

Final Evaluation Report

on the UNDP/GEF Project

“Development and Implementation of the Lake Peipsi / Chudskoe Basin Management Programme”

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Abbreviations

APR	Annual project report
CB	Capacity building
CBA	Cost and benefit analysis
CBC	Cross border cooperation
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IMS	Information Management Systems
IWP	International water project
JWC	Joint Water Commission
LBMP	Lake Basin Management Programme
LFA	Logical framework approach
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
N/A	Not available
NGO	Nongovernmental organizations
OVI	Objectively verifiable indicator
PCM	Project cycle management
PHARE	EC aid programme for Central and Eastern Europe
PIT	Project implementation team
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PM	Project manager
PPP	Public Participation Plan
PPR	Project progress report
SC	Steering Committee
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-limited
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SWOT	Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TACIS	Technical Assistance for Commonwealth of Independent States
TDA	Transboundary diagnosis analysis
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	U.S. dollars
WG	Working group

Abstract

The scope of this report is the final evaluation of the UNDP-GEF project “Development and Implementation of the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Programme” as pre-defined by the terms of reference (ToR). The report contains the results of the evaluation process including the desk studies, interviews, site visits and mid-term evaluation results. It identifies the key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation’s findings could be used as an overall input for the improved design of the UNDP/GEF future programs/projects, and as an interim input for the on-going similar projects. The report was prepared by request of the contracting agency, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation, and also will be used by the UNDP/GEF as well as other stakeholders, beneficiaries indirectly.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

A well-known fact is that 50% of the earth’s land surface made up of transboundary basins, and 70% of the total surface oceans, the majority of the world’s water resources must be managed internationally as the transboundary ecosystems. The cooperation in managing the transboundary waters is one of the four focal areas of the GEF activities. More than 50 international water projects have been implemented and/or are ongoing with the aid of the GEF funding and reflect the request from more than 100 countries. Hereto, Estonia and Russia joined several international conventions for the protection of the environment, i.e. the U.N. Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention, Helsinki 1992) and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea (Helsinki 1992). The cooperation between Estonia and Russia started on the basis of the intergovernmental agreement on the protection and sustainable use of transboundary water bodies signed in 1997. Same year the Joint Estonian-Russian Transboundary Water Commission (JWC) was formed.

Implemented since January 2003, the overall objective of the project “Development and implementation of the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Programme” (LBMP) was to develop and start implementation of the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Programme that included the practical recommendations for the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe nutrient load reduction and prevention as well as the sustainable conservation of habitats and ecosystems in the cross-border region. This served to provide an effective framework for prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impacts on the lake’s basin environment through the cross-border cooperation.

The project substituted the uncoordinated small-scale projects that could be otherwise implemented separately by the Estonian and Russian parts without sufficient coordination, education and public information components with possible omission of key interest of the local stakeholder groups and public at large.

The main expected outputs of this project were as follows:

- **Management Programme** (Strategy Document) and Action Plan prepared and approved by all relevant Estonian and Russian authorities
- **Strengthened Capacity** of the key regional stakeholders including the environmental monitoring infrastructure, data collection and maintenance system
- **Established networking and information exchange**
- **Two demonstration projects** implemented in Estonia: one for the eutrophication reduction through planning water systems in small community, and the second for ecotourism and nature protection (ecological route).

The project was executed by the international NGO - Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation and two Project Implementation Units located in Tartu, Estonia and Pskov, Russia. In accordance with the ToR, the project was carried out by the project partners: Ministry of Environment of Estonia, Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation and also UNDP/GEF as GEF Implementing Agency. The overall project management was performed by the Project Manager located in St. Petersburg office, Russia. For implementation of this project an NGO-execution mode was chosen.

The project stands out due to its cross-border context. Certain key elements of cooperation were established and developed within the project framework and additionally, have long-term impact and strategic importance for the future regional development. The cooperation dimensions entailed such issues as: (a) relations between two countries in transition, (b) development of new EU border cooperation aspects, (c) factors of small and large state affairs, and others.

Several bi-national, regional and local agreements taken place, considerable efforts and time added to the general climate of building trust between two riparian countries in different spheres of life. It resulted in the development of the cross-border cooperation networks and institutional strengthening. Furthermore, it's worth mentioning the cooperation developed among the local authorities, small businesses for environment and tourism, and NGO networks.

Although the sustainability is early to assess it is evident that the project's immediate results may have long-term impacts in the coming years. A direct benefit of this project is the enhanced institutional structures developed within the project that enable to address the existing and future transboundary environmental risks, eutrophication, groundwater pollution, depletion of biodiversity resources including the lake's fish stock, other issues related to air, land and water pollution.

Context and Purpose of the Final Evaluation

Context

The intention of the final evaluation is to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project. Its results can be a contribution to a continuous improvement in the projects/programs' design, performance and management of GEF International Projects portfolio. Usually, the project's design, performance and management are assessed on the basis of five established evaluation criteria, i.e. relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The use of the logframe with the objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) at the stage of a project's design and implementation contribute to the quality of monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

In accordance with the UNDP/GEF policy for the M&E processes at the project level four main objectives are encompassed, i.e. 1) monitoring and evaluation of results and impacts; 2) provision of a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; 3) promotion of accountability for resource use; and 4) documentation, feedback, and dissemination of lessons learned.

Purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation is to provide an overall assessment of the project and an opportunity critically to assess administrative and technical strategies and issues. The evaluation will provide the recommendations to improve the potential of future projects funded by the UNDP/GEF and EU.

The overall objective of this Final Evaluation to review progress towards the project's objectives and outcomes, assess the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of how the project has moved towards its objectives and outcomes, identify strengths and weaknesses in project design and implementation, and provide recommendations on design modifications that could have increased the likelihood of success, and on specific actions that might be taken into consideration in designing future projects of a related nature.

Some cross-cutting issues

- Cross-border cooperation between Estonia and Russia, i.e. political commitment, institutional strengthening, capacity building, public relations & public awareness, networking
- Management & Operation of the Peipsi/Chudskoe Lake Basin Management Programme
- Harmonized standards, norms and procedures
- Technical support mechanism, e.g. IMS (information management systems), data base for networking and information exchange, required hard and software, technology transfer
- Socio-economic improvements in the local/regional communities of the Lake Basin.

Most cross-cutting issues were sufficiently addressed during the project implementation. It is apparent that the political commitment of both parties has gradually progressed and very likely to result in imminent approval and signing of the Lake Basin Management Programme in the nearest future.

Based on the concept “learning by doing” the stronger institutions and human resource development evolved, e.g. the local authorities and NGOs built new partnership arrangements with roles and responsibilities, levels of coordination among relevant players. In terms of the capacity building the UNDP/GEF project contributed to setting the ground for the Management Programme development and implementation, e.g. a working version of the Management Programme as a Strategy Document, Environmental Monitoring Programme, three joint monitoring expeditions conducted within the project implementation, gained experience in working together at the JWC’s level, the Peipsi Forum activities, Peipsi Council concept, joint resource mobilization, etc.

Two new UNDP/GEF approaches for capacity development were also introduced, i.e. the public awareness campaigns and dissemination of project results and information via the Web site. In Estonia through the area media, the awareness campaigns for the Lake Peipsi and the environment became a first time big success. Moreover, the project served to build the grass-roots networks and strengthen the institutional networks, e.g. local municipalities, local community representatives, NGOs from lake Peipsi/Chudskoe region, SMEs.

Although the JWC may require some further strengthening and empowerment, the Peipsi CTC demonstrated successful network operational modality, network sustainability, and establishment of international partnership linkages. The introduced operational activities aimed at the four Es – (a) exchange of best practices and lessons learned, (b) enhancement of local capacity for the development and implementation of cross-border cooperation and lake basin management, e.g. Lake Peipsi Programme, (c) expansion of NGOs for grass-roots cross-border cooperation and transboundary basin management through replication of Peipsi CTC working models, and (d) establishment of new partnerships with concerned stakeholders towards sustainable lake basin management.

The harmonization of standards, norms and procedures is still on-going process where there is a need of the agreement on such issues as joint water quality monitoring, similar and comparable monitoring systems, use of agreed parameters and timely data collection and sharing after validation.

Furthermore, the harmonization of the norms, standards and procedures as an instrument of the LBMP implementation will ensure a sustainable use and protection of transboundary water resources through (i) maintenance and improvement of the lake’s water quality, (ii) sustainable use of transboundary waters, (iii) restoration of fish stock and sustainable use of fish resources, (iv) protection of the lake’s wildlife, and (v) joint management of the Lake’s Basin via coordinated activities, environmental monitoring, information exchange, additional research and studies, joint surveillance, public participation, financing, etc.

For the Management Programme implementation the development and introduction of the IMS, database for networking and information exchange, application of relevant hard and software, technology transfer are still required. The initial basic installation of some components provides the general framework but further enhancement is needed.

Key Findings

- 3 out of 4 development objectives and outputs of the IWP were completely achieved, Objective I – LBMP approval and signing is near completion
- Management processes were flexible, responding to conditions encountered during implementation, and were appropriate in content and time
- The level of cooperation and coordination among relevant players during project implementation was well-established
- The LBMP developed during project implementation has a good scientific basis but not fully clear on structured definition of roles and responsibilities, presentation of targets and objectives, communications and coordination mechanism definitions, allocated sources and resources needed, benchmarks and milestones since some of these issues are already fixed under bilateral agreements or arrangements.
- The relations and partnerships with other projects and donors were well-developed and proved to be resourceful
- The projected level of public involvement in the Management Programme elaboration was appropriate although in implementation phase it should be defined in more detail

- The stakeholders' cooperation and efforts in project implementation proved to be successful
- The project made an impact on the beneficiaries, e.g. improved capacity, strengthened institutions, network and communications established, spin-off effect, although the project will likely have more impacts with the LBMP implementation in medium and long-term
- It's early to assess the sustainability though there is an indication proving that the project continuation is necessary and likely occurs
- The project brought good examples for replication in terms of best practices in capacity building, institutional strengthening, grass roots network development, public awareness, building trust, establishing cross-border cooperation, although the stronger commitment, openness, transparency and ongoing dissemination will be required for the outcomes sustainability
- Although M&E was a requirement for the project and conducted periodically but nascent in terms of joint cooperation and timely data sharing. For future more emphasis on the M&E procedures should be given.

Results achieved

The project under evaluation had four main objectives that encompassed ten key activities (see Part IV, Work Plan, Annex K of the Proposal/Agreement). Based on the desk study review of the project documents, consultations with Peipsi CTC, UNDP, PIU's, field visits and interviews with key stakeholders, the qualitative assessment of the completion of each objective has been made. Furthermore, the project manager (PM) and the project implementation team (PIT) also have contributed to this assessment. Since the logframe was incomplete, the quantitative assessment became hardly feasible. It is obvious that the implementation of the project on the Estonian and Russian side also differ on both local and regional levels.

Although both sides had parallel project activities, the outputs on the Estonian side were higher than on the Russian side for several reasons, i.e. difference in administrative capacities, restricted human and financial resources (allocated budget for the Estonian side was much more than for the Russian counterpart), data availability and reliability, decision-making procedures and pace, general communication practices. Nevertheless, the PIT did its utmost in order to manage the identified and appearing risks while observing the situation critically, using the results of mid-term evaluation and others. All these enabled to complete the project in due time and within the allocated budget, activate the JWC pace of operation and involve other officials in process of consensus building, contribution to the LBMP development and approval.

The obtained results represent the following:

Objective I – Management Programme – The objective included five activities with such deliverables as (i) the draft Lake Basin Management Programme and Action Plan, (ii) Monitoring Programme, (iii) Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA), (iv) Nutrient Reduction Plan, (v) Public Participation Plan for the Basin Management Programme. In general, the objective was achieved and all tasks completed although with some delays caused by the external factors. The level of completion could be considered within the range of 85-90 % based on the expert assessment and the stakeholders' estimation.

The draft of LBMP was completed only in the 4th Quarter of 2005 that left no time for its partial implementation. However, some project activities greatly contributed to the agreed actions under the Programme (for example, joint monitoring etc.). The Nutrient Reduction Plan started as scheduled but also experienced the delay due to the extension of the two satellite projects, i.e. the EC Life Environment Viru-Peipsi CAMP project (Estonia) till September 2005 and the EU Tacis CBC Baltic Line 2000 project "*Environmental Management of Lake Chudskoe*" till the end of 2005. Both projects are further referred as LIFE project (Estonia) and the EC Tacis project (Russia). The UNDP/GEF project expected significant inputs from those two satellite projects both for the TDA, Monitoring Programme and the LBMP. The delays had a serious impact on the timeliness and quality of this component. Despite the earlier signs and preconditions, this risk was underestimated even after the mid-term evaluation with no contingency plan set.

The TDA was prepared by Akvaplan- NIVA A/S in cooperation with other institutions from Estonia and Russia in February 2005. Since the satellite projects were still on-going it brought certain limitations to apply to full extent the final data, findings and recommendations drawn by those projects and relevant to the UNDP/GEF project. Whilst preparing the TDA there was still an uncertainty related to the pollution sources and loads from the Russian part of the Lake Peipsi due to the delay with the EU Tacis project implementation.

The draft of Monitoring Programme was developed in the 3rd Quarter of 2004. There were three joint expeditions carried out in 2003 and 2004. Furthermore, previous joint monitoring results were used for data analysis. The Draft Monitoring Programme was sent to the officials for the comments and feedback in order to improve the quality of monitoring. The results are still pending. To summarize, a lot of work was done to reach this objective. Nevertheless, the official approval of both the LBMP and Monitoring Programme and as well as their partial implementation did not occur during the project life span.

Two feasibility studies (on eco-farming and eco-tourism) were completed in 2005 on both sides of the lake in order to evaluate potential development in this field and possible negative effects on water quality. For Estonia, the eco-farming feasibility study was also supported by an introductory level of farmers' training on environment and pollution issues. Different sites for eco-farming were assessed and identified for crop potential. On the Russian side, the eco-farming pilot project encompassing an assessment of impact made by agriculture on the Lake Peipsi, and eco-farming concept development could be considered fully completed. The research included the analysis of the available sites, current utilization of the agricultural lands, recent developments in plants cultivation and livestock breeding, fertilizers use, assessment of forest reserves and others. Under the eco-tourism study, some cities, towns, and areas were assessed and prioritized for potential eco-tourism development based on the local surveys. The concept of eco-tourism development was based on eight mainstreams of tourism development. In fact, this concept served as the basis of the overall Lake Peipsi eco-tourism development plan to be developed and implemented under the LBMP.

Objective II – Strengthening Capacity – This objective included four main activities focused on institutional strengthening of the Joint Water Commission, the Lake Peipsi Basin Authorities (National & Regional Environmental Agencies), NGOs, local authorities and stakeholder groups.

This component was an important building block that should ensure a successful implementation of the Lake Basin Management Programme. The level of completion could be considered within the range of 90-95 % based on the expert assessment and the stakeholders' estimation. Some activities like a Peipsi Council/Forum or Peipsi Museum in Russia have not been completed to full extent by December 2005 though the wrap-up is expected in the 1st Quarter of 2006.

