

Integrated Natural Resource Management in the Baikal Basin Transboundary Ecosystem

Russian Federation, Mongolia

GEF Agency: United Nations Development Programme

Executing Partners: UNOPS

Federal Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Russian Federation)

Ministry of Environment and Green Development (Mongolia)

GEF International Waters Focal Area and Biodiversity Focal Area

GEF Project ID: 4029

UNDP PIMS: 4347; UNDP Atlas Project ID: 00076781

Mid-term Evaluation Report

April 5, 2014



Image from the Ider river (Mongolia) river basin management plan. Source: Mongolia Water Forum.

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Acronyms

APR	Annual Project Report
BB	Baikal Basin
BIC	Baikal Information Centre
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CPAP	Country Program Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FSP	Full-size project
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
Ha	hectares
IWC	International Waters Cluster (of UNOPS)
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
KM	Kilometers
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAB	Man and Biosphere Programme of UNESCO
MEGD	Ministry of Environment and Green Development (Mongolia)
MINIS	Mining Infrastructure Investment Support Project
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology (Russian Federation)
MSU	Moscow State University
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
PIMS	Project Information Management System
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PUTW	Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters (Bilateral agreement)
RAS	Russian Academy of Sciences
RF	Russian Federation
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SGP	Small Grants Programme
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	United States dollar
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

I. Executive Summary

Table 1 Project Summary Data

Project Title:	Integrated Natural Resource Management in the Baikal Basin Transboundary Ecosystem			
GEF Project ID:	4029		<i>at endorsement (US\$)</i>	<i>at completion (US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	4347 ATLAS ID: 00076781	GEF financing:	US\$3,898,000	US\$3,898,000
Country:	Russian Federation, Mongolia	UNDP own:		
Region:	Europe & CIS	Government:		
Focal Area:	International Waters, Biodiversity	Other:		
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	Strategic policy and planning framework, Institutional Strengthening for IWRM, Demonstrating methods and approaches for water quality and biodiversity mainstreaming	Total co-financing:	Cash contributions: Foundation for the Protection of Lake Baikal: US\$3,387,097 Coca-Cola: US\$300,000 UNESCO: US\$ 315,000 In-kind contributions: National Governments US\$15,161,290 Regional Governments US\$30,124,782	Cash contributions: Foundation for the Protection of Lake Baikal: US\$3,387,097 Coca-Cola: US\$300,000 UNESCO: US\$ 315,000 In-kind contributions: National Governments US\$15,161,290 Regional Governments US\$30,124,782
Executing Agency:	UNOPS	Total Project Cost:	US\$53,186,169	US\$53,186,169
Other Partners involved:	UNESCO, Federal Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) (Russia); Federal Ministry of Environment and Green Development (MEGD) (Mongolia)	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		20 June 2011
		(Operational) Closing Date:	31 December 2015	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW

1. The Baikal project was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with a grant amount of \$3.90 million United States dollars (USD) (not including \$0.18 million USD in project development financing, and \$0.40 million USD in project implementation fees), and originally planned co-financing of \$49.29 million USD, for a total project cost of \$53.19 million USD. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the GEF Agency, and executing partners are UNOPS, the Russian Federal Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), and Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Green Development (MEGD).¹ The project has an expected approximately four-year implementation period, from late 2011 to December 2015.

¹ Formerly the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism (MNET).

2. As stated in the project document, the project objective is *“To spearhead integrated natural resource management of Baikal Lake Basin and Hövsgöl Lake ensuring ecosystem resilience, reduced water quality threats in the context of sustainable economic development.”* The project strategy is to take a multi-pronged integrated water resources management (IWRM) approach addressing the range of threats and barriers to the Baikal Basin watershed.

3. The project objective is planned to be achieved through three main outcomes:

- **Outcome 1: Stakeholders Elaborate and Adopt a Strategic Policy and Planning Framework**
- **Outcome 2: Institutional strengthening for IWRM**
- **Outcome 3: Demonstrating methods and approaches for water quality and biodiversity mainstreaming**

4. The project target area is the transboundary watershed of Lake Baikal in Mongolia and Russia, which covers 54,000,000 hectares (ha), an area approximately the size of France. The project strategy includes a mix of scientific data aggregation, systemic and institutional capacity development (including policy strengthening), and practical on-the-ground demonstration activities. The core of the approach is the production of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Program (SAP), as per the standard GEF international waters focal area approach.

5. According to GEF and UNDP evaluation policies, mid-term evaluations are required practice for GEF funded full-size projects (FSPs), and the mid-term evaluation was a planned activity of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan of the Baikal project. As per the evaluation Terms of Reference (TORs) the mid-term evaluation reviews the actual performance and progress toward results of the project against the planned project activities and outputs, based on the standard evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, results and sustainability. The evaluation assesses progress toward project results based on the expected objective and outcomes, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation identifies relevant lessons for other similar projects in the future, and provides recommendations as necessary and appropriate. The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory mixed-methods approach, which included three main elements: a) a desk review of project documentation and other relevant documents; b) interviews with key project participants and stakeholders; c) field visits to a selection of project activity sites in the Baikal basin. The evaluation is based on evaluative evidence from the project development phase through April 2014, when the mid-term evaluation data collection phase was completed. The desk review was begun in March 2014, and the evaluation mission was carried out from April 7 – 18, 2014.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON THE MAIN EVALUATION CRITERIA

6. The Baikal project is at a critical phase, where the governments of Russia and Mongolia must now move forward in a meaningful way in relation to agreement on the Strategic Action Programme (SAP), and on strengthening transboundary cooperation mechanisms. This includes a revised and updated agreement that can support transboundary integrated natural resource management based on current international norms and standards, and an enhanced joint institutional mechanism to support implementation of the SAP and effective transboundary cooperation. A large number of valuable outputs have been produced by the project, but it is

necessary to have the bilateral cooperation mechanisms in place to support future work, and ensure sustainability of the Baikal project's impressive results. Concrete steps toward continued transboundary cooperation are urgent, as the project has only approximately 18 months remaining.

7. With respect to **relevance**, the project is considered **relevant / highly satisfactory** for strengthening integrated natural resource management and supporting sustainable in the Baikal basin. The project clearly supports priority transboundary environmental and water management issues between Russia and Mongolia, and is in line with numerous national policies and pieces of legislation in both countries. The project is also relevant to local resource user needs and priorities. The project is supportive of the agreed UNDP country priorities for each country, and is in-line with the GEF strategic priorities for the biodiversity and international waters focal areas. Further, the project clearly supports implementation of relevant multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention, and the World Heritage Convention.

8. Project **efficiency** is rated **highly satisfactory**. Project implementation is considered satisfactory, while project execution (i.e. project management) is assessed as highly satisfactory. The project is well on-track with financial delivery, with 54.9% of the total GEF financing disbursed by the end of 2013, and greater than 95% annual budget delivery in 2012 and 2013. The results produced thus far are impressive relative to the project expenditure. Project management costs are also below the budgeted amount, and are expected to remain less than 10% of GEF funding. It is fully expected that the project will finish by the revised completion date of December 2015. Financial management procedures are in-line with norms for international development projects, and conform to UNDP and UNOPS policies and procedures, as well as the requirements of both participating governments. Project co-financing is on-track (with a co-financing ratio of 1 : 12.7), and could potentially significantly exceed originally expected amounts by the end of the project. The Project Management Unit (PMU) is highly professional and has demonstrated excellent planning, reporting, and financial management. The project has good stakeholder engagement through various partnership approaches, though country ownership in Mongolia is weaker than in Russia.

9. The Baikal basin project is well on-track to make important progress toward the overall project objective, and to achieve the supporting three outcomes. Following the initial slow start (the six-month "inception phase"), the project is making good progress on the activities in its agreed workplans. Project **results** thus far are rated **satisfactory**, and project **effectiveness** is also rated **satisfactory**. The results framework has some shortcomings, as it does not fully and adequately reflect project results, and at least one indicator has been completely dropped with approval of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), while others have been modified or downscaled. Nonetheless, the project is on-track to achieve a majority of indicators. The most significant question for the Baikal project – as it is for most GEF international waters projects – is whether at the end of the day the participating countries will be willing to formally agree to concrete and specific measures in the final SAP, which will allow them to move forward in a meaningful and collaborative way. The current view for the Baikal project is optimistic, particularly since there are only two countries involved, but drafting of the SAP has only

started, and there are a number of reasons that the countries may ultimately be reluctant to make further formal commitments.

10. Key results achieved with project support thus far include:

- Completion of the draft Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) by April 2013;
- Progress toward enhanced transboundary cooperation through submission to the Russian and Mongolian governments of a draft revised and updated transboundary agreement for the management of natural resources;
- Increased understanding and knowledge of ecosystem dynamics in the Baikal basin through multiple high quality technical studies and reports on various aspects of the Baikal watershed, including the water quality study for the Selenga delta, groundwater assessment, pollution transport model, and pollution hotspot assessment, as well as the forthcoming Baikal Atlas;
- Strengthened foundational elements of transboundary water resource management through significant progress on water monitoring harmonization;
- Enhanced capacity for effective integrate natural resource management through development of four river sub-basin management plans, with progress toward implementation of these plans;
- Good progress on the pilot and demonstration activities in Russia, including biodiversity-responsible mining practices, and development of ecotourism plans and infrastructure; and
- Increased information sharing and dissemination through development of the Baikal Information Center web portal.
- Another highly notable development is the Russian government's decision to close the Irkutsk paper mill on the south shore of Lake Baikal in early 2014; the mill had been identified as the single most significant point source of pollution to the lake. This action was not the direct result of project activities funded with GEF resources, though the Russian government's work to improve many aspects of environmental quality in the Baikal basin is clearly within the framework of the project.

11. Key issues and areas for attention for the Baikal project in the 2nd half of implementation include:

- Development of an SAP that is adequately concrete and specific, but that can also gain political support from both Russia and Mongolia;
- The need to make significant progress toward concluding bilateral agreement on a revised transboundary water and environment agreement, including consensus on an enhanced joint institutional mechanism to implement the agreement;
- Further progress toward implementation of river basin management plans that have been developed; and
- Capacity strengthening support for River Basin Administrations and River Basin Management Councils in Mongolia.

12. Sustainability is difficult to assess at the mid-term of a project, but risks to the sustainability of project results appears to be limited, and overall **sustainability** is considered

moderately likely. Currently, financial risks and institutional/governance risks are not significant. Socio-political risks do exist in terms of whether Mongolia and Russia will be prepared to continue close formal cooperation on transboundary integrated natural resource management at the end of the project, as signified by adoption of the SAP, and substantive progress toward a revised and updated bilateral transboundary agreement. Environmental risks also do exist as well, considering the current uncertainty about potential hydropower development in the Baikal basin in Mongolia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. **Key Recommendation 1:** The SAP development process should include consultations with sub-national government stakeholders, such as soum and aimag level government representatives in Mongolia. To ensure implementation of the SAP it must be integrated with the planning processes and policies of the Aimags whose territories are included in the Selenga basin. The project could support at least one round of stakeholder consultations, which should be held in the early phases of SAP development (presumably in the third quarter of 2014). If necessary the project should transfer resources from Outcome 3 to Outcome 1 to cover these activities. This could be facilitated through the environment departments of the Aimag governments. [PMU, Mongolia MEGD]
14. **Key Recommendation 2:** The project should explore the possibility of providing further immediate support to the government of Mongolia for reviewing and analyzing the draft revised transboundary agreement with Russia. This approach would follow similar activities undertaken in previous donor projects in which the project supported activities such as expert legal analysis, and consultation with the Department of Justice. Being a transboundary agreement, this would be facilitated in collaboration with both the MEGD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The UNDP Mongolia Country Office may be able to help facilitate such an approach. [PMU, PSC]
15. **Key Recommendation 3:** The project exit strategy should be developed by the end of 2014, for approval by relevant stakeholders in early 2015. The exit strategy is necessary to clearly define roles and responsibilities to support the sustainability of project results. This would include, for example, clear agreement about the responsibility for managing and updating the BIC website. [PMU, PSC]
16. **Key Recommendation 4:** It is recommended that the project explore all potential opportunities to undertake additional demonstration or pilot activities in Mongolia related to integrated natural resource management. The project has thus far included relatively few practical on-the-ground activities in Mongolia, and such activities are often important for gaining stakeholder support and buy-in, and raising awareness. This could have important dividends for the project in Mongolia, by engaging aimag and soum government stakeholders. [PSC]
17. **Recommendation 5:** The Baikal project should explore the option of collaborating with the GEF SGP in Mongolia to activate the Baikal NGO network, and potentially undertake some biodiversity-related pilot activities in Mongolia supporting IWRM management. [PMU, UNDP Mongolia Country Office, GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Mongolia]

18. **Recommendation 6:** The project should consider a variety of approaches to increase the chances of the two countries moving toward accepting the revised and updated transboundary water and environment management agreement. One opportunity could be to hold a media event highlighting “20 years of cooperation” on water management between Russia and Mongolia (or even 40 years, going back to the 1974 agreement). This theme could also be extended to an academic conference on the subject where participants discuss and explore current key topics related to transboundary water management for the two countries. [MNRE, MEGD, PMU, PSC]

19. **Recommendation 7:** To strengthen the current plenipotentiaries mechanism in lieu of a new joint commission the project should work with the key stakeholders and both the government of Russia and government of Mongolia to integrate the SAP actions and targets into the meetings and workplans of the current plenipotentiaries mechanism. This would help consolidate the project results and strengthen sustainability, demonstrating initial steps toward implementation of the SAP. [MNRE, MEGD]

20. **Recommendation 8:** Once the Baikal Information Centre (BIC) website is fully operational it should be promoted and linked to as many other relevant websites as possible, in particular the website of the MEGD in Mongolia and MNRE in Russia, as well as the websites of the environmental agencies of the Republic of Buryatia and the relevant Aimags in Mongolia. The BIC will be a great public information resource, but it is necessary to make a proactive effort to drive website traffic to the site to ensure that it becomes known to the widest possible relevant audience. This would include search-engine optimization as well, and, for example, publication of the website URL on any printed materials of the project. [PMU, BIC developers]

21. **Recommendation 9:** In Mongolia the project should seek opportunities to develop the capacity of Mongolia’s watershed management institutions, i.e. River Basin Management Authorities and River Basin Councils. This could include, for example, the possibility of developing the capacity of the River Basin Councils to act as conduits for public and expert input to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) relevant to the river basin management plans. In addition, the River Basin Management Authorities are expected to operate as key actors in implementing integrated water resource management in Mongolia, but they require training and technical capacity on IWRM issues and approaches. The River Basin Management Authorities and River Basin Councils for the Eg and Ider rivers are still being established, and thus there is a good opportunity for the Baikal project to directly contribute to the establishment of these bodies to support implementation of the river basin management plans that were developed under the Baikal project. [PMU, PSC, MEGD]

22. **Recommendation 10:** The project should increase activity related to responsible mining in Mongolia. The project should ensure that the lessons from the biodiversity friendly mining pilot activities on the Russian-side are documented and shared with the Mongolian colleagues. In addition, the project should engage with the stakeholders in Mongolia involved with identifying and disseminating environmentally responsible best practices for the mining industry. The Asia Foundation has organized stakeholder roundtable events on this issue, and it is a critical issue for the Baikal watershed in Mongolia. The above activities would require relatively little project funding. In addition the project should explore the option of conducting environmentally responsible mining pilot projects in Mongolia (most likely in the artisanal

sector), not necessarily with biodiversity funding, but with funding from the international waters portion of the project budget, or with funding from other partners, such as the GEF-SGP. [PMU, PSC]

23. **Recommendation 11:** The project should conduct an assessment of the feasibility and opportunities for citizen-based water quality monitoring networks, supporting the implementation of river basin management plans. Such a program would help more closely track water quality issues; Mongolia's rivers have a high capacity for quick self-cleaning, so if pollution or water quality issues are reported, by the time government officials are able to respond and test the water, the pollution may already be significantly diluted. Citizen-based monitoring programs also serve a dual purpose of increasing public awareness and supporting environmental education, and they can also be relatively cost-effective means of collecting basic monitoring data. Examples of such programs include the Georgia (USA) Adopt-A-Stream program (<http://www.georgiaadoptastream.com/db/>), and Cook Inletkeeper (Alaska, USA) Citizen Environmental Monitoring Program (<http://inletkeeper.org/clean-water/citizen-monitoring>). [PMU, PSC]

24. **Recommendation 12:** The key technical experts from the Baikal project should participate in the inception workshop of the FAO/GEF mainstreaming project that will be starting in 2014, in order to identify all potential synergies between the two projects. One area of potential synergy may be related to Payments for Ecosystem Services, which the FAO project plans to pilot within Mongolia. [PMU, UNDP, FAO]

25. **Recommendation 13:** Support information dissemination and awareness raising of key issues identified in the TDA through 1-2 page policy briefs highlighting the key points of the primary threats and issues identified in the TDA for the Baikal Basin, particularly for Mongolia. Stakeholders highlighted the fact that it is critical to continue raising awareness of high-level policy makers in understanding these complex issues. [PMU]

26. **Recommendation 14:** There is an excellent opportunity to explore and assess the feasibility of payments for ecosystem services (PES) from a transboundary perspective. There are numerous examples of successful PES for watershed maintenance around the world, but there are few or no known examples of transboundary PES. The Baikal basin has strong potential for such a scheme, since Russia is the downstream partner, and has greater resources (higher GDP, higher level of development) than Mongolia. A PES scheme could even be explored on a non-cash basis, where Russia agrees to provide technical support, or timber, or invest in development in Mongolia (specifically, for example, in the soums located ear the border) in exchange for a guaranteed level of water quality in the Selenga river as it crosses the border, or for ensuring a certain level of forest coverage in specific zones in Mongolia. It is highly unlikely that such a scheme could be piloted on a small scale before completion of the current IWRM project, but the concept should be explored, potentially with an exploratory concept paper or feasibility study, and inclusion of the idea in the SAP. Moving toward such a scheme could be globally significant. [PMU, PSC, SAP drafting team]

27. **Recommendation 15:** The evaluation recommends that the project keep detailed records of co-financing received from all sources. With the Russian Federal investment program in the Baikal region the project can be considered to have more co-financing than originally planned. At the same time, the number and type of co-financing partners, not just the amount

of co-financing received, can be an important indication of stakeholder ownership and support. Thus it would be beneficial for the project to record the range of partner organizations who have contributed any amount of cash or in-kind co-financing. [PMU]

28. **Recommendation 16:** The evaluation recommends that the project results framework be reviews in its entirety following this mid-term evaluation to ensure that additional changes are not required in the 2nd half of the project. In particular, the indicators for Outcome 2 are not reflective of the planned project results under this outcome. [PSC]

BAIKAL PROJECT MID-TERM EVALUATION SUMMARY RATINGS TABLE

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. Implementation & Execution	rating
M&E Design at Entry	MS	Quality of UNDP Implementation	S
M&E Plan Implementation	S	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	HS
Overall Quality of M&E	S	Overall Quality of Implementation / Execution	S
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance	R / HS	Financial Resources	L
Effectiveness	S	Socio-political	ML
Efficiency	HS	Institutional Framework and Governance	L
Overall Project Outcome Rating	S	Environmental	ML
5. Impact	rating	Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	ML
Environmental Status Improvement	M		
Environmental Stress Reduction	M		
Progress Toward Stress/Status Change	M	Overall Project Results	S

II. Baikal Project Mid-term Evaluation Approach

29. The mid-term evaluation is initiated by UNOPS, and by UNDP, which is the GEF Agency for the project, in line with the monitoring and evaluation plan of the project. The evaluation was carried out as a collaborative and participatory exercise, and identifies key lessons and any relevant recommendations necessary to ensure the achievement and sustainability of project results.

A. Mid-term Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

30. The **purpose** of the evaluation is to provide an independent external view of the progress of the project at its approximate mid-point, and to provide feedback and recommendations to UNDP and project stakeholders that can help strengthen the project and ensure its success during the second half of implementation.

31. The **objective** of the mid-term evaluation is to:

- Identify potential project design issues;
- Assess progress toward achievement of expected project results;
- Identify and document lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP and GEF programming in the region; and
- Make recommendations regarding specific actions that should be taken to improve the project.

B. Mid-term Evaluation Scope

32. The **scope** of the evaluation will be as outlined in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, and will include aspects covering:

- Project design, development, risk assessment / management, and preparation
- Project timing and milestones
- Implementation and execution arrangements, including GEF agency oversight
- Stakeholder participation
- Partnership approach
- Work planning, financial management/planning, co-financing
- Flexibility and adaptive management
- Progress toward results
- Key remaining barriers
- Sustainability
- Catalytic role: Replication and up-scaling
- Monitoring and evaluation (project and results levels)
- Impact and Global Environmental Benefits

33. In addition, the UNDP requires that all evaluations assess the **mainstreaming of UNDP programming principles**, which include:

- UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)/Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) / Country Programme Document (CPD) Linkages

- Poverty-Environment Nexus / Sustainable Livelihoods
- Disaster Risk Reduction / Climate Change Mitigation / Climate Change Adaptation
- Crisis Prevention and Recovery
- Gender Equality / Mainstreaming
- Capacity Development
- Rights-based Approach

34. Evaluative evidence will be assessed against the main UNDP and GEF evaluation criteria, as identified and defined in Table 2 below:

Table 2. GEF and UNDP Main Evaluation Criteria for GEF Projects

Relevance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time. • The extent to which the project is in line with the GEF Operational Programs or strategic priorities under which the project was funded. • Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.
Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it will be achieved.
Efficiency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible; also called cost-effectiveness or efficacy.
Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. • In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short to medium-term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other local effects.
Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion: financial risks, socio-political risks, institutional framework and governance risks, environmental risks • Projects need to be environmentally, as well as financially and socially sustainable.

C. Principles for Design and Execution of the Evaluation

35. The GEF M&E Policy² includes principles for evaluation, which are outlined as follows:
- Credibility
 - Utility
 - Impartiality

² See <http://www.thegef.org/gef/Evaluation%20Policy%202010>.

- Transparency
- Disclosure
- Participation

36. The evaluation was also conducted in line with United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.³

D. Evaluation Approach and Data Collection Methods

37. The evaluation commenced March 12, 2014 with the signing of the evaluation contract, and the evaluation field mission was carried out from April 7th – 18th, 2014. The evaluation field visit itinerary is included as Annex 6 to this evaluation report.

38. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the guidance outlined in the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results,⁴ and in accordance with the evaluation guidance as outlined in the GEF M&E Policy.

39. The collection of evaluative evidence was based on three primary data collection methodologies:

1. Desk review of relevant documentation
2. Interviews with relevant stakeholders at local, regional, national and international levels
3. Field visit to projects sites

40. As such, the mid-term evaluation process involved four main steps, some of which overlapped temporally:

1. Desk review of project documentation, and logistical preparation and coordination with the project team for the field visit
2. In-country field visit, including visits to project field sites, and qualitative interviews with key stakeholders at the national and local levels
3. Analysis of data, follow-up to address any data gaps, and drafting of the evaluation report, then circulation to evaluation participants for additional feedback and input
4. Finalization of the evaluation report and follow-up with the project team and stakeholders

41. Individuals targeted for interviews were intended to represent the main project stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries, and those most knowledgeable about various aspects of the project. The evaluation also sought to include a representative sample covering all different types of stakeholders, including national and local government, civil society, local communities, and the private sector.

E. Limitations to the Evaluation

42. All evaluations face limitations in terms of the time and resources available to adequately collect and analyze evaluative evidence. For the Baikal IWRM mid-term evaluation, the evaluator was not able to visit all project field sites, though a number of key sites in Russia were visited. Also, as is understandable, some project documents were available only in Russian

³ See http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4.

⁴ See <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook>.

or Mongolian language, although the project team and UNDP worked to ensure that language was not a barrier to the collection of evaluative evidence. In addition, all key documents were available in English. Altogether the evaluation challenges were not significant, and the evaluation is believed to represent a fair and accurate assessment of the project.

III. Project Overview

A. Baikal IWRM Project Development Context

43. This section includes a brief summary of some geographic and socio-economic aspects of the Baikal Basin; much more extensive and detailed information is available in the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis produced by the project. Portions of the below section are drawn directly from the project document and the TDA.

44. The project area targeted is the watershed of Lake Baikal, which encompasses an area of 540,000 km² (an area approximately the size of France), stretching across north-central Mongolia, and mainly the area of Russia south and southeast of Lake Baikal to the Mongolian border (see Figure 1). Lake Baikal, situated in southeast Siberia, is one of the world's most unique lakes. It is a global hotspot of aquatic biodiversity, harboring an extraordinary variety of flora and fauna, including hundreds of endemic species of amphipods, flatworms, and fish, as well as the only species of freshwater seal on earth. At present, over 2,550 species are known from Lake Baikal, including 1,550 species of fauna and 1,000 plant species and numbers continue to increase as new species are being discovered.

45. Similar to Lake Tanganyika in East Africa, Lake Baikal lies in a geological rift zone that continues to extend as a result of the divergence of continental plates. With an estimated age of between 25-30 million years, and a maximum depth of 1,637 meters, Lake Baikal is the world's oldest and the deepest lake. The lake contains approximately 20% of the globally available surface freshwater. Lake Baikal is also famous for its water clarity, which can reach up to 40 meters.

