

DRAFT

**RUSSIA STRATEGIC PLANNING
WORKSHOP II, RU0031
- CONSULTANCY-**

BACKGROUND PAPER

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GLOSSARY

AID	American International Development Agency
BCC	Biodiversity Conservation Center
BIOTA	Lysenko's proposed Biodiversity Monitoring/GIS Centre
CFS	Canadian Forest Service
CNPPA	Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas
EFM	Environmental Framework Program of the World Bank
EMP	Environmental Management Project of The World Bank
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
ISAR	Institute of Soviet and American Relation
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NO	National Organization of WWF
RPO	Russian Program Office
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Center
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

INTRODUCTION

Based on the outcome of the Strategic Planning Workshop for the Russia Programme in September 1995, the Russia Country Team felt the need for more background information before deciding on activities and focal areas for the next five years. Against this background the service of the consultant was contracted to assist the team in the identification of suitable intervention areas within the given framework of WWF's biome classification, proposed action plans and adopted strategies. More specifically, the consultant was requested to assess priority areas for Russia's biodiversity conservation program, following a critical evaluation of key conservation issues, involvement of the international donor community and WWF's current and proposed engagement (see Appendix III for Terms of Reference).

The assessment shows that an objective determination of conservation priorities for a country as large and diverse as Russia is not feasible or practical. There are too many variables and unknowns for an unbiased approach and there is no single one method to objectively determine such priorities. This was confirmed by the international donor community which struggles with the same problem. The recommendations provided in this report have therefore to be taken with a "grain of salt"; they are based on findings which basically confirm the results of WWF's SWAT analysis from September 1995, which identified internal and external critical factors influencing the decision making process. The analysis of key issues addressed in this report, was taken one step further than in the workshop.

In general, although the expectations with reference to this assignment may not be fully met, the value of the findings is the re-assurance of the Russia Country Team in being "on track" in its priority setting efforts.

APPROACH

In accordance with the Terms of Reference the consultant discussed pertinent biodiversity conservation issues, donor involvement in Russia and priority setting concepts in particular with key persons from respective donor agencies and WWF NOs in North America and Europe. This was followed by discussions at the World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC) and meetings with representatives from key agencies and organizations in Moscow. The Russian perspective on in-country priorities for nature protection was assessed in a "brainstorm" modified SWAT workshop in Moscow with twenty multidisciplinary experts from Government Agencies, NGOs, University, Academy of Science and the private sector. The findings were discussed during a concluding visit to Gland. The exercise was complemented through an intensive literature search with emphasis on materials provided through contacted agencies and persons. Based on the discussions and a comprehensive literature review, key issues related to Russia's nature

protection in general, and WWF's involvement in particular, are addressed in this report. Resulting are recommendations for WWF's conceptual planning efforts and priority setting exercises, arrived at principally by logical exclusion which narrows the scope of suitable, practical and effective interventions.

The consultant's itinerary and list of contacts is attached as Appendix I, a list of workshop participants as Appendix II.

1 GENERIC ISSUES

1.1 Biodiversity conservation and Russia's Protected Area System

There is general consensus that Russia's Protected Area System, inspite its shortcomings, is the backbone of biodiversity conservation in the country. Covering nearly 6 % of Russia, it is the largest, globally one of the most important, and until recently, one of the best organized systems in the world. It is composed of Zapovedniks (strict nature reserves), National Parks (resource use and controlled access permitted), Zakazniks (special flora and fauna reserves), and Natural Monuments, of which eight have been earmarked as World Heritage Sites and sixteen are part of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve program. Although a significant number of species are protected within Russian Nature Reserves, many remain unprotected, facing ever increasing pressures in the aftermath of Perestroika. The biological diversity of Russia is well documented by a core of dedicated specialists, who meticulously recorded scientific data with focus on protected areas over decades. Only a fraction of this invaluable source of information, however, has been published; most of it is inaccessible, filed away in form of handwritten manuscripts and field notebooks, threatened to be lost forever if not transferred soon into computerized databases.

Background studies by WWF and The World Bank indicate that at least one half of the Zapovedniks and one third of the National Parks are in or approaching a critical state, and that the system itself is in jeopardy. The sweeping political and economic changes have resulted in uncontrolled resource utilization - often supported by local administration-, and deregulation of public lands, now subject to clearcutting, mining, agriculture and industrial pollution, causing large scale wildlife habitat destruction and disturbance. Threats to the protected area system are posed through a breakdown of the support structure, lack of funds and personnel; poaching has become widespread, endangering charismatic species such as the Amur Tiger, Amur leopards, Saiga antelope, Brown bear, Sturgeons, and others. The conservation status of many species is currently unknown.

The current situation is aptly summarized by Simonov et al (Simonov, 1995) as follows:

The ability of the protected area system to respond to Russia's new and changing realities are being hampered by serious policy and institutional failure, in addition to severe reductions in funding. Shortcomings are apparent at all levels of protected area

management: interagency cooperation, departmental functions, and operation of individual protected areas. Management structures within the responsible federal agencies are weak and fragmented. Planning for conservation programs in individual reserves is inadequate, and neither Zapovedniks or National Parks are required to develop management plans. There is little incentive for much needed innovation and planning, or for projects encouraging sustainable use of natural resources. Work conducted by scientists in nature reserves is poorly integrated into management and policy development... Virtually all reserve budgets are now spent on wages and salaries, but staff wages do not even reach subsistence levels... Many protected areas have become almost defenseless against the growing pressures around their borders... Most personnel lack training and expertise in protected area management... There is severe lack of training programs to build on the diverse skills of personnel, and to provide a common understanding of the overall mission and the tools for implementation.

On the other hand, Russia's vast landscapes with relatively intact ecosystems offer one of the last opportunities on earth to conserve areas large enough to allow ecological processes and wildlife populations to fluctuate naturally. However, there is consensus that Russia's protected area network will require significant expansion during the next several years if it is to provide adequate protection for biodiversity. The Government has the unique opportunity to set aside large tracts of land for protection, requiring insignificant investments, as long as the majority of the land is still state owned. This applies in particular to ecosystems currently under-represented in Russia's protected area system.

It is understood that adequate and sustainable protection of the Federation's biodiversity requires substantial commitment outside the protected area system. Attention is drawn to the urgent need for responsible resource management.

It becomes self-evident that Russia will be unable to cope with all its problems without massive support and foreign assistance. Biodiversity will always be shortshafed in favor of more pressing economic needs.

To date there is little support for biodiversity conservation by Russia's public at large, inspite of several hundred nature oriented NGOs which mushroomed since Perestroika. The lack of public support is mostly attributed to the historic exclusion of the public from protected areas, which never was invited to actively participate in planning and management. Consequently, the role of support zones and their people, vital for the sustainability of protected areas and habitat in general, is still widely unknown.

Against this background WWF's future role in Russia has to be seen.

1.2 Strategies and Priority Concepts for Russia's Biodiversity Conservation

Simonov (1995) rightly points out that there are no standard solutions for conserving biodiversity and that the process of formulating strategies and action plans is still evolving.

Equally, there are no standard procedures to objectively assess conservation priorities in a country as large and heterogeneous as Russia. Overriding priority should be given to safeguarding adequate representation of all ecosystems, to sustain viable populations of all species, to maintain ecological processes, and to address landscape features that allow for periodic, large-scale disturbance among natural habitats. Such were the premises for the priority-setting first major attempt to develop an investment portfolio for Russia, meant to provide guidance to the international donor community (Krever et al, 1994). The study, financed by the MacArthur Foundation and implemented under the auspices of WWF in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, the Socioecological Union and numerous Russian Scientists, Institutions and Protected Area Managers has been pace setting. Based on Russia's traditional bioregional classification the study identified 52 key initiatives with 30 project proposals of top priority for Russia's 14 bioregions. The 30 proposals are listed in Table 1.2 -a..

To ensure better investments for all bioregions, strategies were developed for biodiversity conservation that address important landscape features, outstanding biological attributes, specific short-term and long-term threats, the existing system of protected areas, reserve management, designation of new protected areas to close gaps in the existing system, ecotourism potential, and conservation needs of species of special concern whose populations are highly threatened within each bioregion. Each bioregion chapter provides a description of the most urgent priorities for conservation action (from: Dinerstein, 1994).

