

Panel Abstract

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Organization: UNEP-GEF

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Summary of Key Issues and Best Practices/Lessons Learned

The GEF PDF-B Project “Support to the National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Anthropogenic Pollution in the Russian Federation (NPA-Arctic)” was signed between UNEP and ACOPS in August 1999 (GF/1100-99-13). In addition to UNEP GEF Trust Fund, the project has been co-financed by ACOPS, Canada, Denmark, GPA Coordination Office, Russian Federation, Sweden and U.S.A.

The following four activities have been implemented in the framework of this Project:

- Review and evaluation of relevant legislation and administrative arrangements at Federal and Regional levels;
- Analysis of pollutant transport mechanisms and zones of impact;
- Identification, Characterisation, and Prioritisation of Hot-Spots; and
- Analysis of the existing practice in preparation of pre-investment studies in the Russian Federation and development of guidelines for their future preparation.

This Project has also generated interest of other external partners who have helped the financing of activities complementary to those covered in the GEF Project. They all relate to various activities of the NPA-Arctic, i.e.

- Programme of measures for radioactive waste and nuclear materials treatment, storage and disposal;
- Development of proposals for the restoration of the environment at decommissioned military bases in the Russian Arctic (especially in coastal zones);
- Preparation of the Arctic Charter to ensure protection of the habitat and the traditional lifestyle of indigenous peoples and their participation in the economic development in areas of their habitats and traditional nature use; and
- Identification of existing capacity for environmental management in the Arctic.

Summary of Key Issues and Best Practices/Lessons Learned

- A multidisciplinary and inter-departmental Working Group was established for each of the above activities, consisting of leading Russian experts and one or two international consultants.
- About 60 Russian experts have participated in the project. The knowledge of most experts can be judged as outstanding. Moreover, they displayed a keen interest and enthusiasm in the work.
- The main substantive assessment work is being completed at present. It is anticipated that the activities will be implemented in accordance with the terms of references, as stipulated in the project. It is expected that four final documents of the Working Groups will be completed by mid-December 2000.
- Methodology for the identification, characterisation and prioritisation of hot-spots has been developed. It includes development of the criteria for the assessment of the

impact of every identified hot-spot, and development of the matrix with ranking of hot-spots. Some 151 hot-spots were identified, based on this methodology. Twenty hot-spots were selected for detailed characterisation.

- Main pollutant transport mechanisms and zones of impact were identified and analysed leading to identification of most important mechanisms and zones.
- Guidelines for the preparation of pre-investment studies were prepared, as well as analysis of the existing pre-investment studies.
- International Financial Institutions have been somewhat hesitant to become involved in this process in view of the poor performance by the Russian partners in a number of related projects. ACOPS has therefore secured the co-operation of the EBRD, the World Bank, NEFCO and the Nordic Investment Bank as observers or contact points for the GEF Project.
- The Working Group on legislation analysed the existing plethora of legal acts relating to protection of environment in general, and the Arctic region, in particular. Loopholes in legislation and its implementation and enforcement were analysed and appropriate recommends have been made.
- The key lesson learnt is that the role of ACOPS as an independent facilitator, with an important Russian segment in terms of policy leadership and technical expertise, but also its links with other Governments and institutions, has catalysed the Russian institutional system to make some bold changes which may augur well for other GEF projects in this large country. In particular, the leadership in Arctic matters has been taken by the powerful Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. The participation of the Russian private sector is being co-ordinated and there is a sign that Russia may be willing to take appropriate loans from the World Bank – the most important litmus test for the willingness of a country to develop its environmental portfolio. Lastly, but not least, as a sign of its support for the emerging legal and institutional framework, the Russian Duma has convened a historic, first ever, Hearing on the NPA Arctic on 30 October. Representatives of all relevant Parliamentary Committees, Deputy Ministers from a broad range of departments, and independent experts as well as foreign speakers are expected to take part. It is therefore hoped that this project will lead, as originally conceived, to the development of a large scale GEF Project.