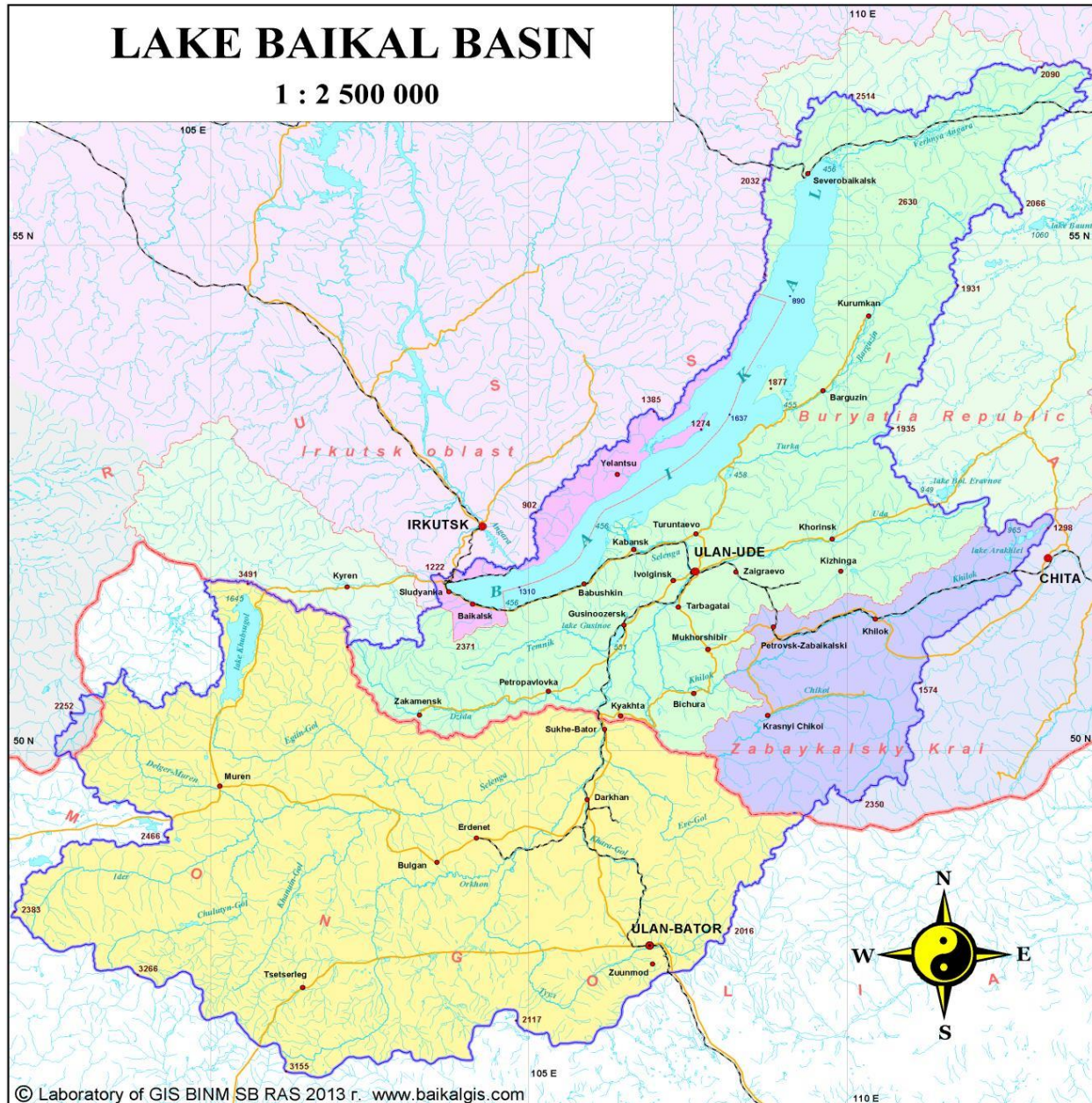
46. In 2008, the Russian Government declared Lake Baikal to be one of the Seven Wonders of Russia. In 1996, Lake Baikal was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites (UNESCO 1996), due to its value as a natural phenomena, representing outstanding examples of ongoing ecological and biological processes in evolution and development of freshwater ecosystems, and as a significant habitat for the conservation of biodiversity. Furthermore, the Baikal region includes numerous historical, archaeological and cultural monuments, several of which are traditionally considered sacred.

47. A total of 336 rivers flow into Lake Baikal with only one outlet, the Angara River. As a result, the residence time of water in the lake is over 300 years. The largest tributary of Lake Baikal is the Selenga River, which starts in Mongolia and contributes over 60% of annual inflow to the lake. The catchment area of the Selenga River is 447,060 km², of which 148,060 km² (33%) is within Russia and 67% within Mongolia. The Selenga Basin comprises over 80% of the Baikal Basin, illustrating the importance of Mongolia to the lake's long-term ecological health. The Selenga Delta of Lake Baikal is one of the world's largest fresh water deltas occupying 680 km². In 1996, the delta of the Selenga River was included on the list of Ramsar Wetlands of

International Importance because of its significant role as a habitat for flora and fauna, as well as its role in functioning as a water filter against pollution flowing into the lake.

48. The water catchment of Lake Baikal is shared by the Russian Federation (Russia) and Mongolia. The Baikal Basin includes Lake Khovsgol, which is Mongolia's largest lake and contains almost 75% of the country's surface freshwater. The basin includes numerous mountains, extensive boreal forests, tundra, and steppes with high scenic beauty and significant natural values. Due to the climatic and geologic differences in the region, a great variety of plants and animal species are found.

Figure 1 Lake Baikal Transboundary Watershed



49. The territory of the Baikal Basin is complex in terms of its political and administrative arrangements. Political borders split the Basin practically in half between Russia and Mongolia. Within the Baikal Basin there are three separate Russian states (Oblast, Krai and Republic) and one Autonomous Region; 12 different Mongolian states (Aimags); over 45 national parks, strict nature reserves and significant cultural sites in both regions; and over 25 counties (rayons) in Russia and 116 counties (soums) in Mongolia, 28 of which are divided by the Basin boundary.

50. Differences in economic development both among the Russian states of the Baikal Basin and between the Russian and Mongolian portions of the Basin are significant. In 2008, Russia's GDP per capita was \$11,832 USD. In 2008, Mongolia's GDP per capita was \$1,191USD.

51. The Basin contains a majority of Mongolia's population, given that the country's most populous city, Ulaanbaatar, is within the watershed. The total estimated Mongolian population in the Basin in 2011 was 2,079,200 persons. The estimated population on the Russian side was 524,600, for a total population in the basin of approximately 2,600,000 persons.

52. Traditionally, the main foundation of the economy of Mongolia was pasturing livestock husbandry, and this remains an important part of the country's economy, employment and export revenues. The sector, which includes industrial processing of livestock products and related services, employs 33% of total labor force, and constitutes approximately 19% of the annual GDP and 25% of the country's export revenue. The past few years the economy of Mongolia has been changing in structure. The mining sector is becoming an increasingly dominant sector and has led the economic growth of the country. The agriculture sector decreased from 18.7% in 2008 to 13.1% in 2011, whereas the industry sector increased from 37% to 58.3% over that same period.

53. A key factor related to economic development in Mongolia is that Mongolia currently imports power from Russia, and has a goal to increase domestic energy independence. On the other hand, Russia has a goal of exporting more natural gas. At the same time, the growing mining industry requires both power, and water for operations – both of which have implications for the water resources of the Baikal Basin. Mongolia is currently conducting feasibility studies for hydropower infrastructure on rivers in the Selenga watershed.

54. In the Republic of Buryatia there has been a slight increase in the annual economic contribution of the industry sector compared to the agriculture sector between 2007-2011. The contribution of the transport sector reduced significantly during that same period. Overall, there has been a steady decline in the proportion of people employed in industry, agriculture and construction since 1985. Agriculture is traditionally an important employment sector in Buryatia, but this sector was impacted heavily by the economic crisis in the 1990's and now only represents 11.9% of the total workforce. The employment rates in trade almost doubled in the same period. The largest increase in employment took place in the public administration sector.

B. Project Concept Background

55. As outlined in the project document, "The history of joint agreements dates to 1974 with the Agreement between the USSR Government and the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic on the Rational Use and Protection of Selenga River Basin Waters. In 1988 an agreement between the USSR and the Mongolian People's Republic was signed in Ulaanbaatar

on ‘Cooperation for Water Management in Transboundary Waters’. Signed in 1995, the bilateral ‘Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters’ (PUTW) Agreement between Russia and Mongolia replaced agreements on ‘Water Management’ (1988), and on ‘Rational Use and Protection of Selenga River Basin Waters’ (1974) and is broad in scope.”

56. According to individuals involved in the project development period, the Russian government began conversations with UNDP about the possibility of GEF-support for Lake Baikal in mid-2006. This was potentially building on the work done under a previous GEF-financed project that had significant activities in the Lake Baikal region: The “Biodiversity Conservation” project (GEF ID# 90), implemented by the World Bank, had a \$6.3 million component focusing on a variety of biodiversity conservation actions around Lake Baikal, and was implemented from approximately 1996-2003. On the Mongolian side, there was also some previous relevant experience under the project “Conservation of the Eg-Uur Watershed” project (GEF ID# 1859), a medium-sized project also implemented by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, which included a component on sustainable catch-and-release high-end fishing ecotourism.

57. Following the initial discussions with the Russian government UNDP engaged Mongolia with the goal of developing an International Waters project focused on integrated watershed management of the entire Baikal Basin. At some point in the development process Russia indicated that it would also be interested in using a portion of its biodiversity focal area allocation from the GEF to support biodiversity conservation activities under the project; however, Mongolia did not have resources still available under its GEF allocation, and thus the biodiversity-specific portions of the project were limited to the Russian side of the watershed. This is further discussed in Section III.D below on the project description.

58. The approach of combining GEF allocations under two focal areas created some challenges in the GEF Secretariat procedural aspects related to the project development process, according to individuals involved, which led to some delays in the project development.

C. Problems the Project Seeks to Address

59. The top threats identified in the TDA are summarized in Table 3 below, in order of priority. At the macro scale, these threats encompass issues such as wastewater management, mining development, forestry, agriculture development, hydropower development, wildlife and fisheries management, and rangeland management.

Table 3 Main Concerns and Specific Problems for the Baikal Basin Transboundary Ecosystem⁵

Main Problem Area	Specific Problem
1. Degradation of Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deforestation • Degradation of agriculture, pasture, and rangelands • Ecosystem changes
2. Hydrological Regime Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water level decrease in the catchment basin • Water level increase in the catchment basin
3. Decline of Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical contamination

⁵ Source: Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, 2013.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased suspended solids and sedimentation • Microbial pathogenic contamination • Organic pollution and eutrophication • Thermal contamination
4. Unsustainable Fisheries and Wildlife Exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-exploitation of aquatic biota • Over-exploitation of terrestrial wildlife
5. Biological Invasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alien species invading aquatic habitats • Alien species invading terrestrial habitats
Cross-cutting Areas	
6. Impacts of Global Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluctuations in freshwater flow • Increased extreme weather events
7. Natural Disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earthquakes • Mudslides • Droughts and floods

D. Project Description and Strategy

60. As stated in the Project Document, the project objective is *“To spearhead integrated natural resource management of Baikal Lake Basin and Hövsgöl Lake ensuring ecosystem resilience, reduced water quality threats in the context of sustainable economic development.”* The objective is to be achieved through three main outcomes, consisting of 15 outputs:

- **Outcome 1: Stakeholders Elaborate and Adopt a Strategic Policy and Planning Framework**
 - Output 1.1. Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis of threats to the Baikal Basin ecosystem including Hövsgöl lake in Mongolia completed
 - Output 1.2. Study on the Selenga Delta habitat and water quality issues, including toxic pollution and nutrient loading, water level fluxes, sedimentation levels, and the health of the benthic zone
 - Output 1.3. An assessment of transboundary problems in integrated surface and ground water resources management of the Baikal Basin and corresponding pollution threats, focusing on: stress on ground and surface water resources; deterioration of water quality in both surface and ground waters of the Basin; and vulnerability of groundwater dependent ecosystems
 - Output 1.4. Pollution hot spot assessment of the transboundary Baikal Basin, including a prioritized list of projects to be considered for future investment, the development of prefeasibility studies and revised regulations to reduce industrial pollution loading in the Baikal/Selenga basin
 - Output 1.5. SAP, including joint actions to enhance ecosystem protection
 - Output 1.6. Biodiversity conservation standards and biodiversity management objectives for tourism (including sport fishing) and mining integrated in SAP and local legislation, regional development plans; with amendments to EIA policies to address biodiversity risks

- Output 1.7. Sub-basin watershed management plans incorporating biodiversity management and ecosystem resilience objectives
- **Outcome 2: Institutional strengthening for IWRM**
 - Output 2.1. Joint Commission for the Baikal / Selenga Basin established and capacitated on the basis of the current joint Russian - Mongolian Task Force on Transboundary Water Use and Protection
 - Output 2.2. Inter-ministerial committees established at national levels
 - Output 2.3. Training program developed and implemented for key actors in an improved and enhanced, long-term transboundary management of the Baikal Basin
 - Output 2.4. The harmonized Baikal Basin Water Quality Monitoring program set under implementation, including upgraded monitoring stations
- **Outcome 3: Demonstrating methods and approaches for water quality and biodiversity mainstreaming**
 - Output 3.1. Pilot projects on biodiversity conscious mining approaches
 - Output 3.2. Demonstration and strategy development for (dead) livestock disposal to cease periodic anthrax outbreaks
 - Output 3.3. Pilots for the mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem health management objectives into tourism planning and practice

61. The main results expected from the project are highlighted in the project results framework, included as Annex 9 to this evaluation report (with a summary of potential achievement). Among the key project results are the revised and updated TDA, and the Strategic Action Programme, to be validated and confirmed by both the Russian and Mongolian governments.

62. The total GEF financing for the project is \$3,898,000 USD. The project is funded with \$2,630,000 USD from the GEF international waters focal area, and \$1,268,000 USD from Russia's biodiversity focal area allocation. The funding from Russia's biodiversity allocation is expected to be used only for activities on the Russian side of the basin.

E. Implementation Approach and Key Stakeholders

i. Implementation Arrangements

63. The implementation structure of the project is indicated in Figure 2, below. The project is executed under UNDP's "National Implementation" modality, with the Federal Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) as the Russian executing agency, and the Federal Ministry of Environment and Green Development (MEGD) as the Mongolian executing agency.

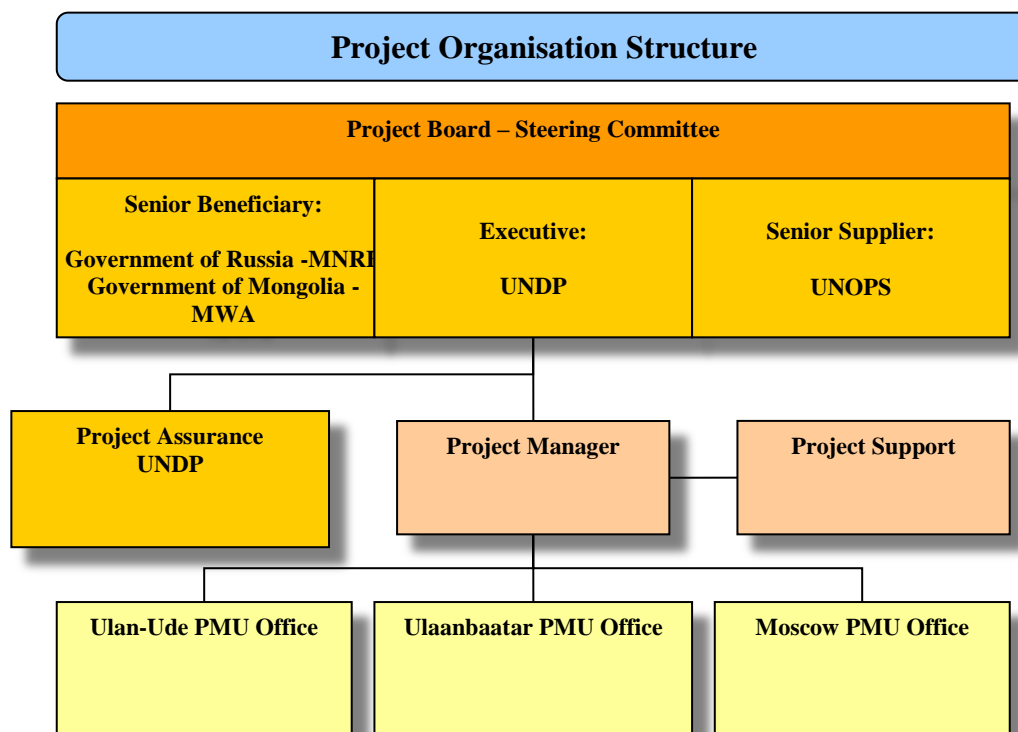
64. The PMU is primarily responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of the project. The main PMU office is based in Ulan-Ude, hosted by the Baikal Institute of Nature Management. The staff consists of the Project Manager, a Bioresources and Data Management Expert, a Finance Officer, and a Project Administration and Logistics Officer. There is also a PMU office in Ulaanbaatar, hosted by the Mongolian Water Authority, with a Technical Director and an Administration and Finance Officer. The PMU also has a Technical Director for Russia, based

in Moscow. Thus in total the PMU has seven staff, covering both technical and management functions.

65. The project has funding from both the biodiversity and international waters GEF focal areas, but is primarily considered an international waters project, and is implemented with support from UNOPS “International Waters Cluster” (IWC) (in accordance with long-standing UNDP and GEF practices for international waters projects), based at the UNOPS offices in Copenhagen. The UNOPS IWC supports the project in-part to address the challenges of project management in a transboundary context; UNOPS supported project start-up through personnel recruitment and set-up of the PMU, and provides support for budget management, travel logistics, workshop management, human resources services, and procurement. The project is further supported by the UNDP-GEF regional office in Bratislava, and the UNDP Russia Project Support Office, in Moscow.

66. The project also has a partnership agreement with UNESCO, which is executing the project component on groundwater.

Figure 2 Baikal Project Implementation Structure⁶



67. The main project oversight mechanism is the PSC. As described by the project document, the PSC “is responsible for making management decisions for a project in particular when guidance is required by the Project Manager. The Project Board plays a critical role in project monitoring and evaluations by quality assuring these processes and products, and using evaluations for performance improvement, accountability and learning. It ensures that required resources are committed and arbitrates on any conflicts within the project or negotiates a

⁶ Source: Project Document.

solution to any problems with external bodies.” The first PSC meeting was held following the project Inception Workshop, on November 22, 2011, and the second PSC meeting was held April 26, 2013 in Ulaanbaatar. The third PSC meeting is planned for July 2014 near Lake Baikal. The membership of the PSC was confirmed at the project Inception Workshop, and is indicated in Table 4 below. However, additional organizations and institutions have participated in the PSC meetings, as also indicated in the table.

Table 4 Baikal Project PSC Membership and Participation

Organization	1 st PSC Attendance	2 nd PSC Attendance
PSC Members		
UNDP	UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor; Head of Environment Unit; Programme Associate	UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor
UNOPS	Observer	Observer (not indicated as PSC member)
Baikalvodresurs (Russia)	Head of Baikalvodresurs	
MNRE (Russia)	Represented by the PMU National Technical Director for Russia	Represented by the PMU National Technical Director for Russia
Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy	Not attending	Not attending
Ministry of Natural Resource of the Republic of Buryatia	Minister	Minister
Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Irkutsk Oblast	Minister	Minister
Zabaikalsky Krai	Head of the department	Not attending
MEGD (Mongolia)	Not attending	National Project Director, State Secretary of the MEGD; Head of Foreign Cooperation Division of MEGD; Officer for Transboundary Water Issues, Policy Implementation and Coordination Department of MEGD (3 persons)
Water Authority of Mongolia	National Project Director, Head of the Water Authority of Mongolia,	N/A (Water Authority now under MEGD)
Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy (Mongolia)	National Project Director	Not attending
One Aimag	Not attending	Not attending
Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, Mongolia	Head of Hydrology Section	Head of Hydrology Section
Federal Water Resources Agency (Russia)	Head of the Baikal Basin Water Management	Head of the Yenisei Basin Water Management
Federal Service for Natural Resources Supervision	Head of Division for Republic of Buryatia	Head of Division for Republic of Buryatia
Observers	PMU staff; UNESCO Programme Specialist; UNOPS Portfolio Assistant	PMU staff; UNESCO Programme Specialist; UNOPS Portfolio Assistant; TDA consultant; Law Expert consultant; World Bank Senior Hydropower Specialist

ii. Key Stakeholders

68. Given the size of the area, the transboundary nature of the watershed, and the integrated approach advocated by the project, the relevant stakeholders for integrated watershed management in the Baikal Basin are numerous. The full list of stakeholders identified in the project document is included as Annex 6 to this evaluation report. Stakeholders cover government authorities at local, regional, and federal levels, numerous civil society stakeholders, local land users and other private sector actors, as well as multiple academic and research institutes. The most critical stakeholders can be considered as those represented on the project steering committee, as indicated in Section III.E.i above.

F. Key Milestone Dates

69. Table 5 below indicates the key project milestone dates.

Table 5 Baikal Project Key Milestone Dates⁷

Milestone	Expected date [A]	Actual date [B]	Months (total)
1. Project Preparation Grant (PPG) Approval	N/A	October 26, 2007	
2. PPG Supplemental Approval	N/S	October 8, 2009	24 (24)
3. Project Information Form (PIF) Approval	N/S	April 29, 2010	7 (31)
4. GEF Council Workplan Inclusion Approval	N/S	June 8, 2010	1 (32)
5. Final Project Document	N/S	December 29, 2010	7 (39)
6. CEO Endorsement Request	N/S	N/S	N/A
7. CEO Approval	N/A	March 4, 2011	2 (41)
8. UNDP-Country Prodoc Signature	N/S	May 6, 2011	2 (43)
9. Project manager hired	N/S	November 1, 2011	6 (49)
10. Inception Workshop	N/S	November 21, 2011	1 (50)
11. Mid-term Evaluation	1 st quarter 2014	April 2014	28 (78)
12. Project Operational Completion	May 31, 2015	N/A	N/A
13. Terminal Evaluation	2 nd quarter 2015	N/A	N/A
14. Project Financial Closing	December 31, 2015	N/A	N/A

70. As indicated by individuals involved in the project development phase, the project concept first started in mid-2006, with discussions between the Russian government and UNDP. Data on when the project concept was first submitted to the GEF is not available, but the first project preparation funding was approved in October 2007, approximately 1-1.5 years after initial discussions on the concept. From that point to GEF CEO Endorsement was 41 months, and there were another two months until UNDP Prodoc signature in May 2011 (considered the official project “start”) with the governments of Russia and Mongolia, for a total project

⁷ Sources: 1.A. Not applicable; 1.B. GEF online PMIS; 2.A. Not specified; 2.B. GEF online PMIS; 3.A. Not specified; 3.B. GEF online PMIS; 4.A. Not specified; 4.B. GEF online PMIS; 5.A. Not specified; 5.B. Date on project document file name; 6.A. Not specified; 6.B. Not specified; 7.A. Not available; 7.B. GEF online PMIS; 8.A. Not specified; 8.B. GEF online PMIS; 9.A. Not specified; 9.B. UNOPS personal communication; 10.A. Not specified; 10.B. Inception workshop report; 11.A. Approximately project mid-point based on actual start-up; 11.B. Timeframe of MTE data collection phase and field mission; 12.A. 48 months after Prodoc signature; 12.B. Not applicable; 13.A. Within three months of project completion, as per UNDP-GEF evaluation guidelines; 13.B. Not applicable; 14.A. Based on standard UNDP procedures, in relation to expected project operational completion date; 14.B. Not applicable.

development phase time of more than 3.5 years, not counting activity prior to PPG approval. However, it was another seven months before the project inception workshop was held in Ulan-Ude, on November 21, 2011.

71. This is a rather long development period for a project by current GEF standards, which target a development period of 22 months or less for FSPs. According to individuals involved in the project development phase, the long development time was partially due to the GEF processes required once it was decided to expand the project to include Russia's biodiversity focal area allocation. At this time the GEF did not have a clear process for developing multi-focal area projects, taking into account the GEF strategic results framework indicators for each focal area, and thus shepherding the project through this process required a lot of discussion between UNDP and the GEF Secretariat.

72. The project is planned for a 48-month implementation period, which would mean that completion is currently expected by approximately June 2015, or four years after Prodoc signature. However, considering that project activities did not substantively start until approximately January 2012, it may be advisable for the project to have a no-cost extension to December 31, 2015. This would ensure sufficient time to complete all project activities, and would be reflective of an "actual" project operational period of approximately four years. This evaluation does not make a specific recommendation about a project extension, but it is anticipated that UNOPS, UNDP, and the respective governments for each country will consider and provide a decision this issue.

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

IV. Relevance

A. Relevance of the Project Objective

73. The Baikal project is considered **relevant** (or “highly satisfactory” in terms of the relevance criteria), as the project clearly supports priority transboundary environmental and water management issues between Russia and Mongolia. The project is in line with numerous national policies and pieces of legislation in both countries, and is relevant to local resource user needs and priorities as well. The project is in-line with the agreed UNDP priorities for each country, and is in-line with the GEF strategic priorities for the biodiversity and international waters focal areas. Further, the project clearly supports relevant multilateral environmental agreements, including the CBD, the Ramsar Convention, and the World Heritage Convention.

i. Relevance to National and Local Policies and Strategic Priorities

74. The most notable polity agreement by the project is the 1995 “Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters” waters agreement, between Russia and Mongolia. The project is directly linked with this agreement, and the plenipotentiary meeting mechanism that supports its implementation. One of the goals of the project is to produce a revised and updated bilateral agreement on water and environmental management between the two countries.

75. On the Russian side the project is highly relevant, first and foremost with respect to the 1999 (rev. 2004) Russian special law on the protection of Lake Baikal. In addition, the project is directly supportive of Russia’s federal program for the sustainable management and socio-economic development of the Lake Baikal region. The project supports numerous other federal and sub-national laws and policies, as outlined in section 1.5 of the project document. These include the *Law on Protection of Natural Environment*, *Law on Wildlife*, *Water Code*, *Law on Fishing and Protection of Aquatic Bio-Resources*, and the *Protected Areas Law*.

76. In Mongolia the project also supports multiple national environmental policies, also as outlined in section 1.5 of the project document. These include the *Law on Water*, *Law on Special Protected Areas*, *Law on Environmental Protection*, *Law on Forests*, and *Minerals Law*.

ii. Relevance to UNDP Country Priorities

77. The Baikal project’s relevance to the agreed UNDP priorities for each of the countries is summarized in a table in the project document in section 2.6, as indicated in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Baikal Project Relevance to Agreed UNDP Country Priorities⁸

Country:	UNDAF Outcome(s) / Indicator(s):	Expected Outcome(s) / Indicator(s):	Expected Output(s) / Indicator(s):
Russia	NA	Improved environmental sustainability of development /environmental dimension in development policy.	Conserved ecosystems are considered as important resource for sustainable development.

⁸ Source: Project document.

Mongolia	NA	Country Program Outcome 3.1: Improved environmental governance is practiced	The impact of the depletion of non-renewable Resources and environmental degradation assessed and corrective actions reflected and addressed in national and sectoral plans.
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iii. Relevance to GEF Strategic Objectives

78. The GEF has limited financial resources so it has identified a set of strategic priorities and objectives designed to support the GEF's catalytic role and leverage resources for maximum impact. Thus, GEF supported projects should be, amongst all, relevant to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives. While strategic priorities are reviewed and proposed for each four-year cycle of the GEF, in practice the overall approach of the GEF's support in the biodiversity focal has remained roughly focused on the same broad areas of intervention.

79. The project was approved and is being implemented under the strategic priorities for GEF-5 (July 2010 – June 2014).⁹ The relevant international waters strategic objective is objective 1: “Catalyze multi-state cooperation to balance conflicting water uses in transboundary surface/groundwater basins while considering climatic variability and change.” Under this strategic objective the project supports three outcomes and associated indicators:

- Outcome 1.1: Implementation of agreed SAPs incorporates transboundary IWRM principles (including environment and groundwater) and policy/ legal/institutional reforms into national/local plans
 - Indicator 1.1: Implementation of national/local reforms; functioning of national inter-ministry committees
- Outcome 1.2: Transboundary institutions for joint ecosystem-based and adaptive management demonstrate sustainability
 - Indicator 1.2: Cooperation frameworks adopted and states contribute to financial sustainability
- Outcome 1.3: Innovative solutions implemented for reduced pollution, improved water use efficiency, sustainable fisheries with rights-based management, IWRM, water supply protection in SIDS, and aquifer and catchment protection
 - Indicator 1.3: Measurable water-related results from local demonstrations

80. Under the GEF-5 biodiversity strategic objectives, the project supports Objective 1: “Improve the Sustainability of Protected Area Systems,” and contributes to Outcome 1.1: “Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas.” The project is supporting the strengthening of Russia and Mongolia’s protected areas within the Baikal Basin (though particularly so in Russia), including Zabaikalsky National Park (Russia), Baikalsky Nature Reserve Special Protected Area (Russia), and Kabanskiy Nature Reserve in the Selenga delta. The project is supporting the protected areas in developing their tourism infrastructure, to improve management and enhance revenue opportunities. The relevant GEF biodiversity focal area results framework indicators are

⁹ For the focal area strategic priorities for GEF-5, see GEF Council document GEF/R.5/31, “GEF-5 Programming Document,” May 3, 2010.

