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ECORA Project

(An Integrated Ecosystem Approach to Conserve
Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation in
Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic)

SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT NO. 4

Summary and selected chapters

January - June 2006

(Revised 20 September 2006)

Report to Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination UNEP, Nairobi

Prepared by **Project Implementation Unit / GRID-Arendal**

UNEP DGEF **GFL-2328-2740-4773**

I. SUMMARY

The major administrative change during this semi-annual period was the formal replacement of the administrative organization of the project CEERI for FCGS "Ecologia". As noted in the previous semi-annual report, the functions and budget of the administrative organization remained unchanged.

With respect to staffing, replacements have been found for the Beringovsky Model Area Coordinator and the Kolguev Island Model Area Assistant.

2006 field work has been initiated in all three Model Areas. The mechanism for transferring funds to the regions developed last year is working well and no delays were experienced this time.

To better integrate non-Russian speaking participants of ECORA, English summaries are being prepared of all reports. The project budget is not sufficient to allow the full translation of all interim documents.

Key Project Achievements during Reporting Period

No	
1.	<p>Field reports and other documents related to project components (e.g., training manuals) were prepared in accordance with the work plans for 2006. Brief English summaries are found in Annex III. The key documents are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental policy and management (Activity 1.2.1) 2. Legal analysis and assessment of administrative reforms having an impact on IEM for Kolguev Island Model Area: A legal assessment of habitat protection mechanisms and species conservation activities in a light of the reforms carried out (Activities 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and 1.1.3) 3. Federal legal base promoting development of IEM (in the context of harmonizing interests of industry, indigenous people of the North and environmental protection) (Activity 1.1.1) 4. Modern social and economic situation in Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and in the Kolyma River Basin Model Area (Activities 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) 5. Assessment of habitat protection mechanisms and species conservation activities (Activity 1.1.2) 6. Legal base for establishing territories of traditional nature use of indigenous people of the North and Sakha Republic (Yakutia) (Activity 1.1.3) 7. Establishing of codes of conduct for industries in the Arctic region: review of the international and Russian experience (Activity 1.1.4) 8. Review of codes of conduct and social responsibilities of international enterprises (Activity 1.1.4) 9. Activity of state bodies on the conservation of biological and landscape diversity in the Russian Arctic (Activity 1.2.4) 10. Monitoring of key indicators for IEM (Kolguev Island) (Activity 2.1.4) 11. Development of a work plan for domesticated reindeer breeding (Activity 2.1.3) 12. Assessment of levels of unfragmented habitats – Beringovsky (Activity 2.1.2) 13. Assessment of levels of unfragmented habitats – Kolyma River Basin (Activity 2.1.2) 14. Assessment of conditions and development of work plans on seabirds – Beringovsky (Activity 2.1.4) 15. Assessment of conditions and development of work plans on key indicator species related to

- globally threatened species – Beringovsky (Activity 2.1.2)
16. Assessment of conditions of waterfowl, willow grouse, and Arctic fox – Kolguev Island (Activity 2.1.4)
 17. Development of a work plan and projects on commercial fish. Statement of fish resources of the Lower Kolyma River (Activity 2.1.3)
 18. Wild reindeer in the Kolyma River Basin (Activity 2.1.4)
 19. Development of map of traditional nature use of Beringovsky (Activity 2.2)
 20. Thematic maps and analysis for IEM planning – Kolyma River Basin (Activity 2.2)
 21. Socio-economic indicators – Beringovsky (Activity 2.3)
 22. Sociological expertise of Bugrino village, Kolguev Island (Activity 2.3)
 23. Socio-economic indicators of Nizhnekolymsk Ulus – Kolyma River Basin (Activity 2.3)
 24. Assessment of indigenous people orienting to different forms of traditional nature use; and Development of mechanisms for indigenous people participating in monitoring biodiversity and management of bioresources in Beringovsky (Activity 2.4)
 25. Game birds harvest regimes in the Kolyma River Basin (Activity 2.4)
 26. Development of IEM plans and strategies (Activities 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3)
 27. Development of conflict resolution mechanism in the Kolguev Island Model Area (Activities 3.1.1 and 3.1.2)
 28. Development of mechanisms and recommendations for conflict resolution (Activities 3.1.1 and 3.1.2)
 29. Development of a strategy and mechanism for public participation; and Development of a mechanism for stakeholder consultations (Activities 3.1.1 and 3.1.2)

