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Abstract

Since 1987, the year when the Brundtland Report introduced the concept of Sustainable Development and the term “Sustainable Tourism” (ST) to the public, this perspective has gained great support from Western governments, NGOs, tourist companies and academics. In Russia the majority of the population is not familiar with this concept. The first chapter of the paper deals with the term “Sustainable Tourism” in the understanding of the World Travel Organisation and the term development in the West. In the second chapter we discuss whether the concept has got sufficient attention of academics, authorities, NGOs and if the principles of Sustainable Tourism have been applied in practice by touristic companies in Russia. The last chapter of the paper deals with the classification of problems that ST has to overcome on its way to acceptance in this country and also brings forward recommendations how to support an effective use of Sustainability concept. It also suggests a way for more rapid development of Sustainable Tourism in Russia.

Zusammenfassung

Im Jahr 1987 wurden im Brundtland Report erstmals das Konzept der *Nachhaltigen Entwicklung* („SustainableDevelopment“) sowie der Begriff *Nachhaltiger Tourismus* („SustainableTourism“) erwähnt. Seitdem wird diesen Prinzipien von vielen westlichen Regierungen und nichtstaatlichen Organisationen, aber auch von Tourismusverbänden und im akademischen Bereich viel Aufmerksamkeit zugewandt. In Russland hingegen hat dieses Konzept jedoch bis heute nur wenig Bekanntheit erlangt. Im ersten Kapitel dieser Arbeit wird die Auffassung und Umsetzung des Begriffs „Nachhaltiger Tourismus“ in westlichen Ländern mit speziellem Fokus auf die Welthandelsorganisation WTO untersucht. Im zweiten Kapitel wird recherchiert, ob diesem Konzept zurzeit auch in Russland ausreichend Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet wird. Im letzten Kapitel wird versucht, verschiedene Probleme und Hürden welche die Umsetzung und Verbreitung von nachhaltigem Tourismus in Russland erschweren, zu klassifizieren. Basierend auf dieser Klassifikation werden Vorschläge gemacht, wie das Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit effektiv umgesetzt werden kann bzw. wie die Entwicklung von nachhaltigem Tourismus in Russland beschleunigt werden kann.

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List of Abbreviations:

AITR (Association of Responsible Tourism)

BEW (Baikal Environmental Wave)

BPPP (Baikal Pulp-and-Paper Plant)

DU (Dersu Uzala)

ETC (Ecological Travel Centre)

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources)

NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation)

NPA (Nature Protected Areas)

ST (Sustainable Tourism)

ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty)

UN (United Nations)

UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development)

UNEP (UN Environmental Programme)

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

USAID (United States Agency for International Development)

WCED (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development)

WCS (World Conservation Strategy)

WTO/UNWTO (World Tourism Organisation)

WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council)

WWF (World Wildlife Fund for Nature)

Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. According to the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), international tourists' receipts reached US\$ 852 billion (€ 611 billion) in 2009 and international arrivals are estimated to grow by 7% in the first half of 2010 (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, Interim Update, August 2010: http://www.unwto.org/facts/eng/pdf/barometer/UNWTO_Barom10_update_august_en_excerpt.pdf, 02.09.2010). Tourism 2020 Vision forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020 with revenues equalling to US\$ 2 trillion and that the world average growth of rates will reach 4.1% concerning the world tourism (UNWTO, Tourism 2020 Vision: <http://www.unwto.org/facts/eng/vision.htm>, 20.08.2010). Anthropogenic pressure on nature and cultural heritage is growing directly related to tourism growth. Taking into consideration the UNWTO tourism growth forecast, the necessity to find a compromise between increasing travel needs and rational use of the earth's resources has become obvious.

The Western world has realised that this industry has not only entertained and employed millions of people around the world, but has also destroyed nature through pollution, has destructed animal habitats and has been responsible for deforestation to make way for hotel constructions, just to mention a few negative aspects. In the 1960s the first negative results of the mass tourism's influence on the environment were pointed out by scientific researchers. "Anthropogenic pressing and its influence retarding development was observed in many tourism sectors and kinds of tourism in

numerous tourism regions”¹ (Khrabovchenko 2007: 5). In 1962 Rachel Carson published her book, “Silent Spring”, which was about the pollution of the environment. Seven years later, Garret Hardin released a volume, “The Tragedy of the Commons in Science”, “which suggested the inevitability of environmental decline in the absence of assigned responsibility for resource protection” (Butler 1998: 25). In 1983 an Austrian journalist, Leopold Lukschanderl, published his book “Rescue the Alps” (“Rettet die Alpen”). He was among the first to describe the problems endangering the mountains because of uncontrolled tourism. The sealing of landscapes, the elimination of plants and animals and piles of litter in sensitive mountain areas show only the tip of the iceberg representing the problems connected with tourism development.

In 1972, the United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment raised the question of the deterioration of ecology. In 1980, the World Wildlife Fund and other conservation organisations published a paper dedicated to rescuing the Earth’s resources. In 1987 Gro Harlem Brundtland, the chair leader of the World Commission of Environment and Development published her report “Our Common Future” that introduced the term “Sustainable Tourism” (ST) to the wider public. The report showed that “survival of the human species depended on adaptation of a new paradigm of economic development termed ‘sustainable development’”. (McCool & Moisey 2001:1). This strategy “became a new approach to the problems that had not got proper attention earlier; it actually became a natural reaction of the human civilisation after it had realized that the traditional technological development path is futureless and that it is emphasising contradictions

¹ Hereafter is translation by the author.

between growing needs of humans and disability of the planet to satisfy them.” (Gulyaev & Selivanov 2008:11). The report changed the attitude of many nations regarding problems limited to technical solutions. Probably for the first time in human history, environmental lobbyists got a chance to be heard in the choir of the economic lobby.

Unfortunately, there are countries where the wake-up call of environmental lobbies still has not happened. I believe that one of them is Russia. I am from this country, from the Komi Republic, which is rich with oil, gas and forest. I see how intensively these resources have been drained and I am embarrassed by the quantity of timber being exported. This situation is exemplary for the whole country. The development of the Russian economy is based on mining and exporting of non-renewable or slowly renewable resources. I am convinced that this way of development leads to nowhere. Russia should reorient its economy to more sustainable modes of production. Taking into consideration the size of the Russian territory, its national diversity and its cultural and historical heritage, the development of tourism seems to be one of the most promising ways of the future development. This assertion deserves attention at least due to the fact that there is already a number of countries (Norway, United Arab Emirates, Mexico) which are rich with mineral resources but nevertheless made tourism one of the main sources of their national income. Gulyaev and Selivanov calculate that in case of the oil price equal to US\$ 67 per barrel Russian income from oil makes up US\$ 55 billion per year; according to Russian experts, based on the UNWTO forecasts, more than half

of this sum could be gained from tourism in case of its proper development and governmental support (Gulyaev & Selivanov 2008:7).

Russia's future is important to me; I believe that explicit implementation of the strategy of Sustainable Development of Tourism is a way to make this future prosperous. For that reason I have chosen "Sustainable Tourism in Russia" as a topic for my Master paper.

Being a country that has been cordoned off from the West, Russia missed the moment of the genesis of the concept. The breakdown of the Soviet Union and the following economic instability resounded upon the scientists more than upon many other experts. Political turbulences and the ideology of primary accumulation, in large part, at expense of natural resources, definitely did not facilitate conservation of nature.

Lag in technology was enormous as well. Wind mills and solar panels that are widely spread in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and other developed countries were a fairy-tale in Russia, almost a symbol of the Western world. Russian cars were not only famous for their unreliability, but also for eco-unfriendliness that fell far below accepted standards of the West. When European countries were discussing the introduction of Euro-3, many Russian fuel stations simply added water to the petrol. In Russia, the core of the problem regarding environmental damage is the lack of conscience.

The negligent attitude of Russian businessmen, administrations and the government is the key factor that plants built in the Soviet times are still operating and continue to pollute the atmosphere and water of Russian lakes and rivers.

Siberian forests and forests of the European North of Russia have been extensively cleared thus damaging the life world for many and contributing to the wealth of only a few. Additionally, Russian children like most of their parents have not been educated in order to respect nature and therefore contribute to environmental pollution by continuing their own life worlds without reflecting the consequences to forests and their own settlements.

In such a situation, when conservation of nature and care of the environment were the business of only a few idealists, terms like sustainability, ecology, responsibility, pro-poor, soft and other kinds of tourism were not familiar to most Russian people and only a few scientists started to study these phenomena in the 1990s. The term “Sustainable Tourism” did not exist at all among the Russian tourist agents. Some companies organized a few ecological tours, but “this could hardly be called ‘ecotourism’”. The tours were too rare to play an essential role. Most of the profit belonged to the foreign operators or travel companies located in the capital cities” (Gündling, Lothar, Korn, Horst & Rudolf Specht, International Workshop: Case Studies on Sustainable Tourism and Biological Diversity: <http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/tourism2.pdf>:126, 20.07.2010) and the local people hardly ever got an adequate share. “Usually nature protected areas either received a miserable income, or demanded super-high prices without the appropriate level of service, and, eventually, lost the clients. Nobody took serious care about education and the involvement of the local population in ecotourism activities.” (Ibid:126).

On the threshold of the new millennium the situation started to change. Some tourist operators (often with the help of foreign organisations and funds) started to organize proper ecological tours, more papers and books were written of this topic by Russian scientists. In recent years even such a term as “Sustainable Tourism” was introduced by a number of specialists working in academia and administrations.

Nevertheless, although the situation has changed slightly, Russia’s enormous lag in the use of sustainable technologies and development of Sustainable Tourism is still dramatic.

The subject of the paper deals with the mechanism of development of the phenomenon of Sustainable Tourism in Russia and tries to answer the question of the specific problems the Sustainable Development of Tourism in Russia is confronted with and how to diminish the disparity between the levels of development in Russia and the West.

The major questions to be answered need the following steps of scientific approach:

1. Find out how Sustainable Tourism is defined and understood in the West;
2. Investigate the principles of work with the concept by international organisations, Western academia, governments and tourist operators;
3. Find out whether ST has gained the attention of the same actors in Russia;
4. Find out what exactly slows down the development of Sustainable Tourism in Russia.
5. Try to give recommendations for solving the problems.

Thus, the first chapter of the paper will be dedicated to the development of the term “Sustainable Tourism” in the West. In the second chapter I will look at the

understanding and development of components of Sustainable Tourism in Russia. The third chapter will deal with obstacles affecting the development of ST and provide recommendations for improvements of the situation.

The scientific originality of the paper is rooted in the fact that in the last five years nobody has written a work in English on Sustainable Tourism in Russia tagging the questions mentioned.

In my paper I use primary resources such as official documents of international organisations, scientific papers of prominent Russian academics working in related fields, such as Kolbovskii, Drozdov, Khrabovchenko, Gulyaev, Selivanov, Novikov etc. (in Russian language) as well as English written literature. Supplementary I consulted some news sites and official sites of numerous tourist operators and funds and integrated the results of a number of interviews conducted with the members and employees of these organisations.