- Indicator 1.1: Protected area management effectiveness score as recorded by Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
- Indicator 1.2: Funding gap for management of protected area systems to meet total expenditures required for management.

81. The project is also supportive of Objective 2: “Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors,” Outcome 2.2: “Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks,” with Indicator 2.2: Policies and regulations governing sectoral activities that integrate biodiversity conservation as recorded by the GEF tracking tool as a score.

iv. Relevance to Multilateral Environmental Agreements

82. In addition to the previously mentioned 1995 bilateral agreement on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters between Russia and Mongolia, there are other multilateral environmental agreements that are supported by the project. The CBD is a key multilateral environmental agreement for which the GEF is the financial mechanism. Russia is a party to the CBD, having ratified the agreement on April 5, 1995, and Mongolia is also a party, with ratification September 30, 1993. The Baikal basin project supports the CBD’s protected areas program of work, and meets CBD objectives by supporting the Convention’s Articles 6 (General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use), 7 (Identification and Monitoring), 8 (In-situ Conservation), 10 (Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity), 11 (Incentive Measures), 12 (Research and Training), 13 (Education and Awareness), and 17 (Exchange of Information). The project also supports the CBD’s Aichi targets for 2020, including:

- *Target 4: By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.*
- *Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.*
- *Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.*
- *Target 8: By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.*
- *Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.*
- *Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.*

83. The Baikal project also supports the World Heritage Convention, as Lake Baikal was designated a World Heritage Site in 1996. In addition, The Orkhon River Valley Cultural Landscape, within the Baikal watershed in Mongolia, was designated a World Heritage Site in 2000. In a similar manner the project supports the Ramsar Convention, as the Selenga delta (the outlet of the Selenga river into Lake Baikal) was designated as a wetland of international

importance in 1996. The Baikal project also naturally supports the Helsinki Convention of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; however, only Russia is a party to the convention, with acceptance February 6, 2013, while Mongolia is not a party to the convention. The project could also be considered supportive of the Convention on Migratory Species, considering that there are some species that do migrate back and forth between Russia and Mongolia in the Baikal watershed, particularly birds and fish.

B. Relevance of the Project Approach: Project Strategy and Design

84. The project design is considered sound, with a structure in-line with a standard approach for international waters projects, including production of the TDA and SAP. There are however a few areas where the project design might have been strengthened. One is that there could have been more practical on-the-ground demonstration activities, particularly on the Mongolian side. Many of the demonstration activities on the Russian side are funded from the biodiversity focal area allocation, and the argument is that this money cannot be spent for activities in Mongolia. There is no clear reason however why during the project development phase there were not demonstration activities in Mongolia included in the project design, with funding from the international waters allocation. Previous GEF project experience has shown that stakeholder ownership and buy-in can be significantly increased by including some practical activities that can be clearly seen by local communities and government stakeholders, even with relatively little funding. This would have been useful given the fact that Mongolian stakeholders tend to perceive the project as being driven by Russia (understandably so), and have not yet demonstrated the same level of ownership as seen in Russia.

85. A second point is that a clear gap in the project activities is with the mining sector in Mongolia. The mining sector is a major economic driver in the Mongolian portion of the Baikal basin, and has direct impacts on water resources in the basin. The project might have supported some activities related to good practices for artisanal mining activities, for example. According to individuals involved in the project development phase there was little or no support from the Mongolian government to include mining activities within the scope of the project. In recent years the US-based Asia Foundation has supported multi-stakeholder dialogues in Mongolia on environmentally responsible mining; this evaluation recommends that the project assess opportunities for linkages and synergy on these issues with integrated water resource management in the Baikal basin.

86. Another gap is the lack of a stronger more comprehensive focus on ecosystem services as a framework for understanding integrated water resource management in the Baikal basin. Ecosystem services, and particularly their economic value, are increasingly recognized as a mechanism through which policy makers and local resource users can easily understand the complex functioning of all components of ecosystems. The focus on ecosystem services was not as prevalent at the time the project was developed as it is today, but it was still clearly an internationally known concept. As discussed later in Section VI of this report, there are notable opportunities to further explore the concept of ecosystem services (particularly transboundary ecosystem services) in the context of the Baikal basin.

87. A final point is that there is not clear justification in the project document for the inclusion of Output 3.2. While addressing human health threats is clearly an important development issue, the linkage with integrated water resource management is not sufficiently clear.

88. There was not extensive detailed information available on the long project development phase, but all indications are that the key stakeholders on both the Russian and Mongolian sides were adequately involved in the project development process. This contributed to a good project design. However, as discussed elsewhere in this report, the view from the Mongolian side is that the project was initiated and is driven by Russia.

V. Project Management and Cost-effectiveness (Efficiency)

89. Overall, project **efficiency** is rated **highly satisfactory**. The project is well on-track with financial delivery, with 54.9% of the total GEF financing disbursed by the end of 2013, and greater than 95% annual budget delivery in 2012 and 2013. The results produced thus far are impressive relative to the project expenditure. Project management costs are also below the budgeted amount, and are expected to remain less than 10% of GEF funding. Financial management procedures are in-line with international norms, and conform with UNDP and UNOPS policies and procedures, as well as those of both participating governments. Project expected co-financing is on-track (with a co-financing ratio of 1 : 12.7), and could potentially significantly exceed originally expected amounts by the end of the project. The PMU is highly professional and has demonstrated excellent planning, reporting, and financial management. The project has good stakeholder engagement through various partnership approaches, though country ownership in Mongolia is weaker than in Russia.

A. Implementation, Including UNDP Oversight

90. The most notable priority that UNDP might have the capacity to influence during the remaining project implementation period is to ensure that Mongolia considers itself as an equal partner in the project, and that as much as possible is done to strengthen stakeholder ownership from the Mongolian side. As discussed elsewhere in this report, the Baikal basin project is understandably seen as a Russia-centric endeavor, and the project results will benefit from stronger Mongolian engagement on all aspects.

91. UNDP is the responsible GEF Agency for the project, and carries general backstopping and oversight responsibilities. UNDP's has fully and adequately supported the project during implementation, with no notable issues. UNDP implementation is considered **satisfactory**. The responsible UNDP Regional Technical Advisor has participated in the PSC meetings (and is actually designated as a member of the PSC), and UNDP provided the necessary introductory information at the project inception workshop.

92. There was some initial confusion about oversight of the project between the UNDP Bratislava regional office, the UNDP Russia Project Support Office in Moscow, and the UNDP Country Office in Mongolia. This was partly because an international waters project had not been implemented in Mongolia before. In addition, there may have been further challenges due to the fact that in UNDP's regional office responsibilities Russia and Mongolia fall in

different regions, with Russia under the purview of the Bratislava office, and Mongolia, as part of the “Asia region”, within the responsibility of the Bangkok regional office.

93. The extensive time required for the project development phase can be considered partly the responsibility of UNDP, as the GEF agency that was responsible for developing the project, but there are numerous factors that contributed to the long development phase. On the whole, as discussed above, the project design that resulted is generally sound.

B. Execution, Including Country Ownership

i. Project Management

94. As indicated in Section III.E above, the responsible national executing partners are the MNRE in Russia, and the MEGD in Mongolia. While the project is implemented under the “national implementation” modality, the PMU is actually external to either of these national line agencies. Therefore project execution can also be considered “project management”, and relates directly to the work of the PMU, in combination with the management and administrative aspects handled by UNOPS.

95. Project execution is considered **highly satisfactory**. The Baikal project is characterized by highly professional and efficient project management, with excellent planning, reporting, and engagement of stakeholders. Among the more than 30 GEF projects previously evaluated by the mid-term evaluator, the Baikal project easily ranks as among the best in terms of the dedication, professionalism, and management capacity. This has been attested to by the fact that the PMU was recognized by UNOPS as having the best project management among projects in its international waters cluster. In addition, the PMU has demonstrated the ability to work effectively on a wide range of technical issues, with the support and engagement of many different scientific and technical partner organizations.

96. Indicators of the high quality project execution include the high financial delivery rate (greater than 95% annual delivery, and greater than 50% total delivery at the project mid-point, as further discussed in Section V.F below), the project’s comprehensive and timely reporting and workplanning, admirably comprehensive recordkeeping and project documentation, and the engagement of high-level representatives from both Mongolia and Russia in the PSC and other project activities. In addition, the project has not faced any significant issues with deliverables from project contractors.

97. The execution structure, with project Technical Directors in Moscow and in Ulaanbaatar has also proven to be effective. Although Moscow is not within the Baikal watershed (Ulaanbaatar is), having a full-time Technical Director in Moscow has allowed the project to engage at the highest levels of federal government in Russia, with discussions of project issues held in the Russian State Duma. The Russian government has in fact established a “Baikal” working group within the State Duma. While this is indicative of the importance the Russian government accords the Baikal region, the subject of few GEF projects have been accorded such high-level government attention.

98. There are three minor areas where the project may be able to strengthen project management: A.) In the management of minor expenses it would be preferable to use petty cash or some other mechanism that avoids project staff having to personally advance funds to

the project and then be reimbursed; mixing project staff personal finances with project finances is not considered best practice. B.) Project procurement notifications should be published sufficiently in advance to allow a representative pool of potential applicants to submit bids; this may mean at least one or two months advance publication. C.) On the whole the project's efforts to make publications and documents available in at least two if not three languages (often including English) is highly admirable; at the same time, the project has often relied on technical and scientific staff to make translations between Russian and Mongolian, which is not an efficient use of the time of these individuals. Whenever possible the project should utilize the professional translators that the project has contracted, who can work more efficiently than scientists to produce outputs in multiple languages.

ii. Country Ownership

99. As highlighted at the beginning of this report, Russia and Mongolia are in asymmetrical situations in myriad ways, and particularly when it comes to the Baikal watershed. Mongolia is the upstream party, while Russia is the downstream party. Russia and Mongolia have different levels of development, and consequently have different development priorities in the Baikal watershed. The project concept was initiated by Russia, and Mongolia was later asked to join in the venture of an international waters project. Russia is investing heavily in a range of infrastructure and other measures to improve the sustainability of development in the Baikal region. Also as previously highlighted, Russia has specific legislation on the protection of Lake Baikal. The lake itself is entirely within Russia's territory, and is designated a World Heritage Site. The project activities have been discussed in the Russian federal Duma. Perhaps the most notable recent indicator of Russia's commitment to maintaining the environmental quality of Lake Baikal is the recent closure of the Irkutsk paper mill on the southern shore of the lake, which was a major economic contributor to the region, employing approximately 3,000 people. The mill had been identified as one of the most significant sources of pollution to the lake.

100. On the other hand, it appears that Mongolia is only beginning to consider its territory part of the transboundary Baikal watershed, rather than just the Selenga river watershed, which ends at the border with Russia. Naturally, Russia, as the downstream party, is proactively engaging Mongolia on water management issues. Multiple stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation, in both Russia and Mongolia, indicated that from the view of Mongolia the project is somewhat Russia-centric. This is understandable, given that the project concept was initiated by Russia, the PMU headquarters are in Russia, and the project is overseen by UNDP on the Russian side, while the responsible UNDP Regional Technical Advisor also happens to be Russian. There are numerous other small indications as well. Approximately a third of the project budget comes from Russia's GEF biodiversity allocation, and can only be used in Russia, and as a consequence, there are no notable demonstration activities in Mongolia. The project legal expert who drafted the revised transboundary agreement for Russia and Mongolia is Russian. Through UNDP's work in Russia the project was able to take advantage of the development of the "Baikal Box" environmental education tool (a highly visible project output, which focuses on the lake itself), while there is no such tool on the Mongolian side. What one stakeholder called Mongolia's historical "big brother" relationship with Russia only reinforces this view.

101. Given all of the aforementioned factors, it is clear that Mongolia is less politically inclined to commit itself to specific environmental management measures, when its overarching goal is continued rapid economic development. This was highlighted at the second project steering committee meeting, when representatives from Mongolia expressed their initial reluctance to make any modifications to the status quo with respect to transboundary resource management with Russia. Mongolia's development has been, and continues to be, largely driven by the mining industry, which requires both water and power. Both of these resources are supported by hydropower development, particularly in the Selenga watershed. This is further discussed in Section VII.A.iv on environmental risks to sustainability for this project. At the same time, there are numerous individuals and institutions in Mongolia strongly committed to sustainable development, and protection of the Baikal watershed.

C. Partnership Approach and Stakeholder Participation

102. The project has a strong partnership approach, as numerous stakeholders on both the Russian and Mongolian sides are actively engaged in the project activities. The project includes an interesting partnership with UNESCO, which is fully responsible for a component on groundwater. Another partnership highlight is the project's work with "Barguzinsky datsan", a Buddhist monastery in the Barguzin valley, on environmentally responsible religious tourism. The project is actively working with protected area managers, academic and research institutions, civil society organizations, and religious organizations. For example, The NGO network "Friends of Baikal Basin" is participating in the development of the BIC.

103. One area where there is opportunity for additional stakeholder participation is at the Aimag and Soum government levels in Mongolia. There are numerous national organizations and institutions involved in the project on the Mongolian side, but there has not been strong engagement from the sub-national level. Representatives from the Republic of Buryatia in Russia have been actively involved in the project, but there has been much less involvement from the approximately ten Aimags¹⁰ in Mongolia that are covered by the Selenga watershed. This is particularly important in Mongolia as the governance structure is decentralized, and Aimag governments have significant responsibility for activities in their territory. The level of involvement has partly been the case because there have been few on-the-ground project activities on the Mongolian side, but also because there has been significant institutional restructuring in Mongolia. The governance structure in Mongolia was changed in 2012, and is still becoming stable, and the water management institutions were restructured in 2013. Therefore the project has focused on engaging with the national water management authorities in Mongolia. However, Aimags also have a critical role to play on outputs such as the SAP. This is further discussed in Section VI.A on results under Outcome 1.

104. Another opportunity for additional partnership engagement is with the private sector, although there is some engagement through the biodiversity-friendly mining demonstrations in Russia. Given the scope of the project and the size of the area it is operating in, it appears that there could be additional opportunities to engage private sector partners in shifting the overall development pattern in the region toward sustainable development, particularly in Russia. There are many different approaches that could be taken; one example could be for the project

¹⁰ Seven large Aimags, and the Aimags of three major cities: Darkhan, Orkhon, and Ulaanbaatar.

to develop something like a “declaration” that companies could sign on to, stating that they will follow or avoid certain practices to ensure the environmental quality of the Baikal watershed. While the on-the-ground results of such a declaration might be limited, it could at least contribute to awareness raising within the private sector. Another approach, taken in other regions, would be to take the initial steps to develop a “Baikal friendly” green certification for tourism businesses (hotels, etc.) and others such as restaurants. This could alternatively or also be structured as a “Baikal brand” for environmentally friendly products produced in the region.

D. Risk Assessment and Monitoring

105. Section 2.4 of the project document discusses identified risks, though only three risks are highlighted, each with a risk rating of moderate. One of the three relates to climate change risks. In addition, the project results framework (Section II, Part 2 of the project document, p. 63) includes a column on “Risks and Assumptions” for each of the indicators listed. The project inception report did not update the risk assessment analysis. The 2013 PIR also does not identify any critical risks.

106. GEF projects typically have inadequate risk assessment at the development phase, and it would appear that the Baikal project risk assessment was also very limited, considering only three risks were identified for a project encompassing such a wide range of activities and issues over such a large area. At the same time, the fact that the project does not currently face any critical risks is an indication that risk assessment and risk management has been sufficient. However, more risks may arise in the second half of the project, as the project stakeholders work to consolidate results and ensure sustainability. In particular, there is a moderate risk that both the Russian and Mongolian governments will not sign-off on an agreed SAP, and that the project will not be able to move forward with the revised transboundary agreement between the two countries. There are other risks related to some of the smaller specific project activities as well, such as the low-level risk of sustainability for the Baikal Information Center online portal. The PMU and UNDP must continue to diligent risk monitoring during the second half of the project, and develop mitigation measures for specific risks.

E. Flexibility and Adaptive Management

107. Flexibility is one of the GEF’s ten operational principles, and all projects must be implemented in a flexible manner to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and to ensure results-based, rather than output-based approach. Thus, during project implementation adaptive management must be employed to adjust to changing circumstances.

108. The Baikal IWRM project is being implemented in a flexible and adaptive manner, and there have been a number of small changes and adjustments made to the project plans and expected results, as needed. For many projects it is necessary to make changes in initial workplans at the project inception workshop to reflect any changes to the context since the project development phase, but this was evidently not the case for the Baikal project, as the inception workshop report notes “During the Inception Phase of the [Baikal] project no major changes influencing the planned implementation of project activities were identified. The project outcomes, outputs, and activities as defined in the Project Document, remain entirely valid and no changes need to be applied.”

109. Changes have been made following the inception workshop, though there have been no changes at the objective or outcome levels. For example, the project document foresaw \$50,000 USD budgeted for four monitoring buoys to be installed in Lake Baikal. Based on feedback from project stakeholders, the PSC determined the funds would be better spent in providing some water quality monitoring equipment for the relevant laboratory in Mongolia.

110. Some modifications to the project results framework have also been made. For example, the original results framework included ecosystem resilience parameters for Hovsgol Lake – nutrient concentrations, secchi depth, and abundance and age structure of Hovsgol grayling. However, there is not an adequate monitoring program in place to track these indicators, there are no pollution hotspots near the lake, and there is little fishing pressure. The project proposed to remove these indicators from the results framework, and to agree with the Mongolian government on new, more relevant indicators for Hovsgol Lake. In another example, the indicator related to the level of fishing pressure on Taimen in Russia had to be changed, as it is a Red List species in Russia, and is officially not allowed to be caught.

111. One notable point for adaptive management is whether the project will actually catalyze a “new” Joint Commission between the two countries for water management, or whether the project will even succeed in getting Russia and Mongolia to agree to an enhancement of the current “plenipotentiaries” meeting. This is discussed at-length in the adaptive management section of the 2013, and is further discussed in Section VI.B on results for Outcome 2. The current outlook is that there will not be a “new” Joint Commission as foreseen in the project document, but the current mechanism may be strengthened with a more meaningful mandate.

F. Financial Planning by Component and Delivery

112. The breakdown of project GEF financing is indicated in Table 7 below. The total project budget is \$3,898,000 USD, not including the PPG amount. Of this, \$0.92 million (or 23.5% of the total) was planned for Outcome 1, \$0.75 million (19.3%) was planned for Outcome 2, and \$1.84 million (47.3%) was planned for Outcome 3. The planned project management budget equates to 9.9% of the total GEF resources. The M&E budget indicated in the M&E plan in the project document was \$0.27 million, or 7.0% of the total budget. However, the M&E costs are drawn from various project budget lines, and do not have their own separate budget line.

113. Figure 3 below shows the breakdown of planned and actual spending by outcome. As of December 31, 2013, the project had disbursed \$2.14 million, or 54.9% of the project budget. Figure 4 shows the project planned, revised, and actual budget total budget expenditure by year.

Table 7 Project Planned vs. Actual Financing, Through December 31, 2013 (\$ million USD)

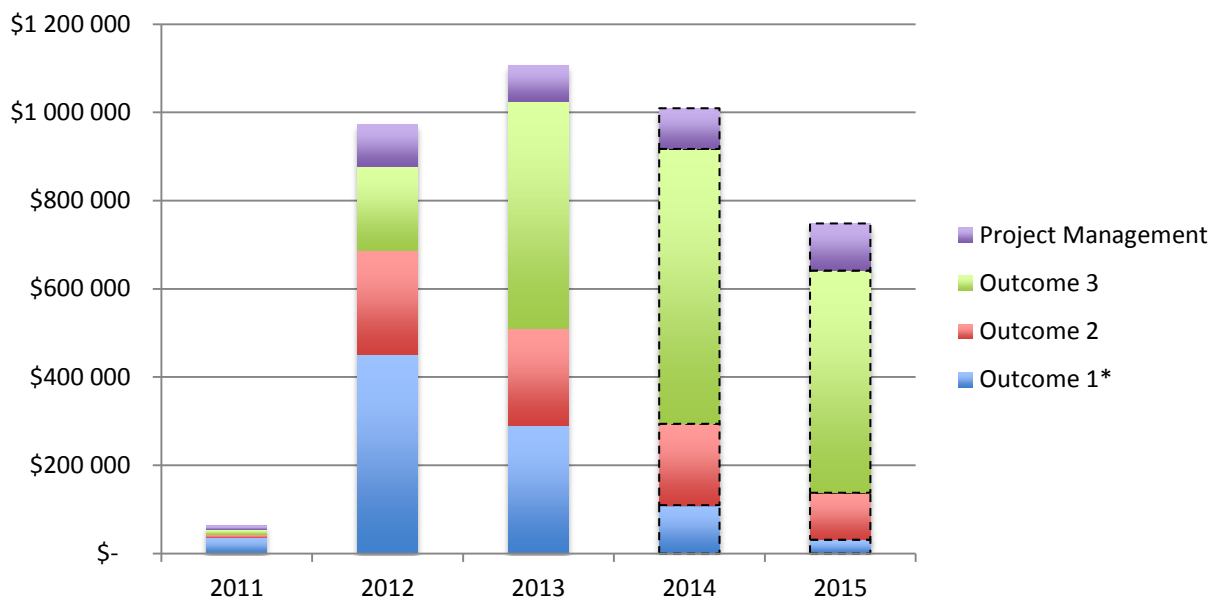
	GEF amount planned	Share of total GEF amount	GEF amount actual	% of GEF amount actual	% of original planned
Outcome 1: Stakeholders Elaborate and Adopt a Strategic Policy and Planning Framework	\$0.92	23.5%	\$0.78	36.3%	84.7%
Outcome 2: Institutional strengthening for IWRM	\$0.75	19.3%	\$0.46	21.5%	61.3%
Outcome 3: Demonstrating methods and approaches for water quality and	\$1.84	47.3%	\$0.72	33.5%	38.9%

biodiversity mainstreaming					
Monitoring and Evaluation*	\$0.27	7.0%	N/A	8.7%	N/A
Project Coordination and Management	\$0.38	9.9%	\$0.19		48.2%
Total[†]	\$3.90	100.0%	\$2.14	100.0%	54.9%

Sources: Project Document for planned amount; data provided by PMU for actual GEF amounts.

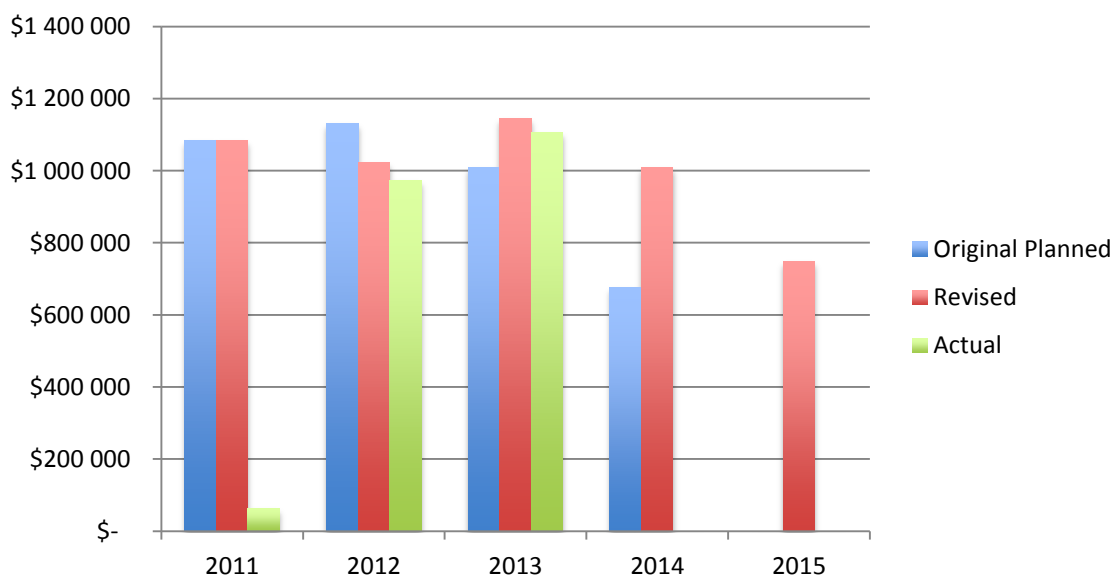
*The project document includes a detailed M&E budget. However, the total M&E budget includes activities that would be funded from the project management budget line (such as annual reporting) or other sources (such as UNDP oversight). As such, the funds for M&E activities were drawn from across project budget lines.

Figure 3 Project Actual (through 2013) and Planned (2014-15) Spending By Component (\$ USD)



*Note: Outcome 1 includes the sub-contract to UNESCO.

Figure 4 Baikal Project Planned, Revised, and Actual Spending by Year (\$ USD)



114. The project financial delivery rate in 2011 was only 5.8% of the amount foreseen for the first year in the project document, but this was primarily due to the fact that the project inception workshop was not until November of the first year. In 2012 the project delivered 95.1% of the revised planned budget, and in 2013 the financial delivery rate was 96.7%. These annual delivery rates are impressively high compared with most GEF projects, and on the whole the project is fully on-track for successful execution. As previously mentioned, although the project is “officially” supposed to close in May 2015, it is anticipated that the project will have a no-cost extension through the end of 2015, considering the fact that project activities only substantively started in January 2012.

115. The project management costs are another positive indicator of project efficiency and strong project financial management. The planned management costs were 9.9% of the total GEF funding, which is below the stated 10% threshold. Total management costs through 2013 were \$185,305, or 8.7% of the total disbursed thus far; this is less than the originally planned 9.9%, but it is expected that project management costs will reach – but not exceed - this level by the end of the project.

116. The project has not yet had an audit, although an annual audit is indicated in the project M&E plan. There has not yet been an audit because it has not been required by the standard financial management procedures of UNOPS or the UNDP Russia Project Support Office. Although there is strong faith in UNOPS and UNDP financial management processes, and no indication that there are any shortcomings in project financial management, it may still be worthwhile for the project to ensure that at least one audit is conducted prior to the final project evaluation.

G. Planned and Actual Co-financing

117. The expected project co-financing was \$49,288,269 from a variety of government and non-government sources in both Russia and Mongolia. This is an expected co-financing ration of 12.7 : 1. Table 8 below shows planned co-financing. According to the 2013 PIR, the project had received a total of \$24,467,721 in cash and in-kind co-financing as of June 30, 2013. This is 49.6% of the expected co-financing. The specific sources of the actual co-financing received were not available for this evaluation, and the breakdown of co-financing is not tracked by project outcome because it is not managed by the project.