Nevertheless, further demonstration of the success ratio on the Estonia side for project scope and replication is reflected through the synergy of its activities. For instance, many large-scale projects were initiated in Lake Peipsi region through using outcomes of the project capacity building and strengthening (such as trainings, joint seminars, roundtables etc. for discussing the needs and possible tools for implementation), e.g. INTERREG IIIB BIRD project with a budget of 4,0 M €, INTERREG IIIB TRABANT project with budget of 1,2 M €, BEN, PHARE CBC Waterway, PHARE CBC Community Philanthropy to highlight some spin-off activities. Thus, the UNDP/GEF Lake Peipsi Project directly and indirectly resulted in new projects, and strengthened contacts among NGOs, local authorities, and stakeholder groups.

- **Objective III – Networking & Information Exchange** – This objective was completely achieved. The Web site was designed and operational. The dissemination of project information to general public, press and other stakeholders is still on-going process. Project partners also expressed the will to distribute main project results via their own web-sites. The level of completion could be considered as 100 % based on the expert assessment and the stakeholders' estimation derived from the interviews carried out during the evaluation site-visits. Additionally, the UNDP/GEF project supported the development of a robust multi-stakeholder network in the transboundary region that resulted in multiple cross-border cooperation projects including, for instance, TACIS/INTERREG project on sustainable tourism executed by Tartu County Union of Local Authorities, a bike tour project around Peipsi conducted regularly by the Russian and Estonian NGOs, environmental education projects such as on volunteer monitoring, etc
- **Objective IV – Two Demonstration Projects** – The pilot eco-tourism projects started as planned and considered to be fully completed by December 2005. An average level of completion could be considered 100 % based on the expert assessment and the stakeholders' estimation. Infrastructure pilot project: "Development plan for water supply and waste water treatment systems for Rapina rural municipality" was also fully completed even early than planned due to the wish of local stakeholders to get a Plan early in order to be eligible for the coming EU investments.

The Lake Peipsi Museum has a small facility in Kallaste, new light board exhibit and a virtual museum on the Internet in Pskov.

Conclusion

In accordance with the terms of reference, the final evaluation mostly focused on three main project components: 1) project delivery, 2) implementation, and 3) project finances. Each project component was evaluated on the basis of 3 established criteria, i.e. effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness.

The final evaluation was held within the period of January 22 through February 10, 2006 (Annex 2) by the international expert Ms. Lisa Supeno, MSc. who undertook the field missions to Estonia and Russia. During the field mission from January 22 until February 4, 2006 the evaluation expert reviewed the key project documents, conducted the fact-finding and interviews with all parties involved in the project. During this period, the expert also visited Peipsi CTC (host) in Tartu, Estonia, stakeholders' offices in Tallinn, and the project office in St. Petersburg. A few telephone interviews were organized and managed, i.e. the UNDP/GEF office in Moscow, PIU office in Pskov, Tacis project manager in Finland.

To summarize the results of this evaluation, the project is scored for each criterion on a five point scale, with 1 on the scale represents a highly satisfactory project, 2 – satisfactory, 3 – marginally satisfactory, 4 – unsatisfactory, and 5 – N/A, lowest score. More details on the final evaluation are presented in Annex 7. Project Information Evaluation Sheet

Main Components	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Timeliness	Overall Score
Project Delivery	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1
Project Implementation	2	1.9	2	2.0
Project Finances	2	2	2	2.0
Overall Score (average)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

Overall, the UNDP/GEF project 'Development and Implementation of the Lake Peipsi / Chudskoe Basin Management Programme' is evaluated as *satisfactory* despite some difficulties mostly coming from:

- (a) A time lag between programming and actual implementation, e.g. the programme dated 1996-1997, the project started in January 2003 that means that the project cycle was long and the budget became less realistic in both currency and initially allocated amount. This issue is already under consideration by UNDP/GEF and potential improvements are at their designation. It is obvious that for future UNDP/GEF projects there could be shorter term between programming and implementation if possible.
- (b) Dependence of the UNDP/GEF project on the inputs from other two EU funded satellite projects
- (c) Delays in implementation of some project components due to external factors, e.g. extension of the satellite projects' duration and late presentation of the required data to the UNDP/GEF project
- (d) Different priorities on political, economic, environmental, cultural and technical issues with regard to transboundary cooperation in both countries whereby the coordinated measures can be made
- (e) Slow pace in reaching a joint agreement on the key issues like the monitoring systems, methods, tests, sampling, etc. experienced by both countries
- (f) Staff changes on either side of the Joint Water Commission, e.g. changes or replacements
- (g) Differences in decision-making processes on both sides of the JWC
- (h) Complexity of some tasks and some ambitious expectations regarding the outcomes for the Objective I, e.g. the LBMP development, approval and signing, agreement on monitoring programme, etc.
- (i) Some internal factors like too flexible project planning, non-structured project communication scheme, lack of operational logframe and its update, use of M&E could be better and more efficient as a management tool

Hereby, the score indicates the results of the final evaluation in terms of the project performance, i.e. delivery, implementation and finances. Most tasks and objectives were timely and well accomplished, the others experienced some

delays and changes in scope of work, e.g. less available open tenders/contracts as originally planned, due to the financial reasons caused by considerable currency exchange fluctuation and other external factors. Among them also were the cross-border cooperation issues, timely deliverables from the EU LIFE and EU Tacis projects. Most those factors were mentioned earlier in the Proposal/Agreement (see Annex G. Risks, Prior Obligations and Sustainability) although they were not properly elaborated and addressed during the project implementation. Thus, more intensive use and revision of the operational logframe, updated risk management program, and results of M&E could have prevented the experienced problems and delays as well brought the timely and efficient intervention in the project process.

On the one hand, the project team controlled the internal factors, i.e. project administration, finances, local/regional partnership, reporting, etc. On the other hand, some external factors, e.g. the level of cross-border cooperation, international/national partnership, the satellite projects' progress and deliverables, and others were outside of the PIT's control.

The project team implemented the project had appropriate experience and expertise in the required fields. Drawn from the interviews conducted in St. Petersburg and Tallinn, the modality of the NGO led project was considered highly successful and replicable for other GEF projects. The summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned is presented below.

Conclusions	Recommendations	Lessons Learned
1	2	3
<p>The project was executed satisfactorily. As an NGO-run project the modality proved successful for UNDP/GEF.</p> <p>3 out of 4 development objectives and outputs of the project were achieved, Objective I – LBMP approval and signing is near completion.</p>	<p>Expand the 'best practices' for other projects in regions/countries context. Notably with transboundary context and multi-task issues and many stakeholders levels.</p> <p>Accelerate the process of negotiations and discussions aimed to shorten the time between the LBMP agreement and signing, commence the implementation.</p>	<p>Despite different hurdles during the execution the project gain of improved cooperation, better understanding of current situation in the Lake Basin area, willingness to work together on prescribed solutions, and certain level of commitment to the overall objective.</p> <p>Developing cross-border cooperation, building trust, establishing a shared vision is a process. The timeframe for implementation and unforeseen bottlenecks should not be underestimated in future activities.</p>
<p>Lake Basin <i>Management Programme</i> and Monitoring Programme developed in situ committee and discussed by stakeholders, yet finalization is still pending due to the official feedback and approval.</p> <p>The level of cooperation & coordination among relevant players during project implementation was well established, although the structured definition of roles and responsibilities, coordination mechanism was not clearly mapped in the LBMP since it is partially covered by other documents.</p> <p>The TDA and other prepared documents sufficiently contributed to the LBMP drafting. In general, the LBMP clearly reflects the main issues in environmental, economic, financial, social and political context. The LBMP is feasible for implementation after official approval by both countries.</p> <p>The relations and partnerships with other projects and donors were well developed, and proved to be resourceful.</p>	<p>After all comments received, it is advisable that the documents both contents and quality-wise are corresponding adjusted and/or corrected, and whereby the JWC revisit the discussions aimed at final approval of both documents.</p> <p>Review the content of LBMP, structure it in terms of objective(s), targets, the roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms, benchmarks & milestones, required or/and available resources.</p> <p>Incorporate the adjustments in the final version of LBMP.</p> <p>Set the timeframe for the LBMP discussion, corresponding adjustments and signature. Priorities could be the harmonized norms, procedures as well as agreed national recourses allocation.</p> <p>Further dissemination of best practices on broader scale, e.g. regional, international, conferences, forums, workshops and trainings.</p>	<p>Pre-conditions of risk management are to be properly considered at the early stage. Proper SWOT analysis is required at the programming stage in order to avoid any political, social or economic complications during the implementation phase.</p> <p>Based on the existing experience gained through other cross-border water projects, there is a number of good examples for the Management Programme development.</p> <p>The first steps were already made, common understanding established. A faster pace in the decision-making process is required.</p> <p>The well-built level of cooperation ensured the expected outputs and outcomes being more reliable and risk level of the project was thereby satisfactorily lowered.</p>

<p><i>Institutional strengthening</i> was conducted in due time with visible outcomes. Although the JWC was founded and operational it still required more empowerment and equal resource allocation from both sides.</p> <p>The project brought good examples for replication in terms of best practices in capacity building, institutional strengthening, grass roots network development, public awareness, building trust, establishing cross-border cooperation, although the stronger commitment, openness, transparency and ongoing dissemination will be required for IWP outcomes sustainability.</p>	<p>When the LBMP is approved and final decision of responsible agencies for implementation made, the JWC composition must be reviewed, adjusted, the status bestowed and the required resource allocated. JWC could also learn more from the experience of other international water committees.</p> <p>Create for inter-agency coordination documental and verifiable activities that would be coordinated with the past, ongoing and prospective work of the Implementing Agencies and other relevant authorities and stakeholders. These will include experience gained, lessons learned, dissemination based on the project activities. The know-how will comprise the experience of multilateral, bilateral, and private institutions, international & national NGO, regional/ national research centers and academic organizations, municipal authorities, volunteer network, other relevant partners.</p>	<p>Initial steps to cooperate, plan and implement took place. However, the modality to operate successfully and efficiently is still to be developed. Exchange programs from other similar joint water committees enrich the knowledge and experience and contribute to the networking and cooperation.</p> <p>The best practices developed during the UNDP/GEF project implementation already have spin-offs and evolved into multi-country, multi-stakeholder projects replication in the near future.</p>
<p>Other issues related to <i>capacity building</i> show still meager on the respective institutional capacities while stronger on the grass roots sustainability side. On the community level, good work was performed for raising awareness, training, and information dissemination. At mid-level of local & regional authorities, there is understanding and willingness (systems, structures, staff, and expertise) yet full commitment is yet partial. Generating funds regionally and locally can actually transpire with short-medium term pilot project implementations, for example. That will certainly add to the sustainability. On the national level, absorption capacity is there, however, needs further development i.e. market transforming, better economic, financial instruments, and human, social capital utilization.</p> <p>The projected level of public involvement in the LBMP elaboration was appropriate although in implementation phase it should be defined in more detail.</p>	<p>A system of continuous training and public awareness building should progress. Planned activities should continue to exceed the expected outcome of inputs, costs, budgets and deliverables. Obvious that without the governmental funds such programs are hardly feasible. The willingness and open-mindedness of the populace with new sights and a vision of overall community improvement should not be overlooked. Future incomes can be generated while preventing the pollution. This also can be an objectively verifiable indicator of progress for both Russian and Estonian sides.</p> <p>Use project-trained individuals, institutions or companies to replicate the project's outcomes in other regions.</p> <p>The revised public participation plan (PPP) must be in incorporated in LBMP in more detailed than a general descriptive way.</p>	<p>Project has commenced identifying and involvement of champions (individuals in government and civil society who could promote sustainability of project outcomes). However, there is a concern. If the key documents are not approved soon, the impact of these players and momentum could be lost. It means that the level of the built capacity so far, now needs more expansion and practical utilization.</p> <p>The project results is in the 'best practices' category and bears replication locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.</p> <p>The PPP was recently revised and contained all activities relevant for the LBMP implementation.</p>
<p>The <i>networking</i> and <i>information exchange</i> was sufficiently established. It built partnerships among different project stakeholders and proved operational and ongoing. The Web site and intranet together with printed materials facilitated the communications and fast information exchange. The future of the project website was discussed at the SC and the partners agreed to place the results and other relevant information on some official web pages in order to preserve the data for the LBMP implementation</p>	<p>Somehow, the relations between different stakeholders should be kept active through the seminars, workshops, etc. before the LBMP implementation starts. The established network should be sustained through participatory activities rather than abandoned. In the future, the JWC and other relevant stakeholders should decide what website is to be used or created for the LBPM implementation.</p>	<p>It was a very extensive networking and information exchange and took on its own qualities of reliability, operational effectiveness and accountability due to quality management. It mostly reached the project objective that gave the added value to all resulting communications.</p>

