The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) has contributed to building significant trust and cooperation across the region. From a starting point where discussions between some countries had to be mediated through a neutral third party, countries are now coming together to agree and plan new, large-scale projects and recognize the benefits of working together. Some countries didn’t quite realize the impacts of their activities on other countries. “In the beginning it was a different environment. People from different countries rarely talked or worked together. Some countries didn’t quite realize the impacts of their activities on other countries.” Dr. Barbara Miller, former Senior Water Resources Specialist in the World Bank’s Africa Region.

Through regionally agreed strategic programs, the NBI has contributed to building significant trust and cooperation across the region. From a starting point where discussions between some countries had to be mediated through a neutral third party, countries are now coming together to agree and plan new, large-scale projects and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively.

This trust and cooperation has in part been achieved through improvements in understanding, capacity, and knowledge. Where previously weaknesses in capacity and knowledge were real constraints, now technicians, and Ministers from the Nile countries better understand the realities of transboundary flows, the impacts of water resource management and development on neighbouring countries, and the benefits of working cooperatively.

Combined, these achievements inform both developments in national policy and planning, and expectations on shared benefits from transboundary cooperation. This promotes management and development of the Nile that is cooperative, equitable, and sustainable.

Achieving regional economic development and stability

The NBI helps countries better understand and manage changes in the river, including floods and droughts. The tools, capacity and infrastructure will help countries better adapt to climate change. By working together to jointly manage resources before potential conflicts occur, trust and cooperation among member states is increased and contributes to stability and peace.

Investment leveraged

Nile Basin Trust Fund (NBTF) support has leveraged investment in development projects (cumulative figures)

- NBI policies on gender, climate, environment and social sustainability – all of which guide best practice,
- Nile Basin Sustainability Framework (NBSF) – approved by Nile-COM in 2011 – informs and guides all investment projects, ensuring their orientation towards shared benefits and regional economic development.
- Nile Basin Decision Support System (DSS) - an analytical tool jointly developed by the NBI and Member States.

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was opened in 2003 at the request of Ministers responsible for water affairs in the Nile countries, and was administered by the World Bank on behalf of ten donors.

NBI Member States

- Burundi
- DR Congo
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Rwanda
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Tanzania
- Uganda

Funding to support Nile cooperation

This pooled fund mechanism, administered by the World Bank and supported by ten donors, has helped to ensure coordination and best use of funding, and to keep everything working efficiently towards a single shared vision.

Funding to support Nile cooperation has come through various sources, with a total commitment of over US$264 million applied in the last 10 years. This support has resulted in a total of over US$1.5 billion being leveraged for ongoing investment projects across the region.

Key influential factors in the success

“This is an important milestone. Donor groups working together - we always came to a consensus which was amazing. It makes everything a lot easier, and transaction costs are much lower.”

“This note forms part of a series of briefing notes prepared to mark the completion of the Nile Basin Trust Fund (NBTF). The Nile Basin Trust Fund (NBTF) was established in 2003 at the request of water ministers in the nine Nile countries as a joint program of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI). The NBTF is co-financed by ten donors: the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the governments of Australia, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, USAID and the UN Charter Fund. The NBTF was opened in 2003 at the request of ministers responsible for water affairs in the Nile countries, and was administered by the World Bank on behalf of all the donors. The NBTF is a pooled fund established to support Nile Basin member countries in improving their capacity to plan and manage the Nile Basin’s water resources.

In 1999, nine Nile Basin countries came together in a remarkable partnership. They formed the Nile Basin Initiative as a platform for joint working to better understand and utilize the common Nile resource, to harness the benefits for equitable and sustainable regional economic development. This note highlights the key achievements of this historic endeavor.
water resource issues. They share data to plan and
Now, countries regularly meet to discuss their regional
the NBI began to be mobilised, it is a very different story.
Today, a little over 10 years after significant funding for
Initiative (NBI) was born.
habitants. The governments of these countries came
development to the benefit of the basin's 237 million
The Nile is one of the world's most celebrated rivers.
•  It effectively promotes regional cooperation on the
•  Launched in 1999, the NBI is now a well-respected,
organization. Nile cooperation has enabled the
Nile-COM adoption of NBI policy guidelines.
Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) established through
partners to support development and
•  Once implemented, the Nile Basin Trust Fund and
•  The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) set up as a transitional arrangement while a
formal agreement was being sought, has become the “go to” institution for support on Nile issues.
Development is viable, and the only way forward is cooperation, which should bring all countries peace and
stability.”
•  A key feature of NBI is that its members remain the ultimate owners of the project.
•  NBI’s work to date demonstrates the importance of close cooperation between
national governments and the private sector.
Nile cooperation has achieved key results in the past 15 years, once
investment projects are implemented.
Nile cooperation projects are contributing significantly to regional
energy security.
Nile basin countries have an opportunity to secure the
benefits of regional cooperation projects. These projects
will bring about significant savings, most importantly by
sharing expertise and revenues, which will bring about
improved livelihoods and increased food security.
Nile cooperation is directly contributing to improving
food security, promoting trade and economic development.
Nile cooperation is helping member countries
reform their water sector management systems.
Nile protection projects are enabling member countries to
secure the benefits of regional cooperation projects. These projects
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