Chapter 1 Development of the term “Sustainable Tourism” and development of the phenomenon in the West

1.1 Development of the Sustainable Tourism concept

Concern about sustainability has likely existed much longer than the term itself. Michael Hall asserts that “political debate over sustainability is a continuation of a debate that has been occurring in industry since 1870” (Hall 1998:13) and “present-day discussions on the nature of sustainable development have their antecedents in the debates that have taken place for well over a century” (Ibid:22). Nevertheless, the concept of Sustainable Development and Sustainable Tourism is a concept of the 20th century. In 1962, as already mentioned in my introduction, Rachel Carson published her book, “Silent Spring”, which discussed the pollution of the environment. Seven years later, Garret Hardin released a volume “The Tragedy of the Commons in Science” “which suggested the inevitability of environmental decline in the absence of assigned responsibility for resource protection”. (Butler 1998:25).

Step by step, the imminent danger that natural resources could be exhausted was realized on the global level. In 1972 “The Limits to Growth” by the Club of Rome, written by a number of authors, stirred the public with the idea that the economic growth cannot last forever due to the limits of the natural resources. In the same year The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, dedicated to the world’s environmental problems, opened in Stockholm. The conference was attended by the representatives of 113 countries, 19 inter-governmental agencies, and more than 400 inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. Its result became a declaration containing 26 principles concerning the environment and

development; an Action Plan with 109 recommendations, and a Resolution. The Stockholm Conference is widely recognized as the beginning of modern political and public awareness of global environmental problems. (Baylis & Smith 2005:454-455).

The next big step on the way to the emergence of the Sustainable Development/Tourism concept was a publication of the World Conservation Strategy (WCS) in 1980 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) in cooperation with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and a number of the UN institutions. The WCS “was a strategy for the conservation of the Earth’s living resources in the face of major international environmental problems such as deforestation, desertification, ecosystem degradation and destruction, extinction of species and loss of genetic diversity, loss of cropland, pollution, and soil erosion.” (Hall & Lew 1998:3). The main issues for the WCS were the following:

1. living resource conservation for sustainable development;
2. maintenance of essential ecological process and life-support systems;
3. preservation of genetic diversity;
4. sustainable utilization of species and ecosystems.

These objectives formed four chapters in the Strategy. (IUCN, World Conservation Strategy: <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/WCS-004.pdf>, 20.06.2010). The WCS showed global environmental problems in details and, following The Limits of Growth Report, emphasized dependence of the economic development on sustainable environment.

The World Conservation Strategy “laid the basis for the fundamental message of the Brundtland report [...], namely, that development and conservation were both

necessary principles on which the future pattern of human activity should operate and should be planned together in an integrated manner.” (Butler 1998:26). The Brundtland Report, (which official name is “Our Common Future”, as it has been mentioned), was a report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published in 1987. The report defined Sustainable Development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (UN Documents, Our Common Future, Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development: <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm#I>, 1.07.2010). “Five basic principles were identified in the report:

1. the idea of holistic planning and strategy making;
2. the importance of preserving essential ecological process;
3. the need to protect both human heritage and biodiversity;
4. to develop in such a way that productivity can be sustained over the long term for future generations;
5. achieving a better balance of fairness and opportunity between nations”. (Hall & Lew 1998:3).

“Our Common Future” not only showed dependence of the economic development on the sustainable environment, it insisted that “survival of the human species depended on adaptation of a new paradigm of economic development termed ‘Sustainable Development’”. (McCool & Moisey 2001:1). McCool and Moisey highlight the following:

“This paradigm was significantly different from previous calls for environmental protection and economic progress in the sense that it represents a combination of both, while attending to quality-of-life needs. The Commission argued that the only effective method to protecting the environment, addressing economic progress, alleviating poverty and preserving human rights was through a developmental paradigm that ‘provided for the needs of the present while ensuring that options for the future were preserved’.” (Ibid:1).

Butler adds that the Brundtland Report added two elements to the call for Sustainable Development “that had not been explicit before in the earlier discussions on wise use of resources, namely ethics and equity”. (Butler 1998:26).

Although the term “Sustainable Development” had been already used in the WCS, it was up to the Brundtland Report to become a bombshell which led to the introduction of the term into the public lexicon. “Since its introduction in 1987, it has received enthusiastic support from more than a hundred governments and innumerate non-governmental agencies and other groups, as well as academic endorsement and apparent general public sympathy, at least in developed world countries.” (Kirkby et. Al 1995 in Butler 1998:26). I would highly agree with the author of this passage. As the Russian experience shows and the next chapter of this paper will demonstrate, developing countries, even countries like Russia with a high intellectual capacity have been far behind the developed world in discussing Sustainable Development and Sustainable Tourism among academics and researchers. A number of essays written on these topics show that the concept was even introduced in some

underdeveloped countries around Asia, Africa, Oceania and Latin America although² mostly initiated as well as sponsored by the governments of developed countries.

As for Kirkby's remark on the interest concerning the sustainability concept among the "academic endorsement", here I want to emphasize my support. Research in the "Leisure, Recreation and Tourism Abstracts" showed that in the list of titles, a reference leading to the term "sustainability" did not even exist before 1990 when the first two papers dedicated to environmental protection and planning were published. In 1991, abstracts of already 19 papers were published in the journal under reference to "sustainability". Taking into consideration, that academia usually needs a couple of years before the first paper on a particularly topic is released, these results of the research show that exactly the Brundtland Report was an impulse for the introduction of the Sustainable Development topic into the scientific world.

Our Common Future opened doors to further discussions on the Sustainable Development concept. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) – at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 – took the idea of sustainability as a central one for development of all the industries and spheres of economy. Delegates of the conference signed a programme document, "Agenda 21". Tourism was not touched by this document, but its influence on environment conservation, ethnic and cultural heritage caused the creation of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry. The document was elaborated and accepted by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Earth Council in 1995.

² See Zeppel, Heather (2006) *Indigenous Ecotourism: Sustainable Development and Management*. Trowbridge: Cromwell Press.

Agenda 21 defines Sustainable Tourism as “tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.” (Agenda 21 http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_00.shtml, 12.07.2010).

The document states that there are numerous pieces of evidence of tourist flows that exceed site capabilities, deterioration of coasts, elimination of indigenous cultures, transport problems and locals’ negative attitude towards tourists. The tourism industry has great potential to improve ecological and socio-economic situations in all the centres and countries where this industry functions using the system of Sustainable Development. The system demands a replacement of a culture of intensive consumption for a culture of smart growth. That means a balance of economic and ecological factors of development; the finding common interests of tourists and local populations; the distribution of benefits from tourism among members of society, particularly, among the poorest groups of inhabitants. (Novikov 2009:1).

Agenda 21 advises governments to implement a programme of actions leading to the Sustainability of Tourism and offers various recommendations to tourist companies to encourage Sustainable Development of Tourism. The document points out the importance of cooperation of governments, various industries of the economy and tourist organisations and moves the accent from ecological to Sustainable Tourism. “Sustainability in tourism implies positive common balance of

ecological, socio-cultural and economic impact of tourism, as well as positive impact of visitors on each other.” (Ibid:1).

Tourism companies are called up by Agenda 21 to minimize the use of energy, manage resources of fresh water, waste water, hazardous materials, transport and logistics, to plan and manage land use, to actively involve employees, customers, locals in solving environmental problems, to develop projects of sustainable development and to forge partnerships for the sake of sustainable development.

Agenda 21 also pays attention to the work of local administrations. It outlines nine spheres of priority such as estimation of capacity of existing tourist infrastructure in order to maintain Sustainable Tourism; evaluation of economic, social, cultural and natural components of development of tourism organisations; education and social understanding of the processes of tourism development; planning of Sustainable Development of Tourism; exchange of information, experience and technologies of Sustainable Tourism between developed and developing countries; providing of participation in the process of development of all sectors of society; elaboration of touristic product in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Tourism in its base as an integral part of the process of tourism development; measurement progress of achievement of Sustainable Development of Tourism; partnership in sake of Sustainable Tourism. (Khrabovchenko, 2007:8-9).

The concept of Sustainable Tourism and actions for implementation of sustainability principles in every aspect of life have been discussed in following years at numerous summits and conferences of UN institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations. There is still no single definition of “Sustainable

Tourism”, shared by all the organisations and institutions working in this field. For the base we will take a “conceptual definition” accepted by the WTO in 2004 as a description of the phenomenon:

“Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.” (WTO, Sustainable Development of Tourism, Conceptual Definition (WTO, 2004): <http://www.unwto.org/sdt/mission/en/mission.php>, 10.07.2010).

Thus, Sustainable Tourism should:

- 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities and contributing to poverty alleviation. (Ibid).

According to the WTO, “Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building”. “Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.” “Sustainable Tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting Sustainable Tourism practices amongst them.” (Ibid).

In the second chapter, in order to find out, how familiar Russia is with the WTO’s understanding of Sustainable Tourism, I will check how often words’ combinations used in the WTO’s three points, characterising Sustainable Tourism, can be detected in official Russian documents. The combinations of words that are at stake will be the following:

1. Maintaining ecological process; conserve natural heritage; conserve biodiversity;
2. Respect culture of host communities; conserve cultural heritage; conserve traditional values; inter-cultural understanding, tolerance;
3. Viable, long-term economic operations; socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders; fairly distribution of socio-economic benefits; stable employment to host communities; income-earning opportunities to host communities; social services to host communities; poverty alleviation.

1.2 Sustainable Tourism in the Western world

As it was mentioned before, after the publication of the Brundtland Report the concept of Sustainable Tourism has gained great interest and respect in the Western world. Since then the WTO has actively followed the principles of sustainability outlined in Agenda 21. One example is the implementation of a programme titled “Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty ST-EP” in 2003 in order to “harness the developmental power of tourism in the fight against world poverty.” (UNWTO ST-EP Foundation, Overview & Mission: <http://www.unwtostep.org/foundation/foundation1.asp>, 4.07.2010).

Sustainable Development of Tourism needs a mutual respectful attitude of tourists and indigenous people to each other. Tourists should behave correctly with the people who agree to host them and to share their traditions with them. Locals should learn that tourists are not troublesome people who distract them from everyday activities, but people who facilitate economic development and social stability in the region.

One of the non-governmental organisations that promote respectful relations between local hosts, tourists and tourism organisations is the Italian Association of Responsible Tourism (AITR) established in 1998 whose members (more than 60 organisations) represent different spheres of the tourism business. According to the official site of the organisation, AITR is a “non-governmental and non-profit association; it has no profit-making intentions, either direct or indirect” that “promotes, helps define, raises awareness for, researches, updates and safeguards the cultural paradigms and the subsequent practical actions connected to the phrase

“responsible tourism” and “promotes and coordinates its members by encouraging the culture and the Responsible Tourism trips they propose and creating synergy among members”. (AITR, Who We Are: http://www.aitr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22&Itemid=318&lang=en, 6.07.2010). “AITR is a second level association that groups associations, organizations and cooperatives that work in the field of responsible tourism” (AITR, Bilanci: http://www.aitr.org/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=320&lang=en, 6.07.2010) with a total budget of €127,000 per year sponsored by its members. Among the “guiding ethical documents” serving as a base of the organisation’s behaviour there are the WTO’s “Global Code of Ethics for Tourism” and the Agenda 21. Special attention is paid by the AITR to the elements of the WTO’s definition of Sustainable Tourism. Thus on the level of ideology, the ideas of the association totally match the WTO’s ones. In practice, “the Italian NGOs operating in international cooperation projects” realize the ideas of sustainable tourism through “creation of beds, opening small restaurants, training guides”, “integration of [...] traditional activities such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries , crafts”. (AITR, ONG, Cooperazione allo Sviluppo: http://www.aitr.org/index.php?option=com_flexicontent&view=category&cid=198&Itemid=307&lang=en, 6.07.2010).

