

## Holistic river conservation through adoption of river basin conservation approach

**Problem statement:** Since the fund available with NRCP is limited, projects for conservation and sewage treatment along major river basins should be prioritized to be taken up under the scheme. Hence, there is a need to take an approach towards river basin conservation of major rivers.

**Intervention:** The Rhine river flows across Switzerland, France, Germany and the Netherlands to reach the North Sea. During the rapid industrialization of 1800s, there was rampant river pollution where untreated chemicals from industries as well as untreated sewage was thrown into the river much like in India today. Multiple actions and international cooperation were targeted through the Rhine Action Programme. However, results only started being visible in the 1980s. Restoration of river water quality to drinking standards, ecological rehabilitation, restoring salmon population were few of the key success indicators. Currently, Rhine 2020 programme is ongoing to continuously monitor and maintain the river health including flood prevention and groundwater protection. This entire programme wouldn't have been successful without intense trans-boundary cooperation between multiple governments and citizens.

**Impact:** The Rhine 2020 program has been immensely successful in improving the quality of water of River Rhine.

**Sustainability:** A key learning from the Rhine Action programme is that a river basin conservation effort is not a one-time effort but a continuous process and spans decades and requires immense collaboration and stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

*(Reference: Rhine 2020 Action Program)*