118. The evaluation recommends that the project team keep detailed records of co-financing received from all sources. In reality, the project will receive far more co-financing than originally planned, thanks to the Russian federal investment program in the Lake Baikal region. At the same time, the number and type of co-financing partners, not just the amount of co-financing received, can be an important indication of stakeholder ownership and support.

Table 8 Planned and Actual Co-financing Received, as of December 31, 2013

Source	Cash/In-Kind	Type	Planned	Actual	% of Planned
MoNET - Mongolia	In-kind	Government	500,000	Not available	
Ministry of Natural Resources Buryatia	In-kind/Cash	Government	13,118,459	Not available	
Roshydromet Buryatia	In-kind/cash	Government	2,440,411	Not available	

Source	Cash/In-Kind	Type	Planned	Actual	% of Planned
Service for consumer rights - Buryatia	In-kind/cash	Government	5,602,912	Not available	
Baikal Institute for Nature Use	In-kind/cash	Other (Academic)	5,496,774	Not available	
Buryatia State University	In-kind/cash	Other (Academic)	2,294,839	Not available	
Dept. Veterinary Control	In-kind/cash	Government	548,161	Not available	
Federal Fishery Agency -Baikal	In-kind/cash	Government	623,226	Not available	
Coca Cola	Cash	Other (Private sector)	300,000	Not available	
Baikal Lake Water Resources Agency	In-kind/Cash	Government	14,661,290	Not available	
Foundation for the protection of lake Baikal	In-kind/Cash	Other (Foundation)	3,387,097	Not available	
UNESCO	In-Kind/cash	UN Agency	315,000	Not available	
Total			\$49,288,169	\$24,467,721	49.6%

Sources: Planned from Project Document. Actual total co-financing received as indicated in 2013 PIR.

H. Monitoring and Evaluation

119. The Baikal project **M&E design** generally meets UNDP and GEF minimum standards, but is considered **moderately satisfactory**, due to inadequacies in the design of the original results framework. **M&E implementation** is considered **satisfactory**, and **overall M&E** is considered **satisfactory**.

i. M&E Design

120. The Baikal project M&E plan is outlined in the project document under Part IV, p. 52. The project document describes each of the planned M&E activities, including roles, responsibilities, and timeframe. The identified M&E activities include inception workshop and report, annual progress reporting (APR/PIR), PSC meetings, quarterly status reports, project technical reports, the independent mid-term and terminal evaluations, project terminal report and lessons learned, audit, and monitoring visits from UNDP. The M&E plan is summarized in a table showing responsible parties, budget, and timeframe for each of the M&E activities, with the total expected budget of \$273,000. This is fully adequate for a project of this size and scope, representing approximately 7% of the GEF allocation; however the plan does not indicate if the M&E costs are to be fully covered by GEF resources, or would be also partially funded by project partners such as the main national executing partners, the MNRE in Russia and MEGD in Mongolia. The project does not have a specific M&E budget line; the cost of M&E activities is to be drawn from various project components, such as project management. The project M&E plan is appropriately designed and well-articulated, and conforms to GEF and UNDP M&E minimum standards.

121. The one notable shortcoming in the project M&E design is the project results framework indicators and targets, which do not adequately meet SMART criteria. While the results framework does do a reasonable job of having indicators focused more at the outcome and impact level rather than the output level, it is also more “supply” driven than “demand” driven – in other words, the results framework simply reflects the activities planned under the project, rather than being clearly linked to the threats to the Baikal basin, and the barriers to sustainable and integrated water resources management. Examples of indicators where the results framework fell short include:

- Objective level: Inclusion of impact-level indicators for Hovsgol Lake, despite the fact that there are limited threats to the lake, the project has no substantial activities there, and there is not adequate means by which to monitor the parameters indicated (*Nutrient concentrations: soluble reactive phosphorus/Chlorophyl-a*); *Secchi depth*; *Abundance and age structure of Hovsgol grayling*);
- Objective level: Inadequate justification for the target of the number of production sector policies and regulations that incorporate biodiversity (*End of project target of 10, broken down by tourism, mining, sport-fishing, and watershed management in each country*);
- Objective level: Inadequate justification of the target value for replication quantification, relating to the number of mining and tourism firms applying biodiversity mainstreaming principles (*at least 10 mining companies in each country, and at least 15 tourism companies in each country*);
- Outcome 2: Excessive indicators related to Joint Commission, with inadequate attention to results indicators for other activities under Outcome 2.

122. Partially as a result of the inadequacy of the original results framework the project has already had to request some changes from the PSC. This evaluation recommends that the results framework be reviewed in whole a final time following this mid-term evaluation to ensure that additional changes are not required in the second half of the project; the results framework should set the expectations for project results, and should be the tool through which actual vs expected results are measured, rather than the other way around. As such it is good practice for the results framework indicators and targets to be revised as infrequently as possible, and to avoid any revisions towards the end of the project. The project should also make sure it is applying the GEF international waters and biodiversity tracking tools, as appropriate.

ii. M&E Implementation

123. The project M&E activities are generally being implemented as foreseen. The PMU is doing a good job reporting at the quarterly and annual reporting intervals, UNDP monitoring missions have been completed, and the mid-term evaluation was commissioned according to schedule. One minor issue in M&E implementation is that the PSC meetings have been held slightly less frequently than expected. Typically project steering committee meetings are held annually at the beginning of the work year, to approve project annual workplans and budgets. The Baikal project has only had one PSC meeting, April 26th 2013, since the project inception workshop on November 21, 2011; the second PSC meeting is planned for mid-2014. The infrequency of PSC meetings is somewhat understandable given that the project has been able to engage a number of high-level officials in the steering committee, and scheduling meetings with high-level officials from two countries can be a challenge. The PMU is also in contact with the PSC through email as necessary for decision-making on project annual workplans and

budgets. The workplan and budget is distributed in January for remote approval, along with information on the previous year's results.

124. Another minor issue is that the project has not had an audit, although the M&E plan indicates that audits would be conducted annually. The lack of audit is not necessarily due to inattention, as annual audits are not actually required for specific projects according to UNDP Russia Project Support Office or UNOPS procedures.

VI. Effectiveness and Results: Progress Toward the Objective and Outcomes

125. The Baikal basin project is well on-track to make important progress toward the overall project objective, and to achieve the supporting three outcomes. As discussed in the previous Section V.F on project finances, following the initial slow start (the six-month "inception phase"), more than 50% of the project budget has been implemented, implying that the project is making good progress on the activities in its agreed workplans. This was in fact confirmed through this mid-term evaluation, and a majority of key project results verified. Project **results** thus far are rated **satisfactory**, and project **effectiveness** is also rated **satisfactory**.

126. The project results framework is included as Annex 9 to this evaluation report, with an assessment of achievement for each of the indicator targets. The project has a total of 27 indicators (including seven at the objective level), though some of these have multiple data points within them. As previously discussed in the preceding section on project M&E, the results framework has some shortcomings, as it does not fully and adequately reflect project results, and at least one indicator has been completely dropped with approval of the PSC, while others have been modified or downscaled. Nonetheless, the project is on-track to achieve a majority of indicators.

127. Key results achieved with project support thus far include:

- Completion of the draft TDA by April 2013;
- Submission to the Russian and Mongolian governments of a draft revised and updated transboundary agreement for the management of water and environmental resources;
- Multiple high quality technical studies and reports on various aspects of the Baikal watershed, including the water quality study for the Selenga delta, pollution transport model, pollution hotspot assessment, as well as the forthcoming Baikal Atlas;
- UNESCO groundwater assessment, as this is one of the first GEF international waters projects to include a groundwater assessment;
- Significant progress on water monitoring harmonization;
- Development of four river sub-basin management plans, with progress toward implementation;
- Good progress on the pilot and demonstration activities in Russia, including biodiversity-responsible mining practices, development of ecotourism plans and infrastructure;
- Development of the Baikal Information Center web portal; and
- Strong partnership approach with collaborative results produced with multiple other initiatives and projects, such as OECD.

128. Key issues and areas for attention for the Baikal project in the 2nd half of implementation include:

- Development of an SAP that is adequately concrete and specific, but that can also gain political support from both Russia and Mongolia;
- The need to make significant progress toward concluding bilateral agreement on a revised transboundary water and environment agreement, including consensus on an enhanced joint institutional mechanism to implement the agreement;
- Continued progress on implementation of river sub-basin management plans in Russia, and all feasible steps in Mongolia to support relevant stakeholders to implement the sub-basin management plans that have been developed; and
- Capacity strengthening support for River Basin Administrations and River Basin Management Councils in Mongolia.

129. This last item is not foreseen in the project document since Mongolia's institutional structure was still developing at that time (and continues to evolve today), but Mongolia is now in the midst of establishing the River Basin Administrations, and this is a prime opportunity for the project to make a concrete contribution to actually strengthening the capacity of water management authorities on the Mongolian side of the Baikal basin. Such activities could be justified and supported under project outputs 2.1-2.3, depending on the level of financial resources still available in the project budget. This is such an opportune entry point for the project that it may be worth considering re-directing some project resources that may be already budgeted for other lower priority activities.

130. The most significant question for the Baikal project – as it is for most GEF international waters projects – is whether at the end of the day the participating countries will be willing to formally agree to concrete and specific measures in the final SAP, which will allow them to move forward in a meaningful and collaborative way. The current view for the Baikal project is optimistic, particularly since there are only two countries involved, but drafting of the SAP has only started, and there are a number of reasons that the countries may ultimately be hesitant.

131. Based on the project's track record in the first half of implementation it is anticipated that the project could achieve at least a satisfactory rating by completion. To achieve a highly satisfactory rating at project completion any GEF-funded project should generate results that go above and beyond the originally anticipated results, or should truly zero shortcomings. Examples of some results that might be considered extraordinary for the Baikal project might be completion of some demonstration activities on the Mongolian side of the border, securing agreement for upgrading of the water monitoring laboratory at the border in Mongolia, actual final agreement of the revised transboundary agreement, agreement for piloting of transboundary payment-for-ecosystem services, or some other notable cutting-edge initiative.

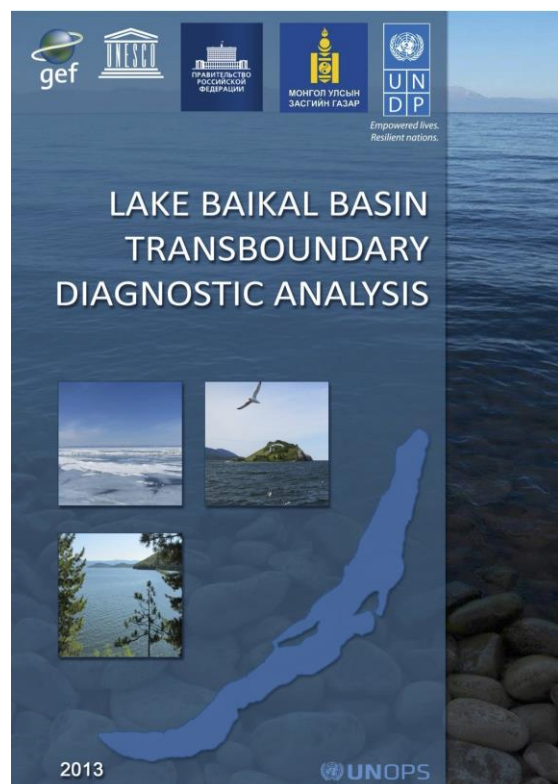
132. Considering the scope of the Baikal project, it is beyond the capacity of this evaluation report to mention all project activities and outputs, and only a number of key results are discussed under each of the outcomes below. The project has produced an 80-page brochure highlighting all of the project activities and results in 2012 and 2013, which is available for download on the project's IW:Learn website at the link <http://baikal.iwlearn.org/en/results>. Detailed information on all the key project activities is also available at the same website.

A. Outcome 1: Stakeholders Elaborate and Adopt a Strategic Policy and Planning Framework

133. Outcome 1 was budgeted for \$917,930, of which 67.5% was from the international waters focal area, and 32.5% was from the biodiversity focal area. Outcome 1 consists of a number of significant technical outputs, including the TDA. Producing in-depth technical studies and documents is one of the areas where the project has excelled. There are numerous academic and research institutions working on project outputs in both Russia and Mongolia; the project has engaged the leading organizations on issues related to the Baikal basin.

134. The critical result in the first half of the project is the TDA (Figure 5), which was completed and accepted by the PSC in the 2nd quarter of 2013. The fact that the TDA was completed this quickly is impressive, particularly since it is a comprehensive document, and the TDA appears to have the acceptance and buy-in of all project stakeholders. An international consultant, as “editor”, coordinated production of the TDA, but the inputs came directly from the technical experts involved on each of the respective fields or issues (i.e. hydrology, biodiversity, etc.). The TDA identifies the priority issues for integrated water resource management in the Baikal basin, which were previously highlighted in Section III.C at the beginning of this report.

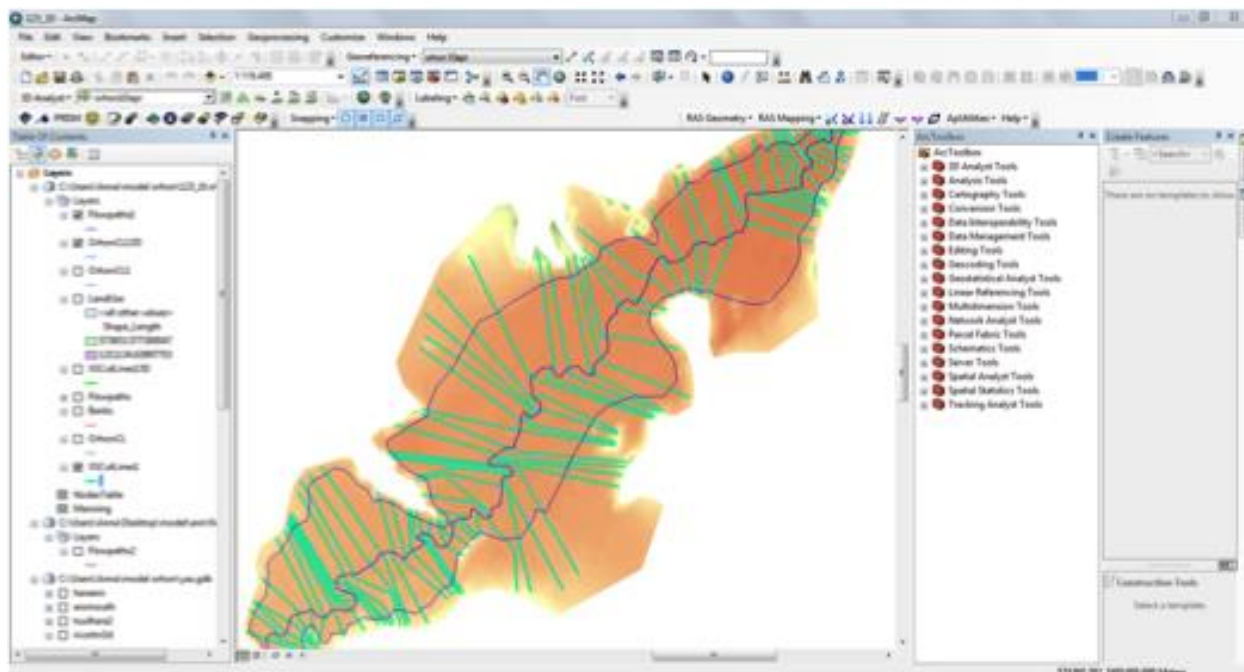
Figure 5 Completed TDA



135. A second major technical output was the study on the Selenga Delta water quality issues, which was completed by the Baikal Institute of Nature Management. The Selenga delta is a critical component of the overall Baikal basin ecosystem, serving as a kind of giant filter for a majority of the inflow to Lake Baikal, which comes from the Selenga river. This study analyzes data from 11 monitoring stations maintained in the delta by Russia to assess changes in key water quality parameters over time between 2003 and the present. This study highlights the important linkages between some climate change impacts and water quality issues, because typically as water quantity in the Selenga river decreases, concentrations of pollution increase. This study was planned as Output 1.2 of the project.

136. Also under Outcome 1 was the major technical study performed by Moscow State University (MSU) on setting up a pollution transport model within the Baikal basin. The team produced a database for modeling and simulation of pollution transport, and developed the pollution transport model, applying the HEC-RAS 1D (i.e. one dimensional) modeling software (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 Screen Capture from MSU HEC-RAS Pollution Transport Model



137. The project's results from the partnership with UNESCO¹¹ (under their International Hydrological Programme) on groundwater also fall under Outcome 1, as Output 1.3, which was expected to be an "assessment of transboundary problems in integrated surface and ground water resources management of the Baikal Basin and corresponding pollution threats, focusing on: stress on ground and surface water resources; deterioration of water quality in both surface and ground waters of the Basin; and vulnerability of groundwater dependent ecosystems." Three workshops were held under this activity (November 20, 2012; March 20, 2013, and July 12, 2013), which also served as an input to the TDA. Altogether the outputs of this activity are a thematic report, surface and ground water resources qualitative and quantitative assessment, transboundary sampling sites identification, pilot demonstration of isotopic monitoring methods, and development of policy recommendations. Another notable output from the UNESCO partnership is the "Review and ranking of upgrade needs for Mongolian municipalities in the Selenge River basin, including the identification of ongoing and planned water and sanitation projects, focusing on Kharaa River Basin pollution assessment."

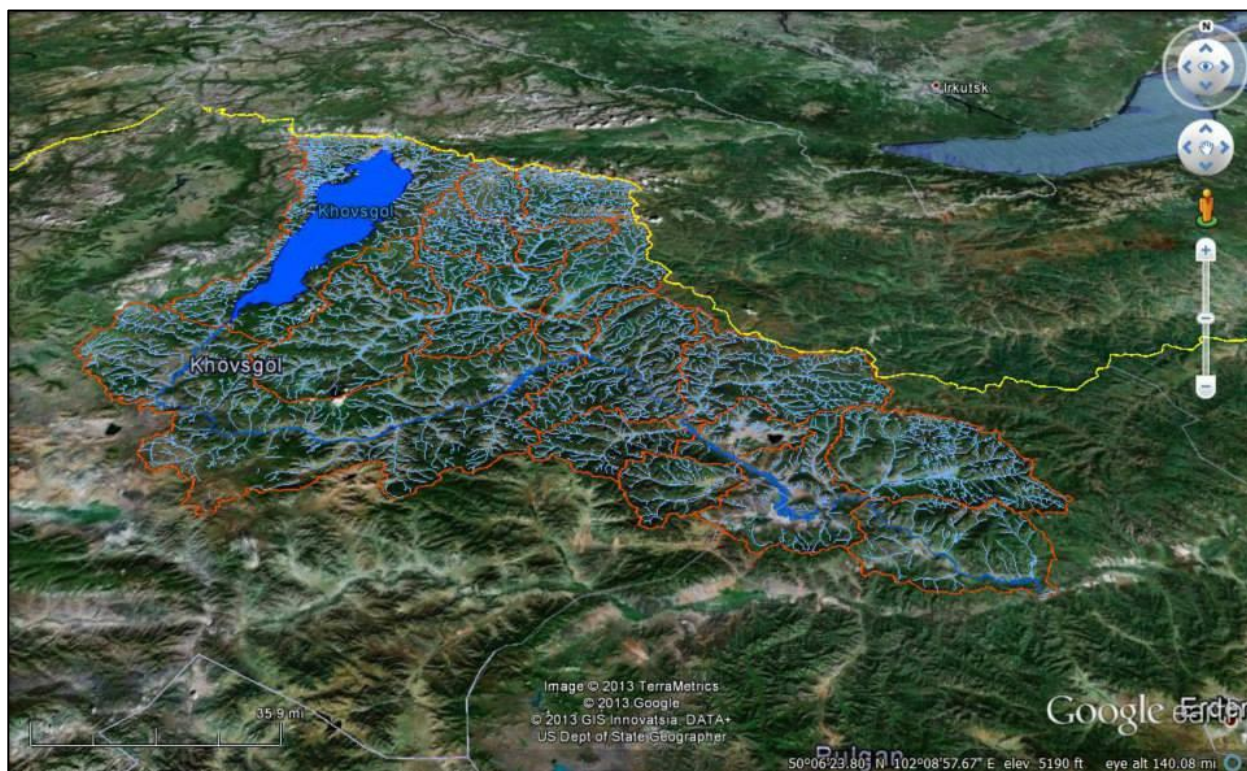
138. The project has leveraged partnerships with other relevant international initiatives as well. For example, the project developed a joint activity with OECD-supported Special Working Group under the Action Program of Nature Protection in Central and Eastern Europe on improvement of water resource usage of economic instruments and Buryatia water economic complex management. The activity supported development of baseline data on the operational effectiveness and efficiency of water management organizations in Buryatia. Another relevant activity the project has collaborated with is the "Integrated Water Resources Management for Central Asia: Model Region Mongolia (MoMo)" project, supported by the German Federal

¹¹ Under their International Hydrological Programme, see <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/ihp/> for more information.

Ministry of Education and Research. It is anticipated that the project will also be able to collaborate with the recently approved GEF-funded FAO project “Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation, SFM and carbon sink enhancement into Mongolia’s productive forest landscapes” (GEF ID #4744), which has project sites within the Selenga basin.

139. The project has also supported development of river basin management plans in both Russia and Mongolia. In Russia this has been done for the Tugnuy-Sukhara and Khilok sub-basin watershed management plans, and in Mongolia it has been done for the Ider, Hovsgol Lake-Eg river, and Orkhon sub-basin management plans. Baselines on socio-economic and ecological conditions were documented, and the draft plans were prepared. The plans include detailed thematic maps and other data (see Figure 7). In Mongolia the plans were completed by the NGO Mongolia Water Forum.¹² The plans are in various stages of endorsement by the relevant authorities. In Russia endorsement has been received for the Khilok plan, and in Mongolia the Orkhon plan was endorsed, and implementation has begun through the Orkhon River Basin Management Authority. One of the important areas for continue project attention is to ensure that progress continues on actual implementation of the sub-basin management plans that have been produced, and that these do not just become irrelevant documents. In addition, particularly the Ider and Eg river plans in Mongolia highlight the need for increased capacity of the River Basin Management Authorities (see **Ошибка! Источник ссылки не найден.**).

Figure 7 Example Image from the Hovsgol-Eg River Sub-basin Management Plan



140. The major result still expected under Outcome 1 is the draft SAP, which the governments should endorse before the end of the project in order to continue with GEF

¹² See <http://www.mongoliawaterforum.com/> for additional information on the plans prepared.

support for future implementation of priority actions supporting integrated water resource management in the Baikal basin. The SAP process has been initiated, with three technical experts appointed from both Russia and Mongolia (six total). These individuals were also involved in the TDA process. Initial meetings have been held to discuss the approach to drafting the SAP. The initial timetable is for the draft SAP to be completed in late 2014-early 2015, which would allow six to nine months for further discussion and formal adoption by Russia and Mongolia. The annual transboundary plenipotentiaries meeting has typically been held in the 4th quarter of the year, and therefore the meeting in 2015 could present the prime opportunity for formal adoption of the SAP by Russia and Mongolia.

141. However, it is a standing question whether an SAP draft can be developed that is adequately politically acceptable to both sides. As multiple stakeholders interviewed for the mid-term evaluation noted, the SAP must be a finely balanced document. It must be targeted at the appropriate level so as to present tangible and concrete actions that can be implemented, while at the same time avoiding any critical political issues that would limit the ability of both countries to formally adopt the document.

142. For the SAP to have the greatest likelihood of implementation it must also be well-integrated with national and sub-national planning processes. This implies that although the team of appointed representatives can draft the SAP, there should also be adequate stakeholder consultations on development of the SAP. Multiple stakeholders in Mongolia interviewed for this mid-term evaluation indicated that, due to Mongolia's decentralized structure, the SAP should be well-integrated with the environmental planning at the Aimag level to greatly enhance the potential for actions within the SAP to be implemented. This evaluation recommends that the project ensure that there is at least one round of sub-national consultation with the Aimags within the Selenga basin.

Box 1 River Basin Management in Mongolia

River basin management in Mongolia is a recent concept, and is in early stages of implementation. National policy related river basin management has shifted multiple times in the past few years, and the current approach foresees "River Basin Management Authorities" as the responsible government entities for managing each of the 29 river sub-basins that have been defined (of which 10 are in the Selenga basin). These management authorities are to be supported by River Basin Management Councils. The exact status and role of River Basin Management Councils is still being explored and determined, though these are currently seen as quasi-civil society organizations, responsible for their own funding.

B. Outcome 2: Institutional Strengthening for IWRM

143. Outcome 2 was budgeted for \$751,534 USD, of which 67.5% was from the international waters focal area, and 32.5% was from the biodiversity focal area. Progress under Outcome 2 has been good, with work on harmonizing water quality monitoring between Russia and Mongolia as a highlight, while on the other hand there are uncertainties with respect to the future of the transboundary management coordination mechanism.

144. The Baikal project document indicates that the project will establish a “Joint Commission” in the model that has been pursued in many other GEF-supported international waters projects around the world. As part of the 1995 agreement between Mongolia and Russia there was already an institutional mechanism in place, called the “Institute of Plenipotentiaries”, which is an annual meeting (although it has not always been held) of representatives from both countries to discuss the current status of shared water resources. According to project participants, the current plenipotentiaries mechanism has a limited scope, focusing on only specific individual issues, without a broad approach to addressing transboundary integrated management of the Baikal basin. The mechanism also does not have substantive decision-making or policy-setting powers. As stated in the report of the project legal expert, “While the institute of Plenipotentiaries used to be common mostly in Eastern Europe, it is increasingly replaced by another type of joint bodies – bilateral commissions. In contrast to joint commissions, plenipotentiaries typically lack any additional staff or other organizational structure responsible for implementing the agreement and decisions taken.” In addition,

“Similar to other comparable agreements, the 1995 Water Agreement defines the tasks and responsibilities of the Plenipotentiaries in very general terms. At the same time, both RF and Mongolia have created also bilateral commissions with some of their neighbours (e.g., Russia with Finland, Estonia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan; Mongolia with China). The most recent agreements (Russian-Azeri of 2010 and the new one between Russia and Kazakhstan) are particularly instructive in terms of their detailed description of the competencies, tasks and functions of the joint commissions.”

145. While the topic has been raised at PSC meetings and other project events, neither Russia nor Mongolia has thus far indicated a strong willingness to change the status quo of the plenipotentiaries mechanism and the 1995 agreement. Considering the issues at stake, such as the fact that Mongolia is in the process of conducting feasibility assessments for hydropower development in the Selenga watershed, it would be highly useful for Russia and Mongolia to have a well-established mechanism for substantive dialogue and cooperation on natural resource management issues in the Baikal basin. This would not necessarily require a “new” Joint Commission with full-time staff, as discussed in the project document, but would require enhancements to the status quo.