Many independent tourist organisations also follow the sustainability principles in their work. An example of it was established in 2000: the Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI).

“The Initiative is an Association registered in Switzerland. It is voluntary, non-profit, and open to all tour operators, regardless of their size and geographical

location. With this Initiative, tour operators are moving towards sustainable tourism by committing themselves to the concepts of Sustainable Development as the core of their business activity and to work together through common activities to promote and disseminate methods and practices compatible with sustainable development.” (TOI, Introduction: <http://www.toinitiative.org/index.php?id=3>, 7.07.2010).

TOI was developed by tour operators with the support of the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO and WTO. It currently has 16 members (plus the organisations that supported the TOI development) and is open for all the tourist companies irrespective to their size and geographical location (TOI, Members of TOI: <http://www.toinitiative.org/index.php?id=6>, 7.07.2010) and includes such famous operators as ACCOR (France), TUI Travel (Germany), Settemari (Italy). They “regard sustainable tourism development as a guiding concept for the sound management” of their business. In the “long-term interest of host communities” and tourism industry, TOI members “endeavour to prevent or minimize” tourism’s negative “impacts on the economy, environment, nature, social structures and local cultures”, “oppose and actively discourage illegal, abusive or exploitative forms of tourism”, “manage and monitor the environmental, cultural and social impacts of [their] activities” that obviously match the second point of the WTO’s definition of sustainable tourism. TOI strives to “pursue the best practices in all [their] activities - internally and when forming business relationships with partners, suppliers and sub-contractors - especially with regard to responsible use of natural resources, reducing, minimizing and preventing pollution and waste, conserving plants, animals,

ecosystems and protected areas, conserving landscapes, cultural and natural heritage, respecting the integrity of local cultures and avoiding negative effects on social structures involving, and co-operating with, local communities and people, using local products and skills” that also definitely matches the ST’s definition by the WTO. The Association also encourages its “partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to improve their contribution to Sustainable Development and management of tourism, and will work with them and share information to assist in this.” (TOI, Statement of Commitment to Sustainable Tourism Development: <http://www.toinitiative.org/index.php?id=11>, 07.07.2010). All the quotations show the importance of the WTO’s definition of Sustainable Tourism for the tourism development.

Unfortunately, the TOI is not active enough in spreading information about itself and its principles to attract more new members. To the questions “Have you heard of the Tourist Operation Initiative?” and “Why you are not a member of the TOI?” representatives of two big tour operators, “Capital Tour” and “Coral Travel” answered that they had heard about it, but joining the TOI is business of the top management.

Development of Sustainable Tourism is not only an initiative of responsible tour operators and specialized organisations like the WTO, but it is also a concern of governments. For example, in 2003 the Australian government released a Tourism White Paper for the facilitation of the creation of a base for partnership between state bodies and the tourism industry as well as technological development in tourism business and Sustainable Development in ecology and culture (Novikov 2006:1). On the European level, an organisation called European Travel Commission is

responsible for the global development of European tourism. “The European Travel Commission is a non-profit organisation with its headquarters in Brussels. Its members are the 39 National Tourism Organisations of Europe, whose role is to market and promote tourism to Europe in general, and to their individual countries in particular.” (European Travel Commission, Welcome to the European Travel Commission: <http://www.etc-corporate.org/>, 12.07.2010). The European Union is strongly concerned with the issues of Sustainable Development of Tourism.

The “Agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism” approved by the European Commission in October 2007 outlines the future steps for promoting the sustainability of European tourism and further contributes to the implementation of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs and of the renewed Sustainable Development Strategy. [...] By outlining the objectives and principles for the sustainability of tourism and the challenges to be tackled, this Commission addresses all stakeholders playing a role in European tourism and calls them to contribute to the sustainable and competitive development of tourism in the EU. Tourism stakeholders are invited to accept their responsibilities at the levels where they mostly operate and are invited to embrace the opportunities that the sustainability challenge offers as a potential driver for innovation and growth.” (European Commission, Agenda for Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/documents/communications/commission-communication-2007/index_en.htm, 20.08.2010).

The development of the Sustainable Tourism concept in Western academia deserves special attention. Numerous works were written on it in the last decade. The

first articles dedicated to the sustainability issues were published in the 1990s, since 1991 the amount of literature written on Sustainable Development and Sustainable Tourism has been growing quickly. In 1991 19 articles could be found in the “Leisure, Recreation and Tourism Abstracts” under the reference: “Sustainability”. In 1993 the number grew up to 38 articles, in 1996 the articles and books dedicated to sustainability issues exceeded one hundred.

Some general tendencies can be tracked. Very first papers raised questions of conservation, land planning and economic impact of tourism development. Starting with the year 1993 a number of authors worked on host-guest relationships, cultural heritage and cultural change caused by tourism. First articles on case studies were mostly dedicated either to developing countries in Asia (Nepal has been a very popular country for investigations concerning Sustainable Tourism), Africa and Latin America or to developed European countries, especially the United Kingdom.

In the mid 1990s the first books on tourism development and world life conservation were published. In 1998 a book was published by Michael Hall and Alan Lew “Sustainable Tourism: A Geographical Perspective”: It was the first book with a collection of articles on different aspects of Sustainable Tourism. This book has been later followed later by a number of other with the same topic.

The end of the 1990s was also time of releasing articles dedicated to Eastern Europe. The real boom happened in 1999 when around ten articles on Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Eastern Europe generally in connection with sustainability issues were published. At the same time a magazine, dedicated only to Sustainable Tourism issues, “The Journal of Sustainable Tourism”, was established.

Five years ago academics working in the tourism field started to write more articles connecting sustainability and specific topics like migration, transport and wine production. Especially hot in 2006-2007 was the theme of sustainability and climatic change. Some papers were written on the ethics of tourism. They obviously were based on the first UNWTO Regional Seminar on Ethics of Tourism that took place in June 2006 in Quito. Another tendency was clearly recognizable in these days: Sustainability was also linked to topics like agrotourism, urban tourism, indigenous and cultural tourism.

In the last couple of years academics have worked on a wide variety of topics, dedicated to all possible aspects of Sustainable Tourism and produced numerous case studies. Nevertheless, some topics attracted more attention than others. Thus, some recently written articles evaluate the concept of Sustainable Tourism and try to answer the following questions: Why to implement ST principles to communities, if ST is really dedicated to the conservation of wild nature? Is there a special code of conduct for responsible tourists and what is the behaviour of tourists supposed to be?

Now, to understand the situation with the Sustainable Tourism in Russia, we will look at the degree of the development the concept has already reached in academia, politics and tourism business.

Moreover I want to point out that Western academics not only produce papers written on Sustainable Tourism, but they also establish faculties of ST at universities. For example, the East Carolina University offers Master of Science degrees in Sustainable Tourism as well as the London Metropolitan University offering a degree in International Sustainable Tourism.

Chapter 2 Sustainable Tourism in Russia

2.1 Sustainable Tourism in Russian academia

Academics' attention to Sustainable Tourism in Russia is quite limited compared to Western academia. A reason for this could be the fact that the translation of "Sustainable Tourism" into Russian- [Ustoichivy Turizm] ("Устойчивый Туризм") - does not sound correct and gives the impression of a kind of tourism that brings a lot of money rather than developing tourism in a sustainable way. Nevertheless, academics working in the field of tourism research know the term. My desk research in the Russian State Library (a library that contains information on all the dissertations defended at Russian Universities and Institutes) showed that only eight of all the dissertations were dedicated to at least one specific aspect of Sustainable Tourism in Russia respectively in a selected location of the country(see table 1). In comparison, in Austria, with a population being 17.5 times smaller, ten dissertations focused on Sustainable Tourism are registered.

Table 1 List of Russian dissertations on Sustainable Tourism

Name of dissertation	Author	Year	Home university
Organizational and Economic Mechanism to Ensure Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Region.	Lyudmila Vasilyeva.	2006	Saint-Petersburg State Engineer-Economic University
Problems of Sustainable Tourism Development in the Region: on the Materials of the Resort Town of Anapa.	Ruslan Aisanov	2008	Kislovodsk Institute of economy and law
Sustainable Tourism Development in a Geographical and Recreational Complex.	Ruslan Khachmamuk	2004	Sochi State University of Tourism and Resort Business
Formation of the Factors and Conditions to Improve Resource Efficiency in the Region for	Ksenia Maslennikova	2006	Saint-Petersburg State Engineer-Economic University

Sustainable Tourism Development.			
Formation of an Integrated System of Governance for Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Region.	Svetlana Sevastyanova	2006	Saint-Petersburg State Engineer-Economic University
Georesorces of Tourism as a Factor for Sustainable Development of the Altai Republic	Nadezhda Soboleva	2007	Tomsk State University
Managing Sustainable Development Organizations, Health Tourism in Russia.	Marina Romanova	2007	Moscow State University of management
Formation of the Concept of Sustainable Tourism Development for a Destination (Case Study Republic of Buryatiya).	Yekaterina Maksarova	2009	Saint-Petersburg State University of Economy and Finance

Source: Russian State Library <http://www.rsl.ru>

Among dissertations, Maksarova's analyses on the "Formation of the Concept of Sustainable Tourism Development for a Destination (Case Study Republic of Buryatia)" defended at the Saint-Petersburg State University of Economics and Finance in 2009 is of special interest. In her dissertation Maksarova analyses the theoretical basis of the Sustainable Tourism concept, defines the term "Sustainable Tourism" according to the principles of social, ecological and economic effectiveness and concludes that the main problem of Sustainable Tourism Development is the lack of instruments for the realization of the ST principles in practice.

Although the number of dissertations dedicated to Sustainable Tourism is limited, general questions of the concept were considered in some publications by a number of authors. Alexandrova A., Aigina E., Birzhakov M., Gulyayev V. and Selivanov I., Karpova G., Novikov V., dedicated their contributions to general issues of Sustainable Development of Tourism (see table 2). Arsenyaeva A. and Kuskov E., Zhuk L. and Scherbakova S., Korostelev E., Maksanova L., Ageeva E. and Bulatova

Yu. worked on its regional aspects (see table 3). Ecological aspects of ST as well as the theme of ecological tourism in general were reflected in papers of Sevastianov D., Kolbosinskiy E., Drodov A., Basanez L., Kim E. (table 4). The tables below do not contain comprehensive information but offer an insight into the directions in which Russian academia is working on Sustainable Tourism issues.

