the Roseires, Sennar, Khasm El Girba, Gezira, Rahad, and New Haifa irrigation schemes in Sudan.

**Regional and Country level Strategies:** As noted earlier, the Nile River is critical for economic and social development in the ten riparian countries. After decades of tension over the use of the waters of the Nile River, the countries began to work towards cooperative management of water and other natural resources for their mutual benefits. This evolving regional cooperation, which
began in 1999, is under the auspices of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI). Under the NBI, the riparian countries adopted a “Shared Vision”, whose goal is “... to achieve sustainable social-economic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile basin water resources.”

This shared vision is supported by the following four specific objectives: (a) develop the water resources of the Nile basin in a sustainable and equitable way to ensure prosperity, security, and peace for all its peoples; (b) ensure efficient water management and the optimal use of the resources; (c) ensure cooperation and joint action between the riparian countries, seeking win-win gains; and (d) target poverty eradication and promote economic integration.


2. Rationale for Bank and GEF involvement

There are three main reasons for the World Bank’s involvement in the proposed project. First, the Bank has been associated with the NBI since its inception in 1999, and it continues to play a facilitating role in assisting the riparian countries to develop strategies for cooperation and to mobilize financial and technical resources for the implementation of their shared vision. As noted earlier, the goal of the shared vision is “... to achieve sustainable social-economic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile basin water resources.” The Bank has also helped the countries to mobilize funding from bilateral and multi-lateral sources for capacity building activities and investments. This project presents another opportunity for the Bank to build on its experience with the NBI to assist the riparian countries to mobilize additional technical and financial resources.

Second, the Bank is giving priority to the sound management of transboundary basins in its Africa Action Plan (AAP) and Regional Integration Department’s (RID) strategy because of the important role they play in supporting accelerated economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Finally, the Bank has extensive global knowledge and experience on watershed management in transboundary water bodies. Therefore, its involvement in the proposed project would help to bring this knowledge and experience to the Eastern Nile countries, including best practices in watershed rehabilitation and management.

For the GEF, the sustainable management of the Eastern Nile Sub-basin is consistent with the strategic priorities for two of its focal areas – Land Degradation and International Waters. The two specific strategic priorities for the GEF’s land degradation programs related to the proposed
project, including the TerrAfrica/GEF Strategic Investment (GEF/SIP) Program, are as follows (a) develop an enabling environment that will place sustainable land management in the mainstream of development policy and practices at regional, national, and local levels (Strategic Objective 1); and (b) transmit upscale sustainable land management investments that generate mutual benefits for the global environment and local livelihoods (Strategic Objective 2).

Specific GEF SIP priorities to be addressed in the proposed project include the following: (a) regional-level activities such as improving knowledge management; strengthening of African coalitions, institutions and leadership; and investment coordination; and (b) national and community-level priorities such as: (i) support for on-the-ground activities to scale up sustainable land and water management practices; capacity building for community-level and other relevant institutions; (ii) integration of sustainable land and water management priorities into national and sectoral planning frameworks, regional cooperative basin planning frameworks; (iii) development of effective knowledge management systems, including sharing of knowledge and innovation, and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned; and (iv) improvements in the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change, including diversification of crop production, water harvesting/supplementary irrigation, and diversified livelihood.

The proposed project is also in line with the long-term objective of the GEF’s International Waters Focal Area – to foster international, multi-state cooperation on priority water concerns. It is also consistent with the GEF’s Strategic Program for International Waters for the GEF’s Fourth Replenishment (GEF-4) - “to balance overuse and conflicting uses of water resources in surface and groundwater basins that are transboundary in nature”.

3. Higher level objectives to which the project contributes
As agreed by the Nile Basin institutions, the overall goal or higher level objectives of the proposed Eastern Nile Watershed Management Project is to “assist Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan to develop and implement coordinated approaches and planning frameworks for integrated land and water management to improve environmental management and the living standards of local communities in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin.”

4. Project Description

Lending instrument
The proposed project would be financed with a total of US$37.4 million over a five-year period, using the World Bank’s Sector Investment Loan instrument. $15 million of the financing would be provided by a Trust Fund to be established at the Bank by the Government of Finland. The GEF would provide $8.7 million, $13.5 million from the Government of Sudan, and $0.2 million from the Government of Egypt.

Project development and global objectives and key indicators
The Project Development Objective and Global Environment Objective (GEO) are to increase the adoption of sustainable land and water management practices in selected micro-watersheds in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin. A second GEO is to develop a framework for integrated and sustainable management of Lake Nasser/Nubia Sub-basin.
The key performance indicators are as follows:

- Increase in the area of degraded agricultural landscape rehabilitated.
- Adoption by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt and the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources, Sudan of a framework for integrated and sustainable management of Lake Nasser/Nubia Sub-basin.