The investment portfolio has received widespread attention and support within the donor community and has given direction to WWF's Russia involvement. It forms the basis for both the US-AID's large scale investment in biodiversity conservation in Siberia and the Far East and the GEF financed biodiversity conservation project covering the entire Federation. The latter is associated with the World Bank Environmental Framework Program for Russia of US \$ 282 million over a four year period.

With due respect to this remarkable document, its priority setting procedure has two major shortcomings: (a) it concentrates on Zapovedniks (1.42 % of Russia) and fails to sufficiently address National Parks (0.38 %) Zakazniks (4%) and other protection categories; (b) the information provided from the regions on pertinent issues and threats is unbalanced. The basis for the prioritization is the systematization of project proposals submitted to the study team. The proposals (a) do not equally cover all ecosystems of Russia; (b) they reflect personal judgments of the proponents. The need for an objective determination of ecological/biological priorities remains.

Lysenko's gap analysis, produced in preparation of the GEF project, aimed at a more objective assessment of system representation in Russia as basis for the determination of priority needs (1995). The gap analysis is a step in the right direction. It is based on a series of map overlays including Russia's system of physiographic zoning (14 bio-regions with 271 physical-geographic provinces), landscape zoning, vegetation maps and River Basin zoning. Assumptions for this approach were that (a) Zapovedniks are the cornerstones for biodiversity conservation in Russia, protecting more than 50 % of all species listed in Russia's Red Data Book; (b) that an expansion of the number and size of Zapovedniks is needed, in order to assure adequate representation of all ecosystems (filling in the "gaps"). Lysenko's gap analysis map provides an excellent overview of gaps in ecosystem representation by Zapovedniks (see Table 1.2 -b). As such, it provides objective guidance to decision makers struggling with the determination of priority needs in the attempt to expand Russia's protected area system. Lysenko's assumptions are valid; however, Zapovedniks alone are insufficient to safeguard Russia's biodiversity on a species/habitat level.

Table 1.2 -b Significant gaps in Russia's ecosystem representation by Zapovedniks

- 1 Tundra areas of Novaya Zemlya, Kanin Peninsula
- 2 Tundra regions of the southern part of Yamal and Gydan peninsulas
- 3 Forest tundra sites in the east Kola peninsula, south of nenetsky national district
- 4 Forest tundra and rare taiga regions in the northern part of Western Siberia
- 5 Middle taiga and southern taiga complexes of the European region
- 6 Northern steppes in the Samara river region
- 7 Mixed forests and forest steppes of the mid-Russian heights
- 8 Mixed forests in the northern part of Kaliningrad region
- 9 Semi-deserts of Transvolga region

- 10 Northern steppes in Medveditsa region, middle section of the Don river basin, lower reaches of the Seversky Donets river, and eastern part of the sub-Azov region
- 11 Fragments of forest steppe, steppe and semi-desert of Stavropolsky Krai and Dagestan
- 12 Ecosystems of southern taiga, broad-leaf forest, forest steppe and and steppe to the South of western Siberia
- 13 Forest steppe of the upper reaches of the Angara river; southern taiga west of Bratsk water reservoir along Angara and Chulym river basin
- 14 Rare taiga in the north-western part of Yakutia
- 15 Southern taiga from Shilka river to Zeya and Selmdzha rivers
- 16 large areas of northern taiga, mountain taiga and forest tundra of north-eastern Siberia
- 17 Middle taiga of the northern part of Sakhalin Island

Lysenko's study addresses major "threats" related to proposed Zapovedniks as caused through mining operations. Such information may be useful, but provides a biased picture if the full range of actual and potential threats is not adequately covered (i.e. oil/gas exploration and exploitation, linear and other large scale development projects, logging, changing land tenures etc.).

To improve Lysenko's system, Russia's entire network of protected areas has to be assessed in relation to its representativeness on an ecosystem, species and habitat level, to be complemented through a threat analysis. Lysenko recognized the need to move beyond evaluations based largely on species lists; the focus should rightly be the sustainability of ecosystem and habitat diversity to be based on a sufficiently large network of protected areas as the backbone for biodiversity conservation.

In an effort to replace the common ad hoc decisions/ brushfire approach to biodiversity conservation with a more transparent and scientific method, WWF- US recently finalized a gap analysis study for Latin America which successfully applied IUCN's conservation-status-of- species approach (i.e. Red Data Book) to the classification of "ecoregions" (Dinerstein, 1995). This is another step in the right direction. It adds a new dimension to the traditional gap analysis which mostly addresses species specific concerns. The method used for WWF's Latin America gap analysis incorporates features from Myers "Hotspots" approach (1988), Mittermeier's and Werners's "Megadiversity-country" approach (1990), builds on Krever's approach to "objectively" assess Russia's priority needs (1994), and Lysenko's ecosystem gap analysis. As such, this study may well be considered the most advanced of its kind, providing a useful method to more "objectively" assess country and ecosystem specific conservation needs. Studies of similar character always have to be based on the principle that biodiversity has to be conserved everywhere; at the same time recognizing, that some ecosystems/geographic areas have a higher value than others, and that the degree and nature of identified threats will influence decisions on where to place priorities.

Realizing the shortcomings of Kreyer's and Lysenko's approach, and recognizing the need for a more objective assessment of biodiversity conservation needs for Russia, the RPO recently submitted a proposal with a good potential to fill the gap (i.e. "Conservation potential, threat and feasibility analysis of Russia"). The proposed method, however, has to be refined. It should capitalize on WWF's Latin America experience which may well apply to Russia. The proposed gap analysis suggests sophisticated algebra which may not add very much. The proposal promises to produce maps of usable scale (regional/administrative level) and a comprehensive threat analysis. With respect to the proposed "threat" analysis it is suggested to include "fire" as a powerful modifier of ecosystems. Fire was not considered for the proposed study since it is seen as integral part of Russia's fireclimax forests. The "green deserts" of Siberia and the Far East, however, are living prove of long-lasting catastrophic effects of fire (Schuerholz, 1995) which strongly suggests to include fire in the threat analysis. The proposed gap analysis further proposes an area specific "feasibility" assessment as basis for meaningful investments. It is recommended to eliminate the feasibility assessment from the proposed gap analysis; it dilutes the commendable "objectivity" of the proposed study by introducing rapidly changing political climates and socio-economic patterns as unpredictable variables..

The value of an updated, more comprehensive gap analysis would be to provide a realistic picture of Russia's ecological/biological priorities for biodiversity conservation for long-term planning; it could provide the much needed conceptual framework accommodating geographic and subject oriented donor preferences. Once potential projects are identified for specific geographic priority areas, feasibility assessments (i.e. risks and assumptions for sustainability of projects) will have to be implemented in any event to be followed by an assessment and adoption of suitable strategies.

It is recommended: to embark on a new gap analysis study based on the methodology used by WWF-US for Latin America; to support the currently proposed "Conservation Potential Analysis of Russia".

1.3 The Donor Community

Project ideas in the area of biodiversity conservation generally respond to imminent threats to species or habitats instead of being firmly embedded in long-term strategic plans based on transparent and logical concepts. This exposes projects to justified criticism, especially those which address symptoms rather than causes. Russia is a classic example. For decades, access to the Russian Federation was closed to western societies. With Perestroika and the fall of the iron curtain, a floodgate opened: donors flocked into a new playground with seemingly limitless opportunities and needs, eager to assist and stake out claims, filling the vacuum. The resulting chaos was to be expected, especially with the breakdown of long-standing institutional support structures and formerly rigorous control/enforcement mechanisms. This contributed to Russia's fast growing civil disobedience (i.e. poaching, uncontrolled use of forests, minerals, oil and gas etc.), autonomy movements and counter-productive power struggles. Administrative and

political decentralization has assigned the responsibility of policy implementation to a local level, which has resulted in loss of coordination and a minimum implementation of laws and activity regulation. Accelerated privatization of lands and major industries, de-regulated agriculture and general lack of funds have added to the chaos. Encouraged by sensationalized environmental disaster stories of global consequences the collective environmental conscience of the western world reacted spontaneously with a brush fire approach. Today, most of the better known INGOs and bilateral aid agencies are active in Russia, still fighting brush fires without long-term perspectives or meaningful concepts, eager to apply western experience to conflict resolutions. Against this background the involvement of key players in the environmental arena in today's Russia is assessed.