Table 2: Publications on general issues of ST

Author	Name of publication	Year	Main idea
Aleksandrova A.	Global Reconstruction of Tourism Industry on Sustainability Principles.	2008	Use of modern electronic technologies facilitates sustainable development of tourism.
Aigina E.	New Tendencies in Development of International Tourism in the World.	2008	In conditions of growing interest to the nature-oriented tourism, development of the strategy of sustainable development is necessary.
Gulyaev V. & Selivanov I.	Tourism: Economic, Management, Sustainable Development.	2008	The authors' analysis shows that tourism in Russia is underdeveloped. The authors suggest implementation of the concept of Sustainable Development of Tourism and offer some ideas for it.
Karpova G. & Maksarova Y.	Effect of the Tourist-Recreational Special Economic Zones in Formation of an Active Balance of Tourism Destinations.	2007	Special actions undertaken in the tourist-recreational special economic zones facilitate tourists' flow to respective areas.
Novikov V.	Characteristic Features of Tourism of the 21 st Century - Sustainable and Innovative Development.	2006	Presentation of Sustainable Tourism concept and showing how tourism development depends on innovations.
Birzhakov M.	Economic Security of Tourism Industry.	2007	Consideration of components of economic security in tourism; effect of civil riots on Sustainable Development of Tourism.

Table 3: Publications on regional aspects of ST

Author	Name of publication	Year	Main idea
Kuskov E., Arsenyeva A.	Cultural Landscapes of European North of Russia as a Resource Base for Development of Eco-cultural Tourism.	2008	Analysis of development of ecological and cultural tourism in national parks of the Russian North shows that most of the “ecotours” contradict with the WHO understanding of sustainability
Zhuk L., Scherbakova S.	Analysis of Status and Prospects of Tourism Development in Smolensk Region.	2008	The main obstacle for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Smolensk region is absence of proper management of tourism industry in the region.
Korostelev E.	Landscaping Basics of Recreational Nature on the Territory of Arkhangelsk Region.	2007	The paper gives recommendations for use of landscape-recreation possibilities for development of tourism in Arkhangelsk.
Maksanova L.	Tourist is our Favourite Guest.	2005	The main problem for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Buryatiya is absence of relevant experience and proper laws that would guarantee protection of the Baikal.
Ageeva E., Bulatova Yu.	Model of Tourism Area Development in Vologda Region.	2008	Development of Vologda region as a tourist destination is going in a number of directions and is supposed to double the amount of tourists by 2011.

Table 4 Ecological aspects of Sustainable Tourism

Author	Name of publication	Year	Main idea
Sevastyanov D.	Ecological Tourism in the North-East of Russia as Factor of the Region’s Sustainable Development.	2005	The basic need of Sustainable Development of Russian national parks is the construction of infrastructure, advertising the cultural heritage in the parks and through it attraction of tourists who would bring money to further development.
Kolbovskiy	Ecological Tourism and	2006	A book that considers history of

E.	Ecology of Tourism.		tourism, approaches to evaluation of perspectives of Russian tourism development and connects ecotourism and ecomanagement in tourism and recreation.
Drozдов A.	Basic of Ecological Tourism.	2005	Comprehensive book on ecological tourism its history, technologies, management and perspectives.
Drozдов A., Basanets L.	Touristic Environmental Management, Ecological Imperative and Potential of Russia.	2006	From the 1980s two main tendencies prevail in tourism: Use of standard technological services and diversification of the demand that is connected with grow of ecological tourism.
Kim E.	Ecotourist Summer in Khakasia reserve	2010	The article presents ecological potential of Khakasia: natural and historical heritage, as well as factors that limit growth of ecotourism in there.

Further investigation showed that Russian academia also offers education in the field of Sustainable Development. The author did not find any programmes dedicated to Sustainable Tourism itself, but in 2009, the Saint-Petersburg State University, one of the most respected Russian universities, launched a Master programme “Sustainable Development and Ecological Management” (Saint-Petersburg State University, Master programme “Sustainable Development and Ecological Management”: <http://www.center-sd.spbu.ru/main/education/mp%20news.htm>, 27.08.2010). The programme is designed for four semesters and focused on natural, social, economic and political factors being obstacles for the protection of the environment. The course was created and is taught by the staff of 12 faculties of the University, partner organisations and, most importantly, the specialists of the Programme of Partnership in Area of Sustainable Development and Ecological Management (Saint-Petersburg

State University, Programme of Partnership in Area of Sustainable Development and Ecological Management: <http://www.center-sd.spbu.ru/>, 28.07.2010). Most of the experts are specialists in economic development and ecology. In the various courses the topic of Sustainable Tourism is touched only slightly, but anyway, it can be considered a start into the right direction. As practice shows, even this small group of experts has already contributed to realise some minor projects connected with Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development of Tourism in Russia (see 2.4). An interesting fact regarding the Programme of Partnership in Area of Sustainable Development and Ecological Management is that one third of its partners are Western organisations and a part of the others are at least sponsored by the West.

2.2 Partnership of academia and local administrations in Sustainable Tourism issues

Sustainable Tourism is underdeveloped in Russia and, aside from some minor local projects, which will be discussed later, there are not that many examples of ST that fully correspond with the UNWTO's definition. Nevertheless Russian academia, as well as the local administrations of a number of regions, has taken initiatives in promoting Sustainable Tourism. Due to this a number of conferences dedicated to the questions of Sustainable Tourism Development took place in the last five years.

One of the regions being quite active in performing such conferences is the Republic of Buryatiya (part of Siberian Federal District, which shares Lake Baikal with Irkutsk region). In 2005 three relevant conferences were organized. In 2005 the First International Scientific-Practical Conference "Sustainable Development of Tourism: Directions, Tendencies, Technologies" took place in the republic's capital

Ulan-Ude. According to the official site of the Republican Tourism Agency, 150 people participated in the conference. “Special attention was paid to the practical realization of the principles of sustainable development, its implantation into existing tourism activity, as well as the implementation into the education system”. (Tourism and Recreation in Buryatia. Official Site of the National Agency for Tourism, First International Scientific-Practical Conference “Sustainable Development of Tourism: Directions, Tendencies, Technologies”: <http://www.baikaltravel.ru/agency/actions/Mer2009/ConfBEF2009>, 1.09.2010). A round table “Tourism Practice: Models of Sustainable Development of Tourism” conducted within the conference frames, was dedicated to the increase of the local authorities’ role in bringing to life the effective models of Sustainable Tourism. Unfortunately, the World Wide Web does not contain complete information on the conference and its printed results are available only at the Ulan-Ude State Library, which has not been reached by the author due to the city’s remote location.

The Second International Scientific-practical Conference “Sustainable Development: Tourism, Experience and Innovations” took place in Ulan-Ude in 2007. The conference was organized by the Baikal Institute Natural Management of the Siberian Department of Russian Science Academy, the Buryatian Institute and UNESCO international department. Among others it was supported by the Buryatiya and Ulan-Ude administrations, and attracted 300 representatives of state bodies and business structures and tourism organizations from Russia, Japan, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Canada, China and other countries. Participants discussed theoretical and practical questions of sustainable development of tourism, especially in Eastern

Russia. It was elaborated that the following criteria of Sustainable Tourism should be considered as vital:

- the inexhaustible use of natural resources;
- modernization of production systems;
- ecological responsibility in the choice of technology and construction of tourist buildings and infrastructure;
- use of innovations;
- responsible attitude to significant sites of natural and cultural heritage and traditional economic activities.

Like the materials of the previous conference, the printed documents of this one are also available in Ulan-Ude. The Buryatia Republic's Ministry of Economy website says that this conference recommended spreading the ideas of Sustainable Development of Tourism via scientific work, encouraging it during the education process, implementing modern forms of tourism management; increasing tourism exchange between countries (Buryatia in Russia, China and Mongolia in the case of national interests); elaborating a unique marketing strategy for the promotion of the special tourist zones and appealing to international organisations for getting help in development and marketing of tourism in the Baikal region (Tourism and Recreation in Buryatia. Official Site of the National Agency for Tourism, Second International Scientific-practical Conference "Sustainable Development: Tourism, Experience and Innovations": [http://www.baikaltravel.ru/agency/actions/Mer2009/ConfBEF2009, 1.09.2010](http://www.baikaltravel.ru/agency/actions/Mer2009/ConfBEF2009,1.09.2010)). It is interesting to see that the recommendations are always addressed to the central or, at least, republic government and consider help of international

organisations as inevitable. At the same time, the conference participants refer to a very basic level in defining Sustainable Tourism, like mentioning “ecological responsibility in the choice of technology” in the criteria on ST, a point that is implied but not mentioned in the WTO’s definition.

In April 2009 another seminar “Sustainable Tourism in the Baikal Region” took place in the town Baikalsk (neighbours of Buryatiya republic in the Irkutsk region). The seminar was initiated by an NGO “Baikal Environmental Wave” (BEW). This event was supported by the town administration and brought together representatives of the following institutions: local administration, Siberian Baikal tourism association, tourism business, NGOs and national parks located in the area. The participants discussed possibilities of effective and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources of the area, as well as modern ecological technologies for the sustainable development of tourism in the Southern part of the Lake Baikal. (Discover Baikal, Results of the Seminar “Sustainable Tourism in the Baikal Region”: <http://www.discoverbaikal.ru/node/206>, 9.09.2010).

Active work on Sustainable Tourism issues is conducted in the Republic of Karelia. The work is concentrated on “Tourism based on Natural and Cultural Heritage” (Karelian Scientific Centre of Russian Academy of Sciences, Partnership in Area of Sustainable Regional Development with Emphasis on Tourism Based on Natural and Cultural Heritage: <http://www.krc.karelia.ru/section.php?plang=r&id=127>, 12.09.2010) and it is conducted in close cooperation of the republic and local authorities, academia, Finnish institutes and international organizations. One of the first projects was “Euroregion Karelia – promotion of the territory planning project”

(1999-2000). While planning, the land use was considered from a cultural and ecological point of view. The next project was “Euregion Karelia Spatial Structure 2000+: Borders, Cultural Monuments and Sites and Improved Communications” (2002-2004), which was part of the EU programme “Interreg-Karelia” and focused on the partnership of the republic and the border territories in the territory planning. It concentrated on rural tourism and aimed at promoting the cultural and natural heritage. In more recent years, their collaborative works focused on the creation of a Russian-Finnish border biosphere territory. This project should serve as a model of sustainable use and management of nature and cultural resources. It includes two Russian national parks “Koitaioiki” and “Tolvoyarvi” and the Finnish Biosphere conservation area in Northern Karelia. All three territories are located close to each other. The creation of an international conservation area under the UNESCO banner crossing the borders would provide this concept with an international status and would significantly increase the possibility to gain investments for nature-saving and touristic activities. Moreover it will emphasize the positive effects of the Russian-Finnish partnership concerning the environmental protection in the border area.

Thus, on the level of academics and public servants an effective partnership (strongly promoted and recommended by Agenda 21) based on common understanding regarding the concept of Sustainable Tourism came into being. The question if this project can meet the high expectations is still at stake. The Russian reality shows that the most successful projects need a very active participation of foreign organisations and funds. As an example I want to refer to the Karelian projects realized in cooperation with Finland, and (already mentioned above)

Ecotourism Development Fund “Dersu Uzala”, funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) (Gündling, Lothar, Korn, Horst & Rudolf Specht, International Workshop: Case Studies on Sustainable Tourism and Biological Diversity: <http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/tourism2.pdf>:130, 20.07.2010), being active mainly in the Russian Far East.

