

## **Technical Protocol**

### **between the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Latvia and the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Estonia**

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

considering the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of the Republic of Estonia 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 of the Baltic Environmental Forum (hereinafter referred to as "BEF 4"), which is a joint project of the three Baltic States supported by various donors, including the European Commission (DG ENV), Germany, Sweden, Finland and others.

The project's 4<sup>th</sup> phase, BEF 4, is scheduled from 1 September 2003 until 31 December 2004. It consists of the "Core BEF 4 project" as well as two sub-project, the so-called BACCON 3: "Capacity building for chemicals control in Baltic administration" and BANAT 3: "Baltic Regional Co-operation Programme on Natura 2000".

## Article 2

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

The main target of the BEF is to support the co-operation and experience exchange among the Environmental Authorities of the Baltic States, to assist them in the accession process towards the European Union and to maintain the co-operation at the beginning of the EU membership.

The Baltic Environmental Forum shall continue operating as an organiser of stable, effective and continuous discussion fora for the three Baltic States integrating experts from different state authorities, e.g. environment (main target group), health, agriculture, finance etc., as well as other economy sectors such as industry, science and NGO's.

The Baltic Environmental Forum shall serve for the Parties by performing a programme related to EU environmental policy issues and capacity building of the Baltic Stakeholders. 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 programme bi-annually. Similar Steering Groups are set up for the different sub-projects.

The core staff to implement the BEF 4 project shall consist of:

- one environmental expert, paid (and contracted) by each Party and located in their countries.
- a technical assistant/project accountant (paid by the parties jointly)
- a project manager (paid by project funds and responsible for supervision of all sub-projects).

In addition various environmental experts and technical staff related to the sub-project implementation according to budget descriptions paid by the project budgets will be contracted:

## Article 4

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

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

- information exchange;
- discussion processes with defined results;
- exchange of experience on 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 Senior Environmental Officials to the Baltic Council of Ministers make proposals for seminars, meetings and other proposed activities.

The topic lines and concrete programmes are elaborated by the staff and are 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 are the services 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 4 is 390,000 EUR and shall be spent according to the adopted Terms of Reference (Annex 1) and the bi-annual working programme.

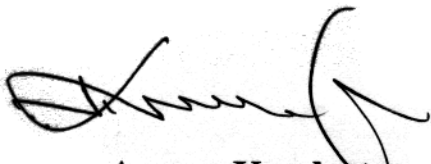
The budget for the BACCON 3 project is estimated at 500,000 EUR and for the BANAT 3 at 270,000 EUR. It shall also be spent according to the relevant Terms of Reference (Annex 2 and 3) and bi-annual working programmes.

The co-funding from the state budget of the parties shall be similar to the current funds allocated for the share of salaries and costs of the three offices (Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius). Additionally the parties support applications for seminars from their environmental funding facilities.

## Article 6

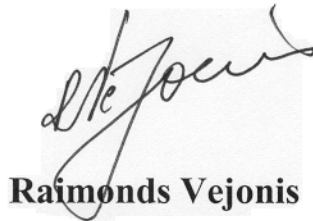
The Technical Protocol shall enter into force on 1 September 2003 and shall remain in force until 31 December 2004.

Done in Sigulda on 8 May 2003 in three copies in English.



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