Abbreviations in used text

ChAO – Chukotka Autonomous Okrug
 ETT – Expert Task Team
 IEM – Integrated Ecosystem Management
 MA – Model Area
 MAIU – Model Area Implementation Unit
 NAO – Nenets Autonomous Okrug
 PIU – Project Implementation Unit
 RAC – Regional Advisory Committee
 SC – Steering Committee

In addition to the above, for ease of reporting, activities are often referred only by their number. The list of project activities and their corresponding numbers is given below:

Activity	
1.1.1	Analysis of regulatory, administrative, and institutional reforms
1.1.2	Assessment of habitat protection mechanisms & species conservation activities
1.1.3	Analysis of requirements for establishing territories of traditional nature use
1.1.4	Codes of conduct for industries
1.2.1	Training programs in environmental policy and management
1.2.2	Training for traditional nature use and management
1.2.3	Developing small-scale economic activity
1.2.4	Training of conservation officers
1.3	Financial sustainability.
1.4.1	Environmental Education for Local Schools
2.1	Monitoring of key indicators for IEM

2.2	Thematic maps and analyses for IEM planning
2.3	Socio-economic Indicators
2.4	Community Monitoring Programs
3.1.1	Communication / public participation strategy
3.1.2	Stakeholder consultation mechanism
3.1.3	Conflict resolution mechanism
3.2-3.4	Model Area IEM Plans
4.1	Pilot projects to test IEM implementation strategies

Progress on Components

Component 1: Strengthening the Enabling Environment for IEM (Overall progress to date)

Progress has been made on background studies relating to the regulatory, administrative, and legislative environment in Russia overall, and in the Model Areas specifically.

Reports have been prepared on Activities 1.1.1-1.1.3 for the Kolguev and Kolyma Model Areas. The training manual and its initial implementation for Activity 1.2.1 have been completed; but more training on IEM methods and field application are highly needed. Experts have been selected for Activities 1.2.4 in Kolguev and Kolyma, and for Activity 1.4.1 in Beringovsky.

Training seminars on activity 1.2.1 were held in Naryan-Mar in March and in Chersky in April.

Component 2: Strengthening the Knowledge Base for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating IEM Plans

The federal GIS centre has been contracted.

Reports on key indicators based on 2005 field work have been prepared and incorporated into the Logframe. 2006 field work has been started. List and formats of GIS maps are being agreed to and developed.

Component 3. Development of IEM Plans and Strategies

Training sessions were held in Chersky and in Anadyr on the development of a common approach to IEM during the missions of Task Manager Igor Ryzhov to Sakha and Project Coordinator Evgeny Kuznetsov to Chukotka respectively.

Reports on Activities 3.1.1-3.1.3 have been prepared by federal experts.

Issues surrounding the preparation of an IEM strategy and action plan are being discussed in the regions and with ETT experts.

Component 4: Pilot Projects to Test IEM Implementation Strategies

Pilot projects were not scheduled for this reporting period. They will be the subject of community, government and private sector consultations in 2006 and will be undertaken in 2007.

Delivery on the Strategy and Action Plan for Mitigating Delays and Impacts

A strategy and action plan for mitigating delays in the project was prepared for the October 2005 meeting of the Expert Task Team.

The key issues facing the project were identified as:

1. Inappropriate planning, i.e., on budgets and work plans leading to unnecessary delays
2. Administrative issues, including, problems with transfer of funds to the regions, lack of trust on financial issues in the regions, wrong formats of reporting

3. Inadequate communications at all levels of the project

Following is a summary of the issues and the status on the delivery of each item as of this semi-annual report.

