

Russian Federation – Support to the National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment

GEF Full Project Proposal

Summary

Major outcomes will include a nationally approved Strategic Action Programme to address damage and threats to the arctic environment from land-based activities in the Russian Federation; the completion of ten pre-investment studies to determine the highest priority and tractable interventions to correct or prevent transboundary impacts of land-based activities; direct and related improvements to environmental protection (legislative, regulatory and institutional and technical capacity) within the Russian Federation; and three categories of demonstration projects dealing respectively with marine environmental clean up, the transfer of two decommissioned military bases to civilian control, and enhanced environmental and resource management by indigenous peoples. The results are intended to benefit the international arctic environment, particularly the Arctic Ocean basin and its shelf seas, and contribute to two principal international agreements: the Arctic Council Plan of Action to Eliminate Pollution of the Arctic; and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) as implemented in the Arctic Region through the Arctic Regional Programme of Action.

1. Background

The Arctic Ocean and its shelf seas represent an area of global significance in terms both of their influence on global oceanic and atmospheric circulation and their unique biological species that constitute an essential element of global biological diversity. Although the smallest of the major ocean basins of the world, the Arctic Ocean plays a crucial role in the movement of oceanic waters through connections and exchanges with the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Arctic marine environment is home to a wide range of unique species with the most well known among them being polar bear, narwhal, walrus and beluga. There are also a wide variety of birds. Some of these are species found in other oceans but several are unique to the Arctic such as several species of auk and ivory gulls that maintain close contact with ice-covered areas throughout their lives.

A further important feature of the Arctic is its indigenous inhabitants. Indigenous peoples have been living as part of the Arctic ecosystem for millennia, and in most areas, continue to do so. As consumers of local resources, they are frequently the most exposed recipients of contaminants from local and distant sources. Many of the effects of large-scale environmental contamination are likely to be most pronounced among indigenous peoples. The cultures and traditions of Arctic indigenous peoples are found nowhere else. Most of these groups continue their traditional patterns of resource use maintain their cultural heritage and fight for their rights to continue to do so.

These indigenous populations are threatened by dislocation, interactions with immigrants and the associated decline of traditional activities and values. Some have become extinct, even within the twentieth century. With the increased exploitation of natural mineral resources in the Arctic, the very

existence of the indigenous community is at risk. Arctic indigenous peoples are the most fragile elements of human society in the Arctic and the most susceptible to environmental change. As such, they deserve special attention to their ways of life, living conditions and prospects for the future. The impacts that both contaminants and, more insidiously, the fear of contaminants have on these indigenous peoples and cultures demonstrate the need for effective communication and for action to prevent contamination that may lead to adverse effects.

The Russian Federation is now attempting to rectify past deficiencies and to formulate a comprehensive approach to environmental protection including that of the Arctic and its indigenous arctic peoples. A demonstrable first step in this direction was its involvement with the other seven Arctic States (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the United States) in an Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy adopted in Rovaniemi, Finland, in 1991 and the subsequent assessment of the environment of the entire Arctic defined on political boundaries through the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) the first stage of which was completed in 1998.

The GEF Full Project proposal stems from a PDF-B, approved in 1998 that has been executed during 2000. During the PDF-B a number of preparatory activities were undertaken including: (a) the identification and prioritisation of hot-spots (*i.e.*, areas of environmental degradation and threat) within the Russian Arctic; (b) an analysis of the mechanisms of hydrological and atmospheric transport of contaminants within the Arctic with primary emphasis on processes within the Russian Federation; (c) an analysis of the current policy and legislative situation in Russia including an assessment of contemporary initiatives and future directions and (d) analysis of pre-investment studies and preparation of guidelines for the preparation of such studies. The products of all these activities and other recent initiatives both international and within the Russian Federation, some of which have been carried out in association with the GEF PDF-B activities, which address the protection of the Arctic environment and the sustainable use of its resources and amenities, have been used as background to the preparation of the Project proposal.

The Russian Federation implements Federal Target Orientated Programmes (FTOPs) that are the basic tools for providing state support to the solution of economic, social and environmental problems. The FTOP 'World Ocean', adopted by the Russian Government in 1998, deals with marine environmental protection and economic resource development of the Russian Arctic. The FTOP 'World Ocean' and its sub-programme '*Use and development of the Arctic*' constitute the basic instrument within Russia for policy directions for oceans and the Arctic to be fostered by the government. The FTOP 'World Ocean' is the most relevant to the interventions proposed here. Within the FTOP 'World Ocean', a framework is established for the development of a 'National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Anthropogenic Pollution in the Russian Federation'. This reflects the Russian Federation's commitment to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Arctic and its continuing involvement, with other Arctic States, in the initiatives of the Arctic Council.

2. Objectives

The overall objective of this Project is to protect the arctic marine environment. Coherent with this overall objective, the project embodies three main objectives:

- ensure a coherent basis for the identification of priorities;

- meet Russia's obligations under the GPA and other agreements; and
- prepare the ground for environmentally sustainable development of the Arctic.

