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“...the courses have been well received by participants, and have been effective in engaging multiple stakeholders in discussions and environmental issues...”

TRAINING

BACKGROUND

During the last half of the Russian Air Management Project (RAMP), the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) joined US EPA as a project partner to establish a Center for Environmental Training (CET) in Volgograd. The goals of the component were to:

- Provide courses in air and environmental management for public officials, NGOs, industry and business representatives, research institutions, and citizenry. Courses were intended to utilize US interactive teaching methodologies and incorporate Russian content, regulations, legislation and examples.
- Institutionalize the training capacity within the city of Volgograd to ensure that the lessons learned from the RAMP project would continue to be understood and acted upon by future leaders.
- Develop a pool of local facilitators trained to offer the courses and conduct continuing train-the-trainer sessions.
- Ensure that the Center developed managerial ability to continue to serve the needs of the Volgograd region after RAMP formally ended.
- Share training courses and related information with other centers and institutions in Russia.

The CET opened in October 1995 under the auspices of the Russian Ecological Academy. Russian partners of CET included the Volgograd Environmental Services Administration (VESA), the Volgograd City and Oblast Administrations, local industry, business and NGOs, educational institutions, and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources (MEPNR).

Funding for the CET was made available by a grant from the Institute for Sustainable Communities through a cooperative agreement with the US EPA. The project was originally envisioned to last 18 months, from October 1995 through March 1997. An ISC staff member located in Volgograd during this period to support the development of the CET. Due to budget savings by CET, their grant was amended to fully fund them through July 1997, with partial funding for operational support through FY99.



Dr. Svetlana Kosenkova at the opening of the Center for Environmental Training in Volgograd

IMPACT

To date, CET has offered 20 training programs to approximately 400 participants. Newly written courses were taught by facilitators who were trained by their peers. Non-adapted and some adapted courses were delivered initially by a team of experts from US EPA, who subsequently conducted follow-up facilitator training. EPA-trained facilitators from the sister training center in Ekaterinburg also participated in course delivery and facilitator training at CET.

Courses were offered to a broad spectrum of people including government inspectors and

specialists at city and oblast levels, industry managers, NGO leaders, research and education professionals, and concerned citizens. CET applied for and received a grant from the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to conduct follow-up training on air quality management. In Spring 1997, CET received its license for ecological education from the Russian Federation State Committee on Nature Protection so that it may officially charge for courses. Receiving the license was part of the sustainability plan that the CET had been developing.

The newly written courses and some of the adapted courses share an eight part modular format that can be taught in three days so they can be interchanged and combined. This flexibility in course structure means that CET can tailor courses to particular audiences. This flexibility enables CET to continue to meet the needs of a variety of single-sector and mixed audiences. The existing courses form a solid core for CET to continue to use and develop.

OBSERVATIONS

The short initial time frame of the project (18 months) within which the organizational development and capacity building aspects of the center needed to be organized presented some drawbacks, given the need to focus on the development of long-term strategic plans. Regarding facilitator training, while CET offered US EPA-delivered courses and adapted several of these courses, only one was offered on a three delivery cycle. The third delivery is most important, because at this point the course is taught by local facilitators while US EPA facilitators or other course leaders observe and critique. During interviews with facilitators, many remarked that they had not received enough facilitator training, and



Air quality seminar at Volgograd Training Center

they wanted more interaction with US EPA facilitators. While CET originally did not support the three cycle delivery, they have acknowledged that this would have provided a larger pool of trained facilitators. The CET continues as a viable organization. Its sustainability is critical to the dissemination of RAMP successes, both in Volgograd and for the entire Russian Federation.

“Startup problems were quickly solved and with the idea of ‘train-the-trainer’ and using local facilities, we feel the CET has exceeded expectations.”

**Tatiana Ananskikh
Director, CET
Volgograd, Russia**



Katya Koronova and Tanya Ananskikh, CET, holding RAMP achievement award.