Issue	Action	Status
Assistant for Beringovsky	PIU and MA Coordinator to prioritize finding suitable candidate	Candidate contracted in January 2006.
Use of competitions to select experts	Competitions need only be used to select long-term staff, not short-term contracts.	Implementation proceeding as described.
Announcement of competitions / approval of experts	Recruitment of regional experts is the responsibility of MA Coordinators with support of PIU, if needed. Recruitment of federal experts is responsibility of PIU with input of MA Coordinators. Final approval of experts for 2006 due March 31, 2006.	Most experts have been hired with the exception of Chukotka
Problems finding regional experts	All efforts must be made to hire suitable local experts. Where a suitable local expert cannot be identified within 2 weeks, the PIU may provide assistance to find expert from elsewhere.	Implementation proceeding as described.
Performance reviews	Performance reviews or employee evaluation required for all staff hired for 12 months or more.	Structure of evaluation discussed between Deputy Project Manager and Financial Manager of GRID-Arendal. To be implemented summer 2006.
Quality control	In addition to the quality control (QC) responsibilities as stated within the terms of reference of the PIU and ETT, the PIU has responsibility for QC of small contracts; PIU has responsibility for QC of field work; PIU has responsibility for QC of interim reports of larger contracts and GRID-Arendal has responsibility for QC of final report.	Implementation proceeding as described.
Timeliness of budgets & work plans	Annual budgets and work plans to be ready for SC approval by Dec. 10 of each year (means the drafts ready for review by GRID by early November). SC must be prepared to approve budgets and work plans by Dec. 17 of each year.	Budgets and work plans were finalized on time although minor adjustments were required after the proposed deadline.
Transfer of funds to regions	Cash authorizations can only be made on quarterly basis.	Implementation proceeding as described.
Lack of trust on financial matters	Barring any conflict with GEF rules, PIU and MAIUs have authority to purchase materials and equipment in accordance with the amounts allocated to them in budget.	Implementation proceeding as described.
Translation	Extra support for translation must be sought both within existing budget and from donors.	Western co-funders have been approached to provide additional translation support.
Contracting arrangements with UNDP	All contracts subject to annual renewal must be signed no later than the anniversary date of the contract.	Implementation proceeding as described.

	Process to renew the contract must be initiated minimum of 30 days prior to expiry of existing contract. Minor changes to be approved by Project Manager and Deputy Project Manager. Major changes, including non-renewal, must be approved by SC.	
Contracting with regional organizations	Contracts with regional organizations must be signed no later than February 1 st of each year. The contracting process should be initiated no later than November 1 st of each year.	Implementation proceeding as described.
Communications between MAIUs and Task Managers	Closer and more meaningful communications required between MA Coordinators and Task Managers for IEM, and training and education.	Communications have shown some improvement.
Communications between ETT Chair and Task Managers	Closer and more meaningful communications required between ETT Chair and Task Managers for IEM, and training and education.	Communications between these parties continues to be weak, as do communications with the Project Deputy Manager and Western Advisors.
Web site	Update and maintain ECORA web site.	Web site with basic project information available. More detailed work required in 2006.
Training in IEM	Further training in IEM methods required at all levels in the project.	IEM workshop scheduled for fall 2006.
Quarterly advance requests	MAIUs to submit request to PIU 4 weeks before end of quarter; PIU submits consolidated report to GRID-Arendal 3 weeks before end of quarter; GRID-Arendal submits approved request to DGEF 2 weeks before end of quarter.	Timing of quarterly advance requests has improved with 2006 budget.

Key Issues and Solutions

Key issues identified in this reporting period and proposed actions for the next period are given below.

No	Issue	Proposed Action	Date to be completed	By Whom
1	Delay in selection and contracting of some experts for workplan 2006.	Most experts required for implementing the work plan in the first half of 2006 have been contracted and the contracting of other experts is scheduled for second half of 2006.	31 October 2006 Some of the same experts will be used for other activities thus they cannot start other work until after completion of field work and associated reports.	PIU, MAIUs

2	<p>Poor communications at all levels of the project.</p>	<p>Specific recommendations regarding improving communications, including clear contractual responsibilities with respect to both project staff and consultants have been developed.</p> <p>Recommendations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prompt responses to the asked questions (within 3 days); - obligation to copy all involved on e-mail correspondence; to consult all relevant staff on decisions to be taken; - more active involvement of Model Areas Assistants in project work during MA Coordinator absences (i.e., business trips and vacations), and in communications with Western Advisors in English; - timely notification on the planned missions and holidays and contact numbers and e-mail addresses left with MA Coordinators during absence; - regular contacts with Western Advisors with copying of correspondence to PIU - holding of weekly discussions on the main issues of project implementation in Russian PIU and teleconference with Western partners (at least once a month) 	<p>Progress to be discussed at next ETT meeting in November 2006.</p>	<p>Project Manager, Deputy Project Manager</p>
3	<p>The regional administrative body in Chukotka, Charitable Fund "Yarany", will no longer assist with the transfer of funds or letting of contracts in that region.</p>	<p>Actively seeking a new administrative body in Chukotka to perform this function.</p>	<p>15.08.2006</p>	<p>Beringovsky MAIU Coordinator, PIU</p>
4	<p>Lack of funding for translation of key draft documents into English</p>	<p>Require further in-house translation by MAIUs and PIU, as per their Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Some additional support for translation has been secured from project partners and further support continues to be sought.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Deputy Project Manager</p>