There are positive changes in the implementation of Sustainable Tourism by local administrations, but there is still no global effect of their actions and, as S. Rezvy points out in his article, in the realisation of small projects it is better to work “not so much with local authorities (they are often powerless even if they professionally qualified and have good intentions) but with non-governmental organisations and activists’ groups: they are more flexible, motivated, easily educable and, finally, could be good assistants to authorities in the management of society’s development.” (Rezvy 2008:9). The examples of the NGOs and activists’ work in Development of Sustainable Tourism will be considered in 2.4.

2.3 Sustainable Tourism and the Russian government

In order to find out how often the word-compositions defining Sustainable Tourism are mentioned in state rhetoric, I checked some basic tourism documents such as the Federal Law “On Bases of Tourist Activity in the Russian Federation” (the “Law on Tourism”) from 1996, “The National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Russian Federation” from 1997, the “Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation” from 2002 and the “Strategy of Tourism Development in the Russian Federation until 2015”.

The situation with the government's behaviour regarding issues like Sustainable Development of Tourism has two sides. First, full commitment to the principles of Sustainable Development in general and with regard to tourism is demonstrated. According to 4th Chapter of the "Law on Tourism" from 1996, "objectives of the state regulation of tourism activity", among others, are "environmental protection; creating the conditions for activities aimed at education, training and rehabilitation of tourists; rational use of natural and cultural heritage". (Bishelp, Federal Law "On Bases of Tourist Activity in the Russian Federation": http://www.bishelp.ru/zakon/mb/fz132_o_turizme.php, 12.09.2010).

In 1997 the "The National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Russian Federation" was approved by the government. According to the strategy, the main aim of the Russian Federation is sustainable development in economic, social and ecological spheres. In ecology the main target is conservation and recovery of natural ecological systems, stabilisation and improvement of the environment, and the decrease of water and air pollution (Gulyaev & Selivanov 2008:16). In 2002, the government approved an "Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation". According to it, the main principles of the ecological policy are the following:

- sustainable development providing equal attention to economic, social and environmental components and recognition of the impossibility of human development when degradation of nature continues;
- life-supporting functions of the biosphere should be regarded as more important than the exploitation of resources;

- fair distribution of revenues from the use of natural resources and fair access to them;
- prevention negative environmental impacts caused by economic activities;
- if the consequences are unpredictable for the environmental, projects with the long-term related to the impact for the environment have to be cancelled;
- reimbursement of public and environmental damage caused by the infringement of the law concerning environmental protection. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation”: <http://www.ln.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/0e9272befa34209743256c630042d1aa/432569fa003a249c43256c9a002f10ca?OpenDocument>, 12.09.2010).

The “Strategy of Development of Tourism in the Russian Federation until 2015” seems to be straight and distinctive. The Federal Tourism Agency proposes to develop tourism industry in accordance with the majority of the principles of Sustainable Development. The Strategy emphasizes the necessity to increase ecological safety in the tourism industry, to facilitate employment of local people in the tourist business and to raise the revenues in the budgets of all the levels.

On the other side, a series of acts of the Russian government strongly contradict the principles of Sustainable Development of Tourism. The most noticeable of these acts have taken place in the area of Lake Baikal, probably due to the actions of the resistance of the local activists. It should be pointed out how important Baikal’s safety is for Russia and the planet. This lake is situated in Eastern Siberia and stands for 20% of the world’s reserve of fresh water. Moreover the area

close to the lake has a wide diversity of flora and fauna, 1700 of the species are endemic.

The Russian government has more than once endangered the region by its proceedings. In 2002 the state oil company Transneft decided to build the oil pipeline in a distance less than one kilometre from the lake. The main activist in the conflict with the government was a local ecological organisation “The Baikal Environmental Wave”. BEW is a small but active non-governmental ecological organisation established in 1990 by a few volunteers. The organisation’s mission is the “facilitation of the transition of society to sustainable development, where human’s needs are in harmony with nature’s capacities and where the environment is conserved as much as possible”. (Discover Baikal, “Baikal Environmental Wave”: <http://www.discoverbaikal.ru/baikalwave>, 10.09.2010). BEW collected 20,000 signatures against the proposed pipeline and entered into partnership with some international organisations. As a result, in 2006 the Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered the pipeline to be built outside the water catchment area of the lake. In 2006 the government announced the construction of a centre for enrichment of uranium in a distance of only 90 km from Lake Baikal. The “Baikal Environmental Wave” which decided to fight this decision.

One of the most prominent examples proving the irresponsible attitude of the Russian government to environment is the reopening of the Baikal Pulp-and-Paper Plant (BPPP) in July 2010, just three months after the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, one of the most outstanding ecological catastrophes of the 21st century. The plant is located in the town of Baikalsk, which in April of the same year conducted a seminar

dedicated to the sustainable use of resources. The plant is well-known for its waste water that has polluted the lake since its opening in 1966.

In 2009, the plant was liquidated, the number of employees falling from 2300 to 1600 and the debts growing to 1.2 billion Roubles (30 million Euros). (Lenta.ru, Putin did not Rule out Possibility of Opening of the Baikal PPP: <http://lenta.ru/news/2009/08/01/cbk/>, 12.09.2010). In July 2010 after tests of the equipment, paper and carton production was prohibited in the Central Ecological Zone of the Baikal territory. Instead, the plant restarted its work and production by changing to bleached sulfate pulp. (Gazeta.ru, BPPP Started to Produce Bleached Pulp on an Industrial Scale: http://gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2010/07/09/n_1518127.shtml, 12.09.2010).

The small town of Baikalsk is dependent on the Baikal Pulp-and-Paper Plant for employment. The only problem in the reopening of the factory is the fact that the plant has been a major polluter of Lake Baikal. According to Greenpeace, the BPPP spewed out around one hundred thousand cubic meters of waste water annually (Regnum.ru, The 27th of August – the Day of Baikal: <http://www.regnum.ru/news/694937.html>, 12.09.2010). The director of the WWF Russia claimed, with a reference to the state report “On condition of Lake Baikal and measures for its protection in 2008”, that the volume of the plant emission made up 27.53 million tons in 2008 and approximately 36.8 - 48.3 million tons per year in 1999-2007 when it operated at full capacity. (Shvarts, Baikal: Numbers Management: <http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article/2010/03/25/229158>, 12.09.2010). In July 2010 at the plant’s output ducts toxic compounds of chlorine were found (Pavlov,

BPPP Waste Water is Dangerous for Baikal:
<http://vesti.irk.ru/obshestvo/2010/07/22/95576/>, 12.09.2010).

Towards the end of 2007 the RosPrirodNadzor, a Russian ecological watchdog, filed a case with the Arbitration court of the Irkutsk region, demanding the plant to stop operation as its water license had expired. According to tests conducted by the organisation, the concentrations of some of the polluting substances in the plant's waste water exceeded the allowed level by 12 times. (Dagayeva, 2007:7). After 11 months the court decided in favour of the plant. After the government's bill, dated on the 13th January 2010 and signed by the premier-minister of the Russian Federation to change the law that had prohibited the production of the pulp-and-paper, paper and carton production in the Central Ecological Zone of the Baikal territory, the law base for the further work of the plant was created; the factory started its work again six months later. (Newsru.com, After the Government's Approval to Pollute Baikal Putin was chosen the Main Enemy of Siberia along with Masons and Deripaska: <http://www.newsru.com/russia/26jan2010/golos.html>, 13.09.2010).

The alleged main reason for reopening the plant was the necessity to support the city since the plant serves as the principal employer and mainstay. In reality only 10% of the population of 16,000 work for the plant. (Drankina, 2010: 2).

The reopening of the BPPP caused massive protests in February and March 2010. One of the most active organisations in the anti-reopening campaign was the "The Baikal Environmental Wave". During the production stop in the work of the

plant (2009), the organisation actively participated in the development of alternative activities that would support the life of the city.

Two weeks after the plant restarted its work, the BEW planned to organize and conduct a public rally against the reopening. In the end of January 2010 the law-enforcement authorities of Irkutsk came to the office of the organisation and confiscated 11 computers reproaching the activists with the use of illegal software. The organisation's office did not function for some weeks and the computers were returned in May 2010.

This example of the Baikal Pulp-and-Paper Plant shows that the Russian central government does not always base its decisions on principles sustainability.

2.4 Sustainable Tourism by NGOs and tourism operators

Before looking for cases of Sustainable Tourism among tours offered by Russian tourism operators and projects conducted by Russian NGOs, we should mention that while searching on the Internet regarding the term “Sustainable Tourism” in Russia we surprisingly get numerous links offering ecological tours. In reality, although scientists and some members of local administrations, working closely with academics, are familiar with the term, it is not very popular among practitioners. As mentioned above, a reason for this could be the translation of the term “Sustainable Tourism” into Russian. Larisa Basanets, a scientific expert of the “Ecological Travel Centre”, one of the major companies in Russia organizing ecological tours, comments that even if “sustainable and ecological tourisms are not equal and Sustainable Tourism is a wider term standing out also for a theoretical concept, [...] in practice both terms are used as synonyms”.

Thus, to decide whether tours in Russia are sustainable, we have to compare the Western Sustainable Tourism concept with what is understood to be ecological tourism in Russia. As we remember, Sustainable Tourism should:

1. make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity;
2. respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance;
3. ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

We can look at the work of one of Russia's most prominent academics working in the field of the ecotourism, Professor A. Drozdov of Moscow State University. He points out that the five pillars of ecological tourism should be:

1. directed to nature and based on the use of natural resources;
2. not damaging the environment or allowing only minimal damage that does not undermine nature's sustainability;
3. directing ecological education to nature and environmental problems and building up a mutual partnership;
4. caring about conservation of local cultures;

5. economically effective and maintaining sustainable development programmes in all the regions.

Thus ecological tourism is a tourism that cares about nature, facilitates its protection, raises ecological awareness of travellers, has educating functions, makes use of the traditional cultures and local communities and facilitates development of local economies. (Drozdov 2005:41-42).

Comparing the main points of the Sustainable and ecological Tourism concepts, we get that they both require:

1. careful approach to the environment, optimal use of the natural resources, as well as protection and conservation of nature;
2. respect of the local inhabitants, communities, their values, traditions and cultural heritage;
3. support and development of local economies.

As we can see the main characteristics of the concepts of Sustainable and ecological Tourisms in Russia are overlapping. Drawing the definition of ecotourism, Drozdov even mentions a definition of Allcock saying that “ecotourism – is an ecologically sustainable tourism based on nature and including introduction with the environment and its explanation”. (Allcock in Drozdov 2005:41). The conducted comparison entitles us to check if the activities of the Russian tour operators and NGOs carried out under the label of “ecological tourism” correspond with the principles of sustainability. Tour operators and NGOs both use the terms Sustainable Tourism or ecological tourism alternatively.

