

Strengthening Nordic-Baltic-Russia/Belarus partnership in farming for biodiversity

The Association for Traditional Rural Landscapes in SW Finland is a partner in new project financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The project applicant is **Latvian Fund for Nature** and other partners are WWF Sweden, Russian TBC, Nordic Association for Cultural Landscapes and Minsk Division of the International Association of Ecologists.

Budget and timetable

The project budget is appr. 40 000 euros and timetable 09/2009 – 09/2010

Overall objective

To transfer Nordic and Baltic experience in cross-sectoral cooperation in farming for biodiversity to Russia and Belarus and prepare synthesis of Nordic – Baltic – Russian/Belarus best cases in farming for biodiversity

Summary

The project primarily aims at transfer of Nordic and Baltic experience in cross-sectoral cooperation in farming for biodiversity to Russia and Belarus (and vice versa). To achieve this goal and build long-term regional partnership the project will organize meeting of NGOs active in biodiversity conservation. NGOs network set up during this meeting will be used as basis for transferring knowledge and experience between countries in traditional and innovative methods in farming for biodiversity. Influence on governmental decision makers in the agricultural sector is also expected due to involving them in project meeting.

During project two study tours for partners are planned to demonstrate best practices in maintenance of biodiversity in rural areas. Best practice farms from Sweden and Russia/Belarus will be chosen to visit and demonstrate practical management for sustainable eco-farming.

The long-term maintenance of the project results will be secured through printing book in English and Russian "Nordic-Baltic-Russian-Belarus solutions in farming for biodiversity" containing the best Nordic-Baltic-Russian/Belarus experience on jointing farming and nature conservation identified during the project.

It is also expected that NGOs network set up during project will promote further close collaboration of partners in planning and implementation of projects related to nature conservation in rural areas.

Expected results

1. Network meeting in Latvia held with ca 30-40 participants from Nordic, Baltic countries and Russia/Belarus
2. 2 study trips organised for project partners – to Sweden and Belarus, with focus on farming methods, evaluation of biodiversity and best practices in maintenance of biodiversity in rural areas.
3. The best Nordic-Baltic-Russian/Belarus cases in farming for biodiversity compiled in the best practice book "Nordic-Baltic-Russian-Belarus solutions in farming for biodiversity", containing best cases of NGO experience identified during the project on:
 - management of high nature value grasslands
 - adoption to climate change issues in rural areas
 - environmental technologies and solutions in biodiversity farming

4. Experience and best practice exchanged on multifunctional grassland-based farming producing hay, meat and other products and simultaneously producing public goods by maintaining semi-natural landscapes and biodiversity.
5. Promoted and deepened collaboration and mutual understanding between nature conservation organisations and farmers/farmer associations who choose to engage in multifunctional farming.

Project shall produce

- 1) Conference report, for wide dissemination in the Nordic-Baltic-Russia region, on the seminar which will provide a synopsis of:
 - how multifunctional farming preserves and enhances semi-natural and natural grasslands in the Nordic region,
 - how this benefits biodiversity and helps achieve objectives like Countdown 2010,
 - which methods have proved successful in practice and which obstacles and problems remain to be solved
 - how farmers have used their multifunctional farming to distinguish themselves towards consumers as providing a quality product which is ecologically sound
- 2) Agreement by the participating organisations to remain in contact as a network and to continue to exchange experience at the Nordic-Baltic-Russian-Belarus level, with one of the organisations appointed to act as clearing house
- 3) Affiliation of the Russian and Belarus NGOs supporting multifunctional farming to the TRINET network on multifunctional farming being developed since 2006 by the Weideverein Ramsargebiet Lafnitztal and its partners in Europe, supported also by Nordic Council
- 4) Printed book in English and Russian "Nordic-Baltic-Russian-Belarus solutions in farming for biodiversity" containing the best Nordic-Baltic-Russian/Belarus of NGO experience identified during the project, in 2000 English and 1000 Russian copies and in electronic version.