<p><i>Demonstration projects</i> on eco-tourism and infrastructure development in both Estonia and Russia resulted in concrete actions which contribute to water protection activities and bring additional income to the regions. Other pilot projects could be initiated in the region and include aquaculture industry growth or fish stocking, farming crop rotations, and others.</p>	<p>Preparation of the inventory of local/regional skills, sites for eco-tourism, use of volunteers in the planned activities. Establishment of contacts and conduct of regular meetings with both the Western and area entrepreneurs for tourism development including the infrastructure upgrade, e.g. hotels, restaurants, road, etc.</p>	<p>With the LBMP implementation, more emphasis is to put on promotion activities in order to activate and/or bring the investors to the region.</p>
<p>Overall project <i>management</i> is considered satisfactory despite the external factors that caused the delays of some outcomes and changes in scope of work.</p> <p>Although M&E was a requirement for the project and conducted periodically but nascent in terms of feedback and timely data sharing. In general, management processes were flexible, responding to conditions and changes encountered during implementation, were appropriate and timely.</p>	<p>Use and update the logframe during the project life. M&E must be used as a management tool and conducted on a regular basis following the contracting authorities' procedures and guidelines.</p> <p>There is still a room for improvement i.e. introduction of Information Management Systems (IMS) where probabilities of outcomes are regularly or cyclically timed, late project deliverables are few, and product/project cycles are reliable and continuous with less variances or deviations providing more confidence in successful project results from all contributing partners.</p>	<p>In addition to the initial project communication it's advisable to have a detailed and updated project communication scheme as a project management tool. A combination of mixed tools, like LFA, and PCM enable to keep project on track with necessary & timely intervention. Use of these tools enables to have a holistic vision of the project developments.</p> <p>Bringing together both sides, establishing the level of trust, developing level of cooperation, maintaining regular meetings, meant increased networking cooperation, and communication of the JWC with other relevant commissions, international, regional organizations and should not be underestimated. Therefore, it can become a cornerstone for future concerted productive activities.</p>
<p>Generally, project <i>implementation</i> is considered satisfactory although the nature of the complex project and externalities has proved to all stakeholders that shortcomings could impede project e.g. satellite projects' late inputs to UNDP /GEF project. The project completed the activities & met or exceeded the expected outcomes in terms of achievement of the GEF objectives according to schedule, and as cost-effective as initially planned.</p> <p>Overall stakeholders' cooperation and efforts in project implementation proved to be successful.</p> <p>Transboundary cooperation between two countries in terms of political commitment, institutional strengthening, capacity building, public relations & public awareness, networking have all developed identity and presence along with the Lake Basin as an environmental focal area.</p>	<p>Despite the interdependence evolved during UNDP/GEF project implementation, it is advisable that in future projects with the involvement of different donors' projects, the clear preconditions should be defined, combination of flat/vertical hierarchy established, as well as official commitments, conditions and deadlines determined.</p> <p>Activities of stakeholders' cooperation as they relate to the project implementation can be used as a means to compare and use to coordinate activities with other relevant institutions and organizations when the LBMP starts.</p> <p>With the developed transboundary cooperation there is always a room for continuous improvement in the cooperation mechanism. More joint activities on both sides of the lake conducted by different stakeholders in different sectors, e.g. regular volunteer monitoring, Lake Day campaign, joint community projects – cleanup, fundraising, fairs, etc.</p>	<p>Identification of potential sources of co-financing as well as leveraged and associated financing must be properly balanced. The project was implemented within the timeframe and allocated budget.</p> <p>Stakeholders' maintaining a presence within the project as exhibited by a very good level of cooperation were a role model for the rest of the project and can be replicated for future projects.</p> <p>Cooperation patterns developed within this project could be an example for other regions, countries, encountering similar situations with small and bigger country border relations, differences in language, institutional structures, legislation, lake management practices and developing strategies, administration procedures, standards and norms, etc.</p>
<p>The project made certain <i>impacts</i> on the beneficiaries, e.g. improved capacity, strengthened institutions, established network</p>	<p>However, it's somewhat early to assess impact now the overall objective will likely be reached in future. Positive impact on</p>	<p>The project had positive spin-offs resulted in initiation of a number of new projects inside and outside the region, funded by</p>

<p>& communications, spin-off effect, although the project will likely have more impacts with LBMP implementation in the medium and long-term.</p> <p>It is rather soon to estimate the sustainability though there is an indication proving that the project will have a continuation</p>	<p>socio-economic and environmental issues is expected for both sides. More integration of socio-economic and environmental components in regional programs/projects will ensure better impacts.</p> <p>It is likely that the project will have a continuation. Since the development and introduction of tailor made activities under umbrella of this project and follow-up projects is necessary, more emphasis on the socio-economic advancement issues should frame the future activities.</p>	<p>different donor agencies.</p> <p>The built capacity, institution strengthening and public awareness raising will likely contribute to sustainability after the project completion and during the possible follow-up.</p>
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1. Introduction

1.1 *Project Background*

The overall objective of the project “Development and implementation of the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Programme” was to develop and start implementation of the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Programme that included the practical recommendations for the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe nutrient load reduction and prevention as well as the sustainable conservation of habitats and eco-systems in the cross-border region.

The project substituted the uncoordinated small-scale projects that would be otherwise implemented separately by the Estonian and Russian parts without sufficient coordination, education and public information components as well as possible omission of key interest of local stakeholder groups and public at large.

The main envisaged outputs of this project are as follows:

- **Management Programme** (Strategy Document) and Action Plan prepared and approved by all relevant Estonian and Russian authorities
- **Strengthened Capacity** of the key regional stakeholders including the environmental monitoring infrastructure, data collection and maintenance system
- **Established networking and information exchange**
- **Two demonstration projects** implemented in Estonia: one for the eutrophication reduction through planning water systems in small community, and the second for ecotourism and nature protection (ecological route).

The project was implemented by the international NGO - Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation and two Project Implementation Units located in Tartu, Estonia and Pskov, Russia. In accordance the ToR, the project was carried out by the project partners: Ministry of Environment of Estonia, Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation and also UNDP/GEF. The overall project management was performed by the Project Manager located in St. Petersburg office, Russia. For implementation of this project an NGO-execution mode was chosen.

1.2 *Purpose of the evaluation*

The final or terminal evaluation is intended to assess the project achievement of objectives and impacts as well as provide an objective estimate of administrative and technical strategies, issues and constrains associated with large international and multi-partner initiative. The evaluation will provide the recommendations to improve the potential of future projects funded by the UNDP/GEF and EU. Finally, the evaluation has one more objective, i.e. a continuous improvement in the project/programme’s programming and design, performance and management.

The overall objective of this Final Evaluation to review progress towards the project’s objectives and outcomes, assess the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of how the project has moved towards its objectives and outcomes, identify strengths and weaknesses in project design and implementation, and provide recommendations on design modifications that could have increased the likelihood of success, and on specific actions that might be taken into consideration in designing future projects of a related nature.

1.3 *Key issues addressed*

In line with the overall objectives, the following key issues were addressed during the final evaluation:

- Assessment of the extent to which the project achieved its overall objective
- Assessment of the extent to which the development objectives and outputs of the IWP were achieved
- Description of the management processes, i.e. how the project activities changed in response to new conditions encountered during implementation, and whether the changes were appropriate

- Review of the clarity of roles and responsibilities of the various institutional arrangements for the Management Programme's implementation and the level of coordination between relevant players
- Review of any partnership arrangements with other donors and related projects, and comments on their strengths and weaknesses
- Assessment of the level of the public involvement in elaboration of the Management Programme and recommendations on whether the public involvement was appropriate to the goals of the project
- Description and assessment of the stakeholders' efforts to support of the project's implementation
- Review and evaluation of the extent to which the project had the impact on the intended beneficiaries
- Assessment of the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of project outcomes and benefits after its completion
- Description of the key factors that require the attention in order to improve the prospects for sustainability of IWP outcomes and the potential for a replication of the approach
- Review of the implementation of the project monitoring and evaluation
- Description of the main lessons that emerged in terms of:
 - country ownership/drive
 - regional cooperation and inter-governmental cooperation
 - stakeholder participation
 - adaptive management processes
 - efforts to secure sustainability; and
 - role of M&E in project implementation.
- Distinction between the lessons applicable to this project and the ones that may be valuable in broad terms including other, similar UNDP/GEF and EU environmental project initiatives.

1.4. Methodology of the evaluation

The final evaluation was conducted by the international expert, Ms Lisa Supeno, MSc., selected on the base of open tender.

The final evaluation was carried out as a combination of the activities such as the desk study, site visits and interviews with selected stakeholders, e.g. Peipsi CTC, UNDP, Government officials of Estonia and Russia on different levels, local municipalities, local NGOs, communities, etc.

The methodology for the final evaluation also covered the following areas:

- Desk study review of all relevant project documentation
- Assessment of the project's performance based on 'indicators of success' available in the initial project documentation
- Consultations with Peipsi CTC, UNDP, PIUs and offices
- Site visits to the Lake Peipsi and its adjacent areas, Tartu, St. Petersburg and Tallinn
- Interviews (including phone interviews) with the key stakeholders
 - Ministry of Environment of Estonia and its sub-departments
 - Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and its territorial bodies
 - The Estonian-Russian Transboundary Water Commission
 - Local Municipalities
 - Local community representatives
 - NGOs from Lake Peipsi / Chudskoe region
 - Other projects in the Peipsi / Chudskoe region
- Preparation of the draft and final evaluation report in compliance with Annex 1 of the ToR
- Feedback from the PIT and stakeholders, incorporation of the remarks and comments in the final report
- Presentation of the findings and conclusions of the final evaluation at the Steering Committee (SC) meeting held at the end of February 2006.

The key issues addressed during the final evaluation were mentioned above in section 1.3. In accordance with the ToR three main components were evaluated: 1) project delivery, 2) implementation, and 3) project finances. Each component was evaluated on the basis of three criteria, i.e. effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness where:

Effectiveness means the extent to which the project’s objective has been achieved or will likely be achieved

Efficiency will assess the outputs in relation to inputs whilst keeping in mind the costs, implementation timeframe, economic and financial results.

Timeliness means the delivery/obtaining the inputs and results

Furthermore, the final evaluation included the ratings for three mentioned criteria. The summary of the evaluation’s results were presented for each criterion on a five point scale, with 1 on the scale presenting a highly satisfactory, 2 – satisfactory, 3 – marginally satisfactory, 4 – unsatisfactory, and 5 – N/A, lowest score. A proposed module for evaluation results presentation was as follows:

Following the UNDP/GEF policy for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes at the project level four main objectives were encompassed, i.e. 1) monitoring and evaluation of results and impacts; 2) provision of a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; 3) promotion of an accountability for resource use; and 4) documentation, feedback, and dissemination of lessons learned. This mix of tools ensured an appropriate project evaluation despite the lack of the logframe and detailed monitoring reports.

1.5 Outputs of the final evaluation

Since the final evaluation is an assessment of the relevance, performance and achievements of the project, it also gives a notification of potential impact and sustainability of the results including a contribution to the capacity development and attainment of global environmental goals. Furthermore, it serves a dual function of instrument independent to project process, yet also considered as an intrinsic part of project. The evaluation provides an accountability and transparency while assessing the project’s design, performance and management. The outcomes of the final evaluation can be used by the Contracting Agency as well as the Executing Agency and project stakeholders for the current project analysis, similar on-going projects and future project/programmes’ design, implementation and management.

The assessment of the project’s outcomes and outputs was conducted on the basis on the key project documents’ review (see Annex 5 of the Report) and the interviews (Annex 3 and 6) with the key stakeholders and the PIT. The evaluation was based on the UNDP and GEF M&E rules, as well as the approved methodology elaborated and approved in the inception report (see also sub-section 1.4 above). The results of the final evaluation of the UNDP/GEF project “Development and implementation of the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Programme” are presented in the Table below.

Main Components	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Timeliness	Overall Score
Project Delivery	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1
Project Implementation	2	1.9	2	2.0
Project Finances	2	2	2	2.0
Overall Score (average)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

For more details of the project evaluation refer to the Annex 7 of this report.

2. The project and its development context

Project	Context
Project start and its duration	January 2003, duration - 36 months
Implementation status	Completed since January 1, 2006
Problems that the project sought to address	<p>Management Programme(Strategy Document) and Action Plan prepared and approved by all relevant Estonian and Russian authorities</p> <p>Strengthened Capacity of key regional stakeholders (including environmental monitoring infrastructure and data collection and maintenance system)</p> <p>Networking and information exchange established</p> <p>Two demonstration projects implemented in Estonia: one on eutrophication reduction through planning water systems in small community and the second one on ecotourism and nature protection (ecological route).</p>
Immediate and development objectives of the project	Strengthening of the regional/local capacity in order to implement the agreed and approved international Management Programme for the protection and sustainable use of Lake Peipsi / Chudskoe.
Executing Agency	Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation, International NGO
Main stakeholders	<p>Joint Estonian-Russian Transboundary Water Commission</p> <p>Local and regional NGOs</p> <p>Local and regional authorities</p> <p>SME</p>
Project partners	<p>Ministry of Environment – Estonia</p> <p>Ministry of Natural Resources – Russian Federation</p> <p>UNDP, GEF</p>
Results expected	Management Programme is agreed and approved by Estonia and Russia, staff from responsible institutions/organizations well-trained, enhanced stakeholders involvement in the Programme implementation. Empowered JWC with sufficient human, financial and other resources for the PM implementation.

3. Findings and Conclusions

3.1 Introduction

The final evaluation of the project's performance was completed as described in Section 1 of this report. The report follows the lay-out specified in the ToR, and covers three main components:

- Project Delivery
- Project Implementation
- Project Finances

3.2 Key Findings

The final evaluation was undertaken for the UNDP/GEF project officially completed on December 31, 2005 with the wrap-up in March 2006. The key findings, grouped according to the main components, were as follows:

Project Delivery

- The project was completed within the defined timeframe and allocated budget
- Most development objectives and outputs of the project were completely achieved except objective I – LBMP approval and signing is pending
- Key environmental issues were clearly addressed in the TDA and reflected in the LBMP
- The developed LBMP contains a solid scientific background but is less stronger in its structure in terms of detailed definition of roles and responsibilities, communications and coordination mechanism definitions since some of the issues are already covered by other agreements
- The UNDP/GEF project is likely to make a sound impact on the situation in this transboundary water basin in the coming years via supporting cooperation and sustainable water management in the basin
- The projected level of public involvement in the LBMP elaboration was appropriate and during its implementation phase it should be maintained as well
- The project made an impact on the beneficiaries, e.g. improved capacity, strengthened institutions, network and communications established, the project will likely have other impacts with the LBMP implementation in medium and long-term
- The sustainability is early to be assessed, though there is an indication proving that both countries demonstrate their commitment in term of good political will, further cooperation and financing.

Project Implementation

- Management processes were flexible, responding to the changes encountered during implementation, and can be considered appropriate and timely
- Transboundary cooperation was gradually established and proved to be viable though some key issues like the agreement and approval of LBMP, Monitoring Programme and some other documents are still in process
- Also the level of cooperation and coordination among the stakeholders was well established during the project execution
- The relations and partnerships with other projects and donors were well-developed and proved to be useful
- The project brought good examples for replication with regard to best practices in capacity building, grass roots network development, public awareness, building trust and establishing cross-border cooperation
- M&E was a project requirement and conducted periodically, however, in the future more emphasis should be given to this issue
- Administrative and operational capacity to manage the project is sufficient
- Coordination between the national agencies, Peipsi CTC, PIUs, UNDP/GEF was satisfactory

Project Finances

- The project was completed within according to the allocated budget and generated the synergy with the EU funds coming from two satellite projects
- The time lag between the project programming and implementation was too long, it affected first of all the project budget

3.3. Some conclusions and recommendations

Hereby, the detailed summary of the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the desk studies, interviews and consultations is presented below. It also encompasses the three project components under evaluation such as project delivery, project implementation, and project finances on the basis of 3 established criteria, i.e. effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness. The rating system represents a five point scale from 1 – highly satisfactory, 2 – satisfactory, 3 – marginally satisfactory, 4 – unsatisfactory, and 5 – N/A, lowest score.

CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>General. This project is rated as ‘<i>satisfactory</i>’ per the final evaluation. The delivery of the outputs was appropriate even with some delays, but within the allocated budget.</p> <p>The project has mostly reached the immediate objectives. It remains still relevant since the forming in 1996-1997 although the allocated budget seems less realistic due to the long project cycle and considerable currency exchange fluctuation.</p> <p>Although the level of <i>cooperation</i> between both countries on transboundary issues has improved there are some concerns related to the official approval of the <i>Lake Basin Management Programme</i> and Joint Monitoring Programme by the Russian side (highest level of authority is unclear). The TDA and other prepared documents sufficiently contributed to the LBMP drafting.</p> <p>The harmonization of standards, norms and procedures is still on-going process where there is a need of the agreement on such issues as joint water quality monitoring, similar and comparable monitoring systems, use of agreed parameters and timely data collection and sharing after validation. The project partially addressed the issues, however, official agreement in this field under the Commission is crucial.</p>	<p>Following the UNDP/GEF guidelines, it is recommended to develop, use and update the logframe during the project implementation. That enables the Executing Agency to interfere timely and efficiently in the project processes. Timeline of requirements for the benchmark goals, monitoring results and other key factors are needed for appropriate measurability. Application of the SMART principles can facilitate to project quality improvement both in qualitative and quantitative contexts.</p> <p>The time between programming and implementation should be much shorter. In addition, it is advisable to involve the key stakeholders in project design on the early stage.</p> <p>Official approval of the LBMP and relevant agreement on the Monitoring Programme are needed. The strong role of the JWC in these issues is indispensable. In general, the LBMP clearly reflects the main issues in environmental, economic, financial, social and political context. The LBMP is feasible for implementation after official approval by both countries</p> <p>LBMP implementation should ensure a sustainable use and protection of transboundary water resources through (i) maintenance and improvement of the lake’s water quality, (ii) sustainable use of transboundary waters, (iii) restoration of fish stock and sustainable use of fish resources, (iv) protection of the lake’s wildlife, and (v) joint management of the Lake’s Basin via coordinated activities, environmental monitoring, information exchange, additional research and studies, joint surveillance, public participation, financing, etc.</p>
<p>Project Delivery. On average it is rated as satisfactory. Project Delivery includes the institutional arrangement, outcomes, partnership, risk management and M&E. The planning, most preparatory work and other strategies were built on the results of previous activities dated 1995-2000. The Work Plan and Results Framework (see Part II, Results Framework, and Part IV Legal Context. Work Plan of Proposal/Agreement, 4/2002) were</p>	<p>Proposed recommendations include a use of the PCM principles with the LFA that ensure a good project design, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation. The quality of the project performance is much higher when the logframe is properly used and revised during the whole project life. Moreover, it enables to draft a realistic Time Schedule or Work Plan, make adjustments or corrections if needed, and have the timely implementation of the activities.</p>

correspondingly elaborated at the early stage. During the project span, the *plan* experienced the changes due to the external factors. The Project Work Plan was not properly detailed and presented graphically at the very beginning. The split on the project components definitely helps but when it is not detailed it is difficult to keep track on all planned activities and follow up their timely implementation. The lacking part is the holistic view of the whole project for the whole project life. Nevertheless, the project planning was sufficient and satisfactory during the implementation phase despite the externalities that caused some hurdles and delays with some activities.

Technical support was quite sufficient during the project implementation although there were some problems with the changes of the UNDP financing management system. This was aided by timely cooperation of Moscow UNDP/GEF unit to facilitate absorption capacities

Institutional strengthening was conducted in due time with visible outcomes. Although the JWC was founded and became operational, it still requires more empowerment and equal resource allocation from both sides.

Capacity building (CB) initiatives were developed quite satisfactorily. Overall gain through the whole project was active involvement of the stakeholders and development and strengthening of the grass roots. The JWC and new Peipsi Council/Forum are expected to play a key role in the LBMP implementation. The project utilized both traditional and newer approaches in CB, i.e. traditional one - training workshops, technical assistance, supporting scientific research, and newer - multidisciplinary implementation teams and steering committees, public meetings, strengthening networks, info dissemination through website, awareness campaigns. CB resulted in public meetings, strengthening networks, info dissemination through trainings and awareness campaigns with some numbers: 64 seminars-workshops in Estonian side, dozens on the Russian side. A number of booklets, newsletters, manuals, postcards, leaflets. Updated Web site with a high number of visits. Mass media received press releases in every event that was bigger than small workshop, for the grassroots NGOs; several articles in magazine/newspaper published with first time

For future the recommendation is for quarterly financial statements per Moscow to the project rather than simply annual reconciliations and this was agreed during this project and carried out successfully.

With the LBMP is approved and final decision of responsible agencies for implementation made, the JWC composition must be reviewed, adjusted, the status bestowed and the required resource allocated. JWC could also learn more from the experience of other international water committees.

JWC as the designated body for the PM implementation should be more empowered and given more human, financial and other resources. Contemporary water commission bodies such as Black Sea, Danube or Rhine Commissions could be useful example. In the future, it can be recommended to add strengthening regional centers of excellence for further CB.

ever environment full scale press attention; radio/TV broadcasts in Estonia and Russia. The small grant facility aspect of CB meant that with the first call for proposals 12 were submitted and all received money; a total of 78 proposals were submitted during the whole period and out of 78 proposals 40 were awarded with a total overall budget of \$5.8K USD for mostly educational programmes

Although the project *outputs* were delivered, the delays caused by the external factors and unaddressed risks took place. Due to the tight schedules prompted by delays both content and quality of some outputs might suffer. Details, standards and executions consequently were somewhat lacking the key outputs, e.g. the LBMP, PPP and TDA.

Assumption & risks were preliminary mentioned in the Proposal/Agreement (see Annex G of the original Agreement). Out of 10 line items, only one was somewhat higher with 9 assessed as low risks. Several key or critical risks were initially overlooked, e.g. delays related to the satellite projects' inputs, slower pace of appraisal and approval of the key documents, changeover in Russian administration added some changes and delays in the JWC work – including adding further complexities to the personnel responsibilities and accountabilities, further the communication priorities, and perceptions changed among the JWC members etc. Finally, the outset budget allocation quite changed time value with conversion costs from USD at outset to local currency at least 5 years later. Hence, project scope was changed/narrowed in line with the existing realistic budget and less tasks/tenders were performed.

It is recommended to have less dependence on the external inputs and factors through use of proper project design.

The LBMP content could be better elaborated with main focuses on, e.g.:

- Targets and approach
- Ecosystem improvement
- Water quality improvement
- Groundwater protection
- Instruments and public relations
- Success control
- Implementation and costs
- Appointed responsible agencies
- Planned funding

The Management Programme should not exceed 30 pages for the decision-makers review and approval.

Proposed recommendations include: more independence of the projects from potential satellite projects in terms of inputs and deliverables. On horizontal level the problems happened due to the flat hierarchy of Project Management Structure.

Communication scheme could be better developed at the outset of the project, and adjusted during the implementation. It should be not only 'top-down' hierarchy but also 'bottom-up' from grassroots and NGO's for maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

With administrative changes on both shores of the lake each 2-3 years the JWC will experience problems with regard to the composition, timeliness and effectiveness. It may be advisable in future, to keep aside political issues/changes from the actual project work of JWC, et. al, so that the Programme can be managerial, scientific and task-oriented generally. Therefore, maintaining future ongoing business and science relations while minimizing external risks that could affect the Management Programme implementation

With the LFA in place at the outset, all key risks could be addressed timely and precisely while keeping the project progress on track.

Budget recommendations entail a shorter project cycle with more realistic and comprehensive allocations.

<p>Directly resulting from the Lake Peipsi there were some <i>complimentary activities</i> which grew into useful and satisfactory future outlets i.e. per the Peipsi CTC. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lake basin management activities b) Public participation/water programme management activities c) NGO and other development fostering work activities for funding and transboundary projects <p>Development of eco-tourism and eco-farming in both Estonia and Russia might bring further income to the local communities, in some cases replacing the former livelihood of fishing, in the short, medium terms, if the required infrastructure is in place.</p> <p>The project <i>outcomes</i> can be considered as satisfactory despite the changes in the original scope and again experienced delays. Project meetings and various reporting could be assessed as satisfactory. Even the project reporting was timely and detailed to certain extent, the graphic presentation of the project progress as well as the problem/solution identification and lesson learned were light weighted.</p> <p>Activities related to Peipsi CTC performance during this project were efficient, effective and timely, especially in execution and coordination. It can be a good example for future UNDP/GEF and EU funded projects.</p> <p>The <i>partnership</i> during the project implementation has improved on all levels, i.e. international, regional and local including all key stakeholders. The partnership has grown and fostered, at the higher levels to only a mild extent in contrast to the regional and local levels. The common ground for partnership was soundly established with the activities and final agreements lagging behind. On both Estonian and Russian sides new stakeholders' involvement made significant contributions to the projects,.</p> <p>The <i>risk management</i> score bordered on satisfactory and marginally satisfactory. It was already mentioned in risks and assumption area above. Most identified risks at the early stage</p>	<p>For future, what can be recommended on the complimentary activities might also include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional funding via <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Application to the available programme funds e.g., EU Twinning Programme, Foundation Matra, Netherlands, (eco-farming, eco-tourism up to €200,000 grants) b) Partners for Water, Netherlands (small grants) c) others in USA, Canada, EU 2. Establish a better network with other international NGOs (through World Water Forum and like) 3. Some commercial project like 'environmentally friendly fishery' together with EU entrepreneurs and Estonian & Russian businesses. Some with eco-farming (health food stores supply in Estonia, Russia, EU) 4. Public Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Extensive further educational measures e.g. lectures, seminars, TV/radio broadcastings on the regular basis. Volunteers programs, e.g. road race (Tartu Marathon), Sponsors for Lake Peipsi, Youth Hostels, Wilderness Training Weekends, Walking and Hikes, Parks, 5. Eco-tourism, e.g. sailing, boating, canoe, biking, water sports and river sports, ice fishing, ice vehicles. <p>More attention to the issues like problems/solutions, lessons learned and graphic presentation at least the milestones of the project progress. It enables to show the project dynamics.</p> <p>Stronger position of the JWC with enough allocated resources, better coordination and cooperation between both countries responsible agencies, timely allocation of the required resources, approval of the Management Programme & Monitoring Plan.</p> <p>A good example for development and fostering new partnership could be the joint water monitoring expeditions undertaken in 2003-2004, whereby they had two countries, one vessel, cooperation and willingness to accomplish the mission. For the Programme implementation increased involvement of other local/regional stakeholders from industries and business, e.g. use the Venn diagram of the stakeholder relationships, is envisaged.</p> <p>More use of the LFA with practical problem/solution tree exercise completed. Better identification of problems and risks during the project design.</p>
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<p>were to certain extent underestimated. Although some risks were partially overlooked and appeared as hurdles for the project implementation, the PIT did the best to manage them correspondingly. It enabled to complete the project in due time, within the budget with the required intervention of the JWC in the process, consensus building, provision of inputs for the LBMP development and approval. The lack of the logframe with the risks and assumptions table revised and updated made it difficult to deal with identified and unprojected risks appropriately. Therefore, no risk management measures were in place.</p> <p>Project <i>monitoring & evaluation</i> has scored marginally satisfactory rate. Although it was performed in accordance with the UNDP/GEF procedures, i.e. field visits, annual project reports, outcome groups based on the coordination mechanism, and annual reviews, it did not become a real project management tool to full extent. The M&E results should be distributed among the key stakeholders for comments and feedback. The Steering Committee for the most part handled the adaptive management in the project implementation. It was somewhat effective since most objectives were accomplished. No project specific monitoring plans were available. The reporting framework was appropriately set, and timely conducted. The M&E was not a real management tool since the project experienced a number of delays and scope changes. The results of the mid-term evaluation looked very optimistic and general.</p>	<p>While the monitoring entails to check progress, take remedial actions, update plans, and especially link to the logframe objective hierarchy, i.e. inputs, activities, results, it is proposed to enhance the existing practices with tangible regarding the basic building blocks of the management systems.</p> <p>In future, the follow-up procedures should include regular standard monitoring conducted by an independent agent familiar with the UNDP/GEF procedures, and the results accordingly disseminated among the stakeholders. The mid-term evaluation should be conducted more rigorously delivering the SMART results (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-limited). It enables to keep the project firmly on track and add to better quality of the final evaluation.</p>
<p>Project Implementation. Overall score for this project component is satisfactory. There is an opinion that the modality of the NGO led project, i.e. Peipsi CTC office, is very successful pilot project example by itself. It alleviates a great deal of the work load of the Contracting Agency. Evidently, most project administrative procedures were in place and timely conducted. Development of reliable & effective communication for both PIUs & stakeholders contributed appropriately to project. Although some negotiations may have progressed slower, the key decisions and outputs were managed nonetheless. The SC faced the necessity to modify the scope and the budget in order to stay within the fixed limits and time frame.</p> <p>The project generated a number of documents, e.g. monthly, PPRs, APR/PIRs, annuals plans,</p>	<p>Better communication scheme and risk management programme are required in order to avoid the main pitfalls e.g. emerging risks, poor communication, other diversions in project progress and management.</p> <p>The strong Steering Committee will provide steady strategic guidance for the LBMP implementation in future. The SC should be “checkpoint” to ascertain not only the delivery of milestones but also the continuing relevance or otherwise of the context and content of the deliverables. This applies particularly for internal risks and assumptions.</p> <p>The Intranet portal management containing the project documents as well as the project web site and related links</p>

<p>monthly/quarterly financial reports, SC agendas and minutes, other strategic documents, newsletters, press releases, brochures and booklets, etc. Mostly they were produced timely, efficiently and effectively, with or without templates. Via the Intranet portal they could be accessed digitally as well.</p> <p><i>Project oversight.</i> In general the project oversight with regard to the institutions involved i.e. Peipsi CTC, both PIUs, St. Petersburg office, UNDP, SC could be considered satisfactory on the basis of three established criteria. Peipsi CTC was very active, St. Petersburg Office was best noted for ability to build bridges with other agencies, PIU Pskov was best noted for strong local ties building, UNDP/GEF noted for timely and supportive interventions and SC held a key programmatic role taking all pre-conditions and changes into account for best actions.</p> <p><i>Project execution.</i> The modality of the NGO-run with Peipsi CTC as executing agency can be viewed as a successful precedent and pilot project that proved its capacity, experience and expertise offsetting much of the responsibility of the Contractor and freeing for new aspects of the projects to be added on to implementation measures and objectives. The staff's high level of the professionalism can be touted and used to train other similar units in fact.</p> <p><i>Project implementation.</i> The project was executed within the budget and allocated time. The Executing Agency managed to address most technical and administrative issues timely and efficiently. The logistics was done very satisfactorily.</p>	<p>have contributed to the results dissemination. Since the programme implementation is envisaged in 2006-2015 there should be the solution made with regard to the web site and other relevant documents that could be used during implementation. Disseminating information has a far-reaching effect for project success and management and should be considered as one of the vital project components in the future.</p> <p>Programmatically most of the mechanisms envisaged at the outset worked very well together. Perhaps the bridge building of the TACIS component with GEF/UNDP component could have been stronger for better relations with Estonia and Russia in successful negotiating practices. The JWC, as a successor of the SC can count on the experience gained by the SC and continue to cultivate the steady albeit slower progress of improved relations for the cross border issues. Substantial inroads have indeed been made and ought to be capitalized on systematically.</p> <p>Due to the large number of objective verifiable success and results based indicators for UNDP/GEF standards, the project has proven to be relevant and will likely aid to achieve global objectives. Its array of relevant operations for planned policies and actions is useful for other NGO run projects and relevant UNDP/GEF requirements.</p> <p>The institutional capacity of PIUs was satisfactory and there was a high degree of commitment and willingness to continue. However, in future, the PIU composition, resources, scope of work should be realistically considered..</p>
<p>Project Finances. While the new Management System per the UNDP/GEF office had been assimilated successful, it entailed that the financial planning was based on the direction of the Project Manager along with Project Advisor, the two Project Coordinators (Tartu and Pskov) and the Financial Manager. Converting from line item detailed account system to the new account based general category system took concerted efforts and sufficient coordination of Financial Manager and ever-willing Moscow/UNDP/GEF unit but success was achieved.</p> <p>The newly adopted procedures appeared to be intact and operational to provide a normalized</p>	<p>The Financial Manager established a system covering operational and administrative financial aspects and quality control aspects of the project. Budget and personnel have being properly administered and supervised.</p> <p>The financial outputs of the project were of a very high standard. The Operational Guidelines for managing the finances of project could be used as a benchmark and distributed to all stakeholders.</p> <p>For future projects, before starting the project it is very important to provide the executing agency with proven</p>

