

Strategy to green mining operations in Kamchatka

Transfer project in the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme

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Executive summary

The transfer project aims to conserve biodiversity in one of the WWF priority eco-regions - Kamchatka\Bering Sea - through addressing environmental problems associated with the rapid development of the mining industry on the Kamchatka peninsula.

The main goal of the project is implementation of the Strategy to Green Mining Operations in Kamchatka through development of a mechanism for public participation in environmental decision-making and through active dialogue and communication with the leading mining company in Kamchatka. In the nearest future, according to governmental plans on mining development the industry might become a priority pollutant of the territory, causing habitat loss, change and degradation and putting at risk the viability of key ecosystems and decreasing the value of supporting, provisioning and cultural services the ecosystems provide the region with.

In this regard in coalition with regional, federal and international stakeholders the TP is working on preventive measures to be taken to minimize associated risks and considers that the most effective leverage to improve the environmental liability of mining companies is a three-pronged complementary approach:

1. adoption of Responsible Mining Framework to reduce to a minimum the potential risks associated with mining;
2. introduction of legislation that encourages and requires environmentally-responsible behavior from mining industry and ratification of international environmental conventions;
3. building capacities within local communities and grassroots NGOs to effectively participate in environmental decision-making and comprehensive on-site public monitoring.

The focus of this project is approach #1 - adoption of Responsible Mining Framework to reduce to a minimum the potential risks associated with mining.

The target group for this action is a selected mining company that operates around Kamchatka and local communities affected by mining resource development activities.

The final beneficiaries are Kamchatka local communities and the selected mining company as well as ecosystems which will benefit from the actions being planned for implementation.

The intended results of the project were:

1. The targeted mining company approaches to adopting environmentally and socially responsible approaches to conducting business, investing in new technologies, developing environmental and social programs, and assuming voluntary responsibilities; and agrees to implement RMF and develops conservation program with broad engagement of experts from Russia and other countries with positive experiences of mining in vulnerable ecosystems (primarily salmon ecosystems);
2. Broad involvement of local communities and grassroots NGOs in to the process of environmental decision-making in the area of mining sites achieved;
3. Capacities of local communities to participate in environmental decision-making improved through knowledge sharing;
4. Effective use of international financial mechanisms – EBRD’s involvement ensured RMF implementation as well as awareness of EBRD on environmental problems of mining-related activities in Kamchatka and required environmental and social responsibility raised.

The real results so far are the following:

1. Although reluctantly, but the targeted mining company approached to adopting some relevant principles of Responsible Mining Framework, particularly those related to public involvement and data disclosure.
2. In the process of project implementation capacities of local communities to participate in environmentally relevant procedures – like Public hearings and EIAs – significantly increased.
3. The capacities for effective use of international financial mechanisms as leverage to ensure RMF implementation are created. Productive interaction with EBRD, which was identified as a key stakeholder, helped to turn NGOs’ requirements into investor’s requirements which made them more sound and strict.