**Project components**

The proposed project would have the following three components: (a) Community Watershed Management; (b) Knowledge for Cooperative Action; and (c) Project Management.

**(a) Component 1: Community Watershed Management ($27.3 million)**

The objective of this component is to promote wider adoption of sustainable land and water management practices and technologies to reduce land degradation, and increase agricultural productivity and incomes. This component would be implemented in the Atbara, Bau (or Ingessana), Dinder, and Lau sub-watersheds in Sudan. The population of these areas comprises mainly small-scale farmers and pastoralists, with high incidence of poverty.

These sub-watersheds were selected by a process initiated by the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources using the following criteria: (a) they are the major sources in Sudan of sediments that end up in the Nile River; (b) they provide an opportunity to address land degradation in representative ecological systems in Sudan – desert, savanna, and wetland/forest; and (c) they have the demonstration potential for other watersheds in Sudan. Unlike the first three sub-watersheds, where on-the-ground interventions would be implemented, project support in the Lau sub-watershed would focus only on capacity building because of the severely limited institutional capacity (See Annex 4 for details on the project sites).

Building lessons learned from successful pilots within and outside Sudan, interventions under this component would be implemented through the following two sub-components, (a) natural resource management and (b) sustainable agriculture.

**Natural resource management sub-component** ($13.5 million): The objective of this sub-component is to strengthen the management of natural resources in the targeted communities, particularly forests and rangelands that are under pressure from overexploitation and overgrazing. There would be two sets of interventions under this sub-component:

- **Capacity building**: The project would finance technical assistance, training, equipment, and incremental costs for the following activities: strengthening community organizations, preparation of local guidelines for community-based natural resource management; training on the guidelines for local government and community organizations, and the development of community natural resource management plans. These plans would cover, among other things, priorities for forest and range management and sustainable agriculture. For the Dinder sub-watershed, in addition to this assistance, the project would facilitate collaborative park management, including awareness-raising and training in park management for both park staff
and communities. It would also provide assistance to strengthen mechanisms for community involvement in protected area management.

**Resource management**: The project would finance technical assistance, specialized training, and investments in forest management and/or range management on communal lands, depending on the agro-ecological zone. Forest management activities would include agro-forestry, reforestation and management of forest reserves, and the establishment of community forests such as woodlots, gum arabic, and shelterbelts for sand dune fixation.

Range management activities to be financed under the project would include mapping of seasonal livestock migration routes and the rehabilitation of rangelands through stock management, re-seeding, management of water points, and improved grazing systems.

**Sustainable agriculture sub-component** ($13.8 million): The objective of this sub-component is to promote wider adoption of innovative practices and technologies for sustainable soil fertility and water management to increase and sustain agricultural productivity through the following two sets of interventions -- innovations in agriculture and water harvesting. Project support would be based on priorities for sustainable agriculture outlined in the community natural resource management plans.

**Innovations in agriculture**: The project would finance technical assistance, training, equipment, and incremental costs for the establishment of demonstration farms on farmers’ fields. It would also support the transfer of knowledge, technology, and support services to farmers interested in adopting the demonstrated innovations. To facilitate adoption, the project would provide grants to community organizations, which would provide in-kind contributions of up to --% (See Annex 4 for details).

**Water harvesting**: The project would finance the development of rainwater harvesting structures to improve access to water for people, agriculture, and livestock. The project would finance technical assistance, training, civil works, equipment and incremental costs for capacity building to assist local communities to develop structures such as farm ponds, storage tanks and springs development for domestic use and small-scale irrigation, covering a total of about 5100 ha. In addition, the project would finance the rehabilitation of mayas (i.e. natural water collection points in the Dinder area) to harvest rainwater. The project would also finance a limited number of small-scale boreholes to provide safe drinking water for local communities, and capacity building activities to enable communities to manage and maintain such infrastructure.

The expected outcomes of interventions implemented under this component are: (a) increased land area being sustainably managed; and (b) increased agricultural productivity.

**Component 2: Knowledge for Cooperative Action** ($4.9 million)
The objective of this component is to strengthen the knowledge base and human resource capacity for cooperative action on watershed management in the Eastern Nile sub-basin. As noted above, the Tana & Beles Integrated Water Resources Development Project in Ethiopia has an organic relationship with the proposed project and this component strengthens this link. At the regional level, project support would focus on facilitating training and exchange of information
(including on best management practices) and expertise on watershed management in Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan. This component would have the following two sub-components – (a) Regional capacity building; and (b) Lake Nasser/Nubia management.