146. The enhancement of the transboundary institutional mechanism is in a way dependent on revision of the 1995 agreement, and one positive step supported by the project thus far is the production of a draft legal agreement with revisions and updates to the 1995 agreement, including the approach of incorporating a similar transboundary agreement on environmental issues that has been less functional than the 1995 waters agreement. The 1995 agreement should be revised and updated, as, according to the report of the project legal expert,

“It does not reflect some contemporary concepts and principles as the polluter-pays principle, ecosystem approach, sustainability of water utilization, which are present in most modern water treaties. Nor does it contain conventional requirements related to environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context; notification and consultation regarding planned activities that are likely to cause transboundary impact; access to information and public participation in the decision-making; detailed dispute settlement mechanism.”

147. The draft revised agreement was completed in November 2013. The draft was submitted to the MNRE in Russia, and according to the PMU, received positive feedback and willingness to move forward with discussions with Mongolia. The draft was submitted to the MEGD in Mongolia in early March 2014 (by letter directly to the minister), and as of April 2014 a response had not been provided to the project. According to Mongolian government stakeholders interviewed for the mid-term evaluation, the government is reviewing the draft and it is under consideration. The Mongolian government may require more support to thoroughly review this potentially highly important bilateral policy document, and this evaluation recommends that the project propose to provide the Mongolian government with additional support for the legal review.

148. Also on the issue of strengthening the transboundary institutional and policy mechanism, the project provided support to the 11th meeting of the plenipotentiaries, in December 2012, and provided support to the joint working group in 2013, although the official plenipotentiaries meeting was not held. The project has developed a concept paper and the road map for the process of developing and enhancing the legal and institutional framework of bilateral transboundary water cooperation. The concept paper and the road map were presented on different levels particularly on the second PSC Meeting, in the Russian State Duma, Mongolian government, Buryatia government and different workshops and conferences.

149. Also under Outcome 2 is the project's work on capacity development through various training programs. Training needs assessments were carried out in both Russia and Mongolia. Training programs carried out have included topics related to the "Green Economy", and persistent toxic substances and persistent organic pollutants.

150. Another key activity under Outcome 2 was work on harmonizing water quality monitoring between Russia and Mongolia. As stated in the project document, "Monitoring systems and data analysis methodologies are not consistent across the region and there is considerable variation in monitoring capabilities, equipment and activity." The project contracted out work on the water quality monitoring harmonization to the relevant organizations in Russia and Mongolia, and the results of this work are presented in the report on the harmonized water quality monitoring program. The report identifies suggestions for harmonizing monitoring programs in the Baikal basin, and presents an action plan to move toward harmonization. In Russia there are 26 government maintained Selenga watershed monitoring stations included in the program, while in Mongolia there are 19. The report identifies monitoring indicators measured by both sides that do, and do not, require further harmonization.

C. Outcome 3: Demonstrating Methods and Approaches for Water Quality and Biodiversity Mainstreaming

151. Outcome 3 was budgeted for 1,844,174 USD, of which 67.6% was from the international waters focal area, and 32.4% was from the biodiversity focal area. Outcome 3 consists of many of the tangible, practical, concrete activities of the project. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons discussed previously in this report, the majority of field-level activities are being carried out in Russia; there are almost no field-based activities on the Mongolian side under the project. Many of the field activities are being implemented with funding from Russia's

biodiversity allocation, but there were no field activities planned for Mongolia with funding from the international waters focal area.

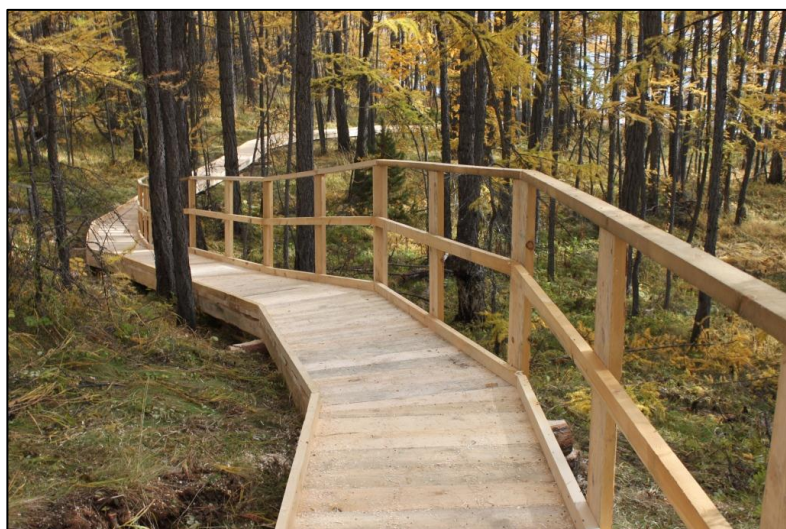
152. Tangible, practical, on-the-ground activities have proven in many GEF projects to be a strong mechanism for engaging stakeholders, building awareness, increasing stakeholder support, and producing some site level impact results. One of the recommendations of this evaluation is that the project should explore whatever opportunities available to initiate some field-level activities in Mongolia as well. One mechanism to explore is the potential for partnership with the GEF-Small Grants Program in Mongolia, to catalyze civil society actors in the Baikal watershed to access SGP resources for small grants projects linked to integrated water resource management in the Baikal basin.

153. There are a number of impressive and important results achieved thus far under Outcome 3. In Russia the project is supporting three demonstration projects for biodiversity-friendly mining:

- Development of technological solutions for minimization of anthropogenic impact of adit mine waters of Kholodninsky polymetal deposit on water ecosystems
- Development of optimal technological solutions for safe storage, retreatment, neutralization and utilization of toxic substances, contained in waste products of inoperative mining enterprise “Dzhidinsky”
- Development of technological solutions for minimization of anthropogenic impact of ore gold mining and processing enterprises on environment

154. The mining demonstration activities are not yet complete, but reportedly are progressing well. It was not possible to include visits to the demonstration sites in the mid-term evaluation mission. The mining demonstration activities are among the activities funded through Russia’s GEF biodiversity focal area allocation, and thus there are no similar activities being carried out on the Mongolian side. Considering the significant presence of mining activities in Mongolia, this evaluation recommends that the project team ensure that the lessons and experiences from the Russia demonstration activities are documented and presented to Mongolian counterparts. As mentioned previously in this report, it would also be appropriate for the project to assess opportunities for linkages with the initiatives on environmentally responsible mining that have been underway in recent years in Mongolia.

Figure 8 Zabaikalsky NP Ecopath



155. The project is working with protected areas in Russia to support strengthening of ecotourism opportunities. One of the assets for integrated watershed management in the Baikal basin is the protected area estate, which covers 17% of the Baikal basin. The project supported development of an environmentally responsible

recreational tourism plan for Zabaikalsky National Park, which is on the eastern shore of Lake Baikal. The plan was developed by Irkutsk State Technical University. Contemporary methods of reducing tourism influence on protected areas were studied, and a paper for recreational use in Zabaikalsky National Park was developed. A feasibility study of impacts of tourism on different ecosystems of Zabaikalsky National Park (protected area, buffer zone, transport corridors) was completed. Under a separate activity in Zabaikalsky National Park the project is supporting construction of an eco-path to the viewing area of for the Baikal seal (see Figure 8).

Figure 9 Baikal SNR "Cedar Alley" Information Board



Figure 10 Barguzin Datsan Pilgrimage Ecopath



156. The project also supported enhancement of another eco-path, in Baikal State Nature Biosphere Reserve, another national-level protected area on the southeast corner of Lake Baikal. This included production of informational boards (see Figure 9). Additional support to the protected area included wastewater treatment infrastructure.

157. One of the innovative activities supported by the project has been the partnership developed with the Barguzin Datsan, or monastery, in the Barguzin valley, which is a key sub-basin on the eastern shore of Lake Baikal. The monastery territory includes a pilgrimage site that is visited by tens of thousands of people each year. The project worked with the monastery to improve the walking path into

the forest to the pilgrimage site, and provided nature-related information boards highlighting the unique biodiversity and helping raise awareness about environmental issues in the region (see Figure 11 and Figure 10). This partnership, leveraging the inherent respect for nature in Buddhism, and the moral authority of the religious authorities, represents a unique and innovative approach for awareness-raising with the public, particularly considering the large number of people who visit this specific site each year. There may be opportunities for further linkages between environmental action and religious organizations; there are some global initiatives linking environment and religion, and the Baikal project could consider supporting the involvement of monasteries in the Baikal basin in this regard. Examples of such initiatives include “Khoryug”,¹³ a network of Buddhist monasteries in India, Nepal, and Bhutan that are working together for environmental action.

Figure 12 Barguzin Datsan Biodiversity Infoboard



Figure 11 Kurumkan Cattle Mortuary



158. Also in the Barguzin

valley, the project is working with local communities to address human health considerations. The issue of anthrax outbreaks was raised during the project development phase, and to address this the project planned to support the construction of technically compliant mortuaries for the disposal of dead livestock or other animals that test positive for anthrax. Mortuaries have been constructed at two locations in the Barguzin valley (Figure 12). As mentioned previously in Section IV.B, the linkage between the cattle mortuaries activity and integrated water resource management is not adequately clear.

159. One of the few on-the-ground activities that have been done in Mongolia is the community shoreline clean-up at Lake Hovsgol. The Khatgal soum government declared

¹³ For more information see <http://www.khoryug.com/vision/>.

October 4, 2013 as the clean-up campaign day, and community members participated in collecting solid waste on the shores of Lake Hovsgol. Similar clean-up campaign days were also carried out on the shores of Lake Baikal in Russia.

160. The development of a major public knowledge platform on the Baikal basin is underway with project support. The “Baikal Information Centre” (BIC) is envisioned as an online portal for accessing a large body of data and other types of information about the Baikal basin. The BIC web address is <http://bic.iwlearn.org/>, and an associated website is <http://baikalgis.com/>. This is already an impressive resource, and it is still under development. Teams in both Russia and Mongolia are working together to produce a trilingual web portal that will contain a range of resources with data about the Baikal basin, which will be available to the general public. It is anticipated that the BIC will be leveraged as a resource for inputs to the planned bilateral, biennial State of Environment in the Baikal Basin report. The BIC is one of the specific project outputs that needs to be included in the project exit strategy, with clear designation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities in terms of maintenance and updating after project completion.

161. A project output that will be a great resource for the future is the planned “Ecological Atlas of the Baikal Basin”, which is being produced based on data collected as part of the TDA, and other data available to the key scientific and research institutions involved in the project. The atlas is a major undertaking, requiring extensive cooperation between Russian and Mongolian counterparts, and a dedicated effort by all individuals involved. It is expected that the atlas will include between 140-150 maps of the Baikal basin at a scale of 1 : 5,000,000, covering a variety of environmental themes such as landcover, average winter and summer temperatures, average snow coverage, protected area coverage, and many others. Once complete the atlas will be a highly valuable resource available for transboundary watershed management. Due to data limitations and harmonization issues it was not possible to produce the atlas with maps at a larger scale. The current scale is not sufficient for local government (i.e. Aimag) land use planning, which is one understandable, but unfortunate aspect of the atlas.

162. The project also produced a very professional and comprehensive documentary, called “Baikal Without Boundaries”, that is available to view online (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_axjCkbhDY). This is a valuable public relations and awareness raising tool that was cited by multiple project stakeholders as something that truly emphasizes the transboundary nature of the Baikal watershed, building in both Russia and Mongolia a joint sense of responsibility for conserving the ecological resources of the Baikal basin.

163. As summarized in Box 2 below, many more on-the-ground activities have been implemented in Russia than Mongolia. This is mainly due to Russia’s contribution of biodiversity focal area resources, but has nonetheless left some Mongolian stakeholders feeling less engaged, and like the project is much more favorably balanced toward Russia, which weighs negatively on all aspects of the project.

Box 2 Summary of Baikal Project Pilot Activities in Mongolia and Russia

<u>Mongolia</u>	<u>Russia</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hovsgol Lake shoreline cleanup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three biodiversity friendly mining demonstration projects • Development of protected area ecotourism management plans • Construction of ecotourism infrastructure in two national-level protected areas • Partnership with Barguzin monastery for environmentally friendly religious pilgrimage route • Construction of two cattle mortuaries in Barguzin valley • “Baikal Box” environmental education teachers’ aid • Lake Baikal shoreline cleanup • Awareness raising for biodiversity friendly sport fishing

D. Impacts and Global Environmental Benefits

164. For the GEF international waters focal area, project impacts are considered as any positive changes in the environmental conditions of the watershed and water body targeted under the project. For example, this could include improvements in water quality, improvements in the quality or coverage of ecosystems, or improved security of ecosystem services. For the GEF biodiversity focal area project impacts are defined as documented changes in environmental status of species, ecosystems or genetic biodiversity resources. Global Environmental Benefits have not been explicitly defined, but are generally considered to involve sustained impact level results of a certain scale or significance.

165. The project document identifies the specific Global Environmental Benefits expected in both focal areas in section 2.5 (p. 47). These include “Pollution levels in designated hot-spot monitoring areas will be reduced by 20%” for international waters, and for biodiversity, “The project will achieve improved management and conservation of globally significant biodiversity, threatened and near-threatened species outside protected areas, in designated Essential Fish Habitats, with populations of target fish species (*Taimen*, *Lenok* and *Grayling*) stable or increasing.”

166. In the project results framework the impact level indicators include one on reduction of pollution by 20%, as well as the following two indicators:

- “Ecosystem resilience parameters for Hovsgol Lake. - Nutrient concentrations: soluble reactive phosphorus (SRP) /Chlorophyl-a) - Secchi depth - Abundance and age structure of Hovsgol grayling,”¹⁴ and
- “Trend of Taimen and Grayling populations in two types of riverine habitat: healthy ‘stronghold’ habitat and degraded ‘troubled’ habitat.”

167. Considering it is only the mid-point of the project, it is early to expect there to be any notable impact level results, and certainly not Global Environmental Benefits. Both site-level

¹⁴ As discussed previously, the Hovsgol Lake ecosystem indicators have been removed from the project results framework due to various shortcomings in relation to SMART criteria.

impacts, and broader Global Environmental Benefits are often not likely to be achieved in the lifetime of a single project, which has only a four-year implementation period. In addition, the project has relatively few on-the-ground demonstration or pilot activities, and the project strategy is long-term, primarily focused on increasing knowledge and understanding of the Baikal watershed ecosystem(s), strengthening environmental management institutions and mechanisms, and developing the SAP to undertake future activities and efforts for improving the integrated watershed management in the Baikal basin.

168. Once the environmentally friendly mining demonstration activities are completed there may be some site-level impacts that could be documented and attributed to the project. The closing of the Irkutsk paper mill plant will certainly have positive impact level results, though this was primarily an initiative of the Russian government, without significant contribution from the project. In any case, in an area the size of the Baikal watershed (an area approximately the size of France) there are numerous actors and stakeholders, and it is difficult to identify the specific contribution of one four-year ~\$4.00 million dollar project.

E. The Long View: Reaching Global Environmental Benefits Through Integrated Water Resource Management in the Baikal Basin

169. There is constant pressure from international donors for development projects to demonstrate impacts, and the GEF is no different. As discussed in the immediately preceding section, it must be acknowledged that the present Baikal basin project has little prospect for producing Global Environmental Benefits by its completion, and it was never designed or intended to produce that level of result in such a short time. The Russian government's efforts to shut down the Irkutsk paper mill, and major investments in wastewater treatment and other relevant infrastructure in the region are likely to produce some notable positive environmental changes in the basin.

170. Numerous threats and barriers to effective management remain however. The TDA prioritizes key issues for the Baikal basin, as previously indicated in Table 3, in previous Section III.C at the beginning of this report. In realistic terms, achieving conservation of the Baikal basin and sustainable development within its boundaries will be a decades long endeavor, and the current project is just one small contributor of an overall process that began 20, or even 40, years ago, and will continue for most likely at least another similar amount of time. The project strategy is focused preliminarily on developing the foundation for future cooperative action by Russia and Mongolia, namely the TDA and SAP, with supporting institutional infrastructure. With the GEF support (and the engagement of all the project partners and stakeholders) the Baikal project is making important contributions on these fronts, and efforts will need to be continued once the current project finishes.

171. Remaining barriers will presumably be highlighted in the forthcoming SAP: issues such as bilateral institutional cooperation and coordination, scientific and technological capacity constraints, and the ongoing development of the mining industry (and associated potential hydropower development), are major areas that remain to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

VII. Key GEF Performance Parameters

172. Sustainability is one of the five main evaluation criteria, as well as being considered one of the GEF operational principles. Other GEF operational principles not otherwise addressed are discussed below, including the project's catalytic role and stakeholder participation.

173. UNDP-GEF project evaluations are also required to discuss the mainstreaming of UNDP program principles. This is covered in Annex 10 of this evaluation report.

A. Sustainability

174. While a sustainability rating is provided here as required, sustainability is a temporal and dynamic state that is influenced by a broad range of constantly shifting factors. It should be kept in mind that the important aspect of sustainability of GEF projects is the sustainability of results, not necessarily the sustainability of activities that produced results. In the context of GEF projects there is no clearly defined timeframe for which results should be sustained, although it is implied that they should be sustained indefinitely. When evaluating sustainability, the greater the time horizon, the lower the degree of certainty possible.

175. In addition, by definition, mid-term evaluations are not well-positioned to provide ratings on sustainability considering that many more activities will be undertaken before project end that may positively or negatively affect the likelihood of sustainability. Based on GEF evaluation policies and procedures, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the lowest rating for any of the individual components. Therefore the overall **sustainability** rating for the Baikal project for this mid-term evaluation is ***moderately likely***.

176. Although sustainability is considered moderately likely, the project must still take necessary steps to support and ensure sustainability of all specific project results to the extent possible. Even if there were a follow-up project building on this project's results, there would likely be a gap between the end of this project and the start-up of continuing efforts. To consolidate results and strengthen sustainability this evaluation recommends that the project produce and secure stakeholder agreement on an exit strategy. The project exit strategy should be developed by the end of 2014, for approval by relevant stakeholders in early 2015. The exit strategy is necessary to clearly define roles and responsibilities to support the sustainability of project results. The exit strategy would include clear agreement about the responsibility for project results, including, for example, management, updating, and maintenance of the BIC website.

i. Financial Risks

177. While financial resources are always an important consideration, in the situation of the Baikal basin financial risks to sustainability of project results are considered low, and sustainability in this regard is considered ***likely***. For one, the Russian government is expected to continue its program of development in the Baikal region through 2020, which means hundreds of millions if not billions of dollars of federal investment in the region. This is certainly not all going towards integrated water and resource management in the region, but much of it should have positive benefits in this regard as infrastructure such as waste water treatment is improved, and assets such as protected areas are strengthened. In Mongolia there are numerous ongoing donor-funded activities relating to integrated water and other resource

management in the Selenga basin. For certain there will need to be ongoing investment in capacity development, but from a general perspective there are no acute financial risks foreseen to project results.

178. It is also anticipated that there would potentially be further GEF funding to support implementation of the SAP, if the two countries commit themselves to the necessary mechanisms to move cooperation on transboundary management forward, as further discussed below.

ii. Socio-political Risks

179. While the project objective has strong support from a large number of stakeholders on both sides of the Baikal basin, there are some moderate socio-political risks to sustainability, and sustainability in this regard is considered *moderately likely*. The most significant question is whether a sufficiently concrete draft SAP can be produced that both countries will be willing to formally agree to. Another issue is whether the two countries will agree to a revised and updated transboundary agreement for water and environmental management; the draft agreement produced with project support has evidently received a positive response at high levels in the Russian government, but the view from Mongolia remains uncertain as there has as of this mid-term evaluation been no official reply regarding the draft agreement. Finally, there is a question of whether the two countries will take steps to strengthen and enhance the joint institutional mechanism for addressing transboundary water management issues.

180. Beyond these high level issues, there remains much work to be done at the ground level in terms of raising environmental awareness among local resource users in both Russia and Mongolia.

iii. Institutional and Governance Risks

181. The institutional and governance mechanisms related to water and natural resource management in both Russia and Mongolia continue to be modified and have their capacity strengthened. Russia is notably more advanced than Mongolia in this regard, with a well-established mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination related to Lake Baikal, while in Mongolia the institutional approach for river basin management is still evolving, with new river basin management authorities for the Selenga sub-basins still in the process of establishment. Nonetheless, there do not appear to be major institutional or governance risks related specifically to the results of this project, and sustainability in this regard is considered *likely*.

iv. Environmental Risks

182. There are numerous environmental risks in the Baikal basin (as identified in the TDA), and many of these could have significant long-term negative influences on the environmental quality and resilience of water resources. The TDA highlights the potential impacts of climate change, though there is much uncertainty about specific environmental impacts in the Baikal basin from climate change; however, in Mongolia some effects from climate change are already evident.

183. One of the most significant environmental risks in the Baikal basin is the potential development of hydropower in Mongolia, as previously discussed in Section VI on results (also

see Box 3 below). Mongolia is only in the feasibility stage of investigating the potential for hydropower development and so the likelihood of and timeframe for actual construction of one or more hydropower dams in the Selenga basin remain highly uncertain, and the potential negative impacts of such infrastructure on the Baikal basin are also uncertain. However, considering that the Selenga river represents 60% of Lake Baikal's inflow, if large-scale hydropower infrastructure were developed, it would likely result in significant changes to the hydrological regime in the Baikal basin.

184. While many environmental risks are present, the current view on future trends is optimistic, notwithstanding the potential future impacts of climate change or major hydropower development. This aspect of sustainability is therefore considered **moderately likely**. It should also be noted that much of the project's work relates to improving scientific capacity, increasing scientific data and knowledge, disseminating information, and strengthening the institutional and policy framework for integrated water resource management. As such, these are not specific on-the-ground results that would be subject to environmental risks.

Box 3 Mongolia MINIS Project Overview

Title: Mining Infrastructure Investment Support Project (MINIS)
Modality: Loan from the World Bank to the Government of Mongolia
Amount: \$25.00 million
National Executing Body/Borrower: Ministry of Finance
Approval: May 11, 2011
Start-up: November 20, 2011
Expected Completion: September 30, 2016
Project Development Objective: The development objectives of the Mining Infrastructure Investment Support Project (MINIS) are to facilitate investments in infrastructure to support mining and downstream processing activities, regardless of funding source, and to build local capacity to prepare and transact infrastructure projects.
Current Status: According to the December 2013 Implementation Status Report, "To facilitate infrastructure investments, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) has updated its list of priority projects which includes: (i) Flow regulation of the Orkhon river and construction of water reservoir complex; (ii) Shuren Hydropower plant; (iii) Integrated Steel Complex with Infrastructure in the central region of Darkhan-Selengea; and (iv) Extension of Coal Mine 'Baganuur' LLC. The implementation of pre-feasibility studies is underway for the first three priority projects and the studies are expected to be completed between January and June 2014."

B. Catalytic Role: Replication and Up-scaling

185. The catalytic aspect of this project is still limited as this is only the mid-term of the project. However, the project has supported extensive important scientific and policy work related to the Baikal basin that is expected to make an important contribution to improving the overall management of the basin in the long-run. The project's most catalytic result is expected to be the SAP agreed between both countries that will serve as the basis for implementation of transboundary integrated water management practices, as well as the potential revised transboundary water and environmental management agreement between the two countries, replacing the 1995 agreement.

VIII. Main Lessons Learned and Recommendations

A. Lessons from the Experience of the Baikal IWRM Project

186. The mid-term evaluation is early for there to be significant lessons from the project, but a few lessons that have been identified are included below. In addition, lessons identified by the project in the 2013 PIR are included in Box 4 below.

187. **Lesson:** When a multi-country project concept originates with one country, it is important to secure equal engagement from the other countries that will be involved. The Baikal basin project is perceived as a Russian-centric endeavor, which weakens the legitimacy of the project's objective at the highest political levels in Mongolia. The project has made notable efforts to ensure Mongolian stakeholders are involved, and numerous Mongolian organizations and institutions are actively engaged, but at high political levels the project is still identified as being mainly in Russia's interest – and by correlation, not Mongolia's.

188. **Lesson:** A project management unit with good management capacity is important for ensuring timely and well-planned project implementation. The Baikal project has greatly benefited from having a PMU with good management capacity, as indicated by good financial delivery rates, good progress in the project workplan, and strong partnerships with a large number of organizations and institutions. On a related note, the project has also benefited from stability of personnel during project implementation.

189. **Lesson:** Grounding political discussions about natural resource management in scientific fact can be a useful way of developing trust and building cooperative approaches. Thus far the Baikal project has been successful in producing a good amount of scientific data about the Baikal basin, in the hopes that this will provide a strong foundation for political discussions.

190. **Lesson:** Donor organizations can incentive countries to cooperate on transboundary natural resource management issues, but should be cautious about prescribing specific approaches and mechanisms. Russian and Mongolia already have a cooperation mechanism in place addressing transboundary water management, and are currently not inclined to establish a "new" institutional mechanism in the form of a Joint Commission, as the GEF project document specifies. It may be possible to achieve the same management objectives with some modification of the current plenipotentiaries mechanism, yet the Baikal project logframe leans heavily on results indicators linked to establishment of the Joint Commission.

191. **Lesson:** As has been shown in many other GEF projects, practical on-the-ground demonstration activities can be important for building stakeholder ownership, increasing public and government awareness about key issues, and catalyzing further action. In the case of the Baikal project many stakeholders in Mongolia lamented the fact that there were no demonstration or pilot activities in Mongolia. This is partially due to the fact that Russia contributed its biodiversity focal area funding to the project, but there is no reason that funds from the international waters focal area could not also have been used for relevant pilot activities in Mongolia, and stakeholder engagement is weaker in Mongolia than in Russia. Projects involving multiple countries should endeavor to ensure there is a balance of on-the-ground activities among countries, even if it means overcoming bureaucratic hurdles.

192. **Lesson:** On a similar note, building political consensus and stakeholder buy-in for processes that will require later stakeholder action (such as development of the Strategic Action Plan) fare best with a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches, and must actively engage stakeholders at all necessary levels.

193. **Lesson:** When working on issues of national priority even relatively small GEF projects can garner political audiences at the highest levels. The Baikal project has been able to directly contribute to sessions in the Russian State Duma on topics related to the management of Lake Baikal. While many environmental initiatives find it difficult to gain traction at the highest political levels, the Baikal project has demonstrated that when project objectives are aligned with high-level national priorities, strong political will for environmental conservation is possible.

194. **Lesson:** Appropriate implementation arrangements are critical to support successful execution of project activities when working in multiple countries. The Baikal project has full-time project staff based in both national capitals, while the PMU headquarters is based in the region. This approach has been critical for engaging important national level institutions in each country, but particularly in Russia.

195. **Lesson:** When working in transboundary contexts it is important to build a common transboundary *identity* to strengthen stakeholder buy-in and cooperation toward a common objective. The Baikal project has started moving in this direction (particularly with the production of the “Baikal Without Boundaries” documentary), but there is still a need for strengthening recognition of the Baikal basin as a single shared resource, to catalyze joint action on integrated natural resource management. There are multiple ways to do this, but a common internet site is one approach that has been successfully employed by some other GEF international waters projects – for example, in the South China Sea (<http://www.unepscs.org/>). While the IW:Learn website platform has many advantages, it unfortunately does not serve well the goal of a user-friendly communal internet “home” to bring together stakeholders from both countries.

