

expected as the World Bank Project is implemented, since this project is designed in part to assist the Russian government in developing an environmental management framework and a reorganization plan for the MEPNR. The present roles and influence of some key MEPNR officials will be discussed in more detail below. Officials marked with an asterisk on the chart are included in this section.

The MEPNR's areas of responsibility include the oversight of environmental impact assessments of new projects with national significance, provision of permits for the operation of facilities, the monitoring of facilities, and evaluation of the impact of facilities' operations on the environment. It should be noted, however, that while the Russian Law on Environmental Protection provides reasonably strong support for the MEPNR's activities, the human and financial resources available to carry out its functions are both limited and subject to frequent revisions.

The particular importance of the MEPNR authorities in Moscow lies in their ability to provide advice and guidance on the design, assessment and implementation of projects. Officials at the Ministry of Finance can also play a role in approving or withholding project financing, licenses for barter trade, and tax reductions, as can other members of President Yeltsin's cabinet.

- b. Contact with the committees on environmental protection of the individual republics of the Russian Federation. According to some federal environmental officials, any enterprise wishing to obtain approval for its operations must go through these committees first. However, other officials noted that it would be in the interest of a project proponent to contact the federal ministry first in order to obtain