5	Lack of common understanding of project objectives and principles of integrated ecosystem management among project staff.	Further support and training to be given to Model Areas and Task Managers. In Sakha and Chukotka, consultations were conducted by Task Manager of Training & Educational Component and the Project Coordinator with MA Coordinators, Assistants and some regional experts to provide a better understanding of the needs and objectives of the project and of IEM.	On-going An IEM workshop is scheduled for November 2006 in St. Petersburg, Russia to help better understand the application of IEM in Russia	Deputy Project Manager, ETT Chair
6	Project not meeting timelines in preparation of budgets, work plans, and reports.	UNEP/GEF Fund Manager reviewed administrative procedures at length. Fund Manager is available to be consulted on questions of administration. GRID-Arendal to closely monitor the project performance in this respect and take corrective measures. Situation in 2006 has improved in some areas but reporting deadlines still experience delays.	On-going	GRID Arendal PIU, MAIUs
7	Delay in reviewing and approval of reports, translation of reports/extended resumes (abstracts) and their distribution to non-Russian speaking partners and to UNEP/GRID-Arendal.	All contractors required to prepare executive summaries / extended abstracts of their reports in conjunction with their reporting duties.	Outstanding reports to be completed by 1 September 2006.	Project Manager, Project Coordinator
8	Difficulties in realizing Russian co-funding at both federal and regional levels.	Project Manager to continue to pursue funding with MEDT and oil and gas industry, as per original contribution agreement letters. A letter was sent by the Project Manager to the Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Russian Federation regarding the support they committed to ECORA MAIU Coordinators continue to pursue regional co-funding as per the original contribution	30.09.2006	Project Manager, MAIU Coordinators

agreement letters.				
9	Difficulty in retaining qualified personnel due to low salary levels. Salary levels were set during the project development phase. Subsequent changes in the Russian economy have deemed the salaries of many positions to be too low.	Two options to consider: 1. Abolishing the role of bookkeepers in the regions. 2. Realizing the co-funding from Russia, either cash or in-kind, thus allowing re-distribution of GEF funds towards salary increases, where appropriate.	30.09.2006, linked with item 8, above	Project Manager in consultation with MAIU Coordinators
10	Performance reviews / employee evaluations	Establish employee performance reviews for all staff hired for periods of 12 months or more.	31.10.2006	GRID-Arendal (Deputy Project Manager, ETT Chair, Financial Manager)
11	Insufficient involvement / consultation of local people and other stakeholders	Complete and implement stakeholder / public participation, conflict resolution and communication plans. Implement stakeholder consultation mechanism; Program Coordinator, Western Advisors, and ETT Chair to monitor its appropriate use	Plan due October 2006 In all MAs, some but timewise inadequate consultations were held with the local population or within the framework of trainings or during the collection of information for implementation of activities.	PIU, IEM Task Manager
12	Providing adequate training to all project participants	Training of local experts to ensure that they have a clear understanding of expectations in their particular activity and in project overall	June 2006	Task Managers, MA coordinators, PIU

2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

2.1 Administration and Co-ordination

Ms. Olga Petunina, Kolguev Island Model Area Assistant, left the project in April 2005. A replacement, Mr. Andrey Vokuev, has been found and formally began his duties on April 1, 2006.

Ms. Ljubov Tkachuk, bookkeeper of MA "Kolguev Island" has informed of her intention to leave the project due to a very low salary. A replacement is expected to be found by the end of August.

Ms. Ludmila Meleshchenko, a Beringovsky Model Area Assistant was contracted on 1 March 2006.

In April the bookkeeper for the Beringovsky Model Area informed us of her retirement. She was quickly replaced with a new bookkeeper, Oksana Polishchuk, was contracted on 1 June 2006.

