



INTERNATIONAL WATERS RESULTS NOTES

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Preparation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Tumen River Area, its Coastal Regions, and Related Northeast Asia Environs

GEF ID#: 462, PIMS ID#: 639

Project Status: Completed



Key results:

1. A Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis highlighting all major issues was prepared and accepted by all project participants and a Strategic Action Programme was completed.
2. The first international environmental agreements were made between the project countries.
3. Local and regional awareness of environmental and biodiversity issues was raised significantly in the general public, government, and private sectors.

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The goal of the project, which came to be referred to as TumenNET, was to deliver regional environmental benefits by protecting international waters and biodiversity in the Tumen River Region.

The Tumen River forms the border between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in its upper reaches, and between DPRK and Russia in its last 17 kilometers before emptying into the Sea of Japan. The river is badly polluted by industrial and urban sources on both sides. In the early 1990s, following the breakup of the USSR, five countries (China; DPRK; Mongolia; Russia; and Republic of Korea), working with UNDP, formed the Tumen River Area Development Programme (TRADP) to promote economic development in the newly demilitarised and opened border zones. TRADP requested support from GEF in addressing the environmental problems of the Tumen River Area, initiating the process that led to this project, which began execution in June 2000.

The project's objective was to strengthen capacity to manage regionally and globally important environmental resources and promote sustainable development in the Tumen Region. The project began building regional capacity to prepare and implement collaborative, targeted and effective efforts. Specifically, the project prepared a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), and a multi-country Strategic Action Programme (SAP), and built capacity to implement the SAP.

RESULTS: PROCESS

INDICATOR #1: Preparation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. [*Target: A TDA accepted by all project participants.*]

Four zonal TDAs were prepared (Tumen River, Daurian Steppe, Mongolian Steppe, and Supra-Regional), as well as a final overall TDA. The final TDA workshop was held in Vladivostok on 3 April 2002. The workshop approved the TDA and agreed that it would be the basis for developing the SAP.

INDICATOR #2: Strengthen national capacities to prepare a regional Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection of international waters and biodiversity. [*Target: SAP signed by participating countries.*]

The Strategic Action Programme was the ultimate outcome of the project, though it was not formally endorsed by the countries. Using the completed TDA as its scientific foundation, the SAP was prepared by countries in early 2002, translated into local languages and scrutinized by local stakeholders in each of the project areas. National SAP task forces were established in each country to lead the national SAP process and several bilateral Memorandas of Understanding were signed between participating countries as well as between provincial governors during its preparation. These were the first international environmental agreements between the participating countries and are annexed in the final SAP dated October 2002.

National SAP Task Forces included political decision makers at many national and provincial levels: environment, foreign affairs, finance, and economic development portfolios, technical experts from the TDA phase, and NGO and business representatives. They also included the National TRADP Coordinators to ensure mainstreaming of SAP recommendations with parallel TRADP driven efforts.

INDICATOR #3: Counterparts, local communities and other stakeholders aware of regional environmental protection issues. [*Target: A 50% increase over two years in the number of articles on transboundary environmental issues in the 10 largest local newspapers in the Tumen River Region.*]

Stakeholder workshops and press conferences were held in all countries. Mass media campaigns were implemented. Community awareness activities were funded under a small grants program. Environmental

education campaigns were developed for schools. The number of environmental articles in the Tumen River region increased by 114% (200% in China and 80% in Russia).

INDICATOR #4: Strengthen national and regional capacities to jointly implement a Strategic Action Programme once endorsed. [*Target: National teams (particularly the line ministries) implement activities included in the SAP after project completion.*]

A political support platform for implementation of the SAP subsequent to endorsement was established. Regional awareness was being created and regional policy networks were established and functioning. Provincial as well as national government became heavily involved. Work was proceeding towards formulating a regional convention/treaty. The TumenNET Governors Memorandum of Understanding committed seven provincial governors to protect transboundary biodiversity and international water resources. A similar agreement was also reached with the private sector in the Republic of Korea. The project expanded into Siberia (at the northern border of Eastern Mongolia) and into the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (at the southern border of Eastern Mongolia), addressing more transboundary issues. The DPRK participated in selected project activities, including the one at the Musan iron ore mine - a major environmental hotspot along the Tumen River. Countries agreed to work towards a regional convention/treaty that will be based on the 1995 TRADP Memorandum of Understanding.

After completion of the project, TRADP was absorbed in 2005 into the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI), an intergovernmental cooperation mechanism engaged in policy dialogue and implementing collaborative projects that focus on transport; trade; investment; tourism; and energy, with environment as a cross-cutting sector.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Implementing the project through a network of local expert institutions significantly enhanced national ownership of the project and helped to establish a genuine regional network of scientists, politicians, government agencies and NGOs. A business network was envisaged as well.
- Inherent in that approach is the need for a strong network coordinator responsible for quality control, value adding and training and resource mobilization. After project completion a similar function needs to be maintained.
- Early involvement of provincial governments in SAP formulation and design enhances local ownership and ensures recommendations are politically acceptable and financially feasible.
- Introduction of the private sector and private investment banks would reduce reliance on donors. This requires efforts to enhance good governance such as transparent and fair regulatory and legal systems and an efficient administration.
- Use of consultants from within the region for training and support builds national capabilities and enhances regional thinking. Knowledge stays in the region and does not depart with the consultants.

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