In preparation of GEF's biodiversity conservation project a study was commissioned to assess and analyze donor involvement in Russia in the area of biodiversity conservation. At the onset, a "Donors" computer data base was established in a cooperative effort by ISAR and the Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC), adjusted to the needs of the survey. All listed donors were contacted. For the purpose of the study and the GEF emergency grant, biodiversity conservation was restricted to activities related to protected areas and the preservation of species and habitat (Daushev, 1995). The study revealed that international support was and is provided by bilateral aid agencies, other foreign Government branches, foreign foundations, and numerous INGOs. Largest contributors proved to be the WWF family, the Governments of the USA, Canada, Germany, and Switzerland, and the MacArthur Foundation. For the year 1994 the total foreign support was calculated at approximately US \$ 12 million (see Table 1.3 -a).

Table 1.3 -a Donor contributions to Russia for biodiversity conservation as of 1994 (Daushev, 1995)

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	
The World Bank	US \$ 1,395,000
European Council	US \$ 230,000
RAMSAR (Secretariat)	US \$ 50,000
WWF	US \$ 500,000
TRAFFIC	US \$ 20,000
FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS	
USA	US \$ 4,440,000
Germany	US \$ 1,300,000
Canada	US \$ 1,120,000
Netherlands	US \$ 330,000
Finland	US \$ 250,000
Norway	US \$ 200,000
Denmark	US \$ 185,000
Great Britain	US \$ 125,000
Sweden	US \$ 100,000
FOREIGN FOUNDATIONS	
MacArthur	US \$ 680,000
Trust for Mutual Understanding	US \$ 260,000
Weeden	US \$ 245,000
A.Kones	US \$ 200,000
OTHER	US \$ 820,000
Total foreign support 1994 US \$ 12,456,00	

Source: Daushev, 1995

It is assumed that there are little changes in donor composition and commitment to date, except for a dramatic increase in donations and funds since 1994. An update of this excellent background study would add little to this report. Suffice it, to highlight current and planned programs and projects which directly and indirectly relate to WWF's Russian country program, and such, which offer cooperation opportunities. The following assessment is therefore confined to current keyplayers with direct relations to WWF-RPO:

i) The World Bank and GEF; ii) US-AID; and iii) The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Opportunities for other cooperative efforts such as between IUCN, CNPPA, and WCMC will be discussed in context with “WWF-Related Issues”.

There is little doubt that a comprehensive assessment of donor commitments in Russia at this stage is biased, because Government agencies at the federal, regional and local level as much as individual protected areas, institutions and scientists jealously guard their funding sources for different reasons; one being, to tap into different sources simultaneously by not telling one source about the other.

In summary, compared to other sectors and countries of the Third World there is surprisingly little bilateral aid interest in biodiversity conservation in Russia. With increasing knowledge about opportunities and needs and increasing economic and political stability in Russia, the lack of interest and the rather cautious “wait and see” approach is expected to change. Compared to Third World countries, the return on investments in nature conservation in Russia is very high due to the well established protected area network and the incredible wealth of well educated human resources. After the first rush there is a clear indication that the donor community is sobering, realizing the need for long-term strategies and addressing the causes instead of fighting symptoms.

i) The World Bank

The World Bank is by far the most important, powerful and influential organization of the donor community. It has been rather cautious in its approach to the monumental task of tackling Russia’s mega-environmental problems. It has recognized that the fragmented institutional structure which is uniformly and simultaneously beset by a lack of coordination, efface, finance and clarity is particularly evident in Russia’s protected area administration (The World Bank, 1996). It further recognized the need for a clearly defined methodology which will reconcile the current dynamism in economic and political development with the restraint required to prevent significant biotic depredation. It acknowledges the fact that sustainable use of natural resources requires comprehensive incorporation of environmental concerns into the private, public and community decision making process; a prerequisite is a clear understanding by the decision makers of the significance of environmental objectives versus development objectives, recognition of effective means to meet the objectives and commitment to the cause.

In this light, the World Bank has prepared the Environmental Framework Program (EFP) for Russia, associated with the Environmental Management Project (EMP) loan from the Bank to the Russian Federation which provides funding for the core components of the EFP (i.e. enhancement of the current system of environmental management in Russia on the basis of US \$ 282 million over a period of approximately five years). Principle elements of the EFP and its relation to the proposed GEF fund of approximately US \$ 20 million for Russia is summarized as follows:

The EFP addresses environmental and natural resource management at federal, regional and local levels in demonstration areas across wide spectra of natural areas. It has eight principal components: i) institutional and policy strengthening; ii) air quality management; iii) water quality and water quality management; iv) hazardous waste management; v) biodiversity conservation and natural resources management; vi) conservation and management of cultural and natural heritage; vii) the National Pollution Abatement Facility; and viii) Center for project Preparation and Implementation (CPPI). Of these, the EMP, with a total cost of US \$ 110 million, concentrates on core elements of i, iii, iv, vii and viii. The proposed GEF project, although financially distinct from the EMP, consists of the core biodiversity component of the EFP and therefore is associated with, and will be implemented under, the same organizational arrangements as the EMP. The GEF project was developed in concert with the EMP (from: "Biodiversity conservation project, 1996).

In the same context, key lessons are summarized, based on experience with NGOs and other bi-lateral projects in Russia during the 42 months preparation period for the GEF project:

- the importance of a national strategic framework for biodiversity policy;
- need to expand the protected area system and improve management technologies for unprotected habitats with high biodiversity and environmental values;
- the need to build in financial sustainability and long-term commitment from the Government;
- the need to involve local people and regional administrations in design and implementation;
- the role of macro-economic and sector policies in establishing an appropriate incentive framework for resource conservation;
- the community participation programs supported under the project incorporate lessons learned from several on-going pilot activities in Russia managed by NGOs, the Government and other donor agencies.

The total cost of the GEF project is approximately \$ 20 million. The Government of Russia (GOR) will provide \$ 4.8 million equivalent to finance institutional strengthening actions and ecosystem protection services (budgeted under the Federal Targeted Program of State Support of State Zapovedniks and National Parks up to the year 2000).

The GEF project includes following three components:

<p>1 STRATEGIC OVERVIEW (US \$ 3,405,000) Sub-component (a): National and Regional Biodiversity Strategies (US \$ 575,000) Sub-component (b): Biodiversity Policy Support (US \$ 1,725,000) Sub-component (c): Biomonitoring Information System (BIOTA) (US \$ 1,105,000)</p> <p>2 STRENGTHENING PROTECTED AREA SYSTEM (US \$ 13,819,000) Sub-component (a): Institutional Support (US \$ 882,000) Sub-component (b): Operations and Planning (US \$ 2,745,000) Sub-component (c): Public Support and Education Programs (US \$ 2,903,000) Sub-component (d): Ecosystem Protection (US \$ 6,448,000) Sub-component (e): Training (US \$ 841,000)</p> <p>3 LAKE BAIKAL REGIONAL PROGRAM (US \$ 6,340,000) Sub-component (a): Inter-regional Activities (US \$ 950 000) Sub-component (b): Regional Activities (US \$ 2,890,000) Sub-component (c): Local Biodiversity Activities (US \$ 2,500,000)</p>
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Component two will address the most urgent problems facing the protected area system summarized as: i) lack of institutional capacity to direct and manage the protected area system; ii) ineffective material and technical capabilities of Zapovedniks and national parks; iii) lack of public awareness (nationally and internationally) about the need to preserve Russia's biological diversity and protected areas; iv) poorly developed mechanisms for development of the system, i.e., creation of new types of protected areas and supporting and maintaining those protected areas which already exists; and, v) lack of preparation in academic institutions for professional level training in protected area management. For this purpose, Model Regions/Sites for Nature Protection Activities were selected in the project preparation phase. Since the model areas are of special interest with reference to WWF support to protected areas, they are summarized in Table 1.3 -b.