The previous part showed that the most consistent supporters of sustainability and Sustainable Tourism concepts are activists and non-governmental organisations. They are not as numerous in Russia as they are in Western countries, but obviously due to the difficulties in raising funds and in overcoming legal problems very staunch activists work for them. The NGOs and activists launched a number of Sustainable Tourism projects around Russia. Some of them were described in the 46th volume (January 2008) of the Ecological Journal “The Wave” (published by the above mentioned NGO “The Baikal Environmental Wave”). One of the projects was organized by the BEW. In 2007 it launched a campaign called “The Baikal Friends”. The main idea was to enhance nature protection activities on the part of tourist hosts. Hotels, tourist bases and guest houses of the Baikal area in the Irkutsk region were offered to participate voluntarily in a programme evaluating their level of eco-friendliness. The idea appeared because of concerns raised by enterprises, authorities, scientists and society over the tourism development of the Baikal Lake area which can be considered far from being sustainable. “Litter, soil erosion, pollution of water, fires, disappearance of rare plants and animals is an incomplete list of these problems; many bays of the “Little Sea” [an unofficial name for the Baikal Lake among locals] have already lost their charm because of chaotic development of camping and tourism bases”. (Ogarkova 2008:30).

The project helped to launch a partnership between the NGO and the tourism business. It was decided that the title “The Baikal Friends” would be given to the winner of the annual competition which was introduced as part of the campaign. The runner ups would get one to five “green leaves” according to their degree of eco-

friendliness. These results could be used in the hostels/guest houses promotion. The criteria for the evaluation of eco-friendliness were the following:

- abidance by the regulations of the water conservation zone;
- adequate handling of waste products and water;
- cultivation measures;
- soil conservation and environmental protection;
- provision of information about the culture and nature of the area;
- participation of the local population.

A comparison with the specific definitions of the terms “ecological” and “sustainable” shows that the above mentioned criteria completely correspond with the principles of ecological tourism. To correspond with the ST definition by the UNWHO, poverty alleviation has to be additionally regarded as a primary aspect.

While checking all the 17 hotels and guesthouses participating in the competition in 2007 the experts visited a wide area around the lake and pointed out a series of negative aspects of illegal tourism and uncontrolled camping resulting in huge piles of litter and inadequate tourism structures spoiling the landscape. “Obviously, the recommendations for improving the ecological image are not only valid for tourist camps and hotels but also for the local and regional authorities (not to forget the Russian government!). This looks to be extremely important since the administrative authorities seem to accept the disappearance of the most beautiful sites of world heritage - “Lake Baikal” - under layers of dust and wheels of tourists’ cars.” (Ibid: 31). The organisers of the competition delivered recommendations to improve the eco-friendliness of the participants. Some recommendations were easy to comply

with (e.g. using energy saving light instead of the traditional bulbs) while others did not seem realistic without the active support of the authorities (like the elaboration of a system of litter sorting and recycling). No participants got five “green leaves”; the winner got three of them and was awarded the title “the Baikal Friend”. This title stands for a local family business (participation of locals), the promotion of the Siberian tradition (conservation of cultural heritage) by constructing houses, proper handling of waste and conservation of nature (maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity).

Another project was conducted on the island Valaam in the European North of Russia. The island is situated in the Northern part of Lake Ladoga (Karelia Republic) and it is famous for its beauty and the Valaam Monastery. In 2006 the island’s citizens invited specialists from the above mentioned “Programme of Partnership in the Area of Sustainable Development and Ecological Management” to find a solution for Valaam’s numerous problems with electricity, water, technical facilities for education, underdevelopment regarding public services and traffic. “The experts’ opinion was unanimous: It is possible to solve the social, economic and ecological problems and to save the unique natural and historically-cultural conservation area by conceptualizing a programme of sustainable development”. (Yermakov, D., Stravinskiy, D. & Chernikova, S. 2008:12). The Projects Consortium “Valaam is Our Common House” created a program called “Ecological Platform – Green Island”, which prompted school children to planting trees. This platform has become a stronghold for the development of “civilised ecological tourism” (Ibid:15) based on the creation of controlled excursions to interesting natural and cultural sites.

These excursions include visiting interesting sites like project “Earthen manufacture”. Of course, in the case of Valaam tourism cannot be developed depending entirely on a sustainable concept since even journeys to the island (22 km from off mainland) are managed by non-ecological boats. Nevertheless, the project indicates a positive change towards a more ST development.

One more example of a sustainable approach to tourism is a project carried out by the company “Rodnik”. It is based in Abaza, a small miners’ town in the Republic of Khakasia. The company rented a site in the Taiga (coniferous forest) in the Sayan Mountains, which is populated with rare animals like the snow leopard. The company is now running a tourist camp named after this animal. “Snezhny Bars” – that is the Russian name for the camp - has been adopting the principles of ecological tourism. The camp offers trails for hiking and horseback riding. The routes are provided “with signs/information boards telling the visitors about the forest dwellers and plants in the area. Toilets and collection points are set in the popular picnic and parking areas”. (Harris 2008:5). Electricity is produced by an independent mini hydroelectric station and the rubbish is taken to a special site. The company also produces food like herbal teas and tincture of pine nuts made of the forest products and offers aroma-saunas that make the company operate profitable even in winter. Thus, “Rodnik” is a good example of non-industrial use of the forest combined with economically sustainable strategies based on ecological and educational tourism principles.

Another project is conducted by the “Great Baikal Trail”, an NGO being active in the Republic of Buryatia since 2003. Its aim was to connect hotels and

hostels located near Lake Baikal with numerous ecological trails. The projects were realized with the help of foreign and Russian funds in close cooperation with the local administration, businessmen and the local population. By now more than 2000 volunteers have worked on the trails' constructions. (Great Baikal Trail, History: <http://www.greatbaikaltrail.net/ru/history>, 20.06.2010).

The initiator and organizer of the project Andrey Suknev confirms that Baikal trails satisfy most of the requirements mentioned above (from the correspondence by E-mail). First, the trails are only for walking, no transport polluting the atmosphere is involved. One can reach the start of the trail and leave the trail after finishing it by public transport. The trails connect local communities, provide easy access to them and create the income sources for the locals. There are projects to clean up the area, to improve the living conditions and to increase the attraction of the conservation area and national parks that the trails pass. According to Suknev, well equipped trails help to conserve the landscape and manage the tourists' flows, as well as inform them and warn them in case of danger. Moreover, the project involves young people and improves their ecological education. Thus, the trails correspond with the ecological tours' requirements and with the main principles of the Sustainable Tourism concept.

Now we will investigate if Russian tour operators offering programmes based on "ecological tourism" follow the sustainability principles. To provide an adequate insight, I will concentrate on two relatively big Russian agencies that organise eco-tours in Russia and are the most mentioned among the links I checked during the research on the World Wide Web. The two organisations are the "Ecological Travel Centre" (ETC) based in Moscow and all operating around Russia and an ecotourism

development fund “Dersu Uzala” (DU). The latter is also based in Moscow but actively operates in the Eastern part of Russia, such as the Baikal region, Kamchatka and Yakutia. With the representatives of both companies I had telephone interviews or corresponded by E-mail.

“The Ecological Travel Centre” participates in a number of Russian and international research projects supported by the World Wide Fund for Nature, Tacis Partnership and Co-ordination Programme, Federal Agency For Nature Conservation (Germany). These projects aim to draw public attention to the problems faced by Nature Protected Areas (NPA) and raise additional financial support for NPA to develop ecotourism programs and to create jobs.” (ETC, Projects: <http://www.ecotravel.ru/eng/projects/>, 20.06.2010). The ETC organizes tours to almost all of Russia’s 101 nature reserves and 41 national parks. Most of the characteristics of these tours are in accordance with the characteristics of Sustainable and ecological Tourism. These journeys include visiting museums and excursions with professional guides who introduce tourists to the local culture and history. Some tours are organized specially for scientific reasons. On their routes the company, according to Larisa Basanets, prefers to work with local people if they have the necessary qualification for serving tourists. She adds that “if possible, the ETC also chooses to cooperate not with tourist agencies, but with the national parks and reserves staff (even if it is more difficult sometimes) as it gives people a chance to earn additional money.” (From the correspondence by E-mail).

Another center of ecological tourism, “Dersu Uzala” has its main office in Moscow but works a lot, as it was mentioned above, in the Eastern part of Russia. It

was named after the famous Nani hunter Dersu Uzala, immortalized through a movie with the same name, who spent the whole life in the Siberian Taiga without a house. “Dersu Uzala” combines functions of an NGO and a travel company. The Ecotourism Development Fund was established in the framework of environmental projects of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the WWF. In addition, invaluable support was rendered by the Russian Branch of the International Union of Nature Conservation (IUCN) and the Citizens Democracy Corps.” (“Dersu Uzala”, About Us: <http://www.ecotours.ru/en/aboutus.html>, 20.06.2010). The mission of the fund is “to spearhead the effective development of sustainable tourism in Russia” by the way of “a comprehensive strategy that encompasses running professional ecotours”, developing and implementing “strategic ecotourism programs for local governments and Nature Reserves in different regions of Russia”. It also aims to train “nature reserves staff and local travel agencies in Sustainable Tourism practices”, providing “local communities with economic incentives for conservation by introducing environmentally friendly small business programs”. “Dersu Uzala” wants to educate “the Russian general public about conservation issues in regard with the regular use of mass media, workshops, seminars and conferences” and increase “global awareness of Russian Nature Reserves and ecotourism potential via books, articles, films and an Internet presence”. (“Dersu Uzala”, About Us: <http://www.ecotours.ru/en/aboutus.html>, 20.06.2010).

Indeed, in the years 1996-2001 “Dersu Uzala” conducted some educational projects, primarily in the Eastern part of Russia. Nowadays the Fund mostly

organizes eco-tours; many of them are created especially for children. Besides its work for profit, DU conducts ecological projects with orphans.

Similar to the work of “Ecological Travel Centre”, the work of “Dersu Uzala” also largely corresponds with the principles of ecological and Sustainable Tourism. In addition to the kind of work done by ETC, DU is contributing a lot to the ecological education sphere.

Summarising the state of the art we can admit that in Russia there are least small steps towards Sustainable Tourism that can be detected. Nevertheless, all these positive examples described are not a proof that ecological and Sustainable Tourism already exist in their full complexity. Many ecotourism projects look better in description than they are in reality. For example, eco-tours can only be considered as ecological if, according to Drozdov, they have the following characteristics:

1. the transport used by tourists is ecological;
2. the tourists' food is healthy and local products are used;
3. routes and guides lead tourists to interesting and ecologically significant natural and cultural landscapes;
4. litter is collected and transported to eco-technological recycling units;
5. rest places and fires are organized only in special places;
6. berries, mushrooms any other fruit are collected only where it is allowed;
7. accommodations for tourists are located the way not to disturb landscape and not to influence its appearance negatively;

8. hotels and camping sites are built of ecologically compatible materials, energy and water are spent carefully, sewage waters is cleaned and other waste is utilized;
9. local inhabitants are involved in the tourism business and stick to traditional ways of economy; tourists respect local cultural traditions;
10. profits from tourist activities support the local budget. (Drozdov 2005:42).

Even if the “Great Baikal Trail”, the “Ecological Travel Centre” and the “Dersu Uzala” projects meet most of these requirements, some of them are not observed. For example, the ETC uses buses for transporting the tourists from one destination to the next. Larisa Basanets from the ETC comments on that: “We have to admit that while planning most of the routes, we do not pay much attention neither regarding transport, nor accommodation facilities etc. This is largely due to the limited choice: We have to accommodate the tourists adequately and use available means of transport.” (From the correspondence by E-mail). People from the centre of Russia choosing one of the DU-projects in the Far East would rather take a plane than a train (the least polluting means of transport) otherwise the journey to reach the destination would take a week. The tourists and organisers of trips could collect the rubbish along the trails but its recycling proves to be a complicated task. Again, as Basanets comments: “The problem of rubbish recycling is to be solved on the place due to capacities of protected areas as far as private objects are concerned this problem does not get much attention.” The development of waste recovery system has to be managed by the region authorities. So far waste recovery in Russia exists only in a small number of regions.