<p>financial position in line with the project activities.</p> <p>Actual spending versus budget expectations were in line with the original specifications. The disbursement analysis proved that the project funds were used effectively efficiently. Efficiency is the focus on the value-for-money axiom or the input-output ratio implied by the achievement of results by the means identified by activities per result in the logframe. By definition, this takes into account both the preconditions to the project and any endogenous risks and assumptions identified at the level of activities.</p> <p>Efficiency in the broad context for the project was very positive although this conclusion is derived from qualitative rather than precise quantitative OVIs, except for balanced accounts and financial reports, as well as from the initially agreed detailed plan of activities.</p> <p>It is assumed that the UNDP/GEF Moscow unit auditor had fully audited and recommended any changes or related issues for the project. So all reviews were done in a timely manner and in compliance with the existing requirements.</p> <p>As known there were minor revisions of the budget and fund re-allocation from the initial intentions due to the fluctuation of the interest rates, for example. All this activities were just in full compliance with the UNDP and GEF and had authorized changes accordingly.</p> <p>Though there were some concerns regarding potential budget change approval and, at the beginning, successful assimilation/integration of project management/financial management software, the new system did not provide sufficient detail to manage the project. These problems were acknowledged and solved. Banking was another issue in that there is no bank common to both agencies which could cause delays in transactions and such. The financial risks were considered to be low except the USD exchange rates. The audit procedures were in place and operational.</p> <p><i>Coordinating structures and mechanisms</i> did work in this project and is rated as satisfactory. Working relations and coordination with other donors, international organizations were generally good in that were necessary structures and mechanisms for the implementation of this</p>	<p>and reliable Management Software which enables the agency to not only manage the project activities and deliverables but to fully manage the finances of the project.</p> <p>For coordination mechanism improvement it is necessary to increase/enhance the use of communication plans, and also periodic stakeholder relationship analyses (Venn diagram). Maybe this could include the improvement of government and non-governmental relations through common goals and activities. Following are some of the</p>
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<p>strategy.</p>	<p>outer lying concepts related to the project.</p> <p>Inherent to the coordinating structures and mechanisms are certain focal areas such as:</p> <p>Country context and institutions: encompassing ‘enabling’ environment and water policy reform, designs and mandates and maybe directives or maybe legal frameworks, and the role of stakeholders</p> <p>Balancing cross-sectoral and cross-boundary interests, i.e. national and international conflict mitigation, water (use) rights, international data bases, and cross-boundary networking</p> <p>Organization management: i.e. organizational performance, management of external relations, and incentive systems and career development</p> <p>Knowledge and institutional resource base, i.e. education and training, data bases and information management, the use of networks and expertise pools.</p>
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4. Lessons Learned

Project design:

- Project cooperation between both countries is like a 'pilot project' in itself'. There are different legislations, standards, procedures, agendas of where to go further and somewhat similar positions at the state level. The JWC's activities proved to be ground breaking, pivotal, instrumental and paving the way for the future key decisions and outputs for the LBMP implementation.
- By keeping political issues separately from the global environmental issues there is less risk as part of the project and tasks can better reach completion.

Project delivery:

- The LBMP has been developed and mostly ready for implementation while some minor structuring is needed. The LBMP is viable and feasible in its content and scope.
- The Management Programme was viewed by many interviewees as a primary output of the project. Expediting the pace of negotiations between two parties on the LBPM official approval will be a crucial step since the Programme is designed for implementation in the period of 2006 and 2015
- Though the Monitoring Programme was prepared in 2004 the decision to agree is still pending due to the need to harmonize national monitoring systems and requirements.
- The findings, lessons learnt, best practices are recommended to consider in the follow-up project and for future programmes/projects. While planning there should be feasible correlation between scope of work and budget. A comprehensive logframe and monitoring procedures should be outlined in the tender dossier as requirements. The monitoring and evaluation bodies as well as procedures should be defined in advance.
- Feasibility studies on eco-tourism were developed and CB has been done so in fact developing the areas for the future is now much easier. There are some investors that would like to develop business plans. It is for entrepreneurs, how fast are they willing to develop more. Added bonus is that it can also maybe in future replace former fishing industry as a means of livelihood for many in the region. Notably, the Russian side is especially interested in water tourism.

Project implementation:

- Management process/procedures are a primary output in the new capacities for each side respectively.
- Both Estonian and Russian side found the personnel efforts useful with agendas distributed before Joint Committee and Steering Committee meetings. Additionally, minutes, quarterly reports and others were found to be efficient as monitoring and progress indicators to certain extent.
- UNDP/GEF and EU Tacis and Life Project Committees, as well as personnel, did discuss respective targets and methods during planning phase to avoid replications in each project scope as part of the complex.
- The extensions of satellite projects and delays with the input to UNDP/GEF project brought hurdles for partial implementation of newly designed Management Programme as well as its approval by country's high level authorities. The extensions in both case were caused by different internal and external factors, e.g. Tacis project got two extensions caused by different reasons.
- Networking and information exchange was well-established and facilitated through printed materials or Web portal of the project. There were several sorts of publications, including the booklets, newsletters, manuals, guides, postcards, other printed materials. There were extensive trainings, seminars and workshops, i.e. almost 100 in total.

Stakeholders involvement:

- The Committees' (SC and JWC) perceptions enhanced awareness and activities is a signal to many stakeholders and target groups of strengthened capacity and more networking and information exchange established. With continual meetings the perceptions of Russia and Estonia Joint Committee Members did indeed progress towards mutual collaboration, cooperation, participation; albeit more negotiating and less concrete activities transpired with many smaller agreements building to larger agreements.
- Committees (SC and JWC) build own management know-how and practices. There were practical and productive sessions with both Russian and Estonian sides aimed at the cost /benefit analysis of problems, projects and agendas including consideration of advantages and disadvantages of potential actions and developments.
- Public awareness and the wellspring of new perception for both Russia and Estonia . The project contributed to the perception, that now the Pskov/Chudskoe/Peipsi region is looked at a whole unit; with both Estonian and Russian counterparts. Consideration now looks to the Lake Peipsi Region in total and it's qualities and characteristics, features and attributes.
- For both Estonian and Russian communities networking and information exchange has begun to build new public awareness for terms "eco, environment, nature, including the lake as an entire ecological area" along with new business and/or growth ideas correspondingly.
- Environment concerns of eutrophication, measuring and monitoring became a GEF funded project and will become joint programmes for future projects/best practices/know-how transfer in: Lake Basin Management Community Schemes – public participation, NGO and development project funding advisory for multi-country approaches and transboundary. NGO's know-how can actually provide: idea generating, cooperation building, information sharing (including lectures, seminars, best practices, etc.) for the new regions, countries, areas, nature and eco-projects development.
- Farmers and school teachers are more open minded about why not to pollute, using environmental law, getting new technologies in future and how to consider changes in polluting farming behaviors. It can not be implemented immediately, yet it would consider some options to add technology or practices since they had education seminars. Yet a new 'open-mindedness' and willingness to get involved based on affirmations/acknowledgements from regional authorities on their using their own 'know-how' with eco or environment solutions. This institutional acknowledgement to the farming community, of new better practices is useful and inspiring for them.

5. Recommendations

The project 'Development and Implementation of the Lake Peipsi / Chudskoe Basin Management Programme' was completed as of January 2006 within the allotted timeframe and allocated budget. The Final Evaluation was conducted by the international expert, Lisa Supeno, MSc. who has the required experience and expertise in both technical and project management issues. Although there were some concerns encountered during the fact-finding and interviews of the final evaluation of the project, still the main issue here remains within the realm of cooperation between the Governments of Russia and Estonia on transboundary water cooperation issues. However, this is outside of the project control. Nevertheless, there were a number of points raised by stakeholders and PIT that could build on current lessons learned and contribute to the future regional and national benefits under different funding. This section contains a summary of general and specific recommendations in order to improve the future quality, performance and management of similar projects.

General Recommendations

- During the programming phase, more attention should be paid to realistic resource allocation, specific of the region conditions, e.g. political, economic, social, cultural relations, preconditions, i.e. readiness and willingness to cooperate, potential hurdles and risks, mitigation measures, etc.
- Transboundary cooperation developed during the UNDP/GEF project implementation still leaves a room for further improvements and developments, i.e. the structure of cooperation could be better off with a combination of vertical and horizontal level, where the vertical level represents a country's political decision making hierarchy (Ministry of Environment, Department of Environment, etc.) including the Joint Water Committee, the horizontal level is the Peipsi Council, JWC's WG (working groups) and ad hoc groups, implementation organizations, stakeholders -NGO's, businesses, SME's, community groups, etc
- The cooperation can be also enhanced and expanded via introduction of more joint activities on both sides of the lake conducted by NGO's, local communities, SMEs, e.g.a joint action - Lake Peipsi Day with multiple programs and volunteers to clean the lakeshore from litter, joint student monitoring day, etc.
- Since there is no universal prescription or model for lake or river basin management committee or authority, perhaps a common goal could be standardization of procedures and cooperation enabling a stable and constant information exchange, transparency and openness between countries, different sectors of water users and experts , as well as use of best practices from other regions.
- The identified key environmental problems, i.e. eutrophication, fishery management, and groundwater pollution have the transboundary context. They must be rigorously addressed in short-term by both countries through the joint consultations and discussion, and incorporated in the national and regional action plans.
- For the transboundary risks management, there should be a combined approach of pollution prevention and cooperation. In this case the cooperation can be channeled via **allocation** (water resources, appropriate legislation and agreements, 'equitable utilization' and 'no harm principle' and financial, social and human capital), **salvation** (cooperative efforts, sound water policies, potential bottlenecks resolution jointly), **opportunity** (common management results, benefits sharing, holistic approach for ecosystem preservation, efforts to jointly administer the Peipsi Lake – in a more flexible, inclusive and cooperative framework approach of integrated management based on the ecosystem of the basin, co-financing), **stakeholders' participation** (commitment, cooperation and coordination, dissemination, transparency and public awareness)
- The fundamentals of PCM and LFA must be strictly followed as required by the contracting authorities
- Further thematic evaluations/studies on project owner administrative capacity, particularly for projects needs should be undertaken as an ex-ante input for all programmes
- Each new project should have clear and specific preconditions

Specific Recommendations

- The time between programming and implementation should be much shorter. This can make the project budget and cycle more viable. In addition, it is advisable to involve the key stakeholders in project design on the early stage.

- The sooner the agreement and approval of the Joint Monitoring Programme by both countries happens, the better the platform for the Water Management Programme to be launched as the next step scenario.
- For new projects, it is advisable to prepare a timeline of requirements for the benchmark goals, monitoring results and other key factors needed for appropriate measurability. Application of the SMART principles can facilitate to project quality improvement both in qualitative and quantitative contexts. Include benchmark checkpoints and institution responsible, for example along with LFA and PCM principles.
- Better commitment and willingness to reach the goals should be inherent with all or both parties concerned across the Lake. It can be achieved through mature dialogue and negotiations logically taking into account each's pre-conditions and risks, information exchange, joint activities whereby businesses can be driving forces to bring the needed finances not only for the programme implementation but to raise the income of the local communities.
- The role and position of the Joint Water Committee definitely must be enhanced and empowered with required resource allocation, e.g. human, financial and social capital to implement successfully this Lake Basin Management Programme.
- It is advisable in the future to address the issues related to the JWC composition robustness so that no personnel changes can hinder its functioning or operations. When the JWC encounters committee member changes for either country, it is advisable that a more specific joint process is introduced, i.e. the existing JWC receives the detailed curricula vitae of the proposed candidates, study them, discuss them, and make jointly the decision of approval or disapproval. This is the means to voice the collective opinion on the prospects jointly. In this case, it brings the required quality of the personnel working at the committee. While it is up to the respective governments to make new appointees it should be considered that it is a bilateral committee, thus the participatory component for input and voting, for example.
- Involvement of other stakeholders after the stakeholder relationship analysis is imperative during the LBMP implementation. This can help in part to ensure robustness and sustainability of the project
- When programming future projects like Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe the contracting agency (UNDP/GEF, etc) should properly consider the complex of issues e.g. existing countries' relations (economic, political, social, cultural), common language of cooperation, institutional structures and legislations, absorption capacities, existing standards, norms and procedures, decision-making mechanisms, level of public participation and information-sharing, potential co-financing, and availability and reliability of existing data and other resources
- Future complimentary activities in the Lake Basin could include eco-farming (fish and agriculture i.e. cereals and berries), eco-tourism (water tourism, ice tourism, sailing, Lake Day, etc.). Better business relations with small and large businesses in the area or outside enable to bring definite changes in the status of infrastructures overall
- Better risk management precondition outlines and better monitoring and evaluation needs to be included in all projects for robustness and sustainability
- The project data should be archived and stored. The chosen agency, responsibilities and other procedures are the decision reserved by the JWC.
- Although the draft Lake Basin Management Programme was presented to the stakeholders for review and comments it is recommended to have a fresh overview of the Table of Contents and pay attention to the definition of 'General Objective, Specific Objectives, Targets and Approaches, Instruments and Public Relations, Success Control, Implementation and Costs, Appointed Responsible Agencies, Planned Funding, and better structure this document. Such document shouldn't exceed more than 30 pages and be prepared for decision-makers (who are not scientists per se), written in plain language.
- Public participation plan should be better presented in the LBMP.

6. ANNEXES:

Annex 1 – ToR

Annex 2 – Itinerary

Annex 3 – List of Persons interviewed

Annex 4 – summary of field visits

Annex 5 – list of documents reviewed

Annex 6 – questionnaire used and summary of results (I - III)

Annex 7 – project information evaluation sheet

Annex 1

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

Standard UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation requirements

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iiiii) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators -, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and final evaluations.

