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Technical Protocol
between
the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania,
the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Estonia and
the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
of the Republic of Latvia

on practical aspects of co-operation

The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties",

considering the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of Latvia on co-operation in the field of environmental protection signed on 21 July 1995 in Tallinn, as the basis for the Baltic environmental co-operation,

considering also the role of the Committee of Senior Environmental Officials to the Baltic Council of Ministers as the co-ordinating institution of the Baltic environmental co-operation,

emphasising the necessity of integration towards the European Union as well as harmonisation of environmental laws and standards,

have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The Parties endorse the prolongation Baltic Environmental Forum (hereinafter referred to as "BEF 3"), which is the joint project of the three Baltic States supported by various donors, amongst others, the European Commission (DG ENV), Germany, Sweden, Finland, the Nordic Council of Ministers and others.

The project's third phase, BEF 3, is scheduled from 1 September 2000 until 31 August 2003. It consists of the Core BEF 3 project as well as various sub-project such as the "Baltic States' Regional Project on Chemicals Control" (BACCON 2), the "Baltic States' Regional Project for Natura 2000 Implementation" (BANAT 2) and the Baltic State-of-Environment Report (BSoER 3).

Article 2

The Parties agree on main targets and tasks of the Baltic Environmental Forum:

The main target of the BEF is to support a co-operation process among the Environmental Authorities of the Baltic States and to assist them in the accession process towards the European Union.

The Baltic Environmental Forum shall continue operating as organiser of stable, effective and continuous discussion structures between the three Baltic States integrating experts from different sectors like the Ministries of the Environment (main target group) and other relevant Ministries, business, science and NGO's.

The Baltic Environmental Forum shall serve for the Parties by performing a programme mainly related to EU accession issues and capacity building. The programme shall be approved by the Steering Group of each separate sub-project.

Article 3

The organisational structure of the Baltic Environmental Forum shall be as follows:

The Core BEF's Steering Group, consisting of representatives of the Parties and the donor organisations will oversee the work of the Baltic Environmental Forum and adopt its working program BI-annually. Similar Steering Groups are set up for the different sub-projects.

The staff of the Baltic Environmental Forum shall consist of:

- One full-time environmental expert, employed by each Party and located in their countries.
- A project manager, a project assistant (employed by the parties jointly), various environmental experts related to the sub-projects.

Article 4

The working principles of the Baltic Environmental Forum shall be as follows:

The staff organises and prepares seminars, meetings and round table discussions that focus on:

- information exchange;
- discussion processes with defined results;
- exchange of experiences with implementation of EU legislation, international conventions and environmental standards, strategies and policy instruments, and;
- identification and elaboration of joint programmes and projects.

The Parties and the Committee of the Senior Environmental Officials to the Baltic Council of Ministers make proposals for seminars, meetings and other proposed activities.

The topic lines and concrete programme is elaborated by the staff and is to be considered and adopted by the Steering Group(s).

The Baltic Environmental Forum will combine Baltic expertise/experience with foreign expertise if necessary for the seminar topics. Follow up, documentation and publication is a service of the Baltic Environmental Forum.

Article 5

The Parties agree on the following financial structure of the Baltic Environmental Forum:

The total budget of the Core BEF 3 is 823,620 EUR and shall be spend according to the adopted Terms of Reference (annex 1) and the BI-annual working programme.

The budget for the BACCON 2 projects is estimated of 1,158,000 EUR and shall as well be spend according to its Terms of Reference (annex 2) and working programme.

Similar the BANAT 2 and BSoER 3 shall be implemented with budgets of approximately 300,000 respectively 150,000 EUR. Their TOR shall be submitted to the Parties and the Committee of the Senior Environmental Officials to the Baltic Council of Ministers at a later stage.

Article 6

The Technical Protocol shall enter into force upon signature and shall remain in force until 31 August 2003.

Done in Riga on 31 August 2000 in three copies in English.



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