REGIONS	ZAPOVEDNIKS	NATIONAL PARKS
Northwest	Laplandskiy Kostomukshakiy Rdeyskiy Nizhnevirakiy	Vodlozerskiy Kenozerskiy Yugyd Va Vaklayskiy
Center	Bryanskiy Les Tsentral.-Chernozemnyi Kaluzhakiy Zaseki	Orlovskoye Polesye Meshchera Smolenskoye Poozerye
Upper and Middle Volga	Kerzhenskiy Zhigulevskiy Shuigan Tash	Samarskaya Luka Chavash Varmane Khvalynskiy
Northern Caucasus	Teberdinskiy Daghestanskiy Kabardino-Balkarskiy	Prielbrusskiy
Baikal	Baikalo-Lenskiy Barguzinskiy	Pribaikalskiy Zabaikalskiy Tunkinskiy
Southern Siberia	Altayskiy Katunskiy Kuznetskiy Alstau Ubsu-Nurskaya Kotlovina	
Far East	Sikhote-Alinskiy Lazovski Ussuriyskiy Khankayskiy Magadanskiy Khinganskiy Botchinskiy Kurilskiy	

Table 1.3 -b Summary of Model Areas selected for the GEF project

The GEF project covers many aspects with direct impacts on on-going WWF activities, especially with reference to work in protected areas and corresponding support zones. The GEF program intends to create Regional Associations for formal coordination between National Parks, Zapovedniks and Regional Zapovednik Secretariats, to ensure full agency and stakeholder participation in land use and management decisions. Furthermore, GEF will finance a complex information system for 110 protected areas which includes hardware and staff training. It will create linkages to BIOTA to facilitate planning and management. It will develop management plans for many protected areas in the model regions. It also will finance a Coordinating Center for Environmental Education and Public Support, staffed by 11 professionals, to develop model projects in the model areas. Training and professional development of protected area staff of all categories will be financed in the model areas. The project will finance model ecotourism projects, carry out gap analysis in 3 areas per model region (15 areas in total) with corresponding

management plans, and incorporate the protected area landscape concept; it also will finance 5 site specific projects to demonstrate opportunities for ecosystem restoration, in particular where systems are fragmented and/or degraded, with emphasis on areas in critical need of protection (i.e. Steppe). It also will finance the establishment of many new areas including integrated landscapes as habitat for migratory species. Focal areas are the Dnieper, Don, Volga and Amur rivers.

Many of the proposed activities will be implemented in areas of current and planned WWF involvement. It therefore is of paramount importance to establish close ties with GEF executants with reference to all project components which are of direct interest to WWF's Russian Country Program. It is strongly recommended to formalize working relationship at an early stage. Projects will have to be coordinated and should be implemented in support of each other. There will be enormous opportunities for cooperation and integrated efforts for the benefit of biodiversity conservation. It will be up to the keyplayers of WWF and GEF executants to make the best of it. This requires willingness, commitment and continuous dialogue on both sides at all times. The GEF project and WWF's efforts are complementary, aimed at the same cause and should be acted on accordingly.

Another World Bank initiative with future relevance to on-going WWF projects is the Forestry Policy Sector Review with emphasis on Russia's Siberia and Far East, implemented in 1995 (World Bank FSPR, 1995). Major recommendations of the review are to finance programs aimed at: (a) institutional strengthening on all levels with focus on regional agencies; (b) formal and in-formal training in sustainable forest management; and, (c) fire management. A component to further the wildlife management sector and management of National Parks may be appended (Schuerholz, 1995). The Forest Policy Sector Review was implemented in preparation of significant loans to Russia for revitalization of the Forestry Sector which are currently being negotiated.

It is strongly recommended: to stay informed about the progress of the earmarked Forest Sector loan for the benefit of WWF's Pechora-Ilych/Ural project and the tiger/bear habitat protection efforts in Russia's Siberia and the Far East.

This context seems appropriate to mention Canada's Model Forest Projects from which lessons could be learned for WWF's Pechora Ilych "Model Forestry" activities. The Canadian Government under the auspices of the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) launched this initiative as a follow-up to the Rio conference. It provided \$ 10 million for model forest areas in which to practice sustainable forest management, foster the use of non-wood products, the integration of local people, maintenance of traditional lifestyles, biodiversity conservation, and active participation of local stakeholders in decision making processes and management (Schuerholz, 1995). The selected model forest, (Gassinski, in the proximity of Khabarovsk, the second one currently being negotiated for Western Russia) are twinned with Canadian model forest areas. The Gassinski Model Forest is in its second year of operation. Although the program may still be in its fledgling

stage, there are already important lessons to learn: **Planning transparency, public information, public participation, communication and cooperation** are critical elements which decide about failure or success of the Model Forest Program. This was learned after the first two years, characterized through a detrimental power struggle for leadership positions. (Schuerholz, 1995).

For lessons to be learned from the Canadian Model Forest project it is recommended to establish communication between WWF, CFS and Gassinski.

ii) US-AID

US AID recently launched a large scale biodiversity conservation project in Russia's Siberia and Far East with a total budget of US \$ 16 million. Since the project is partly based on WWF's original investment portfolio and because WWF-RPO was instrumental in the follow-up design for the current project, there is no need to provide details on individual components. WWF is intimately involved in several of the components including the establishment of a Trust Fund for the Far East. A work proposal prepared by WWF for a complex education program in the Far East is currently under review. The focus of the US -AID project includes the whole of Primorsky Krai, the southern section of Khabarovsk Krai with the Sikhote-Alin Mountain Complex as nucleus. Included are wetlands surrounding Lake Khanka and extensive wetlands along the Amur river. The project is designed to complement ongoing efforts by WWF and other donors in the region, designed to fill the "gaps" (WWF-RPO and WWF-US, 1995).

Discussions with US-AID representatives in Washington D.C. revealed that no further agency involvement in the area of biodiversity conservation in Russia is planned or envisioned (K.Rushin, pers. communication).

iii) The John D and Catherine T. Mac Arthur Foundation

The Foundation provides special project grants to support groups or organizations engaged in research and practical work in the areas of energy and environment, legal and economic reform, human rights, and independent mass media. Collaborative efforts may include participants from different institutions and a range of disciplines and countries in addition to those in the former Soviet Union. The latter applies to a grant for a gap analysis in Central Asia to be implemented under the auspices of WWF-RPO. The grant of approximately US \$ 75,000 has been approved in principle.

This project is overshadowed by the RPO's apparent reluctance to cooperate with sister NGOs, in particular with BIOSTAN, an association of nature oriented NGOs from Central Asia who will take part in this gap analysis study. There is no logical reason why different NGOs could not work together on this project; to the contrary, the gap analysis would definitely benefit from a combined expertise. WWF International has agreed to delegate

this project to the RPO. Due to the somewhat strained relations between the Foundation and the RPO, the arrangement should be re-considered. It may be more advantageous if WWF International in cooperation with WWF-US assume the responsibility for project implementation.

It is recommended to proceed with great delicacy regarding the Central Asian gap analysis.

2 WWF RELATED GENERIC ISSUES

2.1 The RPO's Growing Pains

The rapid expansion of WWF's program in Russia has resulted in problems typical for any organization which grows too fast. As a result it is more and more difficult to maintain the work quality. The rapid growth of WWF may directly be linked to the successful completion of the "Investment Portfolio" document, prepared by WWF and sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation. After publication and distribution of the document, the presence of WWF in Russia was firmly established. The document triggered the interest of several donors, which opened funding opportunities for WWF. Based on priorities identified in the document, initiatives started all over Russia simultaneously with little coordination and/or long-term planning. WWF's NOs pursued their own interests in absence of leadership and a common concept. With the firm establishment of WWF's Russia's Country Program Office the situation has changed. In this light WWF's workshop from September 1995 has to be seen. Recognizing the need for a coordinated effort, firmly embedded in a long-term development plan, tuned into WWF's worldwide agenda, last year's workshop was organized in order to provide the RPO with much needed direction. The workshop's brainstorm resulted in a clear identification of the current shortcomings which have to be solved at an early stage or they will compound and backfire. The workshop also edged out the framework concept for WWF's future involvement in Russia with a definite orientation towards focal areas and model projects, for which appropriate strategies and activity plans will have to be developed. The need for coordination of individual NO programs with an overall conservation plan administered under the same administrative umbrella was acknowledged.