Final evaluation is intended to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project. It should look at early signs of potential impact and sustainability of the results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental goals. It will also identify/document lessons learned and make recommendations that might improve design and implementation of both other UNDP/GEF and EU financed environmental projects.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the project is to develop and start implementation of a Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Programme including practical recommendations for the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe nutrient load reduction and prevention and the sustainable conservation of habitats and eco-systems in the cross-border region. The project is substituting uncoordinated small-scale projects that would be otherwise implemented separately on the Estonian and Russian sides without sufficient coordination, education and public information component, and without taking into account interest of local stakeholder groups and wider public.

The development objective of the project is to prepare, adopt and launch Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Programme for the nutrient load reduction and the sustainable development of the cross-border region.

The main outputs of the project are:

Management Programme (Strategy Document) and Action Plan prepared and approved by all relevant Estonian and Russian authorities;

Strengthened Capacity of key regional stakeholders (including environmental monitoring infrastructure and data collection and maintenance system);

Networking and information exchange;

Two pilot projects implemented in Estonia: one on eutrophication reduction through planning water systems in small community and the second one on ecotourism and nature protection (ecological route).

Project is executed by international NGO Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation. Due to the nature of the project the implementation of project activities are done by two Project Implementation Units situated in Tartu, Estonia and Pskov, Russia. Overall management of the project is responsibility of Project Manager situated in St. Petersburg liaison office, Russia.

2. Objective and purpose of the Final Evaluation

The overall objective of this Final Evaluation is to review progress towards the project's objectives and outcomes, assess the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of how the project has moved towards its objectives and outcomes, identify strengths and weaknesses in project design and implementation, and provide recommendations on design modifications that could have increased the likelihood of success, and on specific actions that might be taken into consideration in designing future projects of a related nature.

In pursuit of the overall objectives, the following key issues will be addressed during the Final Evaluation of the project:

Assess the extent to which the project achieved its overall objective

Assess the extent to which the development objectives and outputs of the IWP were achieved;

Describe the management processes – how did project activities change in response to new conditions encountered during implementation, and were the changes appropriate?

Review the clarity of roles and responsibilities of the various institutional arrangements for Management Programme implementation and the level of coordination between relevant players;

Review any partnership arrangements with other donors and related project and comment on their strengths and weaknesses;

Assess the level of public involvement in the elaboration of the Management Programme and recommend whether public involvement was appropriate to the goals of the project;

Describe and assess efforts of stakeholders in support of the implementation of the project;

Review and evaluate the extent to which project impacts have reached the intended beneficiaries;

Assess the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of project outcomes and benefits after completion of the project;

Describe key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects for sustainability of IWP outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach;

Review the implementation of the project monitoring and evaluation;

Describe the main lessons that have emerged in terms of:

- country ownership/drivenness;
- regional cooperation and inter-governmental cooperation; stakeholder participation;
- adaptive management processes;
- efforts to secure sustainability; and
- the role of M&E in project implementation.

In describing all lessons learned, an explicit distinction needs to be made between those lessons applicable only to this project, and lessons that may be of value more broadly, including to other, similar UNDP/GEF and EU environmental project initiatives.

The Report of the Final Evaluation will be stand-alone document that substantiates its recommendations and conclusions.

The Report will be targeted to meet the evaluation needs of all key stakeholders (GEF, UNDP, MOE, MNR, Peipsi CTC and other stakeholders of Estonia and Russia).

3. Scope of the Final Evaluation

The main components to be evaluated include project delivery, implementation and project finances. Each component will be evaluated using three criteria: effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness.

Project Delivery:

The Final Evaluation will assess to what extent the project has achieved its immediate objectives? It will also identify what have been produced and what impact products have achieved overall objective.

The section will include an assessment of the following priority areas:

Institutional arrangements

Strategic planning, preparatory work and implementation strategies,

Technical support,

Capacity building initiatives,

Project outputs,

Assumptions and risks, and

Project-related complementary activities.

Outcomes:

Efficiency of project activities,

Progress in the achievement of immediate objectives (level of indicator achievements when available)

Partnerships

Assessment of collaboration between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations,

Assessment of national-level involvement and perceptions

Assessment of local partnerships, and

Involvement of other stakeholders

Risk Management

Were problems/ constraints, which impacted on the successful delivery of the project, identified at project design?

Were there new threats/risks to project success that emerged during project implementation?

Were both kinds of risk appropriately dealt with?

Monitoring and evaluation

Assess the extent, appropriateness and effectiveness of adaptive management in project implementation

Has there been a monitoring and evaluation plans for the project?

Is the reporting framework effective/appropriate?

Has M&E been used as a management tool in directing project implementation in a timely manner?

Is this framework suitable for replication/ continuation for any future support?

Project Implementation

Review the project management structure and implementation arrangements at all levels, in order to provide an opinion on its efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This includes:

Processes and administration:

Project-related administration procedures;

Key decisions and outputs;

Major project implementation documents prepared with an indication of how the documents and reports have been useful.

Project oversight

Peipsi CTC

PIU in Pskov – Chudskoe Projekt

Liaison office in St. Petersburg

UNDP

Tripartite Review Process

Steering Committee

Project execution

Peipsi CTC as Executing Agency (under the UNDP National Execution (NEX) modality)

Project implementation

Project Manager's office

Project Implementation Units (PIU's): Peipsi CTC and Chudskoe Project

Project Finances

How well and cost-effective did financial arrangements of the project worked? This section will focus on the following three priority areas:

Project disbursements. Specifically:

Provide an overview of actual spending vs. budget expectations

Critically analyze disbursements to determine if funds have been applied effectively and efficiently.

Budget procedures

Did the Project Document provide enough guidance on how to allocate the budget?

Review of audits and any issues raised in audits; and subsequent adjustments to accommodate audit recommendations;

Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and provide an opinion on the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.

Coordinating mechanisms

Evaluate appropriateness and efficiency of coordinating mechanisms between national agencies, Peipsi CTC, PIU's (including internal coordination), UNDP and the GEF.

4. Methodology for Evaluation Approach

The Final Evaluation will be done through a combination of processes including a desk study, selected site visits and interviews - involving all stakeholders (but not restricted to): Peipsi CTC, UNDP, Government officials of Estonia and Russia on different levels, local municipalities, local NGO's, communities etc.

The methodology for the evaluation is envisaged to cover the following areas:

Desk study review of all relevant Project documentation

Consultations with Peipsi CTC, UNDP, PIUs and offices,

Site visits to Lake Peipsi and its adjacent areas, Tartu, Pskov and St.Petersburg and, optional, to Tallinn and Moscow

Interviews with stakeholders

Ministry of the Environment of Estonia (incl. Sub-departments)

Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and its territorial bodies

The Estonian-Russian Transboundary Water Commission

Local Municipalities

Local community representatives

NGO's from Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe region

5. Products

The main product of the Final Evaluation will be:

Final Evaluation Report based on the general format outline at Annex 1.

Final Evaluation Report

The Final Evaluation report will include:

Findings and conclusions in relation to issues to be addressed identified under sections 2 and 3 of this TOR;

Assessment of gaps and/or additional measures needed that might justify further funding to Peipsi/Chudskoe lake region;

Recommendations for future project interventions in the region.

The draft and final report will be written in the format outlined in Annex 1 of this TOR. The draft report will be submitted to Peipsi CTC no later than 31 January 2005.

Based on the feedback received from stakeholders a final report will be prepared by 28th of February 2006.

The report will be submitted both electronically and in hard copies.

The report will be supplemented by: Project Information Evaluation Sheet

Presentation of basic information on the project and evaluators' rating and textual assessment in free format.

Summary presentation of findings to be presented in final evaluation meeting

Team leader will conduct a final meeting for selected stakeholders and prepares summary presentation of conclusions and findings of the Final Evaluation.

The presentation will be followed by questions & answers session and round-table discussion on effective implementation of evaluation recommendations. Expected time for a final meeting is March 2006.

6. Evaluation Expert

The Final evaluation will be carried out by highly qualified individual expert.

Expert is responsible for:

overall management and successful completion of the final evaluation as well as for drafting, finalizing and presenting Final Evaluation Report to stakeholders (incl. Steering Committee).

drafting evaluation documents (questionnaires, interview lists etc)

conducting interviews with Estonian and Russian stakeholders.

review and analyze of project related documents (based in desk study)

Participation in the working meetings and Steering Committee meeting to present evaluation results and recommendations

Other tasks that are important to successful completion of final evaluation, etc.

Above are described some indicative tasks to be performed by evaluator. Expert will be responsible in further assignments of tasks and division of responsibilities according to objective and methodology set by Terms of Reference.

Professional requirements:

Expert is expected to be familiar with the region (both Estonian and Russian side of Lake Peipsi basin) and have basic knowledge of the project activity areas (such as transboundary waters, transboundary cooperation etc.)
Expert must have expertise on areas of environmental and/or water management, (incl. issues of eutrophication and non-point source pollution reduction approaches), additional knowledge on NGO community, business administration and public participation would be an asset.
The experience on monitoring and evaluation of international projects is required.

7. Implementation Arrangements

Evaluation management arrangements
Role of Peipsi CTC office in Tartu
Overall coordination of evaluation activities in Estonia and Russia
Overall administrative arrangement of evaluation
Organization of site visits in Estonia
Organization of meetings with selected stakeholders in Estonia
Role of Project Manager (located in St. Petersburg liaison office)
Coordination of evaluation activities in Estonia and Russia
Administrative and logistical support to Evaluation Team members during their mission in Russia
Role of Chudskoe Projekt in Pskov
Administrative and logistical support to Evaluation Team members during their mission in Russia
Coordination of evaluation activities in Pskov
Role of UNDP
Coordination of evaluation activities in Moscow
Administrative and logistical support for Evaluation Team in Moscow

Tentative timeframe

Tender	December 2005
Selection of evaluator	January 2006
Briefings for evaluator	January 2006
Desk review	January 2006
Visits to the field (including allocation for travel), interviews, questionnaires	
Estonia	January/February 2006
Russia	January/February 2006
Debriefings	January/February 2006
Validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders through circulation of initial reports for comments, meetings, and other types of feedback mechanisms -	January/February 2006
Preparation of draft evaluation report	January/February 2006
Comments form stakeholders, input of comments -	February 2006
Presentation of report & roundtable meeting	27-28 February 2006

Exact dates will be set with service contract. Final evaluation report must be presented to project Steering Committee on 27-28 February 2006 in Tartu, Estonia.

8. Report Submission

The report will be simultaneously submitted to:

Ms. Lea Vedder

Director

Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation

Aleksandri 9, Tartu 51004, Estonia

lea.vedder@ctc.ee

and Ms. Natalia Alexeeva

Project Manager

Center for Transboundary Cooperation - St.Petersburg

Kozhevennaya line 34 - 411, 199006, St.Petersburg,

Russia

natalia@ctcspb.ru

Annex 1.1: Outline of Final Evaluation Report

Executive summary:

Brief description of the project
Context and purpose of the evaluation
Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

Introduction:

Project background
Purpose of the evaluation
Key issues addressed
The outputs of the evaluation and how will they be used
Methodology of the evaluation
Structure of the evaluation

The Project and its development context:

Project start and its duration
Implementation status
Problems that the project seeks to address
Immediate and development objectives of the project
Main stakeholders
Results expected

Findings and Conclusions

Project delivery
Progress of the project as a whole in achieving its stated objectives
Effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation
Stakeholder participation, partnerships
Project implementation
Project oversight
Project execution
Project implementation
Project administration
Project planning
Monitoring and evaluation
Risk management
Project finances
Budget
UNDP/GEF budget
Governments contribution
EU/LIFE and TACIS budgets
Other funds
Financial planning
Budget procedures
Disbursements
Effectiveness of funding mechanism
Risks

Recommendations

Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

Lessons learned

Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

Annexes:

TOR
Itinerary
List of persons interviewed
Summary of field visits
List of documents reviewed
Questionnaire used and summary of results

Annex 2

Itinerary

Date/day	Location	Activity	Person involved	Expected outcome	Comments
1	2	3	4	5	6
January 22 Sunday	Amsterdam – Tallinn - Tartu	International travel	L. Supeno	Arrival to project location	
January 23 Monday	Tartu, Peipsi CTC ditto	Briefing Data collection, analysis. Desk study Interview	S.Talvet @CTC 10 am Aija Kosk@CTC 3 pm	Instructions, documents for desk study Background data	
January 24 Tuesday	Tartu, Peipsi CTC	Desk study Interviews Inception report preparation	L. Vedder@CTC 11 am Iti Aavik@CTC 2 pm L. Supeno	Data study Background data Based on the questionnaire Draft inception report	Based on the obtained data, the inception report is to be done before 25.01.06
January 25 Wednesday	Tartu, Peipsi CTC	Interviews Desk study Inception report	E. Soosaar @office 3 pm M. Nisu@CTC 11:30 AM L. Supeno	Project background data Background data Inception report	
January 26 Thursday	Tartu, Peipsi CTC Gollaste – Museum,	Site visits Nature museum Journalist	J. Maandel@CTC 11:30 am G. Roll M. Nisu Fjodor Daspanov	Project background data	
January 27 Friday	Tallin Interviews Travel to/from Tallin 370 km	Interviews Desk study Site visits planning	H. Liiv, A Jaani A Laane M Metsur L. Supeno S. Talvet	Project background data Project background data	
January 28 Saturday	Tartu, Peipsi CTC	Desk study	L. Supeno	Project background data analysis	
January 29 Sunday	Tartu -St. Petersburg travel	Briefing	L. Supeno	Project background data analysis	
January 30 Monday	St. Petersburg	Desk study Data collection	L. Supeno St. P. Office	Data on the project	
January 31 Tuesday	St. Petersburg	Interviews St. Ptrsbrg PIU	N Alexeeva @ 12:30 L. Supeno	Data on the project	For final report
February 1 Wednesday	St. Petersburg – Tartu travel	Site visit Leningrad Water Ministry	Vladimir Popov, . L. Supeno	Data on the project	For final report
February 2 Thursday	Tartu	Data analysis Draft evaluation report preparation	L. Supeno	Data on the project for the final evaluation	
February 3 Friday	Tartu	Trip Interviews	S. Talvet@CTC 10 am G. Roll 11 am O.Vassilenko@telcon V. TuurbelCTC 2 pm	Data on the project for the final evaluation	

			Ulo Sults CTC 3 pm		
February 4 Saturday	Tartu, travel to Tallin to Amsterdam	International Travel	L. Supeno		
February 5 Sunday	The Hague, NL	Draft final report preparation	L. Supeno		
February 6 Monday	The Hague, NL	Draft final report preparation	L. Supeno		
February 7 Tuesday	The Hague, NL	Draft final report preparation	L. Supeno		
February 8 Wednesday	The Hague, NL	Draft final report preparation	L. Supeno		
February 9 Thursday	The Hague, NL	Draft final report preparation Telcon Interview w/TACIS Rep: Lasse Koivunen, Finland 4 pm.	L. Supeno telcon TACIS TL Lasse Koivunen, Finland		
February 10 Friday	The Hague, NL	Draft final report submission Draft final evaluation report distribution to the stakeholders for the feedback within 10 working days Comments & feedback to be sent to L. Supeno by February 21	L. Supeno S. Talvet S. Talvet	Ms Talvet will send the report to the stakeholders The stakeholders will send their comments to Ms. Talvet by February 21. Ms Talvet's office will forward the comments to L. Supeno	
February 11 Saturday					
February 12 Sunday					
February 13 Monday					
February 14 Tuesday					
February 15 Wednesday					
February 16 Thursday					
February 17 Friday					

February 18 Saturday					
February 19 Sunday					
February 20 Monday					
February 21 Tuesday					
February 22 Wednesday					
February 23 Thursday		Feedback and comments on the draft report	S. Talvet		
February 24 Friday					
February 25 Saturday					
February 26 Sunday	Amsterdam – Tallinn	International travel	L. Supeno	Arrival to the project location	
February 27 Monday	Tallinn	Workshop presentation	Stakeholders Final Workshop	Discussions Presentation	
February 28 Tuesday	Tallinn	Workshop presentation	Stakeholders Final Workshop	Discussions Presentation	
March 1 Wednesday	Tallinn - Amsterdam	International travel	L. Supeno		

Annex 3

List of persons interviewed

CTC Office Interviews

Management

Natalia Alexeeva & Sille Talvet

Gulnara Roll

Aija Kosk & Olga Vassilenko (telcon)

Lea Vedder

Staff:

1. Iti Aavik, Peipsi CTC Small Grants Coordinator
2. Eilika Molder, Web-Master

Questions:-

Interviewee role, organization, level of involvement, project start, time frame

Project implementation and overall status

Problems and main risks encountered

Immediate and development objectives of the project; bottlenecks/resolutions

Stakeholders

Results expected

Project delivery

Progress of the project as a whole in achieving its stated objectives

Effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation

Stakeholder participation, partnerships

Project implementation

Project oversight, execution, implementation, administration

Project design and planning and initial changes, if any

Project Cycle Management, Log Frame Analysis – familiarity and to what extent used; and if not, why?

