

Current multi-national projects

The BEF Group is implementing several multi-national projects either as lead party or as project partner, a few of them of international importance to be described here.

Nature conservation. The largest project of the BEF Group is a LIFE project called "Marine Protected Areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea" aiming at inventories and protection rules for 13 Natura 2000 sites in the three Baltic States' territorial waters and involving 20 partner organizations from 7 countries. (www.balticseaportal.net).

Furthermore the BEF group is contributing to the EU Habitat discussion on favorable conservation status of boreal forests with a set of indicators developed in a PHARE/Nordic Council project in cooperation with Finnish and Swedish partners (www.bef.ee).

Water management. The INTERREG project TRABANT aims at cooperation with regard to river basins at the EU outside borders with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. The BEF offices from Russia, Latvia and Lithuania are partners in this project and contribute with their expertise and work on case studies from the rivers Daugava and Nemunas (www.ymparisto.fi/default.asp?contentid=179530&lan=EN).

Waste management. The three Baltic BEF offices are partners in an INTERREG project called "BaltHazControl", where several countries around the Baltic Sea try to trace their hazardous waste streams, provide guidance on best practictreatment and facilitate regional cooperation (www.europeanwasteplatform.org/).

New chemicals policy implementation. REACH has been a topic at the BEF agenda since a few years and currently the three Baltic BEF offices are implementing an EU grant of DG Environment aiming at stakeholder information and awareness rising on the new chemicals policy (www.bef.lv).

Industry & Environment. Industry and its efforts to reduce pollution are as well frequent address of BEF projects and programmes. Currently a Germany/PHARE financed project is addressing supply chain communication in different industry branches to raise awareness on the whole production process from supply to end user and support industry in understanding comprehensive environmental requirements (www.bef.lv).

New neighbouring countries. BEF Latvia and BEF Lithuania are partners in three small EU grants of Russian and Belarusian NGOs to build capacity of actors in those countries. The projects aim at training of project development, project management as well as environmental policy to give NGOs in the neighbouring countries an overview on EU environmental policies and strengthen their management skills (www.bef.lv; www.bef.lt; www.ctcspb.ru).

BALTIC ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM GROUP

President: Heidrun Fammler
Peldu iela 26/28-505
Riga LV-1050 Latvia
Phone: +371-7357-555
Fax: +371-7507-071
E-mail: heidrun.fammler@bef.lv
Home page: www.bef.lv

BEF Estonia BALTI KESKKONNAFOORUM

Contact person: Kai Klein
Rävala 8-40
Tallinn EE-10143, Estonia
Phone/Fax: +372-6604-766
E-mail: kai.klein@bef.ee
Home page: www.bef.ee

BEF Germany BEF DEUTSCHLAND e.V.

Contact person: Philipp Engewald
Osterstraße 58
D-20259 Hamburg, Germany
Phone: +49-40-5330 7075
Fax: +49 -40-5330 7084
E-Mail: philipp.engewald@bef-de.org
Home page: www.bef-de.org

BEF Latvia BALTIJAS VIDES FORUMS

Contact person: Kristīna Veidemane
Peldu iela 26/28-505
Riga LV-1050 Latvia
Phone: +371-7357-555
Fax: +371-7507-071
E-mail: kristina.veidemane@bef.lv
Home page: www.bef.lv

BEF Lithuania BALTIJOS APLINKOS FORUMAS

Contact person: Žymantas Morkvenas
Vivulskio 14/8-6
Vilnius LT-03221, Lietuva
Phone: +370-5-213-8155
Fax: +370-5-213-5068
E-mail: zymantas.morkvenas@bef.lt
Home page: www.bef.lt

BEF Russia CENTER FOR TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION

Contact person: Natalia Alexeeva
Kozhevennaja line 34-411
St. Petersburg RU-199106 Russia
Phone/Fax: +7-812-334-8835
E-mail: natalia@ctcspb.ru
Home page: www.ctcspb.ru



Printed on Recycled paper
Cover photo: Atis Minde



BALTIC ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM GROUP



BALTIC ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM GROUP
Peldu iela 26/28-505, Riga, LV-1005, Latvia
Phone: +371-7357 555 Fax: +371-7507 071

Who we are

History

The Baltic Environmental Forum (BEF) was founded in 1995 by the Baltic Ministries of Environment, Germany and the European Commission as a technical assistance project aiming at strengthening the co-operation among the Baltic environmental authorities. Multi-stakeholder seminars, trainings, information days and publications on EU environmental policy have been the key tools for meeting these objectives. Over time the core project was prolonged and the BEF activities grew far beyond the initial project. BEF became accepted as institution for networking and experience exchange among environmental stakeholders in the Baltic States. The organization has contributed to the EU accession process in the Baltic States with a large amount of events and trainings targeted at understanding of the environmental legislation to be transposed and facilitating dialogue and experience exchange for its implementation.