Another big problem mentioned in the telephone interview with the “Dersu Uzala” is the fact that local people in regions like Kamchatka have become used to receiving payments from tourists for hosting them. For this reason they are going to lose some outstanding human qualities like unselfishness and hospitality, two characteristics they have been famous for. Unfortunately, this process is unlikely to be reversed.

Two projects realised in the Baikal zone, Valaam and Khakasia show that there are people thinking about nature and sustainable use of the resources but they are only a drop in the ocean of tourism with traditionally irresponsible attitudes towards the nature. The winning guesthouse of the competition “The Baikal’s Friends” was chosen for its traditional Siberian architecture, but this proven sensitivity is rather an exception than a rule. “The construction and the tourism “boom” in Listvyanka [a settlement at the Baikal shore] represents a real threat to the buildings of the 19th and early 20th century. The new architecture, which appears today along the historic waterfront, involuntarily makes us think not about the progress of human intellect, but of its complete degradation.” (Belskaya 2008:20). As it was mentioned, the Baikal Bays are full of illegal tourists leaving piles of rubbish. The Russian forest is rarely used for ecological tourism, but mostly for exporting timber abroad. Valaam is still under pressure of tourists who visit the island for its famous name but not for its cultural heritage.

By the way, for tourists quite a few alleged “ecological projects” are offered in the net, the aim of which is just to show people wild nature without caring about educational aspects, profits of the local people and ecological transportation. For

instance, to see many remote places in Kamchatka, helicopters must be used. The noise of rotating blades scares away animals. These tours also could be booked for illegal hunting. Such fake “ecological projects” are not part of the study.

It is worth mentioning that at Voronezh State University and - this is more important - since it is a tourism-oriented University, in the Russian International Academy for Tourism the term “Sustainable Tourism” is not used in lectures. Search on the World Wide Web shows that conferences dedicated to Sustainable Development of Tourism take place only in the Baikal region and Karelia and experts joining these conferences arrive either from Moscow and Saint-Petersburg or are members of international organisations like WWF and Greenpeace.

A look at the actions of the federal government suggests that they intend to support “sustainable development, providing equal attention to economic, social and environmental components” (“Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation”: <http://www.ln.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/0e9272befa34209743256c630042d1aa/432569fa003a249c43256c9a002f10ca?OpenDocument>, 20.09.2010). In reality, the government’s actions in the Baikal region show that sustainable solutions are hardly ever supported although the intentions of more sustainable use of resources in future are also part of official documents.

This chapter has shown that even if Sustainable Tourism is underdeveloped in Russia in comparison to the Western world, some steps for the better of the situation have been done. Nevertheless, the way to a common acceptance of the principles regarding Sustainable Tourism by the local authorities, the government, all the tour operators and the public seems to be still very long and difficult. What are the

problems and the reasons for slowing down the pace of sustainability and what could be done to improve the situation? These questions will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Problems of Sustainable Tourism in Russia

As it was documented in the previous chapter, there is a movement of promoting the development of Sustainable Tourism in Russia. Unfortunately, the movement is quite slow and is encountering a lot of problems. If we go through the second chapter we recognize that an effective development of Sustainable Tourism in Russia is confronted with the following problems:

- the term “Sustainable Tourism” sounds confusing in Russian translation;
- only a few academics are engaged in Sustainable Tourism issues;
- Russian Universities do not offer study programmes concerning Sustainable Tourism. The only related programme is based at the Saint-Petersburg University: “Master in Sustainable Development and Ecological Management”;
- the structure and organisation of the “Programme of Partnership in Area of Sustainable Development and Ecological Management” worked out by Russian academics show that there are no real professionals in the field of Sustainable Development of Tourism in Russia who could act as experts being able to realize ST projects;
- absence of unique market strategies for the promotion tourism in remote areas;
- absence of efficient ecological education;
- documents like the “Strategy of Sustainable Development” and the “Ecological Doctrine” are declarative: the government preferably supports economic development promising profit but causing environmental damage;

- there are not enough activists to lobby for more ecological decisions;
- along many routes there are no waste recycling systems and no sustainable systems for water, energy and transport.

This list of existing problems is not a complete, but it shows how wide the scale of the problems really is. Some of them are closely dependent on each other. Following I offer a classification concerning this matter.

3.1 Classification of the problems

Some of the existing problems are connected with the way how Russian people perceive reality. Some of them are connected with decision making by the Russian government. Some depend on the economic underdevelopment. Therefore, the classifications of the problems can be divided into the following categories:

- infrastructure problems;
- the Russian authorities problems;
- Russian mentality problems;
- Russian culture problems.

3.2 Infrastructural problems

1. Russian traffic and transport systems.

For years, Russian tour operators have been complaining about the quality of the traffic and transport systems. They simply do not allow fast and effective transport rites between cities. Russian trains are more comfortable, but the average speed is only 50-70 km per hour. Due to the low level of competition among airlines, tariffs for flights from Moscow to remote areas are really high.

For example, a return ticket to Ukhta, my home town in the Komi Republic costs twice as much compared to a return ticket from Moscow to Vienna, although the distance between Ukhta and Vienna and Vienna and Moscow are approximately the same. A trip to Siberia from the European part of Russia needs more time and is more expensive than a trip to most of the European cities. Russia's size is also the reason for an extremely slow information diffusion between regions. The analysis of the significance of Sustainable Tourism in the second chapter showed that there are regions where the value of Sustainable Tourism ranks much higher than in other regions. The activity level concerning ST issues is the most remarkable in the Baikal area, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Russia despite its remoteness from the metropolitan region, the traditional centre for academic and business activities. The main offices of the two most important ecological services are located in the Russian capital. Another centre of projects dedicated to Sustainable Tourism are regions close to the western border: Saint-Petersburg and Karelia. As already discussed the Saint-Petersburg State University was the first to launch a master course in Sustainable Development and this university hosts the Programme of Partnership in Area of Sustainable Development and Ecological Management. Karelia is also quite active and is successfully cooperating with Finland in developing sustainability ideas. Other regions seem much more passive in dealing with Sustainable Tourism issues. Moscow and Saint-Petersburg have always been the centres of academic and business activities and examples of the Baikal and Karelia regions show that even remote area can stand out for a positive handling of environmental issues - from

today's point of view, the common understanding of the problems of sustainability is by far not sufficient to meet the future environmental challenges successfully. Therefore Sustainable Tourism could and should get more attention in all the Russian regions. Additionally, transport and traffic problems can be found inside and outside the cities and even along special routes organised by companies like the "Ecological Travel Centre" and the "Dersu Uzala". With only a few exceptions the Russian transport system can be considered to be very eco-unfriendly because its average carbon emission level exceeds the European standards by far. According to medical research, the life expectancy of Russian citizens living in big cities is 4-5 years lower than it would be in a better environmental situation. (Denisov, Problems of Motor Transport in Russia: from Ecological Policy to Daily Practice: <http://www.dialogbv.ru/forum/index.php?showtopic=1485>, 15.09.2010).

2. Problem of waste processing.

This problem was already mentioned exemplarily in connection with "The Baikal Friends" competition, as well as the Valaam and the ETC projects. Actually, the manifestation of the problem occurring in these projects is only the top of the iceberg. In the USSR, the system of litter recycling was well established in 1970-80s. The bottles for milk, beer and soft drinks were standardised. Locations for their collection were established in every community. At least once a year pupils were engaged in collecting old paper and scrap metal. The precious metals used in the industry were strictly controlled. The recycled materials were controlled by three Ministries (Light Industry, Ferrous Metallurgy and Non-Ferrous

Metallurgy) as well as The Central Union responsible for the countryside. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the succeeding government of Russia stopped subsidizing the recycling infrastructure and from one of the world leaders in recycling technology Russia went down to the level of a Third World country. Today waste recycling has almost no support of the government. “The total capacity of the waste recycling plants is only 3.5% of the necessary requirements for full recycling”. (Ekzit. Problems of Waste Utilisation: Possible Solutions: http://www.vivozmusora24.ru/musor_utilizacija.html, 17.09.2010). It sounds absurd but in Russia there are technologies and plants that could recycle all the existing rubbish and thus to reach the level of Western countries and Japan. (Ibid).

In Russia all the infrastructural problems can only be solved by the intervention and by investments of the government and the regional authorities. Today road construction and reconstruction, the continuing improvement of the private transport structure as well as the renewal of out-dated means of public transport are considered to be most important by the various authorities on different levels. Contrary, the construction of waste recycling plants does not receive sufficient attention of the government. Without encouragement through public authorities it will be very difficult to find sufficient support for such projects among local people. In my opinion, private investors who decide to finance projects following sustainable principles should get tax reductions and preferential credit conditions. Simultaneously, with starting such a public support the government should organise a wide advertising campaign to attract additional investors. The waste recycling system

should have a state management centre with regional representatives cooperating as existing private enterprises recycle only selective waste. The population should be either financially or ideologically motivated to recycle. An advertising campaign should support this intention. A promising way in the case of recycling is to copy the European system working on the base of law on collateral value that supposes putting the cost of recycling into the product price. (Timofeeva, Russia Sorting: <http://www.rusrep.ru/2009/28/musor/> 16.09.2010). This measure should be adopted after a central management system of the recycling plants was created.

3.3 Russian authorities' problems

1. Lack of motivation to develop Sustainable Tourism.

Russia's wealth in natural resources is not only its great asset but one of its main problems. While oil and gas guarantee the country a high income, the need to develop industries like tourism and waste recycling is not felt by the government. It is particularly difficult to find sufficient motivation to develop Sustainable Tourism, because it needs a lot of effort (Semenov, Either a Five-Star Hotel or a Bed in the Corner: http://www.ng.ru/scenario/2010-05-25/9_rus_tourism.html, 20.09.2010) and does not offer great profit especially at the first stages of its development. The government has already demonstrated its preference to follow the interests of the oil industry by deciding to lay Transneft's oil pipeline through Lake Baikal's' water catchment area. As mentioned, the decision was cancelled thanks to activists' efforts. From my point of view, this lack of motivation is the reason why documents like the "Strategy of Sustainable Development" and the "Ecological Doctrine" that promise positive change fail.

2. Corruption.

Corruption has been Russia's eternal problem. It is an obstacle for sustainable development of the country on many levels. It allows individuals to buy property in places that should not be sold at all. There happens illegal construction of villas even in places such as the shores of Lake Baikal. Recently the Utrish Juniper Forests in Krasnodar region received the natural conservation status and yet the construction of a "sports and recreation complex - in fact, a new Government House, designed for relaxation of senior officials" (Save Utrish: <http://www.save-utrish.ru/>, 20.09.2010) has been planned. The prospective customer is the Department for Presidential Affairs of the Russian Federation. The location where the construction is planned was formerly protected, but it lost the status since this specific plot of land was removed from the conservation area.