Box 4 Baikal Project Lessons from the 2013 PIR

1. Transboundary projects are often supported by regional UNDP offices. The role of UNDP country offices sometimes is not very clear and underestimated. It is significant to increase the role of UNDP countries and involve them in all project activities.
2. Each project has to work with country scientific organizations. It is important to involve international science to the work of local scientific institutions. In this case local science can increase its knowledge and experience and might maintain project deliverables.
3. From the beginning each IW Project has to be a part of IW:Learn informational portal. All project news, events and results will be available for all GEF IW projects and will be alive after project closure. In addition project will save a lot of money on informational support and web development and will identify itself as a part of big GEF IW project portfolio.
4. Project team has to develop good communication strategy during the project inception stage and agree it with stakeholders.

B. Mid-term Recommendations for the Baikal IWRM Project

196. The recommendations from this mid-term evaluation are outlined below. The “key” recommendations – those deemed most critical – are listed first, with lower-level recommendations following. The target audience for each recommendation is indicated in brackets.

197. **Key Recommendation 1:** The SAP development process should include consultations with sub-national government stakeholders, such as soum and aimag level government representatives in Mongolia. To ensure implementation of the SAP it must be integrated with the planning processes and policies of the Aimags whose territories are included in the Selenga basin. The project could support at least one round of stakeholder consultations, which should be held in the early phases of SAP development (presumably in the third quarter of 2014).). If necessary the project should transfer resources from Outcome 3 to Outcome 1 to cover these activities. This could be facilitated through the environment departments of the Aimag governments. [PMU, Mongolia MEGD]

198. **Key Recommendation 2:** The project should explore the possibility of providing further immediate support to the government of Mongolia for reviewing and analyzing the draft revised transboundary agreement with Russia. This approach would follow similar activities undertaken in previous donor projects in which the project supported activities such as expert legal analysis, and consultation with the Department of Justice. Being a transboundary agreement, this would be facilitated in collaboration with both the MEGD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The UNDP Mongolia Country Office may be able to help facilitate such an approach. [PMU, PSC]

199. **Key Recommendation 3:** The project exit strategy should be developed by the end of 2014, for approval by relevant stakeholders in early 2015. The exit strategy is necessary to clearly define roles and responsibilities to support the sustainability of project results. This would include, for example, clear agreement about the responsibility for managing and updating the BIC website. [PMU, PSC]

200. **Key Recommendation 4:** It is recommended that the project explore all potential opportunities to undertake additional demonstration or pilot activities in Mongolia related to integrated natural resource management. The project has thus far included relatively few practical on-the-ground activities in Mongolia, and such activities are often important for gaining stakeholder support and buy-in, and raising awareness. This could have important dividends for the project in Mongolia, by engaging aimag and soum government stakeholders. [PSC]

201. **Recommendation 5:** The Baikal project should explore the option of collaborating with the GEF SGP in Mongolia to activate the Baikal NGO network, and potentially undertake some biodiversity-related pilot activities in Mongolia supporting IWRM management. [PMU, UNDP Mongolia Country Office, GEF SGP in Mongolia]

202. **Recommendation 6:** The project should consider a variety of approaches to increase the chances of the two countries moving toward accepting the revised and updated transboundary water and environment management agreement. One opportunity could be to hold a media event highlighting “20 years of cooperation” on water management between Russia and

Mongolia (or even 40 years, going back to the 1974 agreement). This theme could also be extended to an academic conference on the subject where participants discuss and explore current key topics related to transboundary water management for the two countries. [MNRE, MEGD, PMU, PSC]

203. **Recommendation 7:** To strengthen the current plenipotentiaries mechanism in lieu of a new joint commission the project should work with the key stakeholders and both the government of Russia and government of Mongolia to integrate the SAP actions and targets into the meetings and workplans of the current plenipotentiaries mechanism. This would help consolidate the project results and strengthen sustainability, demonstrating initial steps toward implementation of the SAP. [MNRE, MEGD]

204. **Recommendation 8:** Once the BIC website is fully operational it should be promoted and linked to as many other relevant websites as possible, in particular the website of the MEGD in Mongolia and MNRE in Russia, as well as the websites of the environmental agencies of the Republic of Buryatia and the relevant Aimags in Mongolia. The BIC will be a great public information resource, but it is necessary to make a proactive effort to drive website traffic to the site to ensure that it becomes known to the widest possible relevant audience. This would include search-engine optimization as well, and, for example, publication of the website URL on any printed materials of the project. [PMU, BIC developers]

205. **Recommendation 9:** In Mongolia the project should seek opportunities to develop the capacity of Mongolia's watershed management institutions, i.e. River Basin Management Authorities and River Basin Councils. This could include, for example, the possibility of developing the capacity of the River Basin Councils to act as conduits for public and expert input to EIAs relevant to the river basin management plans. In addition, the River Basin Management Authorities are expected to operate as key actors in implementing integrated water resource management in Mongolia, but they require training and technical capacity on IWRM issues and approaches. The River Basin Management Authorities and River Basin Councils for the Eg and Ider rivers are still being established, and thus there is a good opportunity for the Baikal project to directly contribute to the establishment of these bodies to support implementation of the river basin management plans that were developed under the Baikal project. [PMU, PSC, MEGD]

206. **Recommendation 10:** The project should increase activity related to responsible mining in Mongolia. The project should ensure that the lessons from the biodiversity friendly mining pilot activities on the Russian-side are documented and shared with the Mongolian colleagues. In addition, the project should engage with the stakeholders in Mongolia involved with identifying and disseminating environmentally responsible best practices for the mining industry. The Asia Foundation has organized stakeholder roundtable events on this issue, and it is a critical issue for the Baikal watershed in Mongolia. The above activities would require relatively little project funding. In addition the project should explore the option of conducting environmentally responsible mining pilot projects in Mongolia (most likely in the artisanal sector), not necessarily with biodiversity funding, but with funding from the international waters portion of the project budget, or with funding from other partners, such as the GEF-SGP. [PMU, PSC]

207. **Recommendation 11:** The project should conduct an assessment of the feasibility and opportunities for citizen-based water quality monitoring networks, supporting the implementation of river basin management plans. Such a program would help more closely track water quality issues; Mongolia's rivers have a high capacity for quick self-cleaning, so if pollution or water quality issues are reported, by the time government officials are able to respond and test the water, the pollution may already be significantly diluted. Citizen-based monitoring programs also serve a dual purpose of increasing public awareness and supporting environmental education, and they can also be relatively cost-effective means of collecting basic monitoring data. Examples of such programs include the Georgia (USA) Adopt-A-Stream program (<http://www.georgiaadoptastream.com/db/>), and Cook Inletkeeper (Alaska, USA) Citizen Environmental Monitoring Program (<http://inletkeeper.org/clean-water/citizen-monitoring>). [PMU, PSC]

208. **Recommendation 12:** The key technical experts from the Baikal project should participate in the inception workshop of the FAO/GEF mainstreaming project that will be starting in 2014, in order to identify all potential synergies between the two projects. One area of potential synergy may be related to Payments for Ecosystem Services, which the FAO project plans to pilot within Mongolia. [PMU, UNDP, FAO]

209. **Recommendation 13:** Support information dissemination and awareness raising of key issues identified in the TDA through 1-2 page policy briefs highlighting the key points of the primary threats and issues identified in the TDA for the Baikal Basin, particularly for Mongolia. Stakeholders highlighted the fact that it is critical to continue raising awareness of high-level policy makers in understanding these complex issues. [PMU]

210. **Recommendation 14:** There is an excellent opportunity to explore and assess the feasibility of payments for ecosystem services (PES) from a transboundary perspective. There are numerous examples of successful PES for watershed maintenance around the world, but there are few or no known examples of transboundary PES. The Baikal basin has strong potential for such a scheme, since Russia is the downstream partner, and has greater resources (higher GDP, higher level of development) than Mongolia. A PES scheme could even be explored on a non-cash basis, where Russia agrees to provide technical support, or timber, or invest in development in Mongolia (specifically, for example, in the soums located ear the border) in exchange for a guaranteed level of water quality in the Selenga river as it crosses the border, or for ensuring a certain level of forest coverage in specific zones in Mongolia. It is highly unlikely that such a scheme could be piloted on a small scale before completion of the current IWRM project, but the concept should be explored, potentially with an exploratory concept paper or feasibility study, and inclusion of the idea in the SAP. Moving toward such a scheme could be globally significant. [PMU, PSC, SAP drafting team]

211. **Recommendation 15:** The evaluation recommends that the project keep detailed records of co-financing received from all sources. With the Russian Federal investment program in the Baikal region the project can be considered to have more co-financing than originally planned. At the same time, the number and type of co-financing partners, not just the amount of co-financing received, can be an important indication of stakeholder ownership and support. Thus it would be beneficial for the project to record the range of partner organizations who have contributed any amount of cash or in-kind co-financing. [PMU]

212. **Recommendation 16:** The evaluation recommends that the project results framework be reviews in its entirety following this mid-term evaluation to ensure that additional changes are not required in the 2nd half of the project. In particular, the indicators for Outcome 2 are not reflective of the planned project results under this outcome. [PSC]

IX. Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Annex 2: GEF Operational Principles

Annex 3: Baikal IWRM Project Mid-term Evaluation Matrix

Annex 4: Interview Guide

Annex 5: Rating Scales

Annex 6: Mid-term Evaluation Mission Itinerary

Annex 7: Documents Reviewed

Annex 8: Baikal Basin Stakeholders

Annex 9: Baikal Project Results Framework and Assessed Level of Indicator Target Achievement

Annex 10: Baikal Basin Project Mainstreaming of UNDP Programme Principles

A. Annex 1: Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a mid-term evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the UNDP-GEF project “Integrated Natural Resource Management in the Baikal Basin Transboundary Ecosystem”.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

Lake Baikal and its transboundary basin including Lake Khovsgol represent an unparalleled global benefit in terms of international waters and biodiversity values. While past and current efforts to protect and sustainably utilize the environment and its natural resources are impressive, they are insufficient to the task of addressing the threats to the health of the Baikal Basin’s (BB) interconnected aquatic ecosystems. These threats include: climate change, pollution and sedimentation, nutrient loading, and habitat destruction. To address these threats successfully conservation work must move beyond the protected area limits and into the 87% of the Basin that is not protected where natural resource exploitation continues without regard to ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation objectives. Significant barriers hamper both countries’ ability to move ahead both within their national envelopes and jointly on a robust transboundary level. These barriers include: policy and regulatory gaps, institutional weaknesses, poor utilization of BAT/BEP relevant to key issues facing the Basin, and low levels of awareness of transboundary BB issues.

The project’s objective is to spearhead integrated natural resource management of the Lake Baikal Basin and Khovsgol Lake ensuring ecosystem resilience, reduced water quality threats in the context of sustainable economic development.

Building upon a solid baseline of bilateral cooperation between Russia and Mongolia on the transboundary waters of the Selenga River and on the growing economic baselines of the mining and tourism sectors, GEF support catalyzes the development and implementation of a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the transboundary management and conservation of the Baikal Basin’s aquatic ecosystems.

The project also supports efforts from both national and local governments and civil society to mainstream biodiversity conservation measures into mining and tourism sector policies and practices and watershed management planning, leading to improved management of biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems across 11,047,790 hectares.

Capacity building occurs at the transboundary, national and local levels in support of Russian and Mongolian efforts to establish effective structures and mechanisms for protecting water resources and biodiversity through integrated basin management. The Project assists the two countries to enhance and capacitate the activities and responsibilities of the Joint Task Force through the formation or of a Joint Commission using existing structures or creating new depending on country's needs, with expanded participation by other relevant sectors and by civil society. One inter-ministerial committee is set up each in Russia and in Mongolia, tasked with managing the decision-making processes for approval and implementation of integrated sub-basin watershed management plans. Country protocols for the Joint Water Quality Monitoring Program, including groundwater, is harmonized and set in use using upgraded monitoring stations.

Pilot projects are launched in partnership with local industries to demonstrate techniques for improving water quality and mainstreaming biodiversity management objectives into sustainable economic

development. In addition strategy for (dead) livestock disposal to cease periodic anthrax outbreaks is developed and implemented on real examples. Some pilots deal with “greening” the tourism sector, designed to inform the decision makers within the Baikal Special Zone of Tourism on biodiversity-compatible tourism opportunities (ecotourism).

During preparation phase a preliminary TDA of the basin was developed in 2008. The four year Full Sized Project document was signed in June 2011. The PMU was hired November 2011 and the Inception Workshop was held in November 2011.

The hierarchy of Project goal, objectives, major deliverables and expected outcomes, as well as the related indicators, is laid down in the Project Document, the subsequent Inception Report, Steering Committee Report, and Annual Work Plans. (<http://baikal.iwlearn.org/>)

The extensive review and updating of the preliminary Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis of 2008 was concluded in 2013. Updated TDA additionally includes specific studies like climate change assessment, groundwater pollution risks and ground / surface water intermixing, Selenga Delta study and etc. A hot spot assessment was made for Russia and Mongolia and pollution levels were detected. Two sub-basin management plans for Russia (Tugnuy-Sukhara and Khilok) and two sub-basin management plans for Mongolia (Ilder and Eg) were completed and then they were endorsed by the governments.

Project supports existing institutional transboundary structures (the institute of Plenipotentiaries) formed by 1995 bilateral agreement “Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters”. Additionally the concept paper and the road map for the process of developing and enhancing the legal and institutional framework of bilateral transboundary water cooperation were developed. The learning exchange with Sava River Basin Commission was organized. The Harmonized water quality monitoring program for the Baikal Basin was developed. At list 13 of data parameters jointly were monitored by the two countries across the Baikal Basin. About 30 parameters were harmonized. The database for modeling and simulation of pollutants transport in the Baikal basin waters was developed.

Best practice conservation standards for tourism, mining using international and regional examples were elaborated and the gap analysis was provided. Tourism plans for Baikal Biosphere Reserve and Zabaikalsky National Park were developed. The conception of Baikal Information Center was developed and BIC web portal was launched. Communication and public awareness plans for both countries were prepared. Shoreline clean-up companies in Russia and Mongolia for raising public awareness in environment conservation issues were organized.

Project execution for the UNDP-GEF Baikal Project is the responsibility of the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS), through its International Waters Cluster, in accordance with UNDP and UNOPS operational and financial guidelines and procedures. UNOPS is accountable to UNDP, the implementing agency, for the delivery of agreed outputs as per agreed project work plans, for financial management, and for ensuring cost-effectiveness.

At policy and strategic level the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC) and the Project Steering Committee (PSC) guide the project. The PSC consists of the National Focal Points from Ministries of Mongolia and Russia, representatives of UNOPS, and the Regional Technical Advisor for UNDP RBEC International Waters. The PSC meets annually to monitor progress in Project implementation, provide strategic guidance, and review and approve work plans and budgets. PSC meetings are chaired by the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor. The PSC retains the authority to amend its membership as it deems necessary.

The main Project Coordination Unit (PCU), which is responsible for day-to-day management of the project implementation, is located in Ulan-Ude, Russia. The Russian Technical Project Director is located in Moscow (Russia) and hosted by Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology (Russia). There is also branch PCU office in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), houses the National Technical Project Director and the Project Assistant.

The Mid-Term Evaluation will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

An overall approach and method¹⁵ for conducting project mid-term evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Mid-Term Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR ([Annex C](#)) The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. Execution of the MTE will be home based, with one evaluation mission to the PCU in Ulan-Ude (Russia) and its branch offices in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) and Moscow (Russia).

The main stakeholders of the MTE include the PCU in Ulan-Ude (Russia) and its branch offices in Moscow (Russia) and Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), the PSC members, specifically the Countries' National Focal Points, UNOPS, the UNDP RBEC, the UNDP Country Offices in Russia and Mongolia, the GEF Focal Points in Russia and Mongolia, and selected contractors involved in project implementation. A list of recommended interview partners will be provided by the PCU in advance of the field visit. The PCU will provide the Consultant with support to obtain all the necessary and requested documentations and logistical assistance to conduct the evaluation mission.

Interviews will be held in person or by phone/Skype with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

- Staff of the Project Coordinating Unit (Moscow, Ulan-Ude and Ulaanbaatar)
- Vladimir Mamaev, UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor
- Katrin Lichtenberg or Kirk Bayabos, UNOPS Senior Portfolio Manager in Copenhagen
- Project Executing Partners (UNESCO)
- Project National Coordinators in Russia and Mongolia
- Federal and regional government representatives from Russia and Mongolia
- Selected contractors involved in project implementation
- Other constituencies and stakeholders not directly involved in the project who may have experienced, or may be expected to experience, its impacts.

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF

¹⁵ For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Annex B](#) of this Terms of Reference.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see [Annex A](#)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. IA& EA Execution	rating
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental :	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the UNDP Regional Centre and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the mid-term evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Partner Agency (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual

	d							
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-kind support 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other 								
Totals								

MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

IMPACT

The evaluator will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements knowledge management and experience sharing of GEF IW projects, b) successes in collecting lessons learned and best practices, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.¹⁶

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations and lessons**.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the Baikal Project coordination unit. UNOPS will contract the evaluator and all travel arrangements (if applicable) will be the responsibility of the evaluator. The Project Coordination Unit will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluator to set up stakeholder interviews, coordinate with the Government etc.

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 24 days according to the following plan:

¹⁶ A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROtI Handbook 2009](#)

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	3 days	01 February 2013 - 15 February 2013
Evaluation Mission	12 days	16 February - 15 March 2013
Draft Evaluation Report	7 days	16 March 2013 – 15 April 2013
Final Report	2 days	16 April 2013 - 30 April 2013

EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to PCU and RTA
Presentation	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, and RTA
Draft Final Report	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent PCU, and reviewed by RTA, UNDP CO
Final Report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Signed by RTA and sent to UNDP CO for uploading to UNDP ERC.

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

EVALUATOR QUALIFICATIONS

The Evaluator will be an international consultant. The consultant shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The evaluator selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The Evaluator must present the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated international consulting experience and professional background in the water resources management sector. A minimum of 15 years relevant experience is required.
- Previous experience in the EECCA countries required.
- A Master degree in water resources management, environment, international relations, or relevant field required.

- Substantive experience in reviewing and evaluating similar technical assistance projects, preferably those involving UNDP-GEF or other major ICPS required.
- Excellent English writing and communication skills; demonstrated ability to assess complex situations in order to succinctly and clearly distil critical issues and draw well supported conclusions, required;
- Russian language skills advantageous;
- An ability to assess policy and governance framework and institutional capacity required;
- Understanding of governance, political, economic and institutional issues associated with transboundary water issues in the EECCA countries required;
- Familiarity with GEF International Waters strategic programs, operations and evaluation guidelines, and portfolio advantageous.

EVALUATOR ETHICS

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

(this payment schedule is indicative, to be filled in by the CO and UNDP GEF Project Manager based on their standard procurement procedures)

%	Milestone
10%	At contract signing
50%	Following submission and approval of the 1ST draft mid-term evaluation report
40%	Following submission and approval (UNDP-CO and UNDP RTA) of the final mid-term evaluation report

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are requested to apply online UNOPS <https://gprs.unops.org>. Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. The application should contain a current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact. Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit a price offer indicating the total cost of the assignment (including daily fee, per diem and travel costs).

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals. Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

B. Annex 2: GEF Operational Principles

<http://www.gefweb.org/public/opstrat/ch1.htm>

TEN OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GEF'S WORK PROGRAM

1. For purposes of the financial mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the GEF will **function under the guidance of, and be accountable to, the Conference of the Parties (COPs)**. For purposes of financing activities in the focal area of ozone layer depletion, GEF operational policies will be consistent with those of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its amendments.
2. The GEF will provide new, and additional, grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed **incremental costs** of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits.
3. The GEF will ensure the **cost-effectiveness** of its activities to maximize global environmental benefits.
4. The GEF will fund projects that are **country-driven** and based on national priorities designed to support sustainable development, as identified within the context of national programs.
5. The GEF will maintain sufficient **flexibility** to respond to changing circumstances, including evolving guidance of the Conference of the Parties and experience gained from monitoring and evaluation activities.
6. GEF projects will provide for **full disclosure** of all non-confidential information.
7. GEF projects will provide for consultation with, and **participation** as appropriate of, the beneficiaries and affected groups of people.
8. GEF projects will conform to the **eligibility** requirements set forth in paragraph 9 of the GEF Instrument.
9. In seeking to maximize global environmental benefits, the GEF will emphasize its **catalytic role** and leverage additional financing from other sources.
10. The GEF will ensure that its programs and projects are **monitored and evaluated** on a regular basis.

C. Annex 3: Baikal IWRM Project Mid-term Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Evaluation Criteria: Relevance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective align with the priorities of the local government and local communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and stated priorities of local stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local stakeholders Document review of local development strategies, environmental policies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local level field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective fit within the national environment and development priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and national policy priorities and strategies, as stated in official documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policy documents, such as National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, National Capacity Self-Assessment, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review National level interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project concept originate from local or national stakeholders, and/or were relevant stakeholders sufficiently involved in project development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of involvement of local and national stakeholders in project origination and development (number of meetings held, project development processes incorporating stakeholder input, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff Local and national stakeholders Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project objective fit GEF strategic priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and GEF strategic priorities (including alignment of relevant focal area indicators) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEF strategic priority documents for period when project was approved Current GEF strategic priority documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the project linked with and in-line with UNDP priorities and strategies for the country? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and design with UNDAF, CPAP, CPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP strategic priority documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity? Other relevant MEAs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages between project objective and elements of the CBD, such as key articles and programs of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBD website National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review
Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project cost-effective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and adequacy of financial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> management procedures (in line with UNDP, UNOPS, and national policies, legislation, and procedures) Financial delivery rate vs. expected rate Management costs as a percentage of total costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are expenditures in line with international standards and norms? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of project inputs and outputs relative to norms and standards for donor projects in the country or region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project implementation approach efficient for delivering the planned project results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequacy of implementation structure and mechanisms for coordination and communication Planned and actual level of human resources available Extent and quality of engagement with relevant partners / partnerships Quality and adequacy of project monitoring mechanisms (oversight bodies' input, quality and timeliness of reporting, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents National and local stakeholders Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff Interviews with national and local stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project implementation delayed? If so, has that affected cost-effectiveness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project milestones in time Planned results affected by delays Required project adaptive management measures related to delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of cash and in-kind co-financing relative to expected level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the project leveraging additional resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of resources leveraged relative to project budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the project objectives likely to be met? To what extent are they likely to be met? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of progress toward project indicator targets relative to expected level at current point of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key factors contributing to project success or underachievement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of documentation of and preparation for project risks, assumptions and impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key risks and barriers that remain to achieve the project objective and generate Global Environmental Benefits? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence, assessment of, and preparation for expected risks, assumptions and impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the key assumptions and impact drivers relevant to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits likely to be met? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions undertaken to address key assumptions and target impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
Evaluation Criteria: Results			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the planned outputs been produced? Have they contributed to the project outcomes and objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of project implementation progress relative to expected level at current stage of implementation Existence of logical linkages between project outputs and outcomes/impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project objective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of logical linkages between project outcomes and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are the likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental indicators Level of progress through the project's Theory of Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are project results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial requirements for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintenance of project benefits • Level of expected financial resources available to support maintenance of project benefits • Potential for additional financial resources to support maintenance of project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff • Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of “ownership” of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project staff • Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit interviews • Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of technical capacity of relevant stakeholders relative to level required to sustain project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project staff • Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit interviews • Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of socio-political risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project staff • Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit interviews • Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of institutional and governance risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project staff • Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit interviews • Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of environmental risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project staff • Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit interviews • Desk review
Cross-cutting and UNDP Mainstreaming Issues			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project take incorporate gender mainstreaming or equality, as relevant? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of appropriate engagement and attention to gender-relevant aspects of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project staff • Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit interviews • Desk review

D. Annex 4: Interview Guide

Overview: The questions under each topic area are intended to assist in focusing discussion to ensure consistent topic coverage and to structure data collection, and are not intended as verbatim questions to be posed to interviewees. When using the interview guide, the interviewer should be sure to target questions at a level appropriate to the interviewee. The interview guide is one of multiple tools for gathering evaluative evidence, to complement evidence collected through document reviews and other data collection methods; in other words, the interview guide does not cover all evaluative questions relevant to the evaluation.

Key

Bold = GEF Evaluation Criteria

Italic = GEF Operational Principles

I. PLANNING / PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

A. **Relevance**

- i. Did the project's objectives fit within the priorities of the local government and local communities?
- ii. Did the project's objectives fit within national priorities?
- iii. Did the project's objectives fit GEF strategic priorities?
- iv. Did the project's objectives support implementation of the relevant multi-lateral environmental agreement?

B. *Incremental cost*

- i. Did the project create environmental benefits that would not have otherwise taken place?
- ii. Does the project area represent an example of a globally significant environmental resource?

C. *Country-drivenness / Participation*

- i. How did the project concept originate?
- ii. How did the project stakeholders contribute to the project development?
- iii. Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project?
- iv. Do the local communities support the objectives of the project?
- v. Are the project objectives in conflict with any national level policies?

D. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan / Design (*M&E*)

- i. Were monitoring and reporting roles clearly defined?
- ii. Was there either an environmental or socio-economic baseline of data collected before the project began?

II. MANAGEMENT / OVERSIGHT

A. Project management

- i. What were the implementation arrangements?
- ii. Was the management effective?

- iii. Were workplans prepared as required to achieve the anticipated outputs on the required timeframes?
 - iv. Did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
 - v. Were there any particular challenges with the management process?
 - vi. If there was a steering or oversight body, did it meet as planned and provide the anticipated input and support to project management?
 - vii. Were risks adequately assessed during implementation?
 - viii. Did assumptions made during project design hold true?
 - ix. Were assessed risks adequately dealt with?
 - x. Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?
- B. Flexibility**
- i. Did the project have to undertake any adaptive management measures based on feedback received from the M&E process?
 - ii. Were there other ways in which the project demonstrated flexibility?
 - iii. Were there any challenges faced in this area?
- C. Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)**
- i. Was the project cost-effective?
 - ii. Were expenditures in line with international standards and norms?
 - iii. Was the project implementation delayed?
 - iv. If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness?
 - v. What was the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?
 - vi. To what extent did the project leverage additional resources?
- D. Financial Management**
- i. Was the project financing (from the GEF and other partners) at the level foreseen in the project document?
 - ii. Were there any problems with disbursements between implementing and executing agencies?
 - iii. Were financial audits conducted with the regularity and rigor required by the implementing agency?
 - iv. Was financial reporting regularly completed at the required standards and level of detail?
 - v. Did the project face any particular financial challenges such as unforeseen tax liabilities, management costs, or currency devaluation?
- E. Co-financing (catalytic role)**
- i. Was the in-kind co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
 - ii. Was the cash co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
 - iii. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated cash support after approval?

