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**Dear Colleague**

**GEF project: Targeted Research for improving understanding of the Global Nitrogen Cycle towards the establishment of an International Nitrogen Management System (INMS).**

With this letter we would like to update you on progress in establishing the new nitrogen project with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

As you will recall, last year we submitted the INMS proposal. Following feedback and iteration with the GEF Secretariat, I am very pleased to report that the project initiation stage has been accepted by GEF. This means that we are now proceeding to begin the project preparation grant (PPG) phase, which will be conducted over the months ahead. The anticipated timing is that completion of the PPG phase will allow the INMS project to run mid-2015 to mid-2019. As it is some time since you have seen the paperwork, I here attach the Project Initiation Form (PIF) document, together with a sample pro-forma, to inform you of the details which we are requesting from you in an online form, to update us on your own position.

In the PPG phase we need to achieve several things:

- Further develop buy-in from partners as regards the overall strategy
- Refine the project design, work packages and roles
- Confirm budgetary commitments, including both cash contributions and contributions-in-kind (CIK)
- Confirm our governance structure and consortium agreement
- Translate the agreed strategy and plan into the required detailed package of Project Documents (inc. the 'ProDoc') to be submitted to GEF for endorsement.

In terms of budget, it is worth to remind you that GEF have committed \$6 million as catalytic funding to the INMS process, and we are seeking to bring together partner contributions of several times this amount (c. \$40 million). We need to know about your ambitions to contribute both cash contributions and CIK as early as possible, as these will have a major influence on the detailed design of the project. The ultimate structure and scope will depend on joining up the overall vision with individual priorities, especially of key co-funders.

As I write this from the first United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) meeting in Nairobi, it is obvious that the importance of the nitrogen cycle is being increasingly recognized. In particular, the message is getting out about how improving nitrogen use

efficiency across the economy will contribute multiple quantifiable benefits. The discussions here, for example in how INMS could provide future science support to both the Global Programme of Action on Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and the Montreal Protocol (given the role of N<sub>2</sub>O in stratospheric ozone depletion), illustrate how the INMS approach could provide a key science resource to support several initiatives. These links build on our existing inputs to other initiatives such as the regional marine conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UNECE Transboundary air and water conventions, as well as the emerging Future Earth framework.

**ACTIONS:** In terms of next steps, please look at the sample pro-forma and start to have the necessary discussions and generate the relevant information to fill in the electronic version of the pro-forma, which will be circulated soon. This second expression of interest will be required by 14 August. If you hope to make a cash contribution, but this is not yet confirmed settled, please indicate the timescale for your decision making process. Once the draft ProDoc is available we will be asking partners to provide a formal letter of co-financing.

We will use your feedback to inform a preparatory meeting in October, where the coordination team will meet with GEF Secretariat and UNEP to prepare the next steps. In particular, we anticipate hosting a first plenary INMS preparatory meeting in the UK in mid January (e.g. during week 12-16 January). Please let us know of any dates to avoid!

I look forward to hearing from you and to working together as we develop the next steps.

With best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Sutton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof. M.A. Sutton

Chair, International Nitrogen Initiative (INI)

Co-chair, UNECE Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen (TFRN)