It is difficult to offer solutions against corruption that are prevalent on such a high level. The only possible way to compete in every single case is the work of activists. In my opinion, the authorities' lack of motivation to develop sustainable projects that are socially and ecologically important should be also challenged by NGOs and activists who care about Russia's future. Unfortunately, it is not easy due to the existence of so many current problems.

3.4 Russian mentality problems

1. Low level of commitment concerning sustainable issues.

The importance of the economical and considerate exploitation of resources only concerns people after the satisfaction of their material needs. Citizens in Russian

cities are used to go to their “dacha” (a country house) for a healthy environment rather than fighting for an improvement in the places they live.

2. A common feeling that Russia’s natural resources are unlimited.

Russia occupies 17.075 million square kilometres. This enormous size of the country creates among many people a feeling that the forests (as well as the country’s reserves in gas and oil) will last forever and if deforestation and water pollution happen, they happen somewhere far away so there is no need to be worried about it. It is also a reason for rarely applying sustainable technologies based on ecological sources of energy. Additionally, both energy and water have a relatively low price in comparison to Western countries. This allows businessmen who are obviously interested in saving expenses, to delay the introduction of sustainable technologies that need initial capital investments.

3. Only small numbers of ecological NGOs and activists.

Probably fed up with the numerous demonstrations and fruitless collective activities in the past, Russian people today seem to be quite passive in defending their rights via demonstrations. Only people who are directly affected tend to become worried about nature. “The Baikal Environmental Wave” is a good example for that.

4. Low level of solidarity.

Western countries are full of NGOs committed to help African, Asian and Latin American countries to alleviate poverty. In Russia, volunteers going to any Third World country and paying all by themselves to help other people are considered to be naïve or even crazy. Within Russia, the promotion of cultural tourism

projects promise to be much more successful compared to projects supporting pro-poor tourism. I believe that the obvious lack of solidarity with poor people is highly interrelated with the present economic situation of the country.

To overcome this problem new educational system is needed based on the respect of human rights, environment, other cultures and traditions. So far, Russian pupils are only taught in “Nature Studies”, which simply is an introduction to geography. In this subject some ecological aspects are taught and one or two excursions to parks, zoos or conservation areas are provided. I am convinced that this is not enough. Ecological education as well as education concerning human rights should start in the kindergarten and last until the last form of school education. It should also get more attention at the universities. Such a solution for changing a backwards directed mentality is not an easy one and will need a lot of time for implementation, but I think this is the only way to change people’s conscience.

3.5 Cultural problems

1. Dying local cultures.

According to the WTO’s definition, Sustainable Tourism implies respect of the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conservation and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribution to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. Unfortunately, in Russia there are almost no genuine local cultures left. Seventy years of Soviet governance were years of rapid assimilation of local cultures by Russian culture. A positive exception is the Altai where people respect and keep their traditions. The local people still speak Altaian as the first language, organise traditional festivals and adhere to the traditional cuisine. In

most of the other areas with genuine local cultures it shows that quite a few of the local people cultivate the lifestyle similar to the Russians. Moreover, indigenous people often occupy a lower position in the social stratification and they are more prone to problems such as alcoholism.

Sustainable Tourism could improve the situation with the cultures. The advice in this situation would be restoration of the cultures. Showing national dances, preparing national food for tourists, hosting them in houses in the national style would give job to locals.

2. Decline of Russian villages.

This problem is similar to the first one. Many Russian villages which are situated in beautiful places and therefore seem to be attractive for tourists are in decline. A high-quality infrastructure in villages usually does not exist, the average age of the local population is rather high because of the migration of young people to cities and the economic depression causes high levels of alcoholism.

In Siberia some villages near trunk roads leading from the West to the East of the country are already dependent on tourists staying there for a night. A more professional tourism marketing highlighting the attractions of the villages could make the tourism more profitable for local people and would motivate locals to learn to be better hosts for the visitors. As Larisa Basanets mentioned, the ETC prefers to work with local people, but the ones in charge should have necessary qualifications for it.

All the detected problems are obviously connected with each other. Development of infrastructure and restoring the local cultures need participation of

the authorities that lack motivation. Determined actions of NGOs and activists would make the authorities move in a proper direction, but Russian people are mostly not active enough for it. Only people who understand the necessity for sustainable development in general and Sustainable Tourism as a part of this could change the situation for the better. I think that ST would develop more quickly if it is promoted by successful managers working on the level of the region. Their initiatives need the help of local administrations. Together they can launch a number of successful Sustainable Tourism projects. These projects should connect Russian specialists in tourism and participants of the regional tourism enterprises (local people), foreign specialists that have experience in successful realisation of Sustainable Tourism projects in conditions similar to Russian ones and mediators - Russian people familiar with the western concept and interested in repetition of the experience on the Russian land. Some ambitious projects could bring profit and positive image to their original sponsors and could develop interest of other investors, economical branches and administrations. Successful projects could push the central government in a right direction of following accepted strategies of sustainable development, improving infrastructure, adding more ecological aspects to existing education syllables and restoring declined local cultures and villages.

All the aforementioned problems, recommendations and the possible solutions are shown in table 5.

Table 5 Structure of Sustainable Tourism's problems in Russia and their possible solutions



Conclusion

The enormous growth of the tourism industry and its negative effects on the environment has made Western societies consider the use of nature for tourist purposes more reflectively. In 1987 the term “Sustainable Tourism” was introduced by the Brundtland Report. It was a part of a wider concept of Sustainable Development which was defined as a “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” and implied that economic development should only be realised based on the principles of sustainability. Since the Report’s publication, the concept has gained interest and support of academics, non-governmental organisations, Western governments and international organisations. The concept of Sustainable Development was driven further by the Rio Summit in 1992 and three years later the World Travel Organisation proclaimed that Sustainable Tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism and should aim at a balance between economic, social and environmental dimensions. In the West, principles of Sustainable Tourism are promoted by NGOs like the Italian Association of Responsible Tourism (60 members); by tourist organisations like Tour Operation Initiative (16 companies-members), by governments (the European Travel Commission unites 39 National Tourism Organisations) and by academia (more than one hundred publication every year and the possibility to gain Master degrees in Sustainable Tourism at a number of universities).

The situation with Sustainable Tourism in Russia does not look so rosy. Only eight dissertations have dealt so far with problems of Sustainable Tourism in Russia, approximately the same number one can find in Austria, a country having a much

smaller population. Nevertheless, there are some positive shifts recognizable. In the last few years Russian academics have written papers on general, regional and ecological aspects of Sustainable Tourism; in 2009 at the Saint-Petersburg State University a Master programme “Sustainable Development and Ecological Management” was launched. In the Lake Baikal region a number of conferences on Sustainable Tourism brought together academics, representatives of administrations and businessmen. Moreover, projects based on cultural and heritage tourism are conducted in cooperation with Finland in Karelia. The Russian Government also demonstrates its commitment to sustainability principles in the Federal Law “On Bases of Tourist Activity in the Russian Federation”, “National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Russian Federation”, the “Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation” and the “Strategy of Development of Tourism in the Russian Federation until 2015”. Unfortunately in reality the government neglects the necessity to promote environmental sustainability and favours instead a rapid economic development based on neo-classic considerations. This attitude is exemplary documented by the decision to lay the Transneft’s oil pipelines in a distance less than one kilometre from Lake Baikal, by the fact that a centre for uranium enrichment is under construction just 90km from Lake Baikal and by the reopening of the Baikal Pulp-and-Paper Plant that pollutes atmosphere and the lake’s water. These examples are clear demonstrations of the government’s irresponsibility regarding environment.

In some cases ecological NGOs and activists are able to successfully oppose the government’s decisions. NGOs and activists have also managed to organise some

Sustainable Tourism projects. For instance, “The Baikal Friends” organised by the “Baikal Environmental Wave” found out how efficiently regional hotels and guest houses satisfy the Sustainable Tourism requirements (the winner fulfilled only 60% of the requirements). The “Ecological Platform – Green Island” at Valaam Island, in Karelia, became a platform for the development of “civilised ecological tourism” based on the creation of controlled excursions to interesting natural and cultural sites. The NGO “Great Baikal Trail” based in the Republic of Buryatia, cooperates with hotels and hostels with the objective to offer a wide variety of ecological trails. The trails connect local communities and provide access to remote settlements, thus giving the local population an opportunity to get a share of the profit. They also introduce nature to tourists and teach them how to care for and respect it. In some cases ecological NGOs and activists are able to successfully oppose the government’s decisions. NGOs and activists have also managed to organise some Sustainable Tourism projects. For instance, “The Baikal Friends” organised by the “Baikal Environmental Wave” found out how efficiently regional hotels and guest houses satisfy the Sustainable Tourism requirements (the winner fulfilled only 60% or requirements). The “Ecological Platform – Green Island” at Valaam Island, in Karelia, became a platform for the development of “civilised ecological tourism” based on the creation of controlled excursions to interesting natural and cultural sites. The NGO “Great Baikal Trail” based in the Republic of Buryatia, cooperates hotels and hostels with the objective to offer a wide variety of ecological trails. The trails connect local communities; provide access to remote settlements, thus giving the

local population to get a share of the profit. They also introduce nature to tourists and teach them how to care for and respect it.

A company “Ecological Travel Centre” and an ecotourism development fund called “Dersu Uzala” use the term “ecotourism” in connection with their activities and try to follow the principles of Sustainable Tourism. This is not always possible due to a number of factors they cannot influence but at least sustainability seems to be an important objective for them.

A list of problems was worked out showing the points Sustainable Tourism faces on its way to become effective in Russia. The problems can be divided into four groups:

- Problems concerning infrastructure (e.g. bad roads and slow and expensive means of transport, that make travelling between Russian cities and regions more difficult; lack of waste recycling plants);
- Problems with the Russian authorities (absence of motivation to develop Sustainable Tourism projects, instead looking for high profits through the oil and gas business; high level of corruption among officials);
- Russian mentality (little concern with ecological issues; no awareness that natural resources are limited; only a small number of ecological NGOs and activists; low level of solidarity).
- Problems with Russian culture (decline of the local cultures and villages).

I believe that the first group of problems can only be solved by an increase of active participation in public affairs, by higher direct investments into corresponding industries and by a stronger encouragement of those who promote sustainability. To

get rid of the second group of problems a continuous intervention of activists and organisations is required. The educational system, oriented towards a rising awareness of human rights, environment, other cultures and traditions could help against the third group of problems. A stronger support of the local cultures restoration with promotion of the Russian villages could improve the situation with the last group of problems.

The problems cannot not be solved easily but I think that ST could develop more quickly if it is promoted by successful managers working on the level of the regions. Their initiatives need the help of local administrations. Together they can launch a number of successful Sustainable Tourism projects. These projects should bring together the following experts: Russian specialists in tourism, participants of the regional tourism enterprises (local people), foreign specialists that have experience in the successful realisation of Sustainable Tourism projects under conditions similar to Russian ones and mediators. The latter should be Russians familiar with the Western concept of Sustainability and should be interested to adopt their expert knowledge on Russian ground. Some ambitious projects could bring profit and a positive image to their original sponsors and could spark interest of other investors, economical branches and administrations. Successful projects could make the central government accept the following strategies of sustainable development more easily: improving infrastructure to avoid environmental damage, adding more ecological aspects to existing education syllables and restoring declined local cultures and villages.

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