The Director of the Beringovsky Model Area administrative body, "Yarany", has sent a letter to UNEP/GRID-Arendal regarding his refusal to continue work in ECORA due to absence of financial compensation. It should be noted that financial reimbursement of the regional administrative bodies was not part of their contracts and this was explicitly spelled out in the agreements. The issue of replacing the Beringovsky administrative body should be resolved by the end of September at which time a new contract will be concluded between them and GRID-Arendal.

As noted in the last semi-annual report, the administrative body CEERI was reorganized as FCGS Ecologia with a new director. The organization will continue to operate under the same terms as CEERI and an updated MOU reflecting this change was signed between GRID-Arendal and FCGS Ecologia on 1 January 2006.

2.1.3 ECORA ETT Meeting

The next meeting of the ETT is scheduled for November 2006.

Three teleconferences were held between the ETT Chair, PIU and Task managers to address both the methodological basis of the project and technical issues of implementation of major project components (IEM and Training & Education).

2.2 Project Monitoring

2.2.1 Progress and Finance Reporting

The Semi-annual Progress Report No. 3 (June – December 2005) was submitted to UNEP/DGEF in June 2006. The primary reason for the delay was a result of a change in the reporting format.

The first quarterly report for 2006 was submitted to UNEP/DGEF by GRID-Arendal on 13 June 2006. The second quarterly report will be submitted on 31 July 2006.

The annual audit for both the Russian Federation and UNEP/GRID-Arendal have been completed (June 2004 – December 2005). The audit for GRID-Arendal has been submitted to DGEF. The audit for the Russian Federation will be submitted to GRID-Arendal and DGEF as soon as it has been translated into English.

2.2.2. Project M&E System & Reporting

Reports from the 2005 field work on key indicators are finalized. Summaries of these reports are prepared and will be translated to be sent to GRID-Arendal and the Western Advisors. Completed summaries are included in Appendix III of this report. They will also be made available on the project web-site. The project logframe has been updated with these new findings.

In Kolyma, old-growth larch forests have been replaced with domesticated reindeer as a more appropriate indicator. As noted in previous reports, old-growth larch forests are not found within the boundaries of the Kolyma River Basin Model Area and their inclusion in the logframe matrix was an oversight in the project document.

Report on Activity 2.3, socio-economic indicators, has been completed for Kolguev Island with a delay that was caused by necessity of visiting Kolguev in March-April to gather all information.

2.2.3. Annual Steering Committee - Progress on Key Recommendations

There was no ECORA Steering Committee meeting during this reporting period.

2.2.4 Mid-Term Review - Progress on Key Actions

The MTR which formally is due in 2007 might possibly be combined with the ETT and SC meetings in early 2007.

2.2.5 Quality Control Project Technical Reports

The PIU is closely following the production of technical reports being prepared by federal and regional experts. The quality of reports has been of a varying degree; many of them were seriously delayed or had a different content from what was agreed in the expert contracts. The PIU is working closely with the MA Coordinators to mitigate and prevent this situation from recurring in 2006. All experts are now required to prepare a summary or abstract of their reports. These summaries will be translated into English to help better involve the non-Russian speaking project participants as well as aiding in quality control of project activities and reports. At the time of this SA progress report, brief summaries have been prepared for all reports and translated into English. Full summaries / abstracts are being prepared for translation.

2.3 Mobilization of Staff & Consultants

Please see Staffing Scheme in Appendix II. Most experts have been identified with the exception of Chukotka. It is expected that with a new MA Coordinator now in place, most of the staffing issues can be quickly resolved. Some positions still remain unfilled in Nenets and at the federal level but most of these are expected to be filled after the completion of the 2006 field season.

Two on-going challenges in the project continue to be the difficulty in finding regional experts that meet the project requirements and salary levels in the face of a changing Russian economy. This was detailed in the previous semi-annual report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

A new Minister of Environment has been appointed in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Mr. Vladimir Grigoriev. This is not expected to have any impacts on ECORA.

In Beringovsky, there is a new Head of Administration requiring the establishment of new contacts with the Administration. This is the responsibility of MA Coordinator. This is not expected to pose any complications to the implementation of ECORA.

