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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Russia's communities, which are currently passing through a critical stage of their development initiated by Federal Law # 131-FZ on the municipal reform, are being offered support. Thus, last year, the Fund for Sustainable Development began work on two programs aimed at creating a network of model communities demonstrating successful examples of dealing with environmental, economic and social problems.

The Fund for the Support of Territories and Local Communities (short name - Fund for Sustainable Development or FSD) is an independent, nongovernmental, non-profit Russian foundation created to carry out projects addressing environmental issues and supporting socially responsible community development throughout the Russian Federation. **The mission of FSD is to enhance public-private cooperation in fulfilling targeted projects that emphasize sustainable regional and community development.** Pursuant to its mission, FSD carries out the following activities:

- Grantmaking, including the development and support of activities and training in the sphere of regional sustainable development, environmental protection, rational use of natural resources, environmental education, and civil society development;
- Collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of information on ecosystems, best practices and methods related to sustainable development, and the improvement of environmental and human health;
- Preparation of analytical reviews and forecasts in such areas as the conservation of Russia's natural heritage and biodiversity, and the sustainable management of natural resources;
- International cooperation and sharing experience with international organizations in the area of sustainable development.

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In the course of the past 10 years, FSD's team has accumulated extensive experience in promoting multi-sector interaction; bringing together local communities and interregional networks to manage projects; and involving citizens in protecting their socio-economic interests, advancing civic initiatives, and supporting youth activities. FSD's reputation is based on full transparency of all the aspects of its grantmaking activities, with special attention focused on addressing issues connected with environmental protection and sustainable development. FSD's Board of Directors is headed by Victor Danilov-Danilian, Director of the Institute of Water Problems at the

Russian Academy of Sciences, and its Advisory Council is headed by the well-known journalist Vladimir Posner.

In the process of carrying out over 470 targeted environmental and social projects (for an amount of over \$10 million), FSD has established lasting interaction with all sectors of society: government, business, NGOs and the mass media practically in all of the country's regions. FSD and its regional network (FSD regional partners include NGOs in Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Novokuznetsk, Ulan-Ude, and Khabarovsk) represent a mechanism for disseminating successful community sustainable development experience throughout the Russian Federation.

FSD core principles:

- Transparency
- Openness
- Partnership development
- Achievement of practical results
- Promotion of project sustainability

At present, FSD is implementing two programs aimed at creating a network of model communities demonstrating successful examples of addressing environmental, economic and social issues: the Star Communities Initiatives Program and the Community Development Support Program. Both programs, launched in 2006, are funded by the United States Agency for International Development with support from the following companies that operate in Russia: TNK-BP, Citi-Group, and United Technologies. The programs' sites are located in the Russian Far East, Lake Baikal Region, the Northern Caucasus and a number of other regions of Russia.

Funding allocated for these programs for a period from 2006 through 2009 amount to \$5.92 million. The programs, which are centered on integrated regional and community development through support to municipalities in solving environmental, economic, and social problems, include the following key components:

1. Grant-making in the targeted communities
2. Dissemination of best community development practices
3. Training for community development
4. Creation of new community development tools and practices

The Primary Program Goal is to design and disseminate both innovative and proven models of community development throughout the Russian Federation.

Key Program Objectives:

- To engage local citizens in addressing local needs and problems through a series of targeted grants focused on:
 - waste management;
 - environmental and human health improvement;
 - small business development;
 - local economic development;
 - natural resources management; and
 - energy efficiency.
- To develop and introduce tools for energy saving and mechanisms to allow communities to reinvest saved resources into new development programs;
- To involve all stakeholders in selected communities in identifying priorities for community development;

- To train community leaders, government officials, and business leaders to better address community needs through collective efforts;
- To replicate best community development practices in a selected region.

The Program Shall Facilitate:

- An increased standard of living in Russian regions
- An enhancement of the potential for future community development
- Citizen participation in community decision-making through interaction with local government and business

Main Program Areas:

- Investment into energy-efficiency
- Reinvestment of energy savings into new social and energy-efficiency projects
- Citizen participation in community development

In the course of 2007, the first results of program activities were achieved. Following is an example of a complex of energy-efficiency projects entitled **Energy-Saving as an Important Factor of Municipal Sustainable Development** and fulfilled in Dzerzhinsky Raion in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast.

This project complex encompassed five populated centers in Dzerzhinsky Raion with a population of nearly 15,000 people and included three projects:

1. Founding an energy-efficiency education and coordination center for municipalities (implemented by Dzerzhinsky Polytechnic Institute at Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University in partnership with Nizhny Novgorod Energy-Efficiency Center)

The objectives of this project included increasing the qualification of the staff of municipal power supply services by educating them in the methods of introducing energy-efficiency techniques and explaining to them why such activities must be carried out, and also demonstrating to them model projects showing the economic and social effects of energy-efficiency techniques. Such projects contribute to the well-being of the community and serve as good examples for other communities. They will, in the end, facilitate an improvement of the economic situation in the municipality, which spends considerable funds for energy resources.