COURSES DELIVERED (1995 - 1999)

- Policy I
- Economics I
- Air Quality Management 1
- Air Quality Management 2
- Air Quality Management 3
- Environmental Policy (adapted)
- Questions of Legislation
- Water Quality Management
- Risk Assessment
- Environmental Economics
- Financial Management
- Local Influence on the Technogenic Environmental Biosphere Forming Factors Course
- Air Quality Management
- Soil Quality Management
- Visible Emissions Training and Certification

Principals in Training Component

Tatiana Ananskikh, CET
 Willis Beal, US EPA
 Barbara Felitti, ISC
 Kirk Foster, US EPA
 Bennett Knox, US EPA
 Katya Koronova, CET
 Svetlana Kosenkova, VESA
 Lynn Erin McNeil, US EPA
 Ivetta Shabunina, Russian Ecological Academy, Volgograd
 Michaela Stickney, ISC
 Wendy Vit, US EPA
 Susan Wobst, ISC

SCOPE

The Russia Air Management Project (RAMP) was an ambitious multi-year, multi-layered project whose purpose was to transfer not only techniques and technology for improving air quality, but to share the American air quality management process to integrate all of these components. The project included a large number of people in both countries and many Russian and American organizations. RAMP was divided into a dozen or more components, jointly managed by Russian and US EPA staff.

The project began with joint US EPA-World Bank interaction with Russian experts, with subsequent funding by US AID. US EPA participation and project management came from OAQPS, with additional participation from US EPA offices in Washington, Denver, Seattle and Chicago. Russian participants came from the State Committee for Environmental Protection in Moscow, the Volgograd Environmental Services Administration and other organizations in Volgograd, and technical experts in Volgograd, Moscow and St. Petersburg. In addition, two American contractors and one American non-profit group were major participants. This wide diversity of participants made for a richly multi-layered project but also a daunting management challenge.

Added to this were the relationships that needed to be developed over the two cultures and the scale of the financial level of the project, some \$4 million. The overall management responsibility of RAMP was held by two OAQPS officials, Thompson G. Pace (1992-1995) and Willis P. Beal (1995-1999).

COMMUNICATION

Regular communications between North Carolina and Moscow was challenging because the project crossed eight time zones. When US EPA component leaders from Denver or Seattle were involved, conference calls crossed 10 - 11 times zones. Telephone connections were often low quality and sometimes difficult to make at all. It was not until late in the project that good e-mail connections were possible.

In addition, there was the obvious difficulty with the two languages and more subtle challenge of each culture trying to understand the other. There was a period of developing a comfort level, different for each person, Russian or American. Each person and each side had to take the time to learn how the other conducted business.

PLANNING

The early RAMP planning anticipated that Russia's political system was in the middle of dramatic changes and the future relationships between federal and local environmental officials were difficult to predict. Fortunately, the professionalism of officials at both the SCEP (formerly the Ministry) in Moscow and VESA in Volgograd kept this from being an obstacle. During the project, the SCEP was reorganized and renamed but fortunately the RAMP leadership there remained the same throughout the RAMP.

Although some in RAMP would have preferred to be able to deal with only a single authoritative figure in the Russian government, the facts of life were that the Russian air quality management process is divided at the federal level and between the federal and local levels. The challenge for the US participants was to learn how this worked. The Americans had to understand that the Russian system was in the midst of dynamic change during the project. The remarkable achievement was how well the Russian partners did at keeping project business moving effectively with all the change that was occurring in Russia.

COMMODITIES IMPORT PROGRAM (CIP)

Component leaders had responsibility for their components but, because of situations outside of their control, often were not able to have the most effective coordination possible between components. The most striking example of this involved the ambient monitoring that should have been the beginning baseline for the entire air quality monitoring effort in Volgograd. Because the purchase process for the CIP equipment was managed by a different group within US AID and not the team responsible for working with the RAMP project, there was little that could be done to expedite that process. Because of that, the monitoring that should have occurred early finally happened on a scaled down basis late in the project because of the lengthy delays in that procurement process.

The Commodities Import Program was an independent US AID program designed to foster the utilization of US technologies and equipment in Russia. The RAMP program manager felt that RAMP would benefit if it were allowed to utilize the CIP to furnish air monitoring and source testing equipment to conduct a summer air quality study in Volgograd. This was especially important because the RAMP budget was uncertain and it was not clear if there would be enough money to purchase even a minimal quantity of equipment to conduct a Volgograd study. Unfortunately, there were delays in obtaining the CIP equipment because the CIP program was not linked to either the goals or the schedule of RAMP, the CIP administrative support had limited air quality experience and the eventual suppliers were not well-known to RAMP component leaders. The bottom line was delays and problems in procuring, delivering, training, setting up and operating this equipment. Final equipment delivery was delayed until fall of 1996, nearly at the end of RAMP rather than at the beginning when it could have better reinforced the demonstration of US air quality management techniques.