The greatest environmental issue facing the Model Areas continues to be oil extraction, particularly on Kolguev Island. In addition to ongoing activities on this island, there are plans to build a floating platform in the exploitation block Prirazlomnoye in Pechorsk Sea in 2006. This may have both negative impacts to ecosystem of the island in case of water pollution and positive impacts in social aspect as a new market outlet for reindeer breeding. Exploratory seismology work will be carried out in the Barents, Pechorsk and Karsk Seas. If these fields are developed it may result in significant impacts to the regional ecosystem. This will be addressed at a mission to Naryan-Mar and Kolguev Island in October 2006.

In Beringovsky, traditional reindeer breeding has been recently restored with the support of the administration of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. There has been a renewed interest of indigenous people in reindeer breeding. The people of Meynipylgino village have twice approached the regional administration to help them with revival of reindeer breeding in their village. In addition to this, an active process of establishing "communities" in Beringovsky is underway. A "community" is a legal form of organization that carries out some kind of activity. Most often the tribal communities are organized but not always because it may include representatives of different tribes. Their activities mostly are: reindeer breeding, fishery, marine mammals hunting. There are already five communities established in this area, more than in any other region in ChAO. The regional administration supports the idea of developing the territories of traditional nature use. The process of establishing communities shows the ability of indigenous people to realize their rights and possibilities.

During the environmental policy and management training sessions held in 2006, participants have identified priorities in the areas of nature use, conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, social and economic problems, including protection of health and environmental education. On the

results of the SWOT-analysis, proposals were made regarding ways of address some of the environmental, social and economic problems of the MA. There are currently no codes of conduct for industry in Russia which address the requirements of ECORA. Any existing codes are social and with humans as the only target (i.e., to give something to people to allow the companies to explore and extract natural resources and cause negative impacts to the environment). Environmental requirements are technological and are developed for concrete activities. Companies are obliged to implement these requirements; federal authorities are responsible for control. The main goal of the codes of conduct being developed within the framework of ECORA is a free will obligation of enterprises, administrations, and local populations to protect nature within the framework of sustainable development of this territory.

8. KEY LESSONS LEARNED

8.1 Component Lessons

8.1.1 Administrative-financial component

- Realization of Russian co-financing (federal, regional, and industry) has been weak. In some cases what was scheduled as a cash contribution in reality turned out to be a contribution in-kind and occasionally with other conditions attached (e.g., pending approval of another project). Co-financing conditions need to be clearly spelled out in the design phase along with guarantees that will avoid requirements for repeated re-confirmation of funding. Taking into account that the economic situation can change quite quickly while the process of developing a project and its subsequent approval and implementation may take several years, there is a need for continuously seeking co-funding from any possible sources.. Such additional co-funding could either bolster project activities or compensate any non-fulfillment of previously made co-funding obligations.
- Salaries for key project staff (e.g., Model Area Coordinators and Assistants) must be set at more realistic levels to attract qualified people that are able to work in the position full time.
- In the selection of MA Coordinators and local administrative bodies, it is advantageous to have the director of a local administrative body as the MA Coordinator . In this case regional management of the project is much more effective and it spares many problems even though these regional administrative bodies do not receive any costs from the project budget.

8.1.2 Component 1 – Strengthening the Enabling Environment for IEM

- Experience from the training seminars shows that participants are very interested in the content but that it's the course duration cannot be more than 5 days. Moreover, the dates and venues of such seminars should coincide with some other events (e.g., meetings of representatives of Uluses, agricultural conferences, etc.) that allows for a greater number of interested people to participate in the training. Otherwise a number of participants may be reduced only to a couple representatives from the Model Area. An additional benefit is that considerable funds could be saved on transportation (taking into account high cost of transportation in the North).

8.1.3 Component 2 – Strengthening the Knowledge Base for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating IEM Plans

- Budgets must be developed in a timely fashion and all cash requests must be well-planned so as to avoid any unnecessary delays in project activities, especially time-sensitive ones such as field work.

- Execution of field work on Model Areas is connected with many organizational and technical problems. It is difficult to accurately calculate the necessary funds in advance so there has been a need to reallocate some funds from one budget line to another on several occasions.
- Poaching occurs in all Model Areas making it difficult to obtain accurate information on the use of biological resources. Due to the nature of poaching, it is necessary to develop a special approach on how to receive such information.
- Lack of common internationally approved methodical basis for assessment of bioresources (e.g., with the Arctic Council's working group Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna) makes it difficult to prepare materials in a unified format. As a recommendation for similar projects in the future, it may be useful to include a special component on the harmonization of methodologies for better implementation of the project.