The new BEF

In order to keep the network active the BEF team has founded in 2003 new NGOs in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Germany. The organizations are independent in legal and fiscal terms, but they form a network as so-called “BEF Group” and have common goals and joint activities. The network character is laid down in an agreement on cooperation between all parties. According to this agreement BEF Latvia functions as headquarter of the network and the other organizations are its members. Since 2004 the BEF Group cooperates with the Centre of Transboundary Cooperation St. Petersburg, who became formally a member in the BEF Group in 2005.

The five independent NGOs develop projects together mainly in the Baltic Sea region, which is the target region of the operations of the organizations. Each of the NGOs also acts on national level in its country, however multi-country projects are predominating.

The BEF NGOs are operating project based and depend on grants and contracts. In 2006 the network received first time the EU support for environmental NGOs acting in more than three countries – a kind of small core funding.

The goals of the BEF Group are to act in various fields of environmental policy with regard to capacity building, experience transfer and facilitation of different stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region. Additionally it is envisaged to extend the scope of activities to other countries in Eastern Europe - to make use of our location and facilitate cooperation with the neighbouring countries Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

What is our Profile

Characteristics of BEF projects are high quality seminars and training courses for different stakeholders. Our “opinion” on problems with environmental policy implementation, enforcement weaknesses and legislation gaps (not only in Baltic States) is derived from our learning that communication and dialogue among the stakeholders is missing and this is the niche we were and are acting in.

The BEF group does not understand itself as environmental pressure group, but as facilitators and supporters to dialogue, policy implementation and awareness raising. Projects implemented by BEF are envisaged to serve environmental administration, industry as well as society represented by NGOs. We participate in a few NGO forums and national working groups as a NGO party.

Since being an NGO, the BEF has applied and received mostly grants dealing with implementation of EU Environmental legislation at different stakeholder level. We are still providing training and workshop programmes in combination with expert analyses to state authorities, local authorities and industry to raise their capacity in various environmental policy fields. Furthermore, we investigate on legislation, implementation and enforcement gaps in the three Baltic States and try to contribute to its improvement.

Recently, BEF has also widened actions towards public awareness raising actions on single environmental issues, such as river basin planning, Natura 2000, chemicals in products or eco-labelling. We are newly addressing the general public and other NGOs as multipliers for raising public awareness on these environmental policy fields as well.

The BEF's core environmental topics

Projects are the main activity of the BEF NGOs and BEF currently working in the following policy fields:

- Nature conservation & Natura-2000 implementation,
- Water policy & river basin management,
- Waste & hazardous waste management,
- Chemical policy development and chemicals management at industry,
- Industrial pollution reduction,
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.
- Consumers awareness raising on product choice & handling,
- Enforcement of environmental policy, implementation at local and municipal level.

Our experience

The BEF Group is neither a traditional “green” NGO nor a consulting group, but you find elements of both in our performance. However, the BEF has some special features derived from its previous activities and status:

- One special feature is the **regional approach** with actively cooperating offices in the three Baltic States, which has created a strong regional identity among the staff but as well among participants of BEF events & projects. The BEF is focusing its project acquisition efforts on multi-national projects to keep exactly this special feature alive. Widening the network to other countries around the Baltic Sea or further Eastern Europe and acting in a larger regional context is a goal of the BEF group, but it will also be a major challenge.
- Another feature of the BEF are the **good contacts to all society groups** acting in environmental policy and management: the BEF has build up a good network among different ministries and subordinate organisations, municipalities, industry, trade unions, environmental and other NGO's, as well as experts from different institutes and organisations – all those actors frequently participate in BEF events or different projects and accept the role of the BEF as motor for experience exchange and transboundary cooperation..
- The BEF group comprises a wide **expertise of its team** ranging from traditional environmental topics such as waste management, nature conservation, industrial pollution and water management to more exotic topics such as chemicals policy and consumer information. Although being a networking organization, members of the BEF team participate with their expertise in international projects and produce outputs like management plans for protected areas, environmental data analyses or industry training manuals.
- One of the features the BEF got famous among the environmental family in the Baltic States is its **event management skills**. BEF events are attested high quality with regard to programme as well as organization - no doubt that 11 years experience with more than 500 multi-national seminars can be noticed easily.