2.2 Corporate Image

Within Russia's Federal Government WWF has the highest profile of all foreign NGOs currently involved in the Federation. WWF's work is well respected and its assistance appreciated. WWF is less known by the general public and in regions where the organization is poorly represented. WWF-RPO has excellent access to the Ministry of Environment which consults WWF on issues related to protected areas and species conservation on a regular basis. The RPO has been very successful in lobbying the expansion of Russia's protected area network, in particular for the Arctic Region and the Far East. As one of the world-leading nature organizations, WWF's motivation, work performance and public appearance has to be beyond reproach. This is of particular importance for Russia where WWF's standing is quite high and where the Program Office may well grow into one of the more important of WWF's worldwide initiatives. The stakes are high. WWF has to live up to the expectations, its responsibility and obligations as a world model nature organization. More reason to be twice as cautious and not expose the RPO to unnecessary criticism. While interviewing key persons from donor organizations and bilateral aid agencies in the course of this assignment, the RPO has been criticized for:

being un-cooperative, buying out lead experts from local NGOs, being concerned more about its profile rather than the cause, interfering with and other projects, scheming , and other things.

Justified or not, it is reason for great concern and should be remedied before WWF's image in general is tainted. WWF's NOs have partly contributed to such criticism, fostering their own agendas in Russia instead of acting as a true "family". The problem has been somewhat addressed by workshop participants and should be acted upon accordingly. Consensus agreement on WWF's strategy has to be the first step, determining WWF's future in Russia.

It is recommended to foster cooperation with local NGOs and the donor community at large. If necessary, cooperative programs have to be formalized and inter-agency/organization protocols be elaborated. It is essential to clarify the RPO's role and responsibility. It is essential that Nos contribute to an overall strategy to be administered by the RPO.

2.3 Fund Raising and Trust Funds

It is premature to expect the RPO to do its own fund raising in Russia and abroad without clear direction and training. WWF's NOs have long-standing experience in running successful fund-raising campaigns in their own constituencies. They are successful because they intimately know their constituents and because the mechanisms are in place in a well established market economy. The rules are known and fund raisers play by the rules.

Western fund raisers are fully aware of political consequences and public backlashes if the organization's integrity is jeopardized by tapping the wrong sources. The RPO is too inexperienced and Russia's economy too volatile to negotiate long-term funding agreements, especially when dealing with today's key players in industry and private enterprise. There is little reason to pursue aggressive in-country fund raising at this point, since more than sufficient opportunities are available from outside. The current project far exceeds the RPO's capacity and capability. The program has to be streamlined. The work volume has to grow harmonically, hand-in-hand with a slow expansion of a capable administrative structure. In-country fund raising by the RPO may be initiated after proper training of fund-raisers and after practical guidelines and strategies have been developed. This may piggyback with the proposed public relation/ education/ communication campaign, but needs sound preparation.

The motives for in-country fund raising are quite clear and legitimate. Successful in-country fund raising is essential to safeguard the RPO's long-term sustainability and to facilitate its "relative" independence. This cannot be achieved over night and certainly not through a rather hazardous approach which may compromise WWF's image at large. Against this background the proposed initiative by the RPO to assess potential cooperation with oil and gas companies in collaboration with WWF-UK should be re-evaluated.

This context seems appropriate to discuss an issue which may negatively reflect on WWF's integrity and credibility in the long run and which indirectly falls into the fund raising category. The issue is "**competitive bidding**" on donor projects which is becoming increasingly popular in the WWF family, the RPO being no exception. The RPO may be bidding on project components of the GEF project. To apply for publicly tendered projects seems to contravene the principles and philosophy of a non-profit organization such as WWF. It provides WWF with an unfair advantage over private enterprise. This seems unethical and it exposes WWF to legitimate criticism. Accusations of being bought by a "client" through developing financial dependencies, may soon be justified.

The establishment of proposed Trust Funds (i.e. in cooperation with AID for the Far East, Pechora Ilych and others) should be seen in the same vein. Although Trust Funds for nature conservation have become very popular within the last decade in other parts of the world, especially in connection with "debt-for-nature" swaps, they need a lot of groundwork and may not be as readily applicable to Russia. The proper framework has to be in place in terms of banking procedures, administration, project screening and execution etc., and, most of all, the trust funds should be large enough to provide sufficiently high returns with which to finance projects. WWF's initiatives in Russia in this respect have come under justified criticism from the World Bank involved in similar activities. The World Bank would undoubtedly be more qualified than WWF and much more qualified than the RPO to establish the proper mechanisms. No harm done in cooperation on this matter and no need for WWF to pursue the issue on its own.

It is recommended: that WWF suspends the proposed in-country fund raising campaign until the proper framework conditions are in place, i.e. trained staff and well designed strategy; to enter negotiations with the World Bank regarding the establishment of Trust Funds and to cooperate on this matter; to be very cautious in entering competitive bidding for funds.

3 WWF'S RUSSIA COUNTRY PROGRAM

3.1 Need for Vision Statement

The vision statement for Russia as prepared by the workshop participants is of little use to the RPO. It is very general and relates to the status of nature conservation in Russia instead of the RPO's long-term role in this scenario. To be of value, a vision statement should be prepared which provides the RPO with long-term direction. Questions to be asked are: what should the future of the RPO be? Should it become an autonomous NO with independent programs and operational budgets; should it be fully responsible for its own fund raising? What are the goals related to its capacity, should it grow into a large organization, or stay small, flexible and efficient? Should the RPO be decentralized and if yes, to which extent? What would be the responsibilities and functions of the central office vs. regional offices? How would the RPO relate to other NGOs and the Government?

WWF's vision of its own role and future has to be transparent and practical. Once the vision is clear to everybody, the strategies can be developed. The questions to ask are: the choice of interventions and where to step in most effectively; could the goals be better achieved on the federal, regional or local level, or a combination of such? Would it be more appropriate to lobby on its own, in cooperation with others, or should the RPO be strictly project oriented without becoming political? How to best employ strategies such as education and communication and on which level? Should the RPO get involved in Government policies etc.

Without consensus on a clear definition on the RPO's future role, long-term planning will continue to be overshadowed by ad hoc decisions and the day-to-day routine.

It is recommended that a clear vision statement for the RPO's future role be developed as soon as possible.

3.2 Past and Proposed Projects

i) General observations

WWF's past, current and proposed projects basically fall into three categories: (a) donor driven, (b) need driven and, (c) pet projects. A fourth category applies to projects proposed by people from outside the organization. Category (b) includes projects initiated in spontaneous response to emergency situations (see Table. 3.2 -a). The first category dominates past and current projects in Russia for self-evident reasons. Each NO had its own agenda. WWF-US and WWF-Germany concentrate on "flagship species" with focus on the Far East. The reason, constituents are more responsive to animals, rather than habitats or strategy issues; they are more likely to support action oriented projects involving charismatic species than spending money on something anonymous such as education and communication. WWF-Sweden is mostly interested in area protection in the Arctic and Baltic Sea. WWF-Denmark choose the Baltic Sea and freshwater systems with interests shifting to the Black Sea. Denmark has expressed its interest in "model" concepts rather than specific projects.

Table 3.2 -a indicates that approximately half of past WWF projects originated from inside Russia, and half were donor initiated. Seven of the past 36 projects involved "flagship" species and fifteen supported the establishment of new protected areas and existing Zapovedniks and National Parks. Most of the past project ideas resulted from WWF's "Immediate Response Program" in response to WWF's "Biodiversity Conservation Investment Portfolio" .

It is interesting to note that only one out of the 25 projects proposed for the 1996-1997 country program is donor driven (i.e. RU0025/03) and originates from outside Russia. Most of the proposed projects focus on protected areas.

ii) Preparation of management plans

Attention is drawn to the 10 out of the 25 projects which propose the design of management plans for protected areas. Although it is known that the RPO has entered some agreement with the US Parks Service, it is very doubtful that the RPO has sufficient access to knowledgeable park planners. To the consultant's knowledge, there currently is no in-house expertise within the RPO. It would be counterproductive to copy model plans from the USA since each protected area in Russia as everywhere else in the world has its very own dynamics. A blueprint approach is inappropriate! To produce management plans for protected areas is an acquired skill which needs education and experience. Management plans have to be supported by operational plans with detailed activity programs and budgets. To produce management plans just for the sake of having another dubious document, is of no value. Without well planned follow-up, especially with respect to support zone communities, management plans tend to get shelved. It seems more appropriate to select model areas and follow through with funding for the implementation of one or two well designed management plans.