Future improvement of deliverables (quantity and quality)

Monitoring and evaluation –any agency, feedback given/used; resulting improvements

Risk management – how identified risks were managed

Lessons learned or improvements and/or recommendations for future project plans

Project finances

Financial planning

Budget procedures, Disbursements

Effectiveness of funding mechanism

Risks

Plus ‘Success Indicators’

Pilot Project:

Ulo Sults

Virve Tuubel

Lasse Koivunen, TACIS component, (telcon)

Tallin Interviews

Mr. Jalmar Mandel, Head of the Tartu County Environmental Department of Estonian Ministry of the Environment (Viru-Peipsi WMP, LIFE)

Mr. Endel Soosaar, Tartu County Administration, Deputy - Head of Economic Development Dept. (Steering Committee member, eco-farming, eco-tourism)

Mr. Ain Lääne, Project manager of the EU LIFE Viru-Peipsi CAMP

Mr. Harry Liiv, Deputy Secretary of Environmental Management Department, Head of the Integrated Water Management WG of the Transboundary Commission

St. Petersburg PIU Interviews:

Armand Elena, UNDP, Head of the Environmental Unit; St. Pete' telcon
Popov Vladimir, Former SC; Leningrad Complex Regional Water Admin

Questions:-

Background to component

Timetable

Activities undertaken

Results/ achievements

Feed-back on Results

Problems & solutions

Lessons learnt

Recommendations

Awareness of overall project objectives

Project Management issues

Any other points

Annex 4

Summary of field visits

The Evaluator selected was:

Lisa Supeno, MSc.
International Independent Expert

Programme

The Evaluator completed a number of meetings and discussions with key stakeholders suggested by the PIT including the project offices in Tartu, Tallinn, Estonia and St. Petersburg, Russia (22 January –10 February, 2006) followed by desk study. The results presentation was made at the SC meeting held on February 27-28 in Tallinn, Estonia.

Activities and dates are indicated in Annex 2 Itinerary and Annex 3 correspondingly.

Estonia:

1. Tartu CTC office location and CTC - PIU Implementation Unit (January 22-29, 2006 and February 1 -4, 2006)
2. Kallaste County – Nature Museum (January 26, 2006)
3. Tallinn – various staff interviews @ office locations (January 27, 2006)

Russia:

1. St. Petersburg – PIU Implementation Unit (January 29-February 1, 2006)

Estonia:

1. Tallinn – Evaluation results presentation at the SC (February 27 – 28, 2006)

Annex 5

List of Documents Reviewed

1. Peipsi-Chudskoe UNDP/GEF project “Development and implementation of the Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Program” description with the Annexes A - L.
2. Project Performance Reports (period review from the project start upto its end, i.e. January 2003 – December 2005) with Annexes.
3. Technical/Financial Proposal/Agreement, April 11, 2002
4. Annual Project Reports 2003, 2004
5. Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin Management Program
6. Public Participation Plan, updated version
7. Financial Agreement with the UNDP, 2002
8. Budgeting change, 2004
9. Pepsi/GEF budget proposal, 2001
10. Annual Plans 2004, 2005
11. Quarter financial reports, 2003-2006
12. Annual Financial Reports, 2003-2005
13. Minutes of the Steering Committee meetings, five in total
14. Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA), 2005
15. GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures, 2002
16. GEF Guidelines for Implementing Agencies to conduct Terminal Evaluation, March 4, 2005
17. UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results, 2002
18. Preliminary Report of the EU Tacis CBC Baltic Line 2000 project “Environmental Management of Lake Chudskoe”
19. Mid-Term Evaluation Report on the UNDP/GEF project, June 2004
20. Project’s newsletters and press releases, 2004-2005.

Annex 6

I.

Questionnaire used and summary of results

UNDP/GEF Lake Peipsi Project – Final Evaluation – Stakeholder Assessment Questionnaire

An important component of this mid-term review is an assessment of stakeholder perception of the progress of this project and their involvement in the project. The stakeholders fall into a number of categories:

1. International Stakeholders
 - UNDP/ GEF
 - Peipsi CTC
 - Estonian – Russian Trans-boundary Water Commission
 - International NGOs
 - EC Tacis
 - Other international projects
2. Government Officials
 - Estonian Government officials
 - Russian Government officials
3. Local interest
 - Local municipalities
 - Local Community representatives;
 - Local NGOs
 - Local projects

This assessment will evaluate the level of collaboration between

- the project and identified stakeholders
- between different government agencies
- international organization;
- local organizations

The purpose of the interviews will be to establish the level of contact between stakeholders and the project, to establish the 'value' placed on the project by the stakeholders and to obtain feedback on the execution of the project. The questionnaire should be divided into several sections – to establish the role of the person being interviewed and their involvement with Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe and then to establish their perception of the progress of the project, the information being provided by the CTC and the involvement of the public in general in the improvements to the environment as a result of this project.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please mention your name, position in Project, organization, level of involvement and time frame of being involved.
2. During the planning phase did any changes occur in the project plan? To your opinion how did the project go on?
3. What were the problems and main risks encountered?
4. How the bottlenecks were resolved and by whom and what means?
5. Did the project reach its 4 main objectives and to what extent?

6. What can be done better in the future to improve the quality and quantity of deliverables (comments and recommendations in other words)
7. Did the interviewee have familiarity with PCM (Project Cycle Management) and/or LFA (Logical Framework Approach) methods e.g. GEF?
8. If any, how was the Project monitoring conducted, and how? Any feedback received from the organization conducted the monitoring and how the feedback was used to improve the performance?
9. How the identified risks were managed?
10. Did the project planning experience any changes during the implementation phase e.g. change scope of work shrink/change during the project? And why?
11. Were the PCM principles and the Logframe used at all? And if not why?

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Is there already the Agreement on Water Quality Status between Russia and Estonia officially signed?

1. Was the Monitoring Programme agreed by Estonia and Russia already, if not when?
2. What is the opinion on the UNDP/GEF Management Software ? Is it good, efficient or inflexible and useless? (the question is to Peipsi CTC and Pskov PIUs)
3. How many seminars and workshops were organized and conducted during the whole project (I could not find it on the Web)? It is even better to know the split Estonia-Russia

ANSWER:

64 seminars-workshops in Estonian side

4. How many publications were produced including the booklets, newsletters, manuals, guides, postcards (it was only one with the fish as I saw), other printed materials, etc during the whole project?

ANSWER:

booklets - 3

newsletters - 3

manuals - 2

guides - 0

postcards - 1

other printed materials (leaflets) - 1

What language dominated?

ANSWER:

booklets – 3 (Estonian, Russian, English)

newsletters – 3 (Estonian, Russian, English)

manuals – 2 (Estonian)

guides - 0

postcards – 1 (Estonian, English)

other printed materials (leaflets) – 1 (English)

Were the recommendations made by the Mid-Term Evaluation Team taken into account, e.g. produce the published materials as one document but into languages (means two languages in side one document)?

ANSWER:

Unfortunately we have published all booklets and manuals before mid-term evaluation. In case of project documents we followed this advice.

What kind of publications were produced?

ANSWER:

All publication are region (Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe) specific and/or on problems/solutions concerning surface waters.

5. How often the project Web site was updated?

ANSWER:

Updating of Web-site based on information availability.

What is its future after the project completion?

ANSWER:

After two years it will be closed

Did the Web master have any idea how many people visited the site (there is a special counter)?

ANSWER:

There is counter.

If yes, what is the number?

6. How often did the public at large receive the information about the project and from the project?

ANSWER:

Information on the project was issued before and after every event organized in the frame of the project. Before every event was issued the following information: what kind of event is coming; where; whom; main objectives. After every event was issued the following information: main objectives and main results of the event. This information was available on the project homepage and also sent out by lists.

What did the common people in both countries think about this project?

ANSWER:

Speaking with project team local people was very positive on this project. At the same time they mentioned that mainly it is project to prepare policy/management documents.

Did the mass media make the project visible, if yes how and why in both countries?

ANSWER:

Mass media received press releases on every event that was bigger than small workshop for grassroots' NGOs.

How many articles in magazines, newspapers, etc were published and why?

ANSWER:

3 times in Estonia

How many radio and TV broadcasting were made in both countries?

ANSWER:

5 times in Estonia

7. What is the story with the Russian museum?

ANSWER:

I am not competent to answer this question.

The Estonian is operational already.

ANSWER:

In Estonia Lake Peipsi Life Room (Museum) is operating since June, 2004. It is in Kallaste, in the region with a lot of small museums for educational purposes.

How is the Russian part going to go on with the public awareness? What are the plans of the Estonian part with regard to the same questions?

ANSWER:

I am not competent to answer these questions.

Are there any solid plans with certain financing found?

ANSWER:

Peipsi CTC has some projects (running already) that would be consider as follow-up activities of the UNDP/GEF project.

8. Were the results from the Tacis project and EU LIFE project incorporated in the Lake Basin Management Program

ANSWER:

EU TACIS and EU LIFE projects results were incorporated in the Lake Basin Management Program. Lake Basin Management Programme was drafted based on results of these projects plus expert opinion.

and when

ANSWER:

EU TACIS and EU LIFE projects results were available in November and September 2005, respectively.

and to what extent?

ANSWER:

Lake Basin Management Programme was drafted based on results of these projects plus expert opinion.

What is the status of the Monitoring Program?

ANSWER:

Monitoring Programme was submitted to Water Quality and Monitoring WG of the Estonian-Russian Joint Commission on Transboundary Waters on June, 2005. It is accepted by the Secretaries of both side of the Joint Commission as draft document that will be developed by the WG in the future.

9. How was the local industries (except farmers and fishery) on both sides (Estonia & Russia) were involved in the project?

ANSWER:

Local industries were not involved into the project actively.

What were the practical results of this participation/involvement?

10. Please give the brief information of the two pilot projects, i.e. eco-tourism and eco-farming. When started and ended?

How was the process and attitude? What was the budget allocated? Was it sufficient? Was the specific objective(s) achieved? What are the practical results? Any lessons learned and recommendations for future?

11. What was the stakeholders' involvement (*passive/indifferent/partially active/very active*)?

ANSWER:

In the regions with significant environmental problems (Ida and Lääne Virumaa) stakeholders participated in different seminars and workshops very actively. In the regions without significant environmental problems (Põlvamaa, Jõgevamaa, Võrumaa) stakeholder were rather indifferent.

Any lessons learned, if yes What will be the necessary steps in the future?

ANSWER:

NGO as Peipsi CTC should deal mainly with educating local people and providing information on the state of environment in language understandable for local people.

12. Were any other NGOs involved in the project except those that ran the project Peipsi CTC, Tartu and Pskov?

ANSWER:

Other NGOs were involved as stakeholders for information dissemination or consultation. Also they were encouraged to apply small grant money.

13. What was the level of support from the local governments (*passive/indifferent/partially active/very active*)?

ANSWER:

Representatives of local governments participated actively in different seminars, workshops and meeting. Preparation of water management plan as well as water supply and sewerage treatment development plan were in agenda of all local governments according to the Estonian legislation at the same time. Therefore, they were interested to get information.

Any concrete examples?

14. How did the Small grant facility within the project work?

ANSWER:

Within the first call for application we received 12 applications and all these applications received money.

What was the total number of the proposals submitted during the whole period?

ANSWER:

78

How many were awarded?

ANSWER:

40

What was the total budget spent in total

ANSWER:

5845 USD

Per small project in average?

ANSWER:

150 USD

What kind of projects were they?

ANSWER:

95% of these projects were educational type. Main topic: practical environmental protection exercises in local communes.

What were the practical results?