Scientists from Dzerzhinsky Polytechnic Institute developed an energy-efficiency training program for improving the qualification of the staff of communal services who had undergone training at the Institute; prepared and published a training manual "The Basics of Energy-Efficiency"; founded a permanent energy-efficiency and education coordination center at Dzerzhinsky Polytechnic Institute under the auspices of Dzerzhinsk City Administration; and drafted and legalized normative acts regulating the founding of an energy-efficiency education and coordination center and a mechanism for reinvesting energy savings.

All the planned activities were successfully fulfilled by the coordination center; and two meetings on municipal energy consumption and utilization of energy-efficiency techniques were held.

2. Modernization of the street lighting system in Babino Rural Municipality with the use of energy-efficient light sources (carried out by Babino Municipal Administration)

At the beginning of this project, the street lighting system in Babino, which consists of 448 streetlights, including 314 with mercury lamps and 134 with glow-lamps, was consuming 442,899 kW/h a year. To save energy resources and municipal budget funds spent for electricity, this project replaced mercury and glow lamps in the streetlights with 448 energy-saving lamps. This allowed reducing the amount of energy used for lighting the streets by 36% or by 164 kW/h and saving 316 rubles a year. Besides, the level of street lighting will be increased to the standard level, which will mean a 50% growth, as compared with the existing situation. These energy-efficiency techniques will continue to be utilized in neighboring municipalities at the cost of reinvested energy savings.

3. Modernization of the heat supply system and introduction of energy-efficient techniques in Kindergarten # 147 (carried out by Kindergarten # 147 in Gorbatovka Settlement)

This project involved installing an electric boiler for increasing the temperature of heated water; an automated cold water supply station; heat reflector screens for radiators to decrease heat loss in the building; and a two-rate meter to reduce the cost of heating water during nighttime; and replacing lighting equipment to reduce power costs. As a result of these measures, the indoor temperature in the kindergarten increased from +16° C to the standard +22°C and the temperature of hot water increased from +30 ° C to the standard +55 ° C. Cold water is now supplied to the second floor without interruptions; the quality of potable water reached the standard level; the quality of potable water was improved to the standard level; power consumed for additional water heating was reduced by 10-15% due to decreased heat losses in the building; power consumption for lighting dropped 70%; and, what is the main result, the rate of respiratory and intestinal diseases among the children attending the kindergarten dropped significantly. Another good result of this project is that the saved municipal budget funds will be spent for maintaining outside service lines.

Another example is the project complex **Selenga River Delta – a Sustainable Development Area by Lake Baikal** carried out in Posolskoye Municipality, Kabansky Raion, Republic of Buryatia, with a population of over 40,000 people. The project complex is aimed at solving the following priority issues of the community:

Social:

- shortage of municipal funding for the social sector;
- low employment level of the local population due to restrictions imposed on economic activities on the Lake Baikal UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Economic:

- large heat losses through the obsolete enclosures of the old buildings of children's institutions and worn-out heating systems; and, accordingly, high payments for heating kindergartens and schools;
- high illness rate among children caused by poor heat supply at children's institutions.

Environmental:

- heavy anthropogenic burdens imposed on Specially Protected Areas (SPA) and "wild" tourism sites; and the degradation of the natural environment of the region;
- lack of civilized recreation areas intended both for local residents and visitors.

The goals of this project complex were quite extensive, however they were successfully attained with support from Posolskoye Municipal Administration, Bereg Non-Profit

Partnership, Baikal State Nature Biosphere Reserve, and volunteers from among the local population and also by means of contests of environmental activists and active work with local residents. As a result of project activities, the anthropogenic burden on the reserve's ecosystems decreased by 5%; 30 new jobs were created in the tourist service; ornithological and cultural and educational routes appeared in Selenga River Delta - they were provided with an infrastructure, services, and advertising and are part of the Great Baikal Trail; a 14-day volunteer program was conducted to improve the pedestrian parts of the routes and camp and observation sites; 5 tours were led, including two demonstration ones for stakeholders: officials from Kabansky Raion Administration and from municipalities located on the littoral zone, community members, journalists, and the staff of travel agencies and tour operators; a permanent mechanism of interaction among the administration, businesses and NGOs was set up; and the environmental culture of community members was noticeably enhanced and, especially, among the youth.

The project **Energy-efficiency in Posolskoye Rural Municipality** aimed at lowering the amount of heat lost through the enclosures of old buildings and because of the obsolete heating system, produced quite an impressive effect. The replacement of old window units in Posolskoye School with new modern ones at the recreation hall with an area of 70 sq. m allowed to save 100,000 rubles and created comfortable conditions for the children. Much attention was focused on monitoring energy saving and the pupil's health. Project activities were also centered on reinvestment into social programs at the school. As a result of this project, the rate of colds among the pupils dropped 50%.

These are just a few examples of how a small investment supported by the community may lead to tangible results and draw the attention of investors to a municipality; and may as well change the attitudes of local residents to the natural environment and create a favorable climate in the community. For this, the Fund for Sustainable Development creates all necessary conditions and not only helps to solve certain important issues, but works to increase the activity level of community members by educating them in the principles of self-governance and partnership formation.

More detailed information about other examples of projects carried out by FSD and also about the terms of grant contests may be found at FSD's website www.fund-sd.ru