Following are comments on specific management plan projects.

Project 05PP, Management Plan for Daursky Zapovednik. This is a high profile area which forms part of the 1994 agreement between China, Mongolia and Russia for the establishment of a transborder Zapovednik. Any management planning should cover the three proposed protection areas. The management principles should be the same for all three areas. General agreements have to be designed with reference to development with reference to the three proposed protection areas by a multinational, multidisciplinary planning team; this is of special significance with respect to coordinated visitor programs, access, control and protection, traditional use, and zoning concepts. A blueprint approach would be unacceptable for this project. Incidentally, the budget proposed for the design of a management plan for the Daursky Zapovednik is the same as the budget proposed for the design of a management plan for the Vallam historical reserve (see following proposal 06PP) with only 3600 ha.

06PP management plan for the historical reserve. It is little understood why WWF should pay for a management plan for a historical reserve with focus on a monastery on a small island of 3600 has. The church seems certainly wealthy enough to finance such a plan on its own, if really needed. There are other priorities in Russia where WWF money would more appropriately be spend.

Why the budget for the preparation of this management plan is the same as for the significantly larger and important Daursky Reserve is not logical. This may indicate that the intricate art of designing practical management plans is not appreciated by the project proponents.

RU2PP management plan for the Khingansky Zapovednik. The Zapovednik has been established principally for the protection of cranes which are highly sensitive to human disturbance. In this light, the focus, as proposed, should therefore not be a “museum” and/or an elaborate visitor program but rather the protection of the species.

Although considered a high profile flagship species project, the proposed budget of which the proposed management plan is only one part, seems highly inflated.

RU07PP management plans for Tagani, Kenozersky and Shorsky National Parks..

National parks fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forests. Extractive timber use and sustainable forest management are legal activities in Russia’s national parks. The Russian Federal Forest Service is sensitive to any form of outside interference (World Bank Forest Policy Sector Review, 1995) and it is uncertain, whether the RPO would be accepted as partner for the preparation of management plans which require great expertise and diplomacy which hardly can be offered by the RPO. It has been suggested in the proposal that the three national parks are key areas in Russia and of very high profile, reason, to be twice as careful. Whether the three proposed areas are indeed priority areas, is questionable.

In general, the approach to management plans by the RPO seems quite unrealistic. The budget for the proposed management plan for the Great Arctic reserve (i.e. RU19PP) for example is less, i.e. \$ 23,000 than the budget proposed for the Vallam Archipelago, i.e. \$ 25,000). The latter covering a 3600 has island, the Arctic Reserve 4 million has of complex ecosystems. This does not make any sense.

It is recommended to: critically assess the availability of appropriate expertise for the preparation of management plans prior to approval of corresponding proposals; focus management planning on one or two model areas; to complement management plans through practical operational plans; to provide or search for funding funding for the implementation of the plans; to inquire about assistance from CNPPA for management planning.

iii) Inflated Project Budgets

The RPO has been criticized by several of the interviewed donors of poor budget preparation, poor budget transparency and inflated budgets with reference to projects submitted for funding. The criticism seems justified when looking for example at budgets proposed for projects RU16PP and RU17 PP. The issues addressed by the proposals may be significant, and therefore should be supported, but artificially inflated and unspecified budgets will draw little interest from potential donors. Project RU16PP suggests “assistance to reserves” without specifying the type of assistance; it suggests “surveys”, what type of surveys? It earmarks \$ 10,000 travel costs! Project RU17PP suggests animal counts; what for? Would it make a difference to know whether there are 150 or 200 breeding pairs of Stellar Sea Eagles? And why not cooperate with the GEF project which

suggests similar activities for the Okhotsk Sea. The same projects requests \$ 55,000 for vehicle hire; is this justified? RU15PP suggest \$ 6000 for travel and \$ 2000 for vehicle hire; is this justified?. Project RU18PP provides a totally unspecified budget with \$ 38,000 for non-WWF staff and \$ 31,000 for 60 hours aircraft rental; is this really justified?

It is recommended to: carefully scrutinize budgets of submitted proposals; urge proponents to specify budgets and sufficiently justify each component

iv) Conclusions with reference to the Project Proposal Package

With a couple of exceptions the proposed projects show that the RPO does not have long-term plans; most of the proposed projects (i.e. management plans) will terminate with the completion of the exercise: the two year planning schedule.

One gets the impression that the proposals have been selected randomly rather than being based on well thought-out concepts

Several proposals aim at the establishment of new areas for protection without clear definition of how this can be accomplished. Corresponding budgets are mostly unspecified; examples are proposals RU02PP, RU11PP, RU12PP, and RU13PP. Pros and cons for suitable categories for proposed new areas are not sufficiently discussed and it remains unclear of how these areas fit into the agendas of the corresponding Federal and Regional Agencies. Clarification is also required regarding competence of the proponents to implement the proposed projects; and clarification is needed about official working relationships with Government Agencies and other stakeholders.

The nature of the proposed projects indicates a lack of focus by the RPO. It is time to address the real issues and to proceed in a more organized fashion. This confirms the conclusions of the September workshop: the need for a concerted effort to tackle a formidable task which may best be achieved by concentrating on focal areas and models.

The tiger, bear and crane projects have come under attack from inside and outside Russia. Although recognized as “umbrella” projects with many different facets, concerns regarding the tiger project are directed towards the anti-poaching campaign which apparently has not resulted in a single conviction yet. The tiger census for \$ 120,000 is also criticized. Concerns may be legitimate and the need for future species specific census should be carefully assessed before committing more funds. The question is, does it make a difference to know whether the tiger population is composed of 400 or 600 animals; would the money not be better spend on on-going habitat protection efforts. Regarding the brown bear project: brown bear is definitely not an endangered species in Siberia and the Far East. Hunting and poaching will continue with or without WWF involvement. Again, the project may better be confined to habitat protection.

Attention is drawn to the frequently quoted importance of “personal networks” in Russia. Suffice it to say that such networks are highly controversial and should not be the basis of the RPO’s long-term plans. Personal connections may be used on a project specific level but with great sensitivity. Networks should be kept on a purely professional, technical, and factual level. Any political dependencies will backfire in the long run.

A common criticism by the donor community addresses the RPO’s tendency to submit funding requests for a specific project to several donors simultaneously, each submission with a different budget for the same project, i.e. RU 15PP. This causes confusion and donors are unlikely to support such projects.

It seems to be time to step beyond the original Investment Portfolio which meant to provide first guidance to the donor community. It is time to re-think and re-evaluate priorities which are beneficial to the resource, the RPO and WWF. This may well be through concentration on focal areas for which to develop “case” projects.

3.3 Opportunities for Cooperation

As mentioned earlier, cooperation with local and international NGOs and donors would be of great benefit to the RPO, WWF and the common cause. In the following chapter some opportunities will be discussed which surfaced during this assignment. In general, the partners proposed for cooperative programs are quite interested in collaborative efforts.