(i) Regional Capacity Building Sub-component ($2.0 million)
Project financing under this sub-component would specifically focus on the following two sets of interventions:

- Regional sediment and water quality monitoring: The project would finance technical assistance and training to: (i) develop harmonized standards, methods, and protocols for sharing of information on sedimentation and water quality. This work would build on related on-going NBI initiatives such as those under the Strategic Vision Program (SVP), Water Resources Planning and Management (WRPM) project and the SVP Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP); and (ii) collate data on sedimentation and water quality from national institutions, analyze them to determine regional trends, and disseminate the information among the riparian countries to support decision-making. This work will be coordinated with other related ongoing efforts of the NBI and other institutions in the sub-basin.

- Regional capacity building and coordination: The project would finance joint training for participants from the riparian countries, and technical staff exchanges to strengthen cooperation and capacity in watershed management. It would also finance coordination and exchange of knowledge and experiences across the Eastern Nile countries on innovations and best practices in watershed management, particularly from Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan. This activity would be undertaken in close coordination with the GEF’s network of international water management specialists and practitioners known as the International Waters Learning and Exchange Resource Network (IWLEARN).

Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) would be responsible for the implementation of the above interventions, using its existing institutional arrangements.

The expected outcomes of project support at the regional level are: (i) increased technical capacity of the institutions involved in watershed management in the Eastern Nile Sub-basin; and (ii) information products are developed to increase sharing of information on watershed management, including best management practices, and to support decision making in the riparian countries on proactive balancing of competing resource uses.

(ii) Lake Nasser/Nubia Management Sub-component (US$ 2.9 million)
The objective of this sub-component is to assist Egypt and Sudan to enhance the knowledge base, and develop a framework (i.e. principles and guidelines) for integrated and sustainable management of the land and water resources of Lake Nasser/Nubia basin.

Project support would focus on the following two sets of interventions: (i) environmental quality monitoring; and (ii) development of management guidelines.

Environmental quality monitoring: The objective of the environmental quality monitoring activities is to collect and analyze biophysical (mainly sedimentation, water quality, and selected
limnological parameters) and socio-economic information necessary for the development of guidelines for integrated and sustainable management of Lake Nasser/Nubia. This work would be closely coordinated with the planned initiative of the Government of Egypt, United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Arab Council to use remote sensing and satellite data for water and environmental monitoring and modeling.

For sedimentation, the project would finance technical assistance, equipment, training, and incremental survey costs to improve sediment monitoring in Lake Nasser/Nubia, including refining survey and measurement procedures and techniques, sand encroachment analysis, mathematical modeling tools and procedures, and database system protocols. Project finance would also help to improve the temporal and spatial coverage and the accuracy of sediment surveys on Lake Nasser/Nubia.

Information on water quality would also be collected during the sediment surveys. This information would complement data generated from other ongoing water quality monitoring activities on Lake Nasser/Nubia is being financed by the Governments of Egypt and Sudan.

The sediment survey would build on, expand, and update existing monitoring and modeling systems, and databases in Egypt and Sudan. The project would also finance technical assistance and incremental operating costs for socio-economic surveys to better understand population trends and the distribution of settlements, the socio-economic status of people, trends in natural resource use, planned future development activities, etc. The survey results would help to design future sustainable local livelihood and other development activities in the lake basin.

Collection of other key information on environmental quality will not be financed by the project, but would be obtained from ongoing initiatives being financed by the governments of Egypt and Sudan. For example, data on sand encroachment would be obtained from climatological and sand direction stations around Lake Nasser and on fisheries from the Fisheries Management Centre in Aswan.

**Development management guidelines:** The project would finance technical assistance and training to develop, in a participatory way, principles and guidelines (i.e. management framework) to support the integrated management and sustainable use of the resources of Lake Nasser/Nubia, including balancing competing uses, based on the information generated from the biophysical and socio-economic surveys. Priority would be given to the development of guidelines on agriculture, tourism, and fisheries, which are expected to become the key sectors in any future development activities in the lake basin.

The expected outcome of the above interventions is the completion and adoption by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt and the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources, Sudan guidelines to guide future management and development activities in the Lake Nasser/Nubia basin to ensure balanced and sustainable resource use.

(c) **Component 3: Project Management ($4.8 million)**

The objective of this component is to finance technical and capacity building assistance, and incremental operating costs for existing regional, national, and local entities that would be
responsible for the implementation of the proposed project. Implementation at the regional level would be lead by ENTRO. National level implementation in Egypt would be let by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, and Sudan by the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources.