- iv. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated in-kind support after approval?
- F. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
 - i. Project implementation M&E
 - a. Was the M&E plan adequate and implemented sufficiently to allow the project to recognize and address challenges?
 - b. Were any unplanned M&E measures undertaken to meet unforeseen shortcomings?
 - c. Was there a mid-term evaluation?
 - d. How were project reporting and monitoring tools used to support adaptive management?
 - ii. Environmental and socio-economic monitoring
 - a. Did the project implement a monitoring system, or leverage a system already in place, for environmental monitoring?
 - b. What are the environmental or socio-economic monitoring mechanisms?
 - c. Have any community-based monitoring mechanisms been used?
 - d. Is there a long-term M&E component to track environmental changes?
 - e. If so, what provisions have been made to ensure this is carried out?
- E. Full disclosure
 - i. Did the project meet this requirement?
 - ii. Did the project face any challenges in this area?
- III. ACTIVITIES / IMPLEMENTATION
 - A. Effectiveness
 - i. How have the stated project objectives been met?
 - ii. To what extent have the project objectives been met?
 - iii. What were the key factors that contributed to project success or underachievement?
 - iv. Can positive key factors be replicated in other situations, and could negative key factors have been anticipated?
 - B. Stakeholder involvement and public awareness (*participation*)
 - i. What were the achievements in this area?
 - ii. What were the challenges in this area?
 - iii. How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the achievement of project objectives?
- IV. RESULTS
 - A. Outputs
 - i. Did the project achieve the planned outputs?
 - ii. Did the outputs contribute to the project outcomes and objectives?
 - B. Outcomes
 - i. Were the anticipated outcomes achieved?

- ii. Were the outcomes relevant to the planned project impacts?
- C. Impacts
 - i. Was there a logical flow of inputs and activities to outputs, from outputs to outcomes, and then to impacts?
 - ii. Did the project achieve its anticipated/planned impacts?
 - iii. Why or why not?
 - iv. If impacts were achieved, were they at a scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?
 - v. If impacts or Global Environmental Benefits have not yet been achieved, are the conditions (enabling environment) in place so that they are likely to eventually be achieved?
- D. Replication strategy, and documented replication or scaling-up (*catalytic role*)
 - i. Did the project have a replication plan?
 - ii. Was the replication plan “passive” or “active”?
 - iii. Is there evidence that replication or scaling-up occurred within the country?
 - iv. Did replication or scaling-up occur in other countries?
- V. LESSONS LEARNED
 - A. What were the key lessons learned in each project stage?
 - B. In retrospect, would the project participants have done anything differently?
- VI. SUSTAINABILITY
 - A. Financial
 - i. To what extent are the project results dependent on continued financial support?
 - ii. What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?
 - iii. Was the project successful in identifying and leveraging co-financing?
 - iv. What are the key financial risks to sustainability?
 - B. Socio-Political
 - i. To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors?
 - ii. What is the likelihood that the level of stakeholder ownership will allow for the project results to be sustained?
 - iii. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
 - iv. What are the key socio-political risks to sustainability?
 - C. Institutions and Governance
 - i. To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?
 - ii. What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for the project results to be sustained?
 - iii. Are the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how in place?

- iv. What are the key institutional and governance risks to sustainability?
- D. Ecological
 - i. Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?

E. Annex 5: Rating Scales

Progress towards results: use the following rating scale	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.
Adaptive management AND Management Arrangements: use the following rating scale	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The project has no shortcomings and can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	The project has minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (S)	The project has moderate shortcomings.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The project has significant shortcomings.
Unsatisfactory (U)	The project has major shortcomings.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has severe shortcomings.
Sustainability: use the following rating scale	
Likely (L)	There are no or negligible risks that affect this dimension of sustainability/linkages
Moderately Likely (ML)	There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability/linkages
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability/linkages
Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability

F. Annex 6: Mid-term Evaluation Mission Itinerary

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

06 April 2014, Sunday

Picking up at the airport at 22.30 Korean Air, flight 867 Seoul-Ulaanbaatar and traveling to Ramada hotel.

07 April 2014, Monday

09.30 – meeting on Ramada ground-floor (Mrs. Tumurchudur Sodnom), 30 min by taxi

- **10.00 Meeting with Ms. Erdenebayar** – Chief specialist of the Central Laboratory of Environment and Metrology (CLEM), Intercalibration of analytical procedures for analytes, included into harmonized program of Hydrochemical monitoring for Selenga river basin, Mongolia

(CLEM is the executor of RFQ/EMO/2013-038 (IWC-00078317) Intercalibration of analytical procedures for analytes, included into harmonized program of hydrochemical monitoring for Selenga river basin (Mongolia)

11.10 moving to ORBC by taxi (~20 min)

- **11.30 Meeting with Ms. Oyuntugs** - Head of the Orkhon River basin council (ORBC), Baikal Information Centre, Mongolia

ORBC is the executor of RFQ/EMO/2013-049 (IWC-00078317), “Baikal Information Center (BIC) maintenance, Mongolia”

12.30 – 13.30 – launch in nearby restaurant

13.30 – moving to Institute of Geography by taxi (~30-40min)

- **14.00 Meeting with Ms. Oyungerel and Mrs. Enkhtaivan** - Institute of Geography, Eco Atlas of Baikal basin, Mongolia

RFQ/EMO/2013-047 (IWC-00078317) The Ecological Atlas of the Baikal Basin development

15.30 – free time (moving to Ramada), dinner time can be specified at reception

08 April 2014, Tuesday

09.30 – meeting on Ramada ground-floor, 30 min by taxi

- **(exact time will be cleared) Meeting with Mr. D. Batbold** – (National Project Director in Mongolia), State Secretary of The Ministry of Environment and Green Development, Steering Committee Mongolian Co-chairman
- **Meeting with Mr. D. Tsedenbaljir** – Transboundary water expert of The Ministry of Environment and Green Development, SAP team participant

12.30-13.30 -launch in nearby restaurant

13.40 -moving to Institute of Meteorology (by taxi or on foot, 10-15 min)

- **14.00 Meeting with Mr. G. Davaa**- Head of the Hydrology section, The Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment, Mongolia, Steering Committee Member, TDA team participant, SAP team participant

15:30 - sight-seeing walk

17:00 - moving to Ramada

09 April 2014, Wednesday

09.30 – meeting on Ramada ground-floor, 30 min by taxi

- **10.00 Meeting at the UNDP office with Mrs. J.Chimeg** - Project Focal Point, UNDP Mongolia, Steering Committee.

11.30 -moving to Institute of Geoecology (on foot, ~10 min)

- **(exact time will be cleared) Meeting with Mr. J. Tsogtbaatar** – Director of Institute of Geoecology, MAS TDA team participant

Institute of Geography MAS is the executor of RFQ/EMO/2012-007 “Revise of preliminary Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis for the Mongolia”

12.30-13.30 -launch in nearby restaurant;
13.30 -moving to Lake Baikal Project Office (by taxi, 30-40 min)

- **15.00 Meeting with Ms. P. Batima** - Head of the Mongolian Water Forum NGO, Mongolia in LB Project Office

Mongolia Water Forum is the executor of the following contracts:

RFQ/EMO/2012-010 Conducting baseline study and drafting sub-basin management plans”
RFQ_GPSO_2013_053 (IWC-00078317), services NGO Network “Friends of Baikal Basin” conception designing and implementation, Mongolia

16:30 moving to Ramada (or sight-seeing walk)

10 April 2014, Thursday

**Exact time will be cleared additionally
(Ramada→railway station takes 20-25 min by taxi).**

- **Departure by train to Ulan-Ude, Buryatia**

In Ulan-Ude, Russia

11 April 2014, Friday

**Picking up at the railway station at 07.00 (by Project person) and traveling to Baikal Plaza hotel,
Breakfast,**

09.30 – moving to reception room of Mikhail V. Slipenchuk by transport with Project person (~15 by car)

11 April 2014, Friday

10.00-11.00:

- **Meeting with Bair D. Tsyrenov (Assistant of State Duma deputy, Mikhail V. Slipenchuk**

11.00-12.00:

- **Meeting with Arnold K. Tulokhonov** – Member of Federation Council of The Russian Federation, corresponding member of RAS, Director of Baikal Institute of Nature Management (BINM),
- **Meeting with Endon Zh. Garmaev** – Professor, Acting Director of BINM

BINM is a contractor for the following services:

- RFQ/EMO/2012-009 Study on Selenga Delta water quality issues
- RFQ/EMO/2013-050 (IWC-00078317) “Baikal Information Center (BIC) maintenance, Russia”
- RFQ_GPSO_2013_036 (IWC-00078317) Monitoring of water quality and on Selenga Delta
- RFQ_GPSO_2013-057 (IWC-78317), “Development of technological solutions for minimization of anthropogenic impact of ore gold mining and processing enterprises on environment”
- RFQ_GPSO_2013-061: “Holding of round table “development of ecological tourism: initiatives and partnership of business, society and state” within the scope of international Forum “EcoTourism on Baikal +20” on July 13, 2013 in Turka (tourist zone “Baikalskaya gavanj”), Buryatia, Russia” and “Training for stakeholders” awareness rising and management improvement in the field of environmental problems of Lake Baikal Basin and the role of green economy in their solving”

12.30-13.45 *-launch in nearby restaurant*

14.00 – 16.00:

- **Meeting with Alexander V. Lbov** - Deputy Minister of The Ministry of Natural Resources of Buryatia
- **Meeting with Anna S. Mikheeva** – LICA (Recommendations on environmental investments on active concerns to reduce pollution discharge in the Russian Federation»)
- **Meeting with Andrey N. Beshentsev** – Head of laboratory of geoinformational systems, BINM (executor of RFQ/EMO/2013-050 (IWC-00078317) “Baikal Information Center (BIC) maintenance, Russia”)

16.15-17.15:

- PMU office

17.30 – work completion

Field trip, Buryatiya, Russia

12 April 2014, Saturday

8,15 -meeting on Hotel ground-floor

8.15~11.30 - moving to Turka settlement, 160 km from Ulan-Ude, ~ 3 hr. by car

~11.30~12.30 Turka settlement

Baikal Lake offshore cleaning campaign during “Baikal fishery”, meetings with local authorities of Barguzinskii, Pribaikalskii districts, UNDP-Coca-Cola projects objects inspection

~12.30-13.00 -launch in nearby cafe;

~13.00-16.00 -moving to Barguzin, 300 km from Ulan-Ude, 3 hrs. by car

~16.00~16.45:

Barguzin settlement (300 km of Ulan-Ude), Uro settlement (near Barguzin):
Meetings with local administration of s. Uro, inspection of Barguzinsky cattle mortuary.

RFQ_GPSO_2013-058 (IWC-78317) “Pilot construction of cattle mortuary in Kurumkansky district, Buryatia, The Russian Federation”

~16.45~18.30 -moving to Kurumkan settlement, 400 km from Ulan-Ude, ~2 hrs by car

~18.30~19.30:

Kurumkan settlement

Meeting with local administration of Kurumkan settlement, inspection of Kurumkansky cattle mortuary.

(RFQ_GPSO_2013-064 (IWC-78317) “Pilot construction of cattle mortuary in Barguzinsky district, Buryatia, The Russian Federation”)

~19:30 -dinner in nearby café, accommodation in hotel “Ulechkin”

13 April 2014, Sunday

9.00 - meeting in Hotel

9.00-10.00 - moving to Yarikto village (50 km of Kurumkan):

~10.00 Yarikto village (50 km of Kurumkan):

Meeting with local administration of Ulyun village (**N.P. Baglaev**), senior specialist of district administration (**L.B. Erdineeva**), Abbot of buddhist temple (**Tsyden lama**).

Inspection of eco-trail within the Buddhist temple

(RFQ/EMO/2013-044 (IWC-00078317) Biodiversity compatible tourism plan for the site of goddess Yangima representation of face on stone near Bargusinski Buddhist Temple, village Yarikto, Buriatiya, Russia)

~11.00~11.30:

Meeting with Head of Ulyun secondary school and inspection of one of co-financing UNDP-Coca-Cola projects (well)

~11.30~12.00 -launch in nearby cafe;

~12.00~15.00 -moving to Ust'-Barguzin, 150 km, ~3 hrs. by car

~15.00~15.00:

Ust'-Barguzin village: meeting with director of National Reserve "Zapovednoe Podlemorye":

Director **Mikhail E. Ovdin** and Deputy Director **Konstantin Prosekin**

(RFQ_GPSO_2013-062 (IWC-78317) "Biodiversity compatible tourism plan with a route to the seasonal haul for the Baikal seal on the island Tonkii. (Ushkanyi Islands), Buriatiya, Russia»)

~15.00~20.00 – moving to Ulan-Ude (260 km, ~5 hrs by car)

14 April 2014, Monday

9.30 - meeting on Hotel ground-floor,

-moving to Baikal Water Commission, ~10 min by foot

10.00:

- **Meeting with Valerii S. Molotov** (Head of Baikal Water Commission), SAP team participant

14.00:

- **Meeting with Vasily Sutula, Head of Baikal State Biospheric Natural Reserve (BSBNR)**
- **Meeting with Yurii Anisimov, Deputy Director of BSBNR**
- **Meeting with Nina Shodorova, Head of NGO “BETA”**

BETA is executor of RFQ_EMO_2013-045 «Complex eco-travel tour for the Baikal State Nature Biosphere Reserve»

15:00:

- **Meeting with Konstantin G. Dremov, Head of Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resource Usage**

16:00:

- **Meeting with Bator D. Tsyrenov, Executive director of Baikal preservation Fund, Deputy of Buryat Parliament**

15 April 2014, Tuesday

9.00 - meeting on Hotel ground-floor

9.00~13.00 -moving to Tankhoi village (240 km, 4 hrs by car)

~13.00~14.00 - launch in Tankhoi village

~14.00~17.00 Tankhoi village (Baikal State Biosphere Natural Reserve)

- **Vasilii I. Sutula** – Director of BSBNR, inspection of the reserve and ecotrail.

(RFQ/EMO/2013-045 (IWC-00078317), Service Complex eco-travel tour for the Baikal State Nature Biosphere Reserve”, RFQ_GPSO_2013-065 (IWC-78317) (“Extension of eco-trail “Cedar Alley” and enhancement of biodiversity compatible comprehensive botanical tour for it in the Baikal State Nature Biosphere Reserve, Tankhoi, Buriatiya, Russia »)

~17:00

-moving to Ulan-Ude

Moscow, Russia

16 April 2014, Wednesday

07.00 -meeting on Hotel ground-floor, moving to airport

Departure to Moscow 9:25 a.m., arrival to Moscow (DME) at 11.10 a.m.

S7 aircompany, flight 116.

17 April 2014, Thursday

- **Meeting with Ms. Natalya Ye. Olofinskaya** - Head of the UNDP Moscow office, Russia, Steering Committee Member;
- **Meeting with Mr. Nikolai S. Kasimov** – Academician (Russian Academy of Sciences), Dean of Faculty of Geography, Moscow State University.
- **Mr. Sergey R. Chalov** - Associate professor, Deputy Dean of Faculty of Geography, Moscow State University

(MSU is a contractor for the following services:

- *RFQ/EMO/2012-011 Database for modeling and simulation of pollutants transport in the Baikal Basin;*
- *RFQ/EMO/2013-040 (IWC-00078317) Intercalibration of analytical procedures for analytes, included into harmonized program of hydrochemical monitoring for Selenga river basin (The Russian Federation)*

18 April 2014, Friday

- **Meeting with Dr. Petr D. Gunin and Dr. Sergei Baja** – Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, LICA (Biodiversity experts, Russia), TDA team participants, SAP team participant
- **Meeting with Mr. Amirkhan M. Amirkhanov** – National Project Director in Russia, Deputy Head of Federal Service for Natural Resources Supervision under Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation, Steering Committee Russian Co-chairman
- **Meeting with Mr. Irina B. Fominikh** - Deputy Director of the Foreign Department of the Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology, Russia, Steering Committee Member
- **Meeting with Ms. Natalya Ye. Olofinskaya** - Head of the UNDP Moscow office, Russia, Steering Committee Member

Phone / Email Communications

Mr. Baterdene Lkhagvadorj, Mongolia Ministry of Finance, Project Management Unit – Mining Infrastructure Investment Support Project

Mr. Marcus Wijnen, World Bank, Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, Water Anchor, 202-473-3614,
mwijnen@worldbank.org

Mr. Alan Fox, Evaluation Advisor, UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (former consultant on Baikal IWRM project development)

Mr. Uriel Heskia, UNOPS, Associate Portfolio Manager, GPSO, International Waters Cluster

Mr. Christian H. Severin, GEF Secretariat, Program Manager, International Waters

Mr. Sergei Vinogradov, International Expert, International Waters Multilateral Agreements

Mr. Vladimir Mamaev, UNDP, Regional Technical Advisor, International Waters

G. Annex 7: Documents Reviewed

The majority of project documents are available on the project's IW:Learn website, at <http://baikal.iwlearn.org/en/project>. Virtually all of the documents available on the website between approximately March and May 2014 were reviewed in varying degrees. Key documents reviewed included:

- Project document, including associated signature letters, co-financing letters, and other supporting accompanying documentation
- Project Inception Workshop Summary, including agenda
- Project Inception Workshop Report
- Project Inception Workshop Presentations by participants (20 presentations)
- Project Exception and Change Request Report 2013
- Project Events List
- Project Budget Revisions
- List of Contracts and Procurement Items
- Co-financing summary table
- Project financial data provided by the project management unit
- Annual Project Implementation Report 2013
- Summaries of the meetings of plenipotentiaries for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013
- Documentation of project correspondence (letters numbered 1-129)
- Project report: "Groundwater Resources in Shallow Transboundary Aquifers in the Baikal Basin: Current Knowledge, Protection and Management, A Contribution to the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis of the Lake Baikal Basin," September 2013
- Project Report: "Development of ecological tourism: Initiatives and partnership of business, community and the state," 2013
- Project Report: THE HARMONIZED WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM IN THE SELENGA RIVER BASIN
- Project quarterly progress reports for 2012 and 2013
- Project annual workplans
- Draft revised bilateral transboundary agreement, November 2013
- Project Concept Paper: "The Current Status and Options for Enhancing the Legal and Institutional Frameworks of Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters between the Russian Federation and Mongolia," April 2013
- Project output reports and summaries for project activities (more than 40 reports, as available on the project website)
- Project Results & Events Summary Publication, 2012-2013

- Lake Baikal Basin Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, including annexes, April 2013
- Project Steering Committee documentation, including agenda, minutes, annexes, and presentations
- UNESCO Groundwater Meetings Documentation for two meetings, including 12 presentations
- GEF International Waters Tracking Tools

A number of additional project outputs and documents that were also only available in Russian or Mongolian were also briefly reviewed with minor translation support.

Non-Project Documents:

Asia Foundation, 2009. "Notes from the field: From Mongolia: A new Paradigm in Responsible Mining is Taking Shape," April 15, 2009.

Asia Foundation website: <http://asiafoundation.org/country/overview/mongolia>.

Asian-Power.com, 2012. "Mongolia to build 400MW hydroelectric power station," August 15, 2012. At <http://asian-power.com/project/news/mongolia-build-400mw-hydroelectric-power-station>, as accessed April 6, 2014.

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Engineering & Mining Journal, 2010. "Global Business Reports: Mongolian Mining," July/August 2010.

Farrington, John, 2000. "Environmental problems of placer gold mining in the Zaamar Goldfield, Mongolia," November 2000.

FAO, 2013. Project Document: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation, SFM and carbon sink enhancement into Mongolia's productive forest landscapes. GEF ID: 4744.

GEF IW:Learn, 2013. "GEF Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme Manual: Volume 3, Planning the TDA/SAP process. March 21, 2013.

Hydroworld.com, 2013. "Mongolia Seeks Orkhon River Dam Construction Study Including Hydropower," March 5, 2013.

Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, 2014. "Project Details: Shuren Hydropower". Updated: January 26, 2014.

Lake Baikal Protection Fund website: <http://www.baikalfund.ru/eng/index.wbp>.

López-Hoffman, Laura, 2010. "Transboundary Ecosystem Services: A New Vision for Managing the Shared Environment of the U.S. and Mexico," July 2010. Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, Environmental Policy Working Papers, No. 2.

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- Rivers Without Boundaries, 2012. "Why the World Bank supports dangerous dams in Mongolia?" October 11, 2012.
- Rivers Without Boundaries, 2013. "Russian government protects Baikal from impacts of Mongolian hydropower," December 2, 2013.
- Rivers Without Boundaries, no date. "Selenga River Basin Threatened with Dams," at <http://www.transrivers.org/asian-rivers-spatial-information-system/selenga-river-basin-threatened-with-dams/>, as accessed April 6, 2014.
- Rivers Without Boundaries, no date. "Who will be drowned by the Shuren Reservoir on Selenga River?" at <http://www.transrivers.org/asian-rivers-spatial-information-system/who-will-be-drowned-by-the-shuren-reservoir-look-at-the-map/>, as accessed April 6, 2014.
- UNECE, 2007. "RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAYMENTS FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT," United Nations, New York and Geneva. Report Number ECE/MP.WAT/22. ISBN: 978-92-1-116965-2.
- UNECE, 2007. "RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAYMENTS FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT," presentation.
- UNESCO, Baikalski Man & Biosphere Reserve website: <http://www.unesco.org/mabdb/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?mode=all&code=RUS+13>.
- World Bank, 2001. "Bank Procedures 7.50: Projects on International Waterways", June 2001.
- World Bank, 2004. Implementation Completion Report: Biodiversity Conservation Project, Russian Federation.
- World Bank, 2010. Project Information Document, Concept Stage: MN-Mining Infrastructure Investment Support. February 25, 2010.
- World Bank, 2010. Project Information Document, Appraisal Stage: MN-Mining Infrastructure Investment Support. December 24, 2010.
- World Bank, 2010. "Environmental and Social Management Framework, for the Mining Infrastructure Investment Support Project (P118109)," November 19, 2010.
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- World Bank, 2011. Project Appraisal Document, MN-MINING INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT SUPPORT PROJECT," April 7, 2011.
- World Bank, 2013. "Water Portfolio of the World Bank, Insights from a Review of Fiscal Year 2011," June 2013.
- World Bank, 2013. "Mongolia: MINING INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT SUPPORT PROJECT, Procurement Plan," Updated September 17, 2013.

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World Bank, 2013. "Implementation Status & Results Report, Mongolia, MN-Mining Infrastructure Investment Support (P118109)," December 22, 2013.

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World Wildlife Fund, 2010. "Mongolia Programme Office Annual Review Fiscal Year 2010."

World Wildlife Fund, 2012. "Mongolia Strategic Plan 2012-2016, Executive Summary."

H. Annex 8: Baikal Basin Stakeholders

Table 9 Russian Baikal Basin Stakeholders (Source: Project Document)

	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities relevant to Baikal INRM
1	Federal Institutions:	
	Ministry of Natural Resources & the Environment (MNRE)	Elaborates state policy and regulations for natural resource management, including: sub-soils, water bodies, wildlife and their habitats; water and soil pollution control and prevention; monitoring of environmental quality, pollution. Elaborating and implementation of the state policy and regulating in the sphere of environmental protection, including issues related to state ecological expertise. Also responsible for the elaboration of state ecological expertise (environmental impact assessments).
	Department of the State Policy and Regulation in the sphere of Environmental Protection and Ecological Safety (DSPR)	Elaborates state policy on nature conservation. It is the lead MNRE department for international conventions and agreements and for monitoring and facilitating State implementation of international conventions and agreements.
	Federal Environmental Protection Agency (Rosprirodnadzor)	Responsible for control of environment and use of natural resources and for implementation of the EIA process.
	Regional directorates of Rosprirodnadzor	Implement the EIA process at the regional levels.
	Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Roshydromet)	Registration, management and monitoring of surface water resources of the Russian Federation, which also extends to monitoring of air quality. Responsible for elaborating and implementing an environmental monitoring system, including the establishment of organizational responsibilities and a unified database for maintaining and making available for use relevant data on environmental quality across Russia.
	Federal Service of Ecological, Technological and Nuclear Surveillance (Rostekhnadzor)	Pollution and industrial safety control related to the prevention and/or limitation of adverse technogenic impact from industrial processes. Also responsible for relevant functions in support of implementing state ecological expertise (EIA) at the federal level.
	Federal Agency of Water Resources (Rosvodresursy)	The redistribution of federal water resources; prepares, concludes and implements basin agreements to restore and protect water bodies. Prepares and implements anti-flood activities; Designs and establishes water protection zones for water bodies including shoreline and riparian protective zones. Responsible for maintaining water quality and for promoting the integrated use and protection of water resources. Responsible for state monitoring of water bodies, measuring and monitoring of surface and ground water resources and their use. Identifies the amounts for ecological outflows and the irretrievable retirement of surface waters for each water body.
	Federal Agency of Sub-Soil Use (Rosnedra)	State geological study of sub-soils. Conducts state expertise (EIA) on mining and other projects; Registers and monitors mining and other mineral and sub-soil use activities. Serves as the government entity that issues licenses for sub-soils use, particularly for mining endeavors.
	Interagency Commission on the Baikal Lake Protection Issues	The regional body created by the Russian Federation to improve federal-regional coordination around the conservation and sustainable use of Lake Baikal's natural treasures. Facilitates the implementation of activities agreed among relevant Federal government entities and the executive bodies of the Republic of Buryatia, Irkutsk Oblast and Zabaikalsky Krai, and Ust-Ordynsky Buryatsky Autonomous Okrug. Develops policy recommendations on the protection and sustainable use of natural resources of the "Baikal Natural Territory." This includes the conservation of biological diversity, the provision of ecological safety, socio-economic issues based on the sustainable development principles, and ensuring the continued status of Lake Baikal as a World Natural Heritage Site.
2	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)	Elaborates federal policy in the agricultural sector, including sustainable development of rural areas, cattle breeding, veterinary medicine, cultivation, soil enhancement, agricultural products, aquaculture and forest management outside of PA.
3	Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance –	Control and supervision in the field of veterinary science; imposes phytosanitary quarantine zones, control pesticide and agrochemical use; protection,

	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities relevant to Baikal INRM
	"Rosselkhoznadzor" (under MoA)	reproduction and use of animals and aquatic biological resources, protection of the population from animal infectious diseases.
	Federal Forestry Agency (Rosleskhoz, under MoA)	State monitoring of forests; state record of forest fund; keeping, use and management of information on the forest fund; referring of forests to forest groups and forest protection categories; maintenance of the state forest cadastre; organizes: forest management; activity of the state forest protection of the Russian Federation, except functions of the state control and surveillance; on-land and aviation protection of forests from fires and their extinguishing; implementation of activities on protection and defense of forests, forest pest and diseases control, combating fires.
	Ministry of Economic Development (Federal level)	Land ownership issues, social-economic development in rural areas. State cadastre oversight, state monitoring of lands the state registration of rights for real estate.
4	Federal Agency of Fishing	Develops fish management policy; approves fishing rules that influence Baikal including Total Allowable Catch for any species referred to as an object of fishing in Baikal. Issues permits for fishing, marine mammal hunting and other kinds of aquatic resource use; monitors fisheries and enforce fishing regulations. Important stakeholder in approving proposals for new management regimes in Lake Baikal. Under the supervision of the FAF, a variety of institutions are eligible to manage the marine mammal protection zones and fishery refuge zones created under the new Law on Fisheries of 2004.
5	Territorial Directorates of the Federal Agency of Fishing	Issue permits for commercial, recreational and subsistence (for local/indigenous communities) fishing and other kinds of use of aquatic biological resources in the internal waters where fishing is allowed. Fish inspection departments within the territorial directorates are responsible for the enforcement of the regulation of fishery and protection of aquatic biological resources, including the control of no-fishing areas and, presumably fishery refuge zones once they are established.
	Baikal basin department for protection, fish resources reproduction and fishing regulating (Baikalrybvod)	Elaborates and enforces regulations governing the reproduction and protection of aquatic biological resources (fishes and other aquatic animals and plants) in water bodies with commercial fisheries in the Republic of Buryatia, Irkutsk Oblast and Zabaikalsky Krai, Ust-Ordynsky Buryatsky Autonomous Okrug. In collaboration with other federal and regional entities Baikalrybvod is the specially authorized government agency for the protection, control and use of wildlife and their habitats. It is part of the system of federal agencies especially designated for nature protection.
	Ministry of the Russian Federation on the Issues of Civil Defense, Emergencies and Disaster Control (and Mitigation of Natural Disaster Aftermath)	Elaborates and implements and enforces state policies in the field of civil defense, civil defense from natural disasters, provision of fire safety and safety of people at water bodies.
6	Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation	Elaborates state policy to promote socio-economic development. Coordinates work among federal and regional authorities, local administrations, with respect to EIA and State Expert Review of economic development projects such as mining and tourism.
7	Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy of the Russian Federation	Elaborates official policies and programs to develop and promote tourism across the Russian Federation, including in the Baikal area.
8	Federal Agency for Tourism	Implements tourism policies and programs.
	Regional Administrations/ Governments	In the most developed case may have Ministries of Environment with staff and budget and programs to improve water quality.
11	Ministry of Natural Resources of the Republic of Buryatia (RB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates and maintains the Red Book of the RB. • Establishes and enforces standards for environmental quality. • Ensures sustainable use of water bodies, manages drinking water supply. Levies fees for water use. • Develops inter-municipal programs in environmental protection and ecological safety, covering: air quality protection, waste management, and protection and reproduction of wildlife and their habitats. • Elaborates and enforces hunting and timber harvest laws, enhances wild game populations, tree planting/forest restoration, and monitoring.