GIS capacity building: There is consensus on the value of proper compilation and processing of ecological/biological/socio-economic baseline data to be used in the decision making process regarding species and habitat protection. WCMC has developed some interesting training modules which offer excellent opportunities for cooperation. The training schedule involves enhancing the ability of institutions and individuals to: (a) assess their own information needs, (b) set and implement their own priorities, (c) develop their own information system frameworks, and, (d) build their own information system. GIS is a progressive tool to translate data into useful information to be employed in fund raising and project management. This is the primary reason for the RPO’s repeated attempts in obtaining funds for the establishment of its own in-house system (see project RU15PP). The idea has its merits but needs further evaluation. GEF, in its new biodiversity conservation project for Russia, proposes two GIS centers, one to serve the east, the other western Russia. Within the framework of this project, capacity building on a regional level is one of the primary objectives. The Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC) currently attempts to establish a biodiversity atlas for Russia based on species distribution. Together, the four key players could be a formidable team. In order to prove that cooperation is possible, it is suggested to develop a pilot project on a regional basis in which to involve the four players. WCMC has the technical know-how and readily available programs, GEF has the funds, BCC has experience with species data and WWF

could contribute to the implementation of a workshop and follow-up. Training trainers would hopefully result in a snowball effect, provided all key players are willing to cooperate and provide assistance for follow-up. The Far East would be a very suitable region; for one, it has been one of the first and most important focal area of international efforts in biodiversity conservation; secondly, a sound data base is already available; thirdly, the Khabarovsk Institute of Wildlife Research has been one of the key players in the region for biodiversity conservation and has developed some GIS capability with foreign assistance (WWF-US, Hornocker Foundation); as such it would be the right counterpart for the exercise. Furthermore, the workshop and expected results would be complementary to the on-going AID project and Canada's Model Forest initiative. The RPO could take the lead in developing the project concept and perform essential liaison. It would be a true indicator of the RPO's "good-will" and counteract the office's poor reputation regarding cooperation. A first assessment shows that the key players are very much interested in the project idea and wait for WWF's initiative.

Another opportunity is offered through the production of management plans for protected areas. This is an issue of common concern, addressed by the GEF project, WWF, IUCN and respective Government agencies. Key players would be the two Ministries responsible for the management of Zapovedniks (MoE) and National Parks (MoF), the administrative body for the GEF project which has earmarked substantial funding for management plans and capacity building for planners, CNPPA, as the world's most knowledgeable body on this issue and the RPO in a liaison function. Again, model areas should be selected for which, in a mutual effort, management plans should be prepared, and, in a mutual effort the implementation of the plans be pursued. WWF should take the initiative.

Education is another area of common interest. Key players would be AID, GEF, the respective Ministries, and WWF by providing input in the implementation of informal education programs to be financed by AID and GEF.

The current interest in the RPO's participation in the policy sector on a federal and regional level may offer another opportunity for cooperation with local NGOs, pertinent Government agencies and TACIS. The RPO, however, should only contribute, not assume a lead role.

It is recommended that cooperative projects be designed for:

**GIS/capacity building
preparation of management plans
education programs
(policy sector)**

3.4 Proposed Focal Areas and Models

i) Focal Areas

The attached map shows the location of past and proposed WWF projects in Russia, by WWF file number and corresponding budgets. It is interesting to note that the marked clustering of the projects and supporting budgets already indicate a concentration on certain regions. The greatest inputs have been provided to the (a) Pacific Rim, with focus on Primorsky Krai and Kamchatka, (b) the Central Ural, (c) the Arctic Region, with focus on the Great Arctic Reserve, (d) the East European Region Forest Steppe/Volga Region, and (e) the Oksky area. Planned activities follow the same general pattern: (a) the Pacific Rim, (b) the Altai, (c) the Arctic region, (d) the East European Forest Steppe/Volga Region, and (e) European Russia. Added to the already existing focal areas are the Altai and parts of European Russia.

Whether by accident or design WWF's past and proposed efforts in Russia generally coincide geographically with the conclusions drawn from this assignment and recommendations made regarding future focal areas, except for the European part of Russia, with little justification for European Russia to be included. The large scale Oksky investments for the protection of cranes and Desman may have been justified for political reasons, but should not be part of future priority areas. The recommendation resulting from the workshop to include the Steppe biome in the focal area concept seems only justified in context with Central Asia which has the "lion's" share of intact and contiguous Steppe ecosystems. Funding of Steppe rehabilitation (fragmented Steppe as typical for Russia) as suggested through proposals are of questionable value. Any funding may better be spend in Central Asia.

The recommendation, to concentrate on focal areas and models are supported through key donors who share this view, i.e. US-AID, The World Bank and GEF. The GEF project has designated project areas, Lake Baikal being one. The GEF project and the AID project both aim at the implementation of models. Part of the GEF efforts are directed at model Zapovedniks and National Parks for which management plans will be prepared and implemented.

To concentrate on focal areas and models is highlighted as a key recommendation from the WWF workshop. In this light the following focal areas are proposed. They are circled on the attached map.

- **Focal Area: 1 THE ARCTIC REGION**

There is consensus that the circumpolar and circumboreal regions offer outstanding opportunities to maintain viable wildlife populations in undisturbed habitats. Russia's potential to set aside large tracts of unspoiled wilderness in the Arctic Region, as well as in Siberia's vast Taiga forests, is unmatched in comparison to the already fragmented habitats in Europe and North America. This is of particular importance in the light of the very high interest by international oil, gas and mining companies in this region, posing great threats to the ecological integrity of many arctic areas, which sustain critical breeding grounds of millions of waterfowl and critical habitats of sea and terrestrial mammals of global importance. This may well be the last opportunity to considerably expand the protected area system in the Arctic before large scale intervention and destruction expected from international corporations. Interest in the Arctic Region is shared in particular by Scandinavian WWF NOs. Against this background, the selection as Focal Area seems to be well justified.

- **Focal Area: 2 THE CENTRAL URAL**

The Central Ural is characterized by the only pristine contiguous forest ecosystems left in Europe, thus offering a unique opportunity to set aside sufficiently large areas for protection and to demonstrate the feasibility of sustainable forest management in the light of mounting pressures from international logging companies. Switzerland and Sweden have shown particular interest in biodiversity conservation in this region, using WWF as vehicle to implement large scale conservation projects, i.e. Pechora Ilych. Although contiguous pristine forests are still abundant in Siberia and the Far East, the Ural displays a much higher ecosystem diversity and faces greater threats through logging and mining than Siberia. Except for WWF's involvement, the Central Ural has received little other donor attention. It therefore seems twice as important to select it as second Focal Area.

- **Focal Area: 3 The Caucasus/Forest Steppe/Lower Volga Region**

The Forest Steppe/Lower Volga Region have been a focus of past and proposed WWF efforts. Although both areas may be of equal ecological importance, they cannot match the biological/ecological importance of the Greater Caucasus which displays a very high level of endemism. At present there are little conservation activities on the Russian side for the Greater Caucasus, presumably caused by the political and social instability. With improvement of the political climate, however, it is strongly recommended to shift efforts in the larger region of the proposed Focal Area 3 to the Greater Caucasus. This would be of particular interest with reference to opportunities provided for the establishment of cross-border protected areas in cooperation with Georgia.

- **Focal Area: 4 THE ALTAI**

There is consensus that the Amur-Sakhalin, Greater Caucasus and the Altai regions display one of the highest level of endemism on the continent. In this light it is little understood why the Altai region to date has received such little donor attention with respect to biodiversity conservation. The Altai supports populations of charismatic species such as the Argali and Snow leopard with an uncertain conservation status. Both species are reported to be exposed to poaching and habitats are increasingly threatened through mounting grazing pressures inside and outside reserve areas. Attention has been drawn to this Region of global ecological importance through project proposals, submitted by the RPO to WWF for funding. The proposals should be included in WWF's portfolio as part of a to-be-designed intervention package for this fourth proposed Focal Area. There is little doubt that fund raising for projects in this Focal Area would be enhanced by using Snow leopard as key species for habitat oriented biodiversity conservation in general.

- **Focal Area: 5 THE PACIFIC RIM**

The Primorsky region of the Amur - Sakhalin escaped the last glaciation, and, as a result, served as refugia for many plants and invertebrates now endemic to the area (Dinerstein,1994). Recognizing the importance of the Primorsky region of the Amur-Sakhalin, international efforts traditionally concentrated on this area, WWF being no exception. Due to the outstanding ecological importance of the Pacific Rim Region and in view of mounting land and resource use pressures on this region, it should be awarded a high priority status, duly reflected by past and proposed WWF involvement. The concentration of international efforts seems well justified in the light of the unique opportunities offered for a well synchronized conservation program. New developments as posed through potential threats from proposed large-scale offshore drilling draw attention to the Okhotsk Sea (see RU17PP). It is a must, to include the entire Pacific Rim in Focal Area five.

It is recommended to concentrate WWF's future efforts on the following five Focal Areas:

**ARCTIC REGION
TAIGA FOREST
CAUCASUS/FOREST STEPPE/LOWER VOLGA
ALTAI
PACIFIC RIM**

ii) Models or Case Projects

1 The Arctic Region:

The proposed management plan for the reindeer case study (RU10PP) should become a model for this Focal Area. It should demonstrate that traditional lifestyles still can have their place in a progressive approach to wildland management. The overall goal should be to gain the support of local people for the sustainable management of the species through well managed habitats.