**Lessons learned and reflected in the project design**

The design for the proposed project reflects lessons learned from previous and ongoing land and water resources management interventions in Egypt and Sudan, and international best practices. It also incorporates lessons learned that were documented in a number of studies commissioned under the NBI, a World Bank review of experiences in watershed management completed in 2008, and study tours by watershed management specialists from the Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The main lessons are summarized below.

**A shift from single sector approaches to integrated approaches:** Traditional approaches to watershed rehabilitation and management often focus on a single sector or engineering solution. Based on international experience, there is consensus that integrated approaches are more effective. Such approaches provide a framework to address not only the ecological dimensions of land and water degradation, but also the economic and social aspects. They also facilitate effective participation of a broad range of key stakeholder groups, including resource managers and upstream and downstream communities.

**Country ownership and shared vision:** Strong country ownership and a shared vision by the major stakeholders involved in watershed rehabilitation and management is critical for successful implementation and sustainability. These attributes are even more crucial in transboundary waterbodies such as the Eastern Nile Sub-basin. The shared vision among the riparian countries, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan, is very strong. The project is one of the first set of seven investment projects approved by the Eastern Nile Council of Ministers (ENCOM) at its 7th meeting in Khartoum in March 2001.

**Mainstreaming project planning and implementation:** Project design builds on existing knowledge and practices in integrated land and water management being implemented by government agencies and local communities in Egypt and Sudan. As a result, implementation of interventions proposed under this project would be mainstreamed into these entities, specifically the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI) in Egypt, the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources (MoIWR) in Sudan, local government administrations, and community organizations.

**Participatory planning and implementation:** To ensure that interventions supported under the proposed project reflect the priorities of the intended beneficiaries, a participatory approach to project planning and implementation is crucial. For example, the project, under the Community Watershed Management Component in Sudan, would support a participatory process for local communities to lead the development and implementation of micro-watershed management and development plans for financing. It would also support regular community-led monitoring of implementation performance and impacts as part of the overall monitoring and evaluation system for the project.
5. Financing
Source: (US$ million)
Global Environment Facility: 8.7
Government of Finland 15.0
Recipient – Sudan 13.5
Recipient – Egypt 0.2
Total: 37.4

6. Implementation

The proposed project would have the following two existing inter-related levels of organizational arrangements for the implementation – strategic policy level and implementation level. The Eastern Nile Council of Ministers, assisted by the Eastern Nile Strategic Action Program Team, would provide overall strategic policy guidance at the regional level. These are existing mechanisms mandated by the riparian countries to coordinate regional projects in the Eastern Nile sub-basin.

The Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources (MoWRI), Sudan, in cooperation with local government agencies and community organizations, would lead the implementation of the Community Watershed Management component. For the Knowledge for Cooperative Action component, ENTRO would be responsible for the implementation of the Regional Capacity Building sub-component and the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt and MoWRI would jointly lead the implementation for the Lake Nasser/Nubia Management sub-component.

7. Sustainability

The proposed project is expected to contribute overall to improved land and water management, and increased agricultural productivity in the selected sub-watersheds of the Eastern Nile sub-basin. The expected outcomes and outputs from project support are highly likely to be sustained beyond the five-year implementation period because of the following reasons.

First, there is strong political commitment in Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan for an integrated approach to the rehabilitation and improved management of the Eastern Nile Sub-basin. As noted above, the project is one of the first set of seven investment projects approved by the Eastern Nile Council of Ministers.

Second, the proposed project interventions build on the experience of watershed rehabilitation and management activities already being undertaken in Egypt and Sudan, and by ENTRO. The types of interventions to be implemented under the project are already mainstreamed into the regular programs of the lead implementing agencies. Therefore, the institutional arrangements, and to some extent, the capacity and budget for such activities already exist. The challenge will
be to further enhance technical capacity and augment budget allocations to support sustainability and replication.

Finally, the main intended beneficiaries of the project, local communities, are more likely to sustain the gains expected to be achieved because they are both environmental and economic. By helping households to increase agricultural productivity and incomes through sound environmental management, the project is expected to provide a strong incentive to sustain these outcomes.

8. Lessons learned and reflected in the project design
The design for the proposed project reflects lessons learned from previous and ongoing land and water resources management interventions in Egypt and Sudan, and international best practices. It also incorporates lessons learned that were documented in a number of studies commissioned under the NBI, a World Bank review of experiences in watershed management completed in 2008, and study tours by watershed management specialists from the Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The main lessons are summarized below.

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9. Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project

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10. List of Factual Technical Document


*By supporting the proposed project, the Bank does not intend to prejudice the final determination of the parties' claims on the disputed areas*


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