

## **Status Report on the GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project, BSRP**

### **Component 1: The Baltic Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Activities.**

#### **ASC 2001 – ASC 2002.**

The Bureau has received six earlier reports on the project. They give information on the background to the project, and on activities up to June 2002.

During the last 12 months Jan Thulin has been employed at ICES as Chair/Coordinator for the BSRP mainly on a half time basis. His contract now runs to 31 December 2002.

During the ICES ASC 2001, Thulin had several planning and information meetings with key people in Component 1 activities. These were continued during the Baltic Science Conference last November in Stockholm, during which a steering group for Ships of Opportunity activities, SOOP, was established. The group is now negotiating with ferry owners to extend the coverage of SOOP activities in the Baltic. Further, he participated in the IOC/IUCN/NOAA Large Marine Ecosystem Consultative Meeting in Paris in January 2002, in an Invasive species Seminar in Tallinn in May 2002, and in GEF's International Waters Conference in China in September 2002. He also made presentations of the BSRP at a series of Marine Institutes around the Baltic and several institutes are now preparing letters of agreement with the project. This is also the case with several related marine research programmes e.g. MARE (Mistra) and BIREME (Academy of Finland).

Most of the work during the autumn was dedicated to seeking donor funds for the first phase of the project. Thulin, Staffan Lund, coordinator for Component 2, and Inesis Kiskis, World Bank, visited possible donor organisations and collaborators. These include DANCEE in Denmark, SIDA in Sweden and the Academy of Finland. With the same purpose, the General Secretary has sent letters to the Ministries of Environment in Finland and Agriculture and Fisheries in Sweden (attached). As yet, these inquiries have not resulted in any larger cash contribution or commitment, although positive signals have been received from Sweden. The above-mentioned three people have negotiated with representatives from the recipient countries with regard to in-kind contributions.

Letters from the General Secretary seeking financial support from the Swedish National Board of Fisheries resulted in a contribution equivalent to almost USD 100 000. In a letter from the US Department of Commerce, December 2001, its Deputy Assistant Secretary informed the World Bank that NOAA confirms its commitment to support Component 1 with an in-kind contribution of USD 500 000. The General

Secretary and Thulin have negotiated with the US Embassy in Copenhagen for a possible contribution of USD 100 000. The IUCN covered the expenses for Thulin's participation in the BMB conference in Stockholm in November 2001, and the LME meeting in Paris in January 2002. The US Embassy in Copenhagen covered the costs for Thulin's participation in the Invasive Species Seminar in Tallinn in May.

As stated in an earlier report, the GEF/World Bank has agreed that the project should run in three phases during 2003-2008. A major reason for this has been the difficulties in finding donor commitments for longer periods than 2-3 years. Phase 1, "Introduction of the Ecosystem Approach", will run 2003-2005. It will have a total budget of USD 12 million of which USD 5.6 million (GEF contribution 2.6 mill.) is for Component 1 (the ICES Component). The second phase, "Demonstration of the Ecosystem Approach", runs from 2005 to 2007 with a total budget of USD 20 million. Phase 3, "Expanding the Application of the Ecosystem Approach", will run 2007-2008. During phases 2 and 3 the Component 1 budget will be about 50% of the total and the GEF contribution about half of that. HELCOM and the World Bank finalised their negotiations for the Trust Fund Grant Agreement Phase 1 during July. HELCOM has also asked each of their Contracting Parties to officially nominate a representative to the Baltic Sea Steering Group, which will succeed the present BSRP Core Group. The World Bank will make its final decision on the BSRP budget for phase 1 during October. The official signing of the project contracts will be done during the HELCOM HoD meeting in November 2002. Once this is done the project can start its first implementation period, anticipated as 1 January 2003.

Action is being taken to select a person for the Assistant coordinator post as well as for the positions of Local Project Managers for the Coordination Centres and the Lead Laboratories. During the coming months the coordinator will prepare, together with a WB procurement specialist, ICES sub-contracts with institutes and persons for these positions in the recipient countries.

Attachments: 1. Letter to the Minister of the Environment, Finland  
2. Letter to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Sweden

Dr. Satu Hassi  
Minister of the Environment  
P.O.Box 380  
FIN-00131 Helsinki

Our ref: G.69/DG/mm

23 January 2002

Dear Minister,

*GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project*

I write on behalf of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), to seek your support and commitment to the Baltic Sea Regional Project, which is anticipated to commence early in 2002. The project is co-funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and is supported by the World Bank in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The project has as its objective the improved and sustainable use of all the natural resources of the Baltic Sea, for the wider benefit of society throughout the region. Furthermore, the project is widely acknowledged to be a unique and vital opportunity to address the key issues of the Baltic marine ecosystem in a cohesive and programmed manner. Specifically, it seeks to increase sustainable biological productivity, to improve coastal zone management and to reduce agricultural non-point-source pollution, and thus to (a) provide regional decision-makers (in governments and in regional Commissions) with tools for enhanced policies of sustainable management and (b) improve the social and economic status of the farming, coastal and fishing communities.

The GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project has two main components: Component 1 – Large Marine Ecosystem Activities, and Component 2 – Land and Coastal Management Activities, but both are closely interdependent. ICES will be responsible for Component 1, and it is in that connection that I now write to seek your support for Finland becoming a donor country.

The project adopts an ecosystem-based approach to the subject of resource management, and focuses on land-based, coastal zone and marine activities to improve ecosystem health and productivity, social and economic development, and the provision of ecosystem management tools to enable decision-makers to address transboundary issues within the region. The most important aspects of the project are its linkages between land-based activities, the coastal zone and the whole marine environment.

I am aware that all these issues are high on the list of priorities in Finnish government policy.

The GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project thus seeks to build on, and take further, the Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP) that was initiated by the Baltic countries in the 1990s. The JCP was further elaborated during the Prime Ministers' meeting at Visby in 1996. The recipient countries of the GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia; all nine Baltic countries are contributing to the project.

My colleague Jan Thulin, in his capacity as Chairman of the Core Group of the Baltic Sea Regional Project, has been explaining to your officials Tapani Kohonen and Eeva-Liisa Poutanen, the opportunities for Finland to co-fund the

management and certain activities within Component 1 (the marine component) of the project and thus to become a key player in this vital regional activity. I will be glad to organise a return visit by him to Finland (at your convenience) so that he can inform you further about the project, if you consider that it would be helpful to do so.

I am aware that Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen has been informed about the GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project by World Bank President Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, at their meeting on 2 November 2001.

I would ask you to give positive consideration to the case for Finland, as a long-standing and important participant in Baltic marine affairs, to also commit significant funds to Component 1 of the programme through your Ministry.

Yours faithfully,

David de G. Griffith  
General Secretary

Minister Margareta Winberg  
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries  
Fredsgatan 4  
Stockholm

Our Ref: G.69/DG/mm

31 October 2001

Dear Minister,

*GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project*

I write on behalf of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), to seek your support and commitment to the Baltic Sea Regional Project, which is anticipated to commence early in 2002. The project is co-funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and is supported by the World Bank in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The project has as its objective the improved and sustainable use of all the natural resources of the Baltic Sea, for the wider benefit of society throughout the region. Furthermore, the project is widely acknowledged to be a unique and vital opportunity to address the key issues of the Baltic marine ecosystem in a cohesive and programmed manner. Specifically, it seeks to increase sustainable biological productivity, to improve coastal zone management and to reduce agricultural non-point-source pollution, and thus to (a) provide regional decision-makers (in governments and in regional Commissions) with tools for enhanced policies of sustainable management and (b) improve the social and economic status of the farming, coastal and fishing communities.

The GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project has two main components: Component 1 – Large Marine Ecosystem Activities, and Component 2 – Land and Coastal Management Activities, but both are closely interdependent. ICES will be responsible for Component 1, and it is in that connection that I now write to seek your support for Sweden becoming a donor country.

The project adopts an ecosystem-based approach to the subject of resource management, and focuses on land-based, coastal zone and marine activities to improve ecosystem health and productivity, social and economic development, and the provision of ecosystem management tools to enable decision-makers to address transboundary issues within the region. The most important aspects of the project are its linkages between land-based activities, the coastal zone and the whole marine environment.

I am aware that all these issues are high on the list of priorities in Swedish government policy.

The GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project thus seeks to build on, and take further, the Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP) that was initiated by the Baltic countries in the 1990s. The JCP was further elaborated by Sweden during the Prime Ministers' meeting at Visby in 1996. The recipient countries of the GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia; all nine Baltic countries are contributing to the project.

My colleague Jan Thulin, in his capacity as Chairman of the Core Group of the Baltic Sea Regional Project, has been explaining to you and to your Political Advisor Kai Larsson, the opportunities for Sweden to co-fund the management and certain activities within Component 1 (the marine component) of the project to the extent of an initial SEK 5 million for the first year, and thus to become a key player in this vital regional activity. I wholeheartedly support Jan Thulin in this. While I recognise that Sweden has already committed financial support to Component 2 of the project (agricultural non-point-source pollution), I would ask you to give positive consideration to the case for Sweden, as a long-standing and important participant in Baltic marine affairs, to now commit significant funds to Component 1 of the programme.

Yours faithfully,

David de G. Griffith  
General Secretary