8.1.4 Component 3 – Development of IEM Strategies and Action Plans in the Model Areas

- Proper training in integrated ecosystem management development should be conducted prior to attempting full implementation of the project. There is a lack of common understanding between key members of the project team on the fundamentals of IEM philosophy and practice. Further capacity building in this area is urgently required.
- Greater efforts must be taken to involve stakeholders in the Model Areas. Insufficient effort has been made to inform local people about the aims of the project or to solicit their input into the process. Public consultation strategy, conflict resolution mechanism, and communication should have been finished at the outset of the project and remain incomplete thus complicating the full participation of local people. There is concern on how to apply these strategies at field level and allowing adequate time for full consultative and participatory processes with the key stakeholder groups. MA Coordinators should design ways of increasing interaction and consultations with stakeholder.

8.1.5 Component 4 – Pilot Project to Test IEM Strategies and Action Plans

- Activity not yet started

9. KEY ACTIONS RECOMMENDED

Key issues identified during this reporting period and proposed actions for the next period are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Key issues and recommended actions

No	Issue	Proposed Action	Date to be completed	By Whom
1	Delay in selection and contracting of some experts for workplan 2006.	Most experts required for implementing the work plan in the first half of 2006 have been contracted and the contracting of other experts is scheduled for second half of 2006.	31 October 2006 Some of the same experts will be used for other activities thus they cannot start other work until after completion of field work and associated reports.	PIU, MAIUs

2	Poor communications at all levels of the project.	Specific recommendations regarding improving communications, including clear contractual responsibilities with respect to both project staff and consultants have been developed.	Progress to be discussed at next ETT meeting in November 2006.	Project Manager, Deputy Project Manager
		<p>Recommendations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prompt responses to the asked questions (within 3 days); - obligation to copy all involved on e-mail correspondence; to consult all relevant staff on decisions to be taken; - more active involvement of Model Areas Assistants in project work during MA Coordinator absences (i.e., business trips and vacations), and in communications with Western Advisors in English; - timely notification on the planned missions and holidays and contact numbers and e-mail addresses left with MA Coordinators during absence; - regular contacts with Western Advisors with copying of correspondence to PIU - holding of weekly discussions on the main issues of project implementation in Russian PIU and teleconference with Western partners (at least once a month) 		
3	The regional administrative body in Chukotka, Charitable Fund "Yarany", will no longer assist with the transfer of funds or letting of contracts in that region.	Actively seeking a new administrative body in Chukotka to perform this function.	15.08.2006	Beringovsky MAIU Coordinator, PIU
4	Lack of funding for translation of key draft documents into English	Require further in-house translation by MAIUs and PIU, as per their Terms of Reference.	On-going	Deputy Project Manager
		Some additional support for translation has been secured from project partners and further		

		support continues to be sought.		
5	Lack of common understanding of project objectives and principles of integrated ecosystem management among project staff.	<p>Further support and training to be given to Model Areas and Task Managers.</p> <p>In Sakha and Chukotka, consultations were conducted by Task Manager of Training & Educational Component and the Project Coordinator with MA Coordinators, Assistants and some regional experts to provide a better understanding of the needs and objectives of the project and of IEM.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>An IEM workshop is scheduled for November 2006 in St. Petersburg, Russia to help better understand the application of IEM in Russia</p>	Deputy Project Manager, ETT Chair
6	Project not meeting timelines in preparation of budgets, work plans, and reports.	<p>UNEP/GEF Fund Manager reviewed administrative procedures at length. Fund Manager is available to be consulted on questions of administration.</p> <p>GRID-Arendal to closely monitor the project performance in this respect and take corrective measures.</p> <p>Situation in 2006 has improved in some areas but reporting deadlines still experience delays.</p>	On-going	GRID Arendal PIU, MAIUs
7	Delay in reviewing and approval of reports, translation of reports/extended resumes (abstracts) and their distribution to non-Russian speaking partners and to UNEP/GRID-Arendal.	All contractors required to prepare executive summaries / extended abstracts of their reports in conjunction with their reporting duties.	Outstanding reports to be completed by 1 September 2006.	Project Manager, Project Coordinator
8	Difficulties in realizing Russian co-funding at both federal and regional levels.	<p>Project Manager to continue to persue funding with MEDT and oil and gas industry, as per original contribution agreement letters.</p> <p>A letter was sent by the Project Manager to the Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Russian Federation regarding the support they committed to ECORA</p> <p>MAIU Coordinators continue to pursue regional co-funding as per the original contribution agreement letters.</p>	30.09.2006	Project Manager, MAIU Coordinators