The Great Arctic Reserve should serve as a model for opportunities to set aside large tracts of land for protection with minimum investments. The proposed management plan (RU19PP) will be of high international profile. It therefore is critical to proceed with caution and rather postpone preparation of a management plan until proper means and sufficient expertise is available.

The Lena Delta may be included as a model area (RU0004/02) but should not focus on the Biological Station.

2 Taiga Forest:

The Pechora Ilytch Forest Project (007-02 and 0024) has received a lot of international attention and may turn into one of the more important WWF efforts in Russia. It will serve as a model for participatory sustainable forest management embedded in a well designed land use plan the as proposed long-term objective. The associated Zapovednik and National Park of the Ural have to become an integral part of the project.

3 Caucasus/forest steppe/lower Volga

The model in the Region should -for the time being- be based on the sustainable management of Saiga antelope (RU0002/02 and 18PP). It should be another case study for people-wildlife interactions and should demonstrate that traditional lifestyles can be maintained with proper management. Saiga antelope will be used as a model involving a flagship species.

The Volga Delta Conservation program may be suggested as another model area.

4 Altai:

The proposed project on Argali sheep and Snow leopard (RU16PP) could become a model for proper management of two charismatic flagship species. Since this project may draw international attention, it is strongly advised to learn from the mistakes with other flagship species projects in the Far East. The scope of the project should be broadened and focus be placed on habitat management. The current project proposal needs substantial modifications.

5 Pacific Rim

Little needs to be added to what has been discussed previously with regards to the two models in the Far East, the flagship species “umbrella” projects for tiger protection and Brown bear management.

With due caution, the proposed Okhotsk Sea project may become a future model program for the Pacific Rim.

It is recommended: to concentrate on model sites in the 5 Focal Areas as described.

3.5 Proposed Administrative Structure for the RPO

Without a well structured and clearly defined administrative support, the Russian WWF program will continue to suffer. The current structure is a contemporary solution which cannot meet the rather ambitious long-term objectives. Positions need to be clearly defined within the proposed staff line organization. Positions can be added with increasing work volume on a demand basis. Key positions on the management level have to be filled with competent persons with proven skills and experience in their respective areas of responsibility. Managerial skill and proven skills in teamwork are essential prerequisites.

The proposed organizational structure (see attached organizational chart) allows the RPO to coop with the current and expected work load.

The RPO is directed by a country representative with proven skills in conservation management, organization management, communication and administration. On the management line four key Divisions are proposed, each to be headed by a Division Head: (1) Finance, (2) Administration and Personnel, (3) Communication, and, (4) Conservation. The Division of Communication may also be responsible for fund raising in the future, once the concerns expressed earlier are properly addressed. The Conservation Division should encompass three sub-divisions which may be expanded with growing programs. There will be coordinators for protected areas, species protection and education, to be supported through project administration.

Ideally, the regional offices (three at present) should report to the country representative with administrative support from the appropriate divisions in the Moscow headquarters. If a GIS position is added to the central office staff, it should provide support to the regional offices and headquarters. It is strongly recommended to enter some joint agreement with BCC, GEF and WCMC for the establishment of this section.

The TRAFFIC Program will be affiliated with Moscow headquarters and supported through the Conservation Division and the Regional Offices. The role of the Advisory Group needs strengthening. The Group should receive more responsibility and authority without interfering with the general responsibilities of the line-staff organizations.

It is recommended: to modify the current administrative structure as proposed.

4 CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the need to concentrate on selected Focal Areas and model programs seems to be obvious. The character of projects is not expected to change. There always will be donor driven and pet projects. With a clear definition of Focal Areas, however, projects can be channeled into the most suitable Focal Area. The guiding principle for the RPO will remain:

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

APPENDIX I

ITINERARY AND PERSONS MET

- Jan.09: travel Duncan to Washington D.C.
Jan.10 meeting with B.Eichbaum (WWF US)
meeting with E.Dinerstein, S.Primm (WWF US)
meeting with J.Suter (GEF)
Jan.11 meeting with H.Molineus (World Bank resident mission Moscow)
meeting with H.Wagner (World Bank)
meeting with L.Carbonnier (World Bank)
meeting with M.Koch-Weser (World Bank)
Jan.12 meeting with J.Mundy and A. Bond (World Bank)
conference call with A.Kutchins et al. (Mc Arthur Foundation,Chicago)
Jan.13 travel Washington to Frankfurt
Jan.16 conference call M.Pederson (WWF Denmark)
Jan.16 conference call G.Whiles (WWF UK)
Jan.18 meeting with R.Melisch and L.Schillak (WWF Germany)
Jan.22 travel to Cambridge
meeting with R.Luxmoore (WCMC GIS)
meeting with M.Green (WCMC protected areas)
meeting with H.Gillet (WCMC red data lists)
meeting with B.Groombridge (WCMC data base)
Jan.23 meeting with Z.Karpovicz and T.Rajamets (IUCN Russia program)
meeting V.Moshkalo (IUCN Moscow)
meeting J.Caldwell (WCMC CITES)
meeting with D.Gordon and J.Busby (WCMC Capacity building)
meeting with S. Kaitala (WCMC mapping section)
Feb 07 travel Frankfurt - Moscow
Feb 08 meeting with V.Krever, F.Gordina and L.Williams (WWF Moscow)
meeting with V. Nikiforov (WWF Moscow)
meeting with I.Lysenko (Russian Institute for Nature Conservation)
Feb 09 meeting with WWF program officers
meeting with P.Mokevsky
meeting with Lysenko
Feb 10 literature review
Feb 11 workshop preparation
Feb 12 meeting with I.Chestin, Moscow State University
meeting with Amirkmanov, Deputy Minister of Environment
meeting with Illiyashenko, Head Deptmt. Biol.Resources, MoE
meeting with Stepanitsky, Head Deptmt.Nature Reserve Magmt., MoE
Feb 13 meeting with Russia country team
meeting with E.Seminov and E. Svartz, Biodiversity Conservation Center
Feb 14 workshop; for list of participants see Appendix II

Feb 15 meeting with K.Rushin, US AID
meeting with P.Mokevsky, Pechora-Ilych Forest Management
meeting with V. Tsirkonov and V.Voronin, The World Bank
Feb 16 meeting with T.Zhdanova, Director Mac Arthur Foundation Moscow
Feb 18 meeting with H.Jungius, WWF Gland
Feb 19 meeting with H.Cory, WWF Brussels, H.Jungius and D.Lusti
meeting with D. Sheppard, P.Rosabal and J.Thorsell, IUCN Gland
Feb 20 meeting with P.Rosenberg and H.Jungius, WWF Gland

APPENDIX II

LIST OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

- 1 Ilyashenko Valentin, Ministry of Ecology, Head of Department of Biological Resources
- 2 Danilina Natalya, RF Ministry of Ecology, Department of Zapovedniks
- 3 Moshkalo Vladimir, Director IUCN office Moscow
- 4 Zakharov Vladimir, Director RAS Institute of Developmental Biology, Center for Ecological Policy
- 5 Sheftel Boris, RAS Institute of Animal Ecology
- 6 Neronov Valery, Deputy Chairman Russia UNESCO MAB Committee
- 7 Swartz Eugene, Chairman of Council Biodiversity Conservation Center, RAS Institute of Geography
- 8 Bobylev Sergey, Economist, Moscow State University
- 9 Tishkov Arkady, RAS Institute of Geography
- 10 Puzachenko Andrey, Institute of Nature Conservation and Reserves
- 11 Sumina Elena, Expert on Aboriginal Affairs, State Committee on North Regions
- 12 Ochagov Dimitry, Expert on Protected Areas, Institute of Nature Conservation and Reserves
- 13 Volkov Andrey, Expert on Protected Areas and Reserves
- 14 Chestin Igor, Moscow State University
- 15 Lysenko Igor, Russian Institute for Nature Conservation
- 16-18 Krever Vladimir, Nikiforov Viktor, Gordina Faina