ANSWER:

Cleaned surrounding (collection of abandon waste)

Local people learned traditional handicraft from natural materials

Different practical studies for school pupils in nature

Interviews summary of results

Findings per Management and Staff Consultations and Interviews

Component	Problems	Lessons Learned	Future Recommendations
Project Delivery	<p>1. While there is a joint Water Management Programme for E and R pending final signatures, currently there is no reason for E and R governments to meet as their respective and mutual water management programmes are nearing completion so far.</p> <p>2. JWC Russian members appointees or officials may change on committee requiring new set of relations, issues and priorities each time causing slowdown of JWC finalization progress. Change from environment committee rep to lawyer rep detracts from quality of SC and JWC interactivities technically. Change of perception and priorities for R side may deter project goals with Estonian side.</p> <p>3. With added political agendas it is much more difficult to create/complete concrete tables of deadlines, timelines, tasks and needed materials.</p> <p>4. Coordinated state monitoring delivery could be improved from its existing flow between the three agencies with data and processes.</p> <p>5. Also difference between Russian ministries means different responsibilities to river</p>	<p>1. Through GEF communication kept open and facilitated between 2 governments.</p> <p>2. One special meeting was held for TACIS, Life and GEF in January 2004.</p> <p>2 By keeping political issues separate there is less risk as part of the project and tasks can better usually reach completion; insofar as precise science terms or management divisions may not fit bureaucratic needs yet it may be understood, informally, at perhaps higher government levels but not in project specifics</p> <p>3 Management planning is reflected in the Leningrad Water Admin./Project Database good data correlations and flows between Russia and Estonia. This includes success of joint monitoring mission financed by R oblast for one vessel, 2 countries, and one team taking samplings. Although initially unplanned it was very successful example.</p> <p>4 Very good and meaningful R and E discussions of Cost Benefit Analysis of problems, projects and agendas with plus and minuses of each problem at the Joint E and R Committee level. Independently, this also occurred at the Farmer level whereby they were instructed how to calculate sufficient gains in order to be in business altogether.</p> <p>5.Pilot project NGOs along with Peipsi CTC, Tartu and Pskov and other NGOs were involved as stakeholders for information dissemination or consultation and also encouraged to apply for small grant monies for their NGOs related to the Project outcomes.</p> <p>6. For eco-farming, Estonia 6-7% agricultural land managed by eco-farming and – Russia also eco-farming project shows just initial steps taken – less than 1%. In Pskov, Leningrad</p>	<p>1. A joint protocol implementation with step by step measures is needed for the Joint Water Commission for the two countries.</p> <p>2. To write a final report for project in future have criteria and indicators, who is responsible, before writing, e.g. at state and ministerial level so to better progress the completed work without setbacks.</p> <p>3. Most important result was to develop with R and E a common understanding of the ecological state of the lake and methods to manage and evaluate. The common understanding was pivotal goal.</p> <p>4. Estonia should look for state funds, EU and others. Will also try to find other funds themselves. Russian local authorities have to lobby for funds to get money for environmental issues so not at top of priority list for Federal financial budgeting. \$ in St. Petersburg not in Leningrad oblast or Pskov region. Entrepreneurs are invited to NGO meetings also.</p> <p>5. One team member is optimistic about monitoring coordination on water quality for E side but less optimistic for Russian side.</p> <p>6. One Russian SC member was delighted to participate in the funding of the vessel that set out for combining the sample work with the two country reps and equally</p>

<p>water quality and problems may differ.</p> <p>6. It took many small agreements and implementations before perceptions of committees did change and negotiating moved towards definite resolutions.</p> <p>7. If Russia has: env't standards, different norms, monitoring procedures based on end of pipe solutions and; If Estonia has to comply with the Water Framework Directive and monitors the state of water from sample points along the river area Then Estonia and Russia need to agree to the Transboundary Water Commission monitoring group so both can accept to monitor the same way. In the future both must not only sign but ratify or enact. This risk is not managed yet.</p> <p>8. The co-dependency of Viru Life and TACIS affected timeliness and efficiency of project including the inability for all the risks to be managed</p> <p>9. Kallaste Lake Peipsi museum risk is less funding for advertising and new location for growth & tourism. Project web site will be closed after two years sans funding.</p> <p>10. Russian environment data quality and quantity is much less available than Estonian and slows progress.</p> <p>11. No formal monitoring of project process. Yet SC members overlap with working group members who can informally see</p>	<p>oblast, there is abundant land, especially near Lake Peipsi, but few farmers interested in agricultural activities. This is since most R agricultural activity there is in Eastern Pskov, the opposite side to Lake Peipsi and far off.</p> <p>7. Awareness raising from study means Jogevasmaa county considers itself as a whole unit and not just one city only for tourism so better planning.</p> <p>8. Maybe certain regions need eco-protection, fragile for big tourism and some city ordinances for preserving historical looks.</p> <p>9. The project meant that now the region is looked at a whole too; not only Estonia and Russia counterparts and in joint efforts; but also the Lake Peipsi Region in total and it's qualities and characteristics, features and attributes.</p> <p>Eco-tourism for a clean environment – new mission.</p> <p>10. Can also replace former fishing industry as a means of livelihood for many in the region.</p> <p>11. Lake Peipsi 5,000 km sq. on Russian side and 4,300 km sq on Estonian side. May 2005 study results in R. Study involved communities just that bordered the Lake.</p> <p>Russian side especially interested in water tourism.</p> <p>May 2005 seminar in R. – reps, entrepreneurs, local reps, experts : could discuss how could work. Future ongoing cooperation – entrepreneurs and personal contacts.</p> <p>Met in August: Eco-tourism like NGO in Estonia for possibilities New terminology in Estonia e.g. eco, nature</p> <p>So far tourism is not suitable for big tourist groups and you need a guide especially.</p> <p>Working out standards for eco-tourism guides</p> <p>12. With continual meetings the perceptions of Russia and Estonia Joint Committee Members did indeed</p>	<p>as enthusiastic about the managerial level of the database that shares the various environment data for all 3 of the projects.</p> <p>7. Evaluator suggested aquaculture inquiry for eco-farming/fish stocking of the lake area i.e. Prince Edward Island/mussels/Canada</p> <p>Keeping the web materials for broad dissemination in 3 languages served well: The languages being: Russian, Estonian and English .</p> <p>8. Regional benefit example is a great benefit for Region – all the problems with the environment was brought out and published in the media and got response from the local people and new actions.</p> <p>Remarkably, this is the first time such an initiative (problems, media, folk response) has occurred in the Region of Estonia. Almost like a pilot project itself.</p> <p>9. Offshoots and good results from GEF project Already have new project: Transboundary River Basin Management Program is pending: CTC is from Estonian side and Russian side is CTC St. Petersburg is a partner Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Estonia , Russia and Sweden TRABANT with the Water Framework Directive. Deals with most public participation issues that originated with the Mantra East/UNDP section and developed successfully. Some monitoring issues and also the know-how transfer to other river basins too is quite good.</p> <p>Can provide development cooperation and</p>
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	<p>some degree of quality control. No use of PCM and Logframe.</p> <p>Enabling /providing laptop to an Estonian member necessary for effective interchanges, in addition to PIU offices.</p> <p>12. Pilot project eco-tourism area in Estonia may need conservation ordinances/historical preservation at some areas.</p> <p>13. Pilot project eco-tourism, some R consideration of 8 rules, and also consider fragility of nature in area before tourism development.</p> <p>14. Eco-tourism in Estonia funded by State priorities are Tallinn and an island; therefore municipalities must each distinguish own cities/regions including gaining own funding.</p> <p>15. Representatives of local governments in E would like to get more information. They participated actively in different seminars, workshops and preparing water management plan, water supply and sewerage treatment development plans in all local government agendas according to environment legislation at same time.</p> <p>16. Pilot project eco-farming info seminars to farmers need books to add to environment know how so to back new environment protection measures/equipment.</p> <p>17. Farm seminars better held not in summer but in winter when they are farming.</p> <p>18. Eco-farming could include aqua-culture (i.e. Prince Edward Island, mussels culture idea) but of new stocks or simply</p>	<p>progress towards mutual collaboration, cooperation, participation; albeit more negotiating and less concrete activities transpired with many smaller agreements building to larger agreements</p> <p>13. Environment concerns of eutrophication, measuring and monitoring became a GEF funded project and will become joint programmes for future projects/best practices/know-how transfer in Lake Basin management Community Schemes – public participation, NGO and development project funding advisory for multi-country approaches and transboundary. NGO’s can actually provide: idea generating, cooperation building, information sharing (including lectures, seminars, best practices, etc.) for the new regions, countries, areas, nature and eco-projects development</p>	<p>development assistance to other countries for rivers, lakes, water management issues, public participation: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and other countries is funded by Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the development cooperation.</p> <p>10. It may be best to have one central organizing unit for the three projects rather than separate areas.</p> <p>11. Good practice that NGOs can ‘pool’ their resources for applying for new grants and funding.</p> <p>12. It may be necessary for Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to handle future fundraising efforts that have to do with the Russian and Estonian joint water management project now.</p>
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	<p>re-stocking rotations much more difficult to achieve as post hoc rather than ad hoc. throughout.</p> <p>19. Pilot project mapping took place Estonia eco-tourism cited all problems and all work done in area for mapping scheme to manage pilot project. Possibly Russian too.</p> <p>20. Small Grants proposal submitted 78 overall were submitted and 40 budget of 5,845 with 150 USD. per grant. Yet, number of active volunteers was very high w/o pay also.</p> <p>21. Pskov office finds it most useful to involve as many local stakeholders before, or earlier in the project to ensure much more sustainability.</p> <p>22. Necessary to write the final Joint Water Programme from many sources of reports after the fact of meetings and project over rather than ongoing or during the project makes it</p>		
	<p>23. Installing new computer to Pskov meant additional hard-working juridical team just to allocate properly and successful then receive/reassign to beneficiary the new beneficiary equipment</p>	<p>14. As a result of the eco-tourism study, developing the area is now easier. There are some investors that Virve has access to that would like to develop business plans. It is for entrepreneurs, how fast are they willing to develop more. The development is already visible and is giving people new direction and things to do and why.</p>	<p>13. Moscow GEF unit is always seen as very cooperative and supportive for various PIUs, managers, committee members et al.</p>
	<p>24. Can't insure that all invited entrepreneurs for future aid will attend the trainings, info sessions or seminars or GEF presentations.</p>	<p>15. Already good examples and results, i.e. where a whole community draws together for tourist – before Poltsamaa was just a city and now it has some more identity as the county itself in addition to the degree of tourism Now all Jogeve county altogether and not just a city for tourism</p>	<p>14. Suggested that GEF and TACIS in the future keep more independence from each other in project areas better.</p>
		<p>16. Both E and R side found PM great</p>	

		<p>efforts useful with agendas distributed before Joint Committee and Steering Committee meetings. Additionally, minutes, quarterly reports and others were found to be efficient as monitoring and progress indicators to certain extent.</p>	
Project Implementation		<p>17. The 'evolution' of joint R and E cooperative, communicative, monitoring and measuring measures seems apparent with marked results to-date so far.</p> <p>18 Farmers and schoolteachers are more open minded about why not to pollute, using E envt'l law, getting new technologies in future and how to consider to change polluting farming behaviors. Can't implement immediately yet would consider options to add technology or practices since had education seminars. Yet a new willingness to get involved based on affirmations from regional authorities on their using their own know-how with environment solutions. Institutional acknowledgement of new better practices is useful.</p> <p>19. GEF and Life Committees did discuss targets and methods during design phase to avoid replications in each project.</p> <p>20. Development and training new projects stem from GEF project:: public participation in river basin management; know how on how to apply for funds and manage NGO's;</p> <p>Development programme and area monitoring programme for both Estonia and Russia sides</p> <p>b) env't education and NGO strengthening: seminars, tourism, envt' issues increase focus</p> <p>FBBRT - Latvia, Lithuanian, Finnish, Russian, Estonian and Swedish Interactive Project for Transboundary River Basin Management and Framework Directive. Dealing with public participation issues (derived from UNDP and Mantra East) and monitoring issues (know how transfer). Talus/CHU Development cooperation advisory : on public participation and water management (e.g. Kazakhstan, Kyrgistan, Moldova, and more)</p> <p>21. Management process/procedures are a primary output in the new capacities</p>	

		<p>for each side respectively.</p> <p>22. Cooperation: In a sense the counterpart communication of both Russian and Estonian is like a 'pilot project' in itself'. There are different laws, perspective and ideas of where to go further and different positions at the State level. So with this in mind and looking at the cooperation with Estonia and Russia and stakeholders yes as key decisions and outputs are useful.</p>	
Project Finances	<p>25. Less disbursement chance since Russian financial priorities differ from Estonian: Leningrad oblast overall needs all new financing for new equipments.</p> <p>26. There is no Bank common to both countries and to their accounts so have worked out a R national and E regional bank solution</p>		

Annex 7

Project Information Evaluation Sheet

Content	Priority Areas	Criteria		
		Effectiveness (1 = highly satisfactory, 2 –satisfactory, 3 – marginally satisfactory, 4 – unsatisfactory, 5 – N/A)	Efficiency (1 = highly satisfactory, 2 –satisfactory, 3 – marginally satisfactory, 4 – unsatisfactory, 5 – N/A)	Timeliness (1 = highly satisfactory, 2 –satisfactory, 3 – marginally satisfactory, 4 – unsatisfactory, 5 – N/A)
1	2	3	4	5
Project Delivery	<i>1. Institutional arrangements:</i>	2.1	2.1	2.1
	Strategic planning, preparatory work and implementation strategies	2	2	2
	Technical support	2	2	2
	Capacity building initiatives	2	2	2
	Project outputs	3	3	3
	Assumptions and risks	2	2	2
	Project-related complementary activities			
	<i>2. Outcome:</i>	2	2	2
	Efficiency of project activities	2	2	2
	Progress in the achievement of immediate objectives (level of indicator achievements when available)	2	2	2
	<i>3. Partnership:</i>	1.7	1.7	2
	Assessment of collaboration between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations	2	2	2
	Assessment of national-level involvement and perceptions	2	2	2
	Assessment of local partnerships	1	1	1
	Involvement of other stakeholders	2	2	2
	<i>4. Risk Management:</i>	2.6	3	2.3
	Problems/constraints effected the successful project delivery. Their identification at the project design phase	2	3	2
New threats/risks emerged during project implementation	3	3	3	
Both kinds of risks dealt appropriately	3	3	2	
<i>5. Monitoring and evaluation:</i>	2.2	2.2	2.6	
Assessment of the extent, appropriateness and effectiveness of adaptive management in	2	2	2	

	project implementation			
	Availability of a monitoring and evaluation plans for the project	3	3	3
	Reporting framework was effective or appropriate	2	2	2
	M&E used as a management tool in directing project implementation in a timely manner	2	2	3
	Suitability of this framework for replication/continuation for any future support	2	2	3
Project Implementation	<i>6. Process & administration:</i>	2	2	2
	Project-related administration procedures	2	2	2
	Key decisions and outputs	2	2	2
	Major project implementation documents prepared with an indication of how the documents and reports have been useful.	2	2	2
	<i>7. Project oversight:</i>	2	1.8	2
	Peipsi CTC	1	2	2
	PIU in Pskov – Chudskoe Projekt	3	2	2
	Liaison office in St. Petersburg	2	2	2
	UNDP	2	2	2
	Tripartite Review Process	2	2	2
	Steering Committee	2	2	2
	<i>8. Project execution:</i>	2	2	2
	Peipsi CTC as Executing Agency, under the UNDP National Execution (NEX) modality	2	2	2
	<i>9. Project implementation:</i>	2	2	2
	Project Manager's office	2	2	2
Project Implementation Units (PIU's): Peipsi CTC and Chudskoe Project	2	2	2	
<i>10. Project disbursements, specifically:</i>	2	2	2	
Overview of actual spending vs. budget expectations	2	2	2	
Disbursement analysis in terms of the funds used effectively and efficiently	2	2	2	

Project Finances	<i>11. Budget procedures:</i>	2	2	2
	Sufficient guidance on how to allocate the budget provided by the Project Document	2	2	2
	Review of audits and any issues raised in audits; subsequent adjustments to accommodate the audit recommendations	2	2	2
	Review of the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and an opinion expressed on the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions	2	2	2
	<i>12. Coordinating mechanisms:</i>	2	2	2
Assessment of appropriateness and efficiency of coordinating mechanisms between national agencies, Peipsi CTC, PIU's including internal coordination, UNDP and the GEF.	2	2	2	