The medium-term objective of the project is to formulate and adopt a Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the arctic marine environment from land-based activities. This SAP will comprise specific targeted and costed actions for longer-term implementation to address priority issues and concerns relating to existing damage to the Arctic and threats to its future integrity. This SAP will accommodate three principal thrusts: the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy agreed in Rovaniemi in 1991 by the eight arctic states (subsequently subsumed under the Arctic Council); the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities concluded in Washington, D.C., in 1995 among over 100 countries; and the 'World Ocean' Federal Target Orientated Programme adopted by the Russian Government in 1998.

3. Outcome

Project outcome will be an agreed Strategic Action Programme (SAP) that is in an advanced stage of implementation, completed legislative reforms, an operating regulatory framework accompanied by adequate infrastructure and technical capacity, and prepared ground for massive investments in remediation/prevention.

4. Activities and Expected Results

The four principal components of the project are:

- (a) Formulation of a Strategic Action Programme (SAP);
- (b) Pre-Investment Studies;
- (c) Legislative, Administrative and Institutional Capacity Improvements; and
- (d) Demonstration Interventions.

These components offer the greatest potential long-term benefits in terms of environmental protection from both national and transboundary perspectives. In the context of environmental degradation, pollution issues remain a dominant focus within the Russian Federation. There exists some reason to question this preoccupation. The most instructive manner of fostering a broader perspective is through the careful and deliberate formulation of a SAP that deals with all sources and aspects of aquatic degradation and its effects on both national and international waters, their resources and amenities. It also allows the adoption of the broadened classes of land-based activities specified within the GPA and even extends them to biological diversity and climate-related issues although the latter primarily relate to meso-scale and micro-scale climate modifications. Equally importantly, it aligns with the broad perspectives of Arctic Council activities reflected in the AMAP assessment of the Arctic. Furthermore, it provides a basis for legitimate interactions between the Russian Federation and the other Arctic State members of the Arctic Council to ensure that the Russian Arctic SAP takes account of regional concerns.

Strategic Action Programme - Component (a)

The project will first develop and commence to implement a Strategic Action Programme for Land Based Activities in the Russian Arctic that addresses priority issues from both national and international (*i.e.*, transboundary) perspectives. This Strategic Action Programme would correspond to a National Programme of Action to address land-based activities and develop from the FTOP 'World Ocean' initiative within Russia. This will provide a coherent basis for meeting Russian obligations under the GPA, for satisfying policy agreements and objectives set within the Arctic Council and allowing discrimination of the major transboundary issues warranting urgent attention to reduce effects on other jurisdictions and the global community.

Activities within component (a) relating to the formulation of a Russian Arctic SAP for addressing damage and threats associated with land-based activities will include the creation of a Task Team under the Chairmanship of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade comprising representatives of federal departments, arctic provincial governments, indigenous organizations and communities, and the Co-Executing Agencies. This group would be tasked with the development of a Strategic Action Programme consistent with the Russian FTOP 'World Ocean' initiative, the provisions of the GPA and initiatives and agreements within the Arctic Council. The Task Team would establish any necessary sub-groups on an *ad hoc* basis to complete the development of a Strategic Action Programme within 15 months of the commencement of the project. The product of this activity would be a comprehensive SAP containing specific targeted and costed measures for addressing priority environmental issues derived from land-based activities within the Russian Federation. The Task Team will ensure consultation with appropriate international organizations, especially the GPA Secretariat and subordinate bodies of the Arctic Council, through invitations to such agencies to attend its meetings as observers and requesting reviews of its work and products.

Pre-Investment Studies - Component (b)

The objective of this component is the preparation of pre-investment studies to determine the optimum choice for investment projects dealing with damage and threats in the Arctic stemming from activities within the Russian Federation. The PDF-B activities identified 21 priority hot spots of either sources of land-based activity or seriously degraded environments that deserved urgent attention to rectify. These priority hot spots are either regions of severe environmental damage threatening international waters or major sources of contaminants in Russia that have widespread adverse effects, both on the Russian Federation and on international waters areas beyond Russian jurisdiction. It is intended that this package of issues, for which technical evaluations have been completed during the PDF-B phase, will be further evaluated from social, economic and political perspectives and prioritised with emphasis on the extent of transboundary prejudices associated with these issues. Additional priority issues of concern have been derived from the FTOP 'World Ocean' and evaluations of problems associated with decommissioned military bases and radioactive wastes in the Arctic carried out concurrently with the PDF-B activities. It would be further intended that a few of the priority issues so identified be subjected to pre-investment studies as a basis for presentation at a Partnership Conference in 2002 at which funding partners would be solicited to make investments to resolve major individual issues under bilateral or multilateral arrangements.

Legislative, Administrative and Institutional Capacity Improvements - Component (c)

This component provides for the subsequent introduction of legislative reforms and administrative arrangements, incorporating federal, regional and local entities and the creation of the structures and capacity for monitoring and compliance.