LOGISTICS

There were layers of government to work with and through on both the Russian and American sides. Besides all the environmental organizations, trips and travelers had to be cleared by both governments and letters of invitation and visas had to be obtained. Visas often came at the last moment, sometimes even to the traveler en route.

Early in the project it was difficult to make travel arrangements with Russia from the US. At times, the US State Department did not allow American government participants to fly on Russian air carriers within Russia because of safety concerns. There were black-out periods for US government staff preventing travel before and during Presidential and Vice Presidential trips to Russia, which forced the rescheduling or cancellation of long-planned trips.

CONTRACTORS/GRANTEES

In addition to the many EPA organizations and Russian governmental organizations working in RAMP, two American contractors — Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) and Eastern Research Group (ERG)— and one non-profit agency— Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC)— were part of the project. SAIC assisted with the source assessments and low cost measures as well as with general support of the project, including logistical support from their Moscow office. ERG (formerly Radian) supported measurement and laboratory analysis work. ISC set up the training center and the public participation task force in Volgograd and operated the process for working with several Russian organizations through a sub-grant process.

The scopes of work for many EPA contracts made it difficult to gain access to these contractors at first. International environmental assistance such as this was either not anticipated or excluded from many of the contracts, making it difficult to initiate work. Fortunately, this situation improved over the course of the project.

One contractor, SAIC, had a Moscow office, which was extremely helpful for finding translators, airport pick-ups, moving documents around Russia and support while RAMP teams were in Moscow. When one of the RAMP team members had a heart attack and was hospitalized for an extended time in Moscow, the SAIC and ISC Moscow staffs were extremely helpful in supporting him and his family until he was safely home.

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED

- Both Russian and American participants found that to work together successfully, patience, above all else, was needed, not just technical expertise. Not everyone with technical knowledge had the patience to go over the same ground again and again in order to ensure that everyone had a clear understanding or had the desire to develop an understanding of the other culture and way of doing business. Beyond the excitement of foreign travel there was the reality of the hard work that was necessary to work together to keep the project moving. Participants for future projects should be evaluated for their abilities to work in the sometimes uncertain international environment, not just for their technical expertise.
- Sometimes goals had to be scaled back in order to produce achievable objectives. Rather than trying to work with many enterprises in Volgograd, for instance, the RAMP project eventually focused on a triangle defined by three major industrial sources. This made the project “do-able” and, at the same time, this realistic approach also produced citywide benefits. Actual air quality benefits were never a RAMP objective, but the demonstration of air quality management techniques achieved an estimated 8-12% reduction in air pollution emissions.
- A pilot city for demonstrating the air quality management techniques was absolutely essential, particularly in a large country like Russia. It is the only way to manageably experiment with new techniques, as this project did, and still have the possibility of concrete results. In hindsight, it might have been helpful to also have participation from the oblast (state) level.
- A strong planning effort is needed early with participation by both sides so that there is enthusiastic participation as the project unfolds. An important part of planning is just knowing how each program works, the federal/state/local relationships and the division of authority at each level, such as in this case the monitoring work of RosHydromet and the regulatory work of the State Committee.
- Basic language training for project personnel should be encouraged and facilitated.

- RAMP was a very effective team effort which became stronger as the team worked together. Team training early in the project might have enhanced this development.
- E-mail opportunities are very important now. This capability was nearly nonexistent at the beginning of RAMP but would be heavily relied upon for any project beginning now. Improved translation software is now available, also.
- Conference calls between the US and Russia became a very effective tool. This relatively inexpensive tool made it possible to do a lot of work together before a trip, saving time and money. One of the contractors, SAIC, had an “800” number for conference calls that facilitated the process. The RAMP experience would indicate that this, coupled with the improved e-mail capabilities, would enhance any similar international effort.
- Great care was taken to select the best translators possible throughout the project. While this was not always possible in certain specific meetings, the project developed a cadre of very reliable translators who were vital to the success of meetings and conference calls.

While most of the attention in RAMP was focused on specific components and air quality management techniques, perhaps one of RAMP’s most significant accomplishments was getting the entire air quality management process on the table so that everyone could see how the different elements fit together. The management challenge in the project was to keep each element moving as part of a coordinated sequence or to make adjustments when this could not be done, such as with monitoring and the CIP equipment. The US partners now have a better understanding of Russia’s air quality program and the Russian partners now have some additional tools to adapt for their program.