	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities relevant to Baikal INRM
12	People's Hural of the Republic of Buryatia	Legislative (representative) body of the Republic of Buryatia.
13	Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Buryatia	Ensure the sustainable development of agricultural areas and rural economies. Conservation and reproduction of natural resources used for agricultural production such as water. Formation of efficiently operating market for agricultural products and development of this market infrastructure. Domestic animal breeding to improve agricultural productivity.
14	Local Municipalities and Towns	Local municipalities and towns are the homes of local resource users and politicians interested in livelihood and resource management issues in Baikal INRM. Carry out works related to establishing and operating the Baikal Special Economic Zone for Tourism Development, including five municipal areas.
15	National and Regional-level Universities Russian Academy of Sciences	Several universities, including: Irkutsk State University, Moscow State University, Chita State University, East-Siberian State Technological University (Ulan-Ude) Institute of Limnology of RAS, Institute of Water Problems
16	Wetlands International, Russia	Maintains a database on the important wetlands in BB.
19	Local NGOs	A growing number of local NGOs and community-based organizations are participating in conservation related initiatives across Russia. NGOs play an active role in: Promote, develop, and implement projects for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental protection, conservation and improvement. • Social, educational activities to cultivate scientific and creative abilities of local people. • Enabling local people to better participate in environmental protection and natural resources use. Relevant local NGOs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buryat regional branch for Baikal (BRB for Baikal). • All-Russian Society for Nature Conservation - Buryat, Irkutsk, Chita. • Interregional Public Organization "Great Baikal Path" • Chita Public Entity "Public Ecological Center 'Dauria'" • Regional Public Organization "Ecoliga." • Baikal Wave (an NGO devoted to protecting Lake Baikal) • Tahoe-Baikal Institute.
20	Tourism companies	Many tourist companies operate in the BB area providing a range of tourism opportunities. Some examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In the World of Fantasies" tourist company; • Club "Firn" (Tourist company "Firn Travel") • Buryat Federation for Alpinism and Rock-climbing; • Eco-tourism Club "Davan" (Great Baikal Path) • "Baikal Business Incubator" • Chita Branch - All-Russian People's Tourist Society.

Table 10 Mongolia Baikal Basin Stakeholders (Source: Project Document)

#	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities relevant to INRM and Pollution Control in the Selenga River Basin
	The Ikh Khural - Mongolian Parliament, Committee on Environment, Agriculture, and Rural Development	Mongolia's Parliament, the Ikh Khural is the highest law-making body of Mongolia. The Parliamentary Committee on Environment plays an active role in reviewing effectiveness of current law and proposing new laws or modifications to existing ones.
	Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism (MNET).	The MNET was established in 1989 as the Ministry of Nature and Environment (MNE). In 2008, MNE was restructured as MNET, with the inclusion of Tourism under its portfolio. The MNET's authority encompasses several relevant sectors, including: water, protected areas, environmental protection, and tourism. Its responsibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements water policy and watershed management goals. • Implements policy level activities on trans-boundary water cooperation with Russia under the existing agreement. • Promulgates and enforces environmental law • Refines existing law together with the Khural Committee. • Issues fishing and hunting licenses.

#	Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities relevant to INRM and Pollution Control in the Selenga River Basin
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approves community resource management nokhorlol. <p>MNET Tourism department defines policy on tourism, monitors policy implementation, devises decent legal framework to promote & develop tourism, provide tourism organizations with professional leadership and coordinate tourism programs at state and international levels. Aimag tourism boards are responsible for monitoring the implementation of policy locally.</p>
	Water Authority of Mongolia	Responsible for implementing Government policy with respect to water resource inventory and management in Mongolia. Is responsible for monitoring water resources and to strengthen knowledge and capacity in the field of IWRM in Mongolia. Is responsible for producing the National Water Resources Plan and for selecting and developing pilot river basin management plans in Mongolia.
	National Agency of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment Monitoring Central Lab of Environment and Meteorology	Administers nation-wide network of meteorological stations, the largest and oldest network of monitoring stations in Mongolia. Prepares weather forecasts, analyzes meteorological data, and manages data. Includes the Central Lab of Environment and Meteorology, which: provides information on ground and surface water to government and public. The lab is able to test for 15-20 indicators of water quality QA/QC.
	Environmental Inspectorate	Environmental law enforcement, this department manages the state inspectors whose job it is to enforce environmental and wildlife laws.
	General Agency for Specialized Inspection	Implements and maintains water conservation and pollution prevention programs and policies, developed the National Water Sources Protection Program and promotes natural resource conservation and pollution control through environmental governance.
	Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy	Oversees the mining industry in Mongolia and is planning to pass new regulations on the grass-roots artisanal mining sector in Mongolia. Issues mining permits, oversees the EIA process.
	Aimag governments (Aimags are the regional or state-level entities in Mongolia).	Aimags in the Selenga Basin of Mongolia: Hovsgol, Arhangay, Bulgan, Orhon, Selenga, Darhan-Uul, Tuv, Hentiy, Ovorhangay.
	Mongolian Academy of Sciences Geo-ecology Institute Institute of Geography	Has substantial experience monitoring and sampling fish populations (grayling, etc.) in tributaries of Lake Hovsgol and throughout Selenga Basin. Play an important role in Mongolia of advising policy makers in MNET and the Hural on science based fishery and natural resource management. Executing the Lake Baikal Ecological Atlas.
	Orkhon River Basin Council	Executing the Baikal Information Center
	Taimen Conservation Fund	Created from a now closed IFC-GEF project, the TCF is a Mongolian NGO focused upon the conservation and sustainable use of taimen and their aquatic ecosystems within the upper reaches of the Selenga Basin. TCF has extensive experience with BAT-BEP in combining conservation with successful eco-tourism business.
	Mongolian Association for Conservation of nature and the Environment (MACNE)	Promotes environmental protection through media, scientific and technological studies in the environmental field. Mongolia's oldest environmental organization.
	Union of Mongolian Environmental NGOs (UMENGO) Mongolian Water Forum NGO	Assistance to environmental and ecologically-oriented organizations and associations of Mongolia Executing the river sub-basin management plans for Ider and Khuvgul-Eg river basins.
	Mongolian Water Association	Technical and technological modernization in the field of water resources development, use of reasonable amounts of water resources, prevention of water pollution, carrying out activities in the field of prevention to water objects/resources pollution
	Mongolian National Eco-Tourism Society (MNETS)	A membership society of tourism companies and organizations in Mongolia. Lobbies for policies for tourism.
	Ecological club "Erdem"	Works under the auspices of the National University of Mongolia. Activities include: summer camps, waste management control; sustainable timber use; pollution prevention (air, land, water); urban gardens/parks; replacement of shopping plastic bags with paper ones. Conducts clean up campaigns and raises awareness around Mongolia.
	WWF-Mongolia	Works to strengthen the application of Mongolian EIA law and the promotion of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) as the accepted conservation tool for managing river basins and watersheds. Also works actively on river conservation work outside the Selenga Basin in other rivers systems of Mongolia – a source of potential valuable lessons for this project.

I. Annex 9: Baikal Project Results Framework and Assessed Level of Indicator Target Achievement

Results Framework Assessment Key

Green = On-track	Yellow = Achievement Uncertain	Red = Achievement Unlikely	Gray = Not applicable
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Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
Objective: To spearhead integrated natural resource management of the Lake Baikal / Selenga River Basin (including Lake Hövsgöl in Mongolia), ensuring ecosystem resilience and reduced water quality threats in the context of sustainable economic development.	1) Baikal Basin Strategic Action Programme, including mitigation strategies to address climate change to focal species and aquatic/riparian habitat and strategies for invasive species.	Not completed, approved or adopted.	Completed, approved, and adopted by EoP (end of project)	On-track: The TDA was completed and accepted at the PSC meeting in April 2013. The SAP is in initial stages of development, with a draft expected by late 2014.	
	2) National Action Plans for national portions of Baikal Basin.				
	The long-term security of aquatic biodiversity for at least three sub-basins in the transboundary Baikal Basin as measured by the # of hectares in target sub-basins under improved management.	Zero hectares in these three sub-basins have watershed management plans mainstreamed with biodiversity conservation objectives.	Target: 11,047,790 hectares Russia: Tugnuy-Sukhara basin (4,640,000 ha) Mongolia: Ider River basin (2,275,730 ha) Egiin River basin 4,132,060 ha	On-track: The sub-basin management plans have been completed.	
	Pollution levels in pollution hot spot monitoring areas.	Mercury, other mining pollutants at elevated levels in hot spot areas. Specific levels TBD at inception.	Reduction of at least 20% in target areas by EoP.	It is not anticipated that the project will directly contribute to reducing pollution in hotspots by the end of the project, with the exception of the benefits expected from the closure of the Irkutsk paper mill.	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
	Ecosystem resilience parameters for Hovsgol Lake. - Nutrient concentrations: soluble reactive phosphorus (SRP) /Chlorophyl-a) - Secchi depth - Abundance and age structure of Hovsgol grayling	SRP: 0.5-2; Chl-a: 0.2-1 16-20 meters TBD first summer season of project.	Targets: SRP & Chl-a: No upward change; Secchi depth: no reduction. Abundance and age structure: maintained at baseline levels.	This indicator has been removed on the Second Steering Committee Meeting because of absence of any annual monitoring programs.	
	# of productive sector policies and regulations that incorporate biodiversity management and ecosystem resilience objectives in Russian and Mongolian portions of Baikal Basin. (Improved enabling environment for biodiversity conservation in target productive sectors of tourism, recreation and mining.)	Zero	By EoP a total of 10 policies or regulations modified to incorporate measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity: - Tourism: Revised and enhanced tourism plans adopted/not adopted by three target PA in Russia. - Mining: At least 2 policies modified in each country, for total of four. - Sport fishing: At least 1 regulation or policy modified by 2 protected areas in Russia. - Watershed management planning: at least one watershed management planning policy modified in each country.	On-track: 4 policies or regulations have been modified: - Tourism: two tourism plans adopted and endorsed in two PA in Russia (Baikal State Nature Biosphere Reserve and Zabaikalsky National Park) - Watershed management planning: 2 watershed management plans have been prepared and endorsed.	A portion of this indicator was revised at the second PSC meeting to "Mining: At least 2 policies modified in Russia". This is a project activity-driven indicator rather than a results-based indicator, as there is no clear rationale in relation to the desired normative status for the number of policies targeted. The question is, How many policies actually need to have environmental mainstreaming incorporated?
	Replication quantification measure: # of resource users applying	Zero	At least 10 mining companies in Mongolia	2013 PIR: Two tourism plans have been revised and	Considering the lack of on-the-

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
	biodiversity mainstreaming practices in mining and tourism sectors in Russia and Mongolia Baikal Basin.		and 10 in Russia by EOP. At least 15 tourism companies in Russia and 15 in Mongolia by EoP	adopted for two protected areas in Russia Two workshop on tourism development in protected natural areas of Buryatia was held The International Ecological Tourism Forum \"Ecotourism in Baikal 20\" was organized 10 tourism companies in Russia have been involved in ecotourism sector with PA.	ground activities in Mongolia, the indicator was revised at second PSC meeting to # of resource users applying biodiversity mainstreaming practices in mining and tourism sectors in Russian part of the Baikal Basin\", with targets changed to \"At least 5 mining companies in Russia by EoP\" and \"At least 5 tourism companies in Russia by EoP\". This is a project-activity driven target rather than a results-based target, as there is no clear rationale related to the desired normative status for the number of companies targeted.
	Trend of Taimen and Grayling populations in two types of riverine habitat: healthy \"stronghold\"	Trend is stable at healthy population levels	No change in health population dynamic. i.e.: Egiin River: at least	2013 PIR: No change in health population dynamic.	Monitoring data source unclear.

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
	habitat and degraded “troubled” habitat.	in strongholds. Egjin River Taimen: 19 individuals/km Trend is downward or stable at low population levels in troubled areas.	19 individuals/km No deterioration or upward trend of at least 10% improvement.		
Outcome 1: Stakeholders Elaborate and Adopt a strategic Policy and Planning Framework	Completed TDA by end of project year 1	Preliminary TDA during project PPG	Agreed and jointly implemented TDA/SAP providing road map for ecosystem protection, and addressing epidemiological concerns, groundwater pollution issues and attention to high risk industrial hot spots.	TDA completed and accepted by PSC in April 2013.	Not completed by end of first project year, but target was ambitious, and completion by April 2013 is considered a good achievement.
	Improved mainstreaming of biodiversity primary and secondary impact considerations into the EIA reporting within the Russian portion of the Basin. # of SAP implementation pilots developed for implementation in Mongolian portion of the Basin.	Biodiversity mentioned in reports but little analysis of potential impacts and no alternative steps proposed in 90% of EIA. No concepts developed.	At least 50% of the EIA reports show measurable improvement in treatment of primary and secondary impact considerations for mining and tourism development projects.	2013 PIR: EIA approaches have been analyzed and recommendations for their enhancement have been developed.	It is highly unlikely that the project would be able to reach the level of influence on the implementation of EIA procedures required by the target by the project completion period. The data sources for monitoring this target are also unclear. It is also not sufficiently

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
					defined what would be considered as “measurable improvement”
	New policy and regulatory frameworks incorporating groundwater assessment results.	Some data available on industrial pollution hot spots and on groundwater, but with significant gaps and not linked to.		2013 PIR: The groundwater assessment has been completed. Policy recommendations for sustainable, integrated management of transboundary groundwater and surface water resources into country National Water Master Plan have been developed.	Target not defined. Implication is that policy and regulatory frameworks would be adopted incorporating project inputs, which is uncertain, considering the timeframes and processes required for any policy approval process.
	Baikal Basin-Wide Pollution Hot Spot Analysis and Reporting Methodology adopted/not adopted by Joint Commission on Baikal Basin.	No such basin-wide methodology exists or adopted.	Adopted by year 2.	2013 PIR: Baikal Basin-Wide Pollution Hot Spot Analysis and Reporting Methodology is preparing.	Hotspot analysis is complete, and integrated water monitoring protocol is developed and accepted by stakeholders, but there is no Joint Commission to adopt the methodology. It could be reviewed and approved under the current meeting of plenipotentiaries

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
					mechanism.
	Groundwater protection policy recommendations approved/not approved by the Joint Commission on Baikal Basin.	No such policies exist.	Approved by end of year 3.	2013 PIR: Policy recommendations for sustainable, integrated management of transboundary groundwater and surface water resources into country National Water Master Plan have been developed.	There is no Joint Commission to approve recommendations. Recommendations have been produced and provided to the respective governments.
	Model sub-basin Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) properly assessed and mapped.	No EFH	At least 12 EFH by year 3 of the project.	Report completed on development of a sub-basin essential fish habitat model.	Uncertain how many actual EFHs were fully assessed and mapped.
	# of sub-basin watershed management plans that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services management objectives.	None.	At least 2 by end of year 4.	2 sub-basin management plans for Russia (Tugnuy- Sukhara and Khilok) have been completed and endorsed by government; 2 sub-basin management plans for Mongolia have been completed (Ider, Hovsgol-Eg).	The sub-basin management plans in both countries have been completed, and incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services management objectives.
Outcome 2: Institutional strengthening for IWRM	Governments of Russia and Mongolia extend/do not extend legal status to Joint Commission on Baikal Basin.	Joint Russian-Mongolian Task Force on Transboundary Waters Use is not a legal entity.	Legal status obtained under Russian and Mongolian law by end of year 3.	A concept paper and road map for the process of developing and enhancing the legal and institutional framework of bilateral transboundary water cooperation have been developed. During Second Steering Committee Meeting it was agreed to proceed with development of a draft revised	To be determined if countries adopt a revised legal agreement and enhanced institutional mechanism in the form of a Joint Commission.

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
				agreement, which was completed in November 2013. This has been submitted to both governments.	
	Full-time Executive Director of Joint Commission appointed/not appointed.	No full time director of Joint Task Force.	Appointed by year 4.	No full time director of Joint Task Force.	See previous notes on Joint Commission.
	# of National and/or regional Baikal or Selenga inter-ministerial commissions or working groups in Russia and Mongolia.	1 – the Baikal Commission in Russia.	2 additional by EoP: - A Selenga Working Group or Commission in Mongolia; - A Selenga Delta/Baikal Working Group in Buryatia	2013 PIR: 5 – the Baikal Commission in Russia, the Plenipotentiaries working group in Russia, the Plenipotentiaries working group in Mongolia, the joint Russian-Mongolian commission on environmental protection “Cooperation in Environment Conservation” and the National Water Committee in Mongolia (it was established in 2012)	Results focus of indicator not clear.
	% improvement in knowledge of key technical aspects of ecosystem-based IWRM management in the following institutions: Baikalkumvod, Buryat regional authorities, PA of Russian Baikal; Water Authority of Mongolia, Ministry of Nature Environment and Tourism (Mongolia); # of people in staff trained in: • ecological resilience modeling • IWRM and basin planning • ecological monitoring and risk assessment	Knowledge level TBD at beginning of each training by brief test;	At least 30% improvement for all trainees. - Baikalkumvod: At least 20 people trained. - Buryat regional authorities: at least 30 people. - PA of Russian Baikal: at least 30 people from 3 PA. - Water Authority of Mongolia; at least 20 people;	2013 PIR: - Buryat regional authorities: 10 people. - PA of Russian Baikal: 30 people from 5 PA. - Ministry of Nature Resources (Russia): 20 people. In total 60 people trained.	Training program and capacity development activities continue. Recommend to include 2-3 River Sub-basin Management Authorities of Mongolia. Indicator needs clearer results justification, indicating what will be achieved by training this

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EIAs, industrial site inspections GIS & spatial planning Avoidance and containment of invasive species Enforcement of water quality and biodiversity regulations. 		<p>- Ministry of Nature Environment and Tourism (Mongolia): at least 30 people.</p> <p>In total at least 130 people trained by EoP.</p>		number of people.
	Strengthened status of Joint Commission.	Joint Commission has no legal status or authority/capacity to do anything.	Legal status granted by Russia/ Mongolia, with first-ever executive director employed.	Draft revised agreement has been developed and submitted to both governments, with positive feedback received from Russia. New Joint Commission has not been established.	See previous notes on Joint Commission.
	# of data parameters jointly monitored on a quarterly basis by the two countries across the Baikal Basin to enable comparability of water quality and species data.	Zero	At least 6 by year 3.	2013 PIR: The Harmonized water quality monitoring program for the Baikal Basin has been developed. At list 13 of data parameters jointly monitored by the two countries across the Baikal Basin. About 30 parameters have been harmonized.	Target exceeded. Results justification for target unclear – how many harmonized parameters are actually required to facilitate good transboundary management? What share of total parameters measures have been harmonized or are jointly measured?
Outcome 3: Demonstrating technologies for water quality	% by which 4 pilot mining sites reduce water pollution due to mainstreaming demonstrations.	Baseline to be set during year 1.	At least 30% by end of year 4.	3 pilot project in different mining sites were started in 2013 in Russia.	Unclear how or if water pollution at the mining sites is monitored, and

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
and biodiversity mainstreaming					according to which parameters.
	# of cases of anthrax diagnosed per year in Barguzinsky and Kurumkansky Districts of the Republic of Buryatia.	8 in 2009.	0 by end of project.	The strategy for (dead) livestock disposal has been developed. 0 cases in 2010, 2011, 2012. Cattle mortuaries constructed in Barguzin valley.	
	# of eco-tourism plans approved at regional level (Oblast, Republic) in Russia-Baikal Basin with biodiversity management objectives mainstreamed. # of SAP pilot concepts developed under IW work in Mongolia.	Zero	At least 3 in Russian portion of Baikal Basin by EoP. At least 3 Aimag-level SAP pilot concepts in Mongolian portion by EoP.	2 eco-tourism plans approved in Russian portion of Baikal Basin.	SAP is under development.
	Increase in investment in sustainable ecotourism over life of the project in pilot PA within the Baikal Basin	2010 fiscal year will be the Baseline to be confirmed at project inception.	At least an increase in US\$10 million by end of Project over baseline levels.	2013 PIR: In 2012 The State Baikal Biosphere Reserve has got 37 700 000 RUB ~ \$1 216 129.03 USD In 2013: - Tunkinski National Park - 32 100 000 RUB ~ \$1 035 483.87 USD - Zabaikalski National Park 3 900 000 RUB ~ \$125 806.45 USD - State Baikal Biosphere Reserve - 52 300 000 RUB - \$1 687 096.77 USD - Baikalo-Lenski Reserve 8 100 000 RUB ~ \$261 290.32 USD Additionally for eco- tourism development for different PA: 2012 - 13 400 000 RUB ~ \$432 258.06 USD 2013 - 16 300 000 RUB ~ \$525 806.45 USD	There has been significant investment in protected areas in the Russian portion of the Baikal basin. Unclear to what extent the project might have contributed to this, as this is part of the Russian federal investment program in the region.

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status	Notes
	# of website hits made by Baikal region and Russian/Mongolian stakeholders accessing the Baikal Information Center website.	Zero	Increasing levels during years 2-4 of the project of at least 10% year over year.	Baikal Information Center website has been established. http://bic.iwlearn.org	Web-traffic can be a useful indicator, but the results focus of the target needs to be more clearly justified and linked with desired and expected website hits.
	# of organizations around the Baikal region using the first of an annual "State of the Baikal-Hovsgol Basin" report in Russian, Mongolian and English (Universities, Libraries, Local and National government offices, Management entities and Schools) in Russian and Mongolian portions of the Baikal Basin.	Report does not yet exist.	Published by EoY 4. At least 90 distributed to 30 institutions by EOP; At least 20 downloads of PDF file by country per year.	Report does not yet exist. The project is in the process of producing the Baikal Atlas.	
	# of km of Baikal shoreline and tributary rivers cleaned of litter/solid waste; # of news articles published on this cleaning work around Lake Baikal.	0 0	50 by EoP 20 by EoP	2013 PIR: 35 km 50 media sources	Ongoing progress, achievement expected. The results-oriented justification of the target values should be clearer.

J. Annex 10: Baikal Basin Project Mainstreaming of UNDP Programme Principles

UNDAF / CPAP / CPD	Russia did not go through a full UNDAF process, and the latest Country program is for the period 2008-2010, which was before the start of the Baikal project. Nonetheless, the project supports the environmental sustainability component of the program, which includes elements focused on biodiversity conservation, such as sustainable financial mechanisms for biodiversity conservation, promotion of eco-friendly public-private partnerships, supporting national efforts in monitoring ecological standards. The project directly supports Output 3.2 of the country program results framework: “Conserved ecosystems are considered as important resources for sustainable development”. The indicator for this aspect of the country program focused on ecosystem services, which is highly relevant in the context of integrated water resources management in the Baikal basin, although the project does not have specific activities explicitly focused on analyzing ecosystem services.
Poverty-Environment Nexus / Sustainable Livelihoods	The concept of integrated water resources management, and sustainable development both directly relate to the poverty-environment nexus. The project is supporting sustainable livelihoods in this context, but has little or not direct activity related to addressing sustainable livelihoods. One activity that could be considered in this light is the project’s work to improve the sustainability of recreational and subsistence fishing practices, particularly in Russia, but this is only one very small activity of the project.
Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Mitigation/Adaptation	This is not a major focus of the project, although climate change impacts are highly relevant. The TDA includes a section discussing and analyzing potential climate change impacts, and stakeholders highlighted the need to ensure that climate change remains a top priority for attention.
Crisis Prevention and Recovery	This is not significantly relevant in the context of the Baikal basin project.
Gender Equality / Mainstreaming	The project is ensuring that professionals of both genders are directly involved in and contributing to project activities. For example, multiple PMU technical staff are women, and many of the scientists that have contributed to the TDA and other technical project outputs are women. The project does not include a major focus on working directly with local resource users, but to any extent that the project’s work does extend in this direction there is consideration of gender issues.
Capacity Development	Capacity development is a significant focus of project activities, and is discussed throughout this report where relevant.
Rights	Rights aspects are not highly relevant in the context of the Baikal basin project, except potentially in the context of water rights between the two countries. Another rights-based issue could be related to usufruct and land tenure rights in the Selenga watershed in Mongolia, given that there are traditional land uses employed. However, while such issues might be in the scope of integrated water management issues in the region, they are not something that is a particular focus of the project activities. There are always important issues related to rights-aspects when considering the management of any large ecosystem, such as property rights, usufruct rights, water rights, fishing and hunting rights, land tenure rights, etc., but specific activities or aspects of the Baikal basin project do not directly address these issues.