This component represents the initial steps in the implementation of the SAP for a National Action Programme addressing land-based activities. It contains three parallel activities that must be carried out in a coordinated fashion to create the legal, administrative and technical conditions to enable on-the-ground remedial and preventative measures to be taken to address priority environmental issues. All three elements of Component (c) are to be completed in a period of 36 months following the adoption of the SAP. A Working Group on SAP Implementation comprising representatives of federal departments and provincial regions and indigenous peoples organizations will be responsible for coordinating three subordinate Working Groups on Legislative Initiatives, Administrative Arrangements and Institutional Capacity. The Working Group on Legislative Initiatives would draw up the legal framework and regulations required to facilitate the implementation of the SAP. The Working Group on Administrative Arrangements would design a system of division of responsibilities and the assignment of agency responsibilities for the institutional implementation of the SAP. The Working Group on Institutional Capacity would assess the technical and human resource requirements for implementation of the SAP and specify what administrative structures, designation of responsibilities and information exchange and assessment procedures are required to fulfil appropriate monitoring and compliance functions. These three Working Groups will be directed by the Working Group on SAP Implementation to which they would report periodically.

The Working Group on SAP Implementation would be convened frequently enough to ensure that the work programme is coordinated and that any inconsistencies among the recommendations of the Groups were resolved before undue misdirection of resources occurred. This Working Group would also ensure that appropriate consultations are maintained with the GPA Office and Arctic Council programmes (especially AMAP and PAME) through invitations to observe proceedings and through requests for review of interim products from the process.

Demonstration Projects - Component (d)

This component comprises three demonstration projects that will provide a basis for wider application of approaches and techniques for environmental restoration and damage prevention within Russia, within the arctic community of states and globally. As a result of the PDF-B and related activities funded by the Russian Federation and other arctic states, a number of demonstrable interventions having the potential for wider application have been identified.

The first of these involves the establishment of a demonstration of indigenous peoples community organization on three fronts: enhanced involvement in governance; enhanced public health and sanitary services; and the creation of protected buffer zones under native jurisdiction in areas of intense natural resource development. The Russian Federation has stated its interest in all three of these initiatives separately. It therefore appears appropriate to undertake a demonstration test of these proposals in a specific area of the Russian Arctic. This will be done in an integrated manner that will test administrative arrangements and concepts for achieving greater autonomy for native communities in environmental protection of the Russian north and verify the utility of creating protected buffer zones in areas of intense mineral resource development. GEF support would enable a much more

wide-ranging test of these concepts and offer the possibility of a much more harmonized approach to increasing the autonomy of indigenous peoples and their increased involvement in governance. Also included will be a demonstration of the benefits of creating special regions. These would be territories of traditional nature use by indigenous peoples of the north, based on the Russian Federation law "Concerning the territories of traditional nature use by indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation". A proposal regarding the forms of organization and structure of territories of traditional nature use and the development of principles, procedures and methods would be carried out prior to the demonstration project implementation. These would be subsequently revised in the light of experience gained in the demonstration project. Such a demonstration would be an important indicator of the social and environmental improvements that can be gained from increased indigenous peoples involvement in resource and environmental management in the Arctic.

The second demonstration project involves the use of a novel procedure for the cleanup of contaminated marine areas that has been developed in the Russian Federation. This involves the use of brown algae (*Fucus*) that can be deployed for decontamination purposes and then processed for use in a number of industrial applications. The proposal envisages the deployment of brown algal mats in contaminated coastal areas that absorb contaminants. The brown algae is then used in a variety of industrial applications (*e.g.*, human and livestock foods, fertilizer, thermal insulation) offering the potential for financially self-sustaining commercial activities. This demonstration would provide a full test of a business plan developed by a Russian agency for the large-scale application of the concept as a commercially viable operation. Under baseline circumstances, it is unlikely that the resources could be found to undertake a realistic test of this methodology within the Russian Federation. GEF co-financing would allow accelerated testing and, if successful, the fostering of a commercial environmental services business within the country. This is the equivalent of removing barriers by demonstrating the viability of the technology so that others can adopt and exploit it elsewhere in Russia.

The third demonstration involves the restitution of decommissioned military bases in the Arctic. The current damage to the environment associated with abandoned military bases, many of which are located on coastal sites, not only adversely affects the Russian Federation but poses substantial threats to international waters resulting from waste containment failures that are likely to occur. While there exists willingness on the part of the military for these bases to be transferred to the civilian sector for beneficial uses, the wastes and chemical residues at these sites need to be collected and disposed of in a safe manner. The military lacks the financial resources to undertake this task and the civilian sector is not willing to assume such responsibilities. No doubt there are cases in which the beneficial civilian use of ex-military bases could be achieved in a manner that would reimburse communities for the cleanup costs. This, however, will have to be demonstrated to convince local community representatives. Thus, a demonstration project would extend the assessments of the condition of decommissioned military bases carried out in conjunction with the PDF-B activities to the assessment of potential benefits of transfer to civilian responsibility and then demonstrate in practice how this could be achieved without undue financial liability being placed on the community concerned.