



# Information exchange system on ecosystem state in Vistula Lagoon – PL/RU

## 1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

## 2. Key approaches

- Integration
- Strategies
- Knowledge-based
- Ecosystems based
- Socio-economic

## 3. Experiences that can be exchanged

A regular and comprehensive information exchange is possible only if it is based on the long-term commitment of the research institutions on both sides of the border of a trans-boundary water body and depends on personal relationships and collaboration projects of the co-operating institutions on the decision-taking level.

## 4. Overview of the case

The purpose of the Project (financed under the EEA and Norway Grants 2004-09, grant number PL0223) is to establish a sound organisational and technical structure of Polish-Russian co-operation for collecting and exchanging information on the ecosystem status of the Vistula Lagoon with the overall objective to ensure the biodiversity and environment protection in the Vistula Lagoon. During last decades attempts to coordinate Polish and Russian monitoring of the Vistula Lagoon has been undertaken. However, this problem still remains not solved. The project is focused on the creating both scientific and logistic basis for sustainable management of this specific water body by:

- Carrying out an assessment of the current monitoring and information exchange systems both in Polish and Russian parts of the lagoon;
- Organising meetings, workshops in Poland and in Kaliningrad;
- Developing a common monitoring plan and a database to be shared with the Russian and Polish partners;
- Planning the trainings for Polish and Russian experts.

## 5. Context and Objectives

### a) Context

Complementary monitoring and the operational system of information exchange is a key issue for the ecological status assessment in the context of the Water Framework Directive. Even if WFD rules are not legally binding for the Russian side, both countries will benefit from successful coordination of monitoring activities. Good transboundary cooperation is also extremely important in formulation of protection plans for NATURA2000 areas. Currently, there is a limited collaboration in common management of the Vistula Lagoon between Poland and Russia.

## **b) Objectives**

1. Develop a common monitoring plan and a database to be shared with the Russian and Polish partners.
2. Develop tools for both Polish and Russian administration supporting decision-taking procedures related to economic and environmental management.

## **6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)**

### **a) Management**

The current EU legislation (e.g. WFD and NATURA2000) in the case of transboundary water bodies requires the cross-border cooperation. The assessment of the ecological status of the Vistula Lagoon in the context of the Water Framework Directive has to be done based on information from both sides of the border. Also during formulation of protection plans for NATURA2000 areas, good cooperation and information exchange between Russian and Polish institutions is crucial.

### **b) ICZM tool**

As being financed by the EEA and Norway Grants 2004-09, this project involves cooperation between Polish (Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, IMGW) and Norwegian (Norwegian Institute for Water Research, NIVA) partners but the project implementation requires cooperation of numerous Polish and Russian institutions responsible for environmental monitoring of the Vistula Lagoon.

## **7. Cost and resources**

Complete costing is not available

## **8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)**

Ongoing project – assessment will be possible after project completion.

## **9. Success and Fail factors**

### **a) Success factors**

1. Well established and functioning EU trans-boundary regulation drivers for transitional and coastal water bodies: WFD, MSFD and SEA Directive.
2. Strong technical and local expertise in marine and transitional waters' monitoring, planning and management in both countries.
3. Progress of networks in coastal zone management.
4. There exists an EU-Russia Neighborhood Programme, EEA and Norway Grants Programme and other international instruments financially supporting and facilitating cross-border co-operation between Poland and Russia specifically addressing cross-border management needs of Vistula Lagoon.

### **b) Fail factors**

1. No integrated regulatory framework for transitional waters' management combining WFD and MSFD requirements in both jurisdictions sharing Vistula Lagoon and its catchment area.
2. No integrated trans-boundary plan or other legally-binding agreement in operation for monitoring of Vistula Lagoon in Poland and Russia.
3. Governmental institutions are usually unwilling to share data at their possession, particularly with institutions in another country, even if that institution collects similar data in the same trans-boundary water body.

## **10. Unforeseen outcomes**

None as yet

## **11. Prepared by**

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## **13. Sources**

No published or uploaded sources are available yet

## **14. Relevance for cross-border management of transitional waters**

Vistula Lagoon is shared by an EU country and Russia. This situation implies additional difficulties in aiming at the cross-border coherence in management. This case study is aimed to test the limits of the cross-border co-operation in monitoring and data exchange between an EU- and a non-EU country. Preliminary results prove the relevance of the study for cross-border management of transitional waters as it shows how difficult is the process of setting the right co-operation framework. The cross-border information exchange system can be sustainable only if the rules and principles for information exchange are agreed upon and the committed personnel and funding sources are available on both sides of the border for a longer period of time.