9	Difficulty in retaining qualified personnel due to low salary levels. Salary levels were set during the project development phase. Subsequent changes in the Russian economy have deemed the salaries of many positions to be too low.	Two options to consider: 1. Abolishing the role of bookkeepers in the regions. 2. Realizing the co-funding from Russia, either cash or in-kind, thus allowing re-distribution of GEF funds towards salary increases, where appropriate.	30.09.2006, linked with item 8, above	Project Manager in consultation with MAIU Coordinators
10	Performance reviews / employee evaluations	Establish employee performance reviews for all staff hired for periods of 12 months or more.	31.10.2006	GRID-Arendal (Deputy Project Manager, ETT Chair, Financial Manager)
11	Insufficient involvement / consultation of local people and other stakeholders	Complete and implement stakeholder / public participation, conflict resolution and communication plans. Implement stakeholder consultation mechanism; Program Coordinator, Western Advisors, and ETT Chair to monitor its appropriate use	Plan due October 2006 In all MAs, some but timewise inadequate consultations were held with the local population or within the framework of trainings or during the collection of information for implementation of activities.	PIU, IEM Task Manager
12	Providing adequate training to all project participants	Training of local experts to ensure that they have a clear understanding of expectations in their particular activity and in project overall	June 2006	Task Managers, MA coordinators, PIU

10. ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SEMI-ANNUAL PERIOD

10.1 Mobilisation

All necessary experts for the second half of 2006 will be contracted by September 30, 2006 due to field work continuing. This concerns experts participated in the fieldwork. All other experts are selected already.

10.2 Key Activities for the Next Semi-annual Period

Please see Model Area and federal level work plans in Appendix III for details. The key activities and deliverables to be completed during this period include:

- Completing the second season of field work in the Model Areas

- Continuation of / finalizing the implementation of all activities of 1st quarter 2006. Specifically this includes:
 - Activity 1.1.1, Analysis of regulatory, administrative, and institutional reforms (Beringovsky)
 - Activity 1.1.2, Analysis of habitat protection mechanisms and species conservation activities (Beringovsky, Federal)
 - Activity 1.1.3, Analysis of requirements for establishing territories of traditional nature use (Beringovsky, Federal)
 - Activity 1.1.4, Codes of conduct for industries (All)
 - Activity 1.2.1, Training programs in environmental policy and management (Beringovsky)
 - Activity 1.2.4 Training programs for conservation officers (All MAs)
 - Activity 1.4.1 Environmental education for local schools (All MAs. Start of work)
 - Activity 2.1, Monitoring of key indicators for IEM 2006 (All MAs)
 - Activity 2.2, Thematic maps and analyses for IEM (All MAs, continuation of work)
 - Activity 2.3, Socio-economic indicators 2006 (Federal)
 - Activity 2.4, Community monitoring programs (Kolguev, Federal)
 - Activity 3.1, IEM plans and strategies (communications / public participation plan, stakeholder participation mechanism, conflict resolution mechanism) (Kolguev, Kolyma, Beringovsky)
- Holding a workshop on training programs in environmental policy and management (Activity 1.2.1 – Beringovsky, October 2006); on training programs for conservation officers (Activity 1.2.4 – all MAs, August-October 2006)
- Contracting federal experts on Activity 1.1.4 (Codes of conduct for industries), Activity 1.4.1 (Environmental education for local schools), Activity 1.2.3 (Developing small-scale economic activity), Activity 1.2.4 (Training of conservation officers) (November 2006)
- Confirm regional co-funding for budget year 2007.
- Holding meetings of the Regional Advisory Committees to assess results of the work in 2006 (November 2006)
- Holding meetings with RAIPON to strengthen cooperation with ECORA (with the participation of representatives of the MNR) (October 2006)
- Investigating a joint program of work on waterfowl on Kolguev Island for 2006-2008 with German co-funding. The program has been developed but requires a detailed concordance after finalization of field work (October 2006)