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Developing an Effective Civic
Engagement Policy by the World Bank,
European Bank for Reconstruction and
Development and Russian Executive
Authorities

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Executive Summary

Civil society organizations and civil society in general in Russia are often perceived by authorities as a “black box”. More precisely, the problem lies (1) in the limited character of feedback with various social groups; (2) there is not enough clarity regarding the role and importance of the “third sector” in societal development; (3) there is no clear understanding of the various forms of interaction with a variety of civil society organizations at the level of federal ministries and governmental agencies and at the regional level; (4) laws and regulatory acts in the sphere of civil society engagement are not always matched by practice; (5) protest forms of public participation dominate others (for example, protest voting, actions of protest), which are mixed by contrast political apathy of citizens (for example, low turnout at elections).¹

A well-thought and effective civic engagement policy is necessary for international institutions and executive authorities in order to raise the efficiency of social and economic reforms and national projects by taking into consideration interests of various social and interest groups, obtaining feedback from the society for minimizing political mistakes, as well as development of effective cooperation with civil society organizations.

The present policy paper and the research behind it, carried out in the frame of the International Policy Fellowships of the Open Society Institute, touches upon the policy options for implementation of an efficient civic engagement policy in Russia by the World bank (WB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – international financial institutions (IFIs) that play an important role in global economic governance. These institutions developed comprehensive policy documents on civic engagement for a successful implementation of structural reforms and concrete projects, undertaken with their financial and consultative support.² Both formal and informal civic engagement policies of the WB and EBRD are tasks to make civic engagement principles open and clear, contribute to better public awareness, understanding and public support of concrete strategies of economic development and reforms, as well as serve as a feedback to managers and politicians.

International financial institutions, the Government of the Russian Federation and civil society organizations are working to solve common tasks and are to respond to the new challenges that require a comprehensive cross-sectoral approach, cooperation among various governmental (federal ministries and agencies of the RF, regional executive authorities),

¹ According to the USAID Democracy Initiatives Final Survey Report for Russia (2003-2004) there is a link between the disabling of external environment, in which CSOs operate and the decrease of political activity in Russia’s cities: Moscow, St.Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Novossibirsk, Samara, Chelyabinsk, Rostov-on-Don, Perm, Saratov, Khabarovsk, Irkutsk and Tomsk.

² An excellent rationale for inclusion of civic engagement in global economic governance can be found in “Democratizing the Global Economy. The Role of Civil Society”, a study based on interviews with over 200 various civil society organizations in seven countries, including Russia, and written by Jan Aart Scholte, Director of the Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation, University of Warwick [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/ - Research -Projects].

supranational (the WB, EBRD and other) and non-governmental (civil society organizations) institutions. Civil society organizations are among those concerned and working to find solutions to the modern challenges of social-economic development of Russia.

Civic engagement is implemented both with the view to raise efficiency of social and economic reforms and national programs, and with a view to identify common national values for consolidation of the society and legitimating authorities. The conclusions of the policy paper and the research are based on the values of participatory democracy, based on the power with authority and legitimacy, which takes into consideration various social interests and seeks to provide for social justice, public participation and guarantee human rights.

The desirable policy option is formalization and institutionalization of the civic engagement process (for example in the form of a concept of “public contract/compact”), based on clear open and understandable criteria, and shared by all actors in the process:

After a document on civic engagement is adopted, it should become obligatory for all managers and officials of an organization/ministry and circumvention or delays are treated as unacceptable.

Officials are recommended to institute and pass specific educational programs and training (in the frame of the formal additional education programs) to learn how to better implement civic engagement policy.

All levels of an institution/ ministry should take part in the development and implementation of civic engagement policies.

The principle of openness should be observed in the development and introduction of amendments (review, changes and updates) of civic engagement policy documents.

Civic engagement policies should be linked to and/or mainstreamed into other key policy documents of an institution/ ministry.

Civic engagement events should be organized in such a way that various stakeholders and interest groups are represented.

Special budget and other resources should be previewed for planning, preparation and execution civic engagement activities.

Civil Society and Forms of CE in Russia.

Why Engage With Civil Society?

Russian civil society organizations (CSOs) – is an active and indispensable part of the Russian civil society. CSOs, providing services to the population, including the grassroots and unregistered organizations, are, in their majority, closer and in some cases closer to the population than any level of authorities. Non-governmental research organizations undertake professional and cost-intensive analysis of acute social and economic matters, often attracting alternative (non-budget) sources of funding. Educational NGOs are more sensitive to the demands of the labor market, than traditional state higher educational establishments, raising the qualification of various specialists, including civil servants. Watchdog organizations carry

out a great volume of work on civic education and drawing attention to acute pressing social matters³.

According to the World Bank's paper entitled "Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and Civil Society Organizations" (draft from 24 October 2003 and final version from March 2005), prepared by the Bank's Civil Society Team, "CSOs become more influential actors in public policy and in development efforts". These changes were facilitated by the globalization process, including easier access to telecommunication technologies, societal changes and a scaled economic integration. Civil society organizations became important actors at the global market of financing for development, exercise greater influence on public policy at the global and national levels, are responsible for provision of a considerable part of social services and implementation of cross-border initiatives.

According to the UNDP Global Human Development Report 2004, it is necessary to make services of use for the poor and marginalized people and take into consideration their opinions, engage civil society through various forms of civic engagement as an inherent element of public policy. Civic engagement is an important instrument for better provision of services and speeding up the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁴

Other intergovernmental organizations also admit the need to actively interact with CSOs not only on general, but also narrow specific matters, which certifies the acknowledgement of deep and competitive expert knowledge of CSOs. For instance the G8 Group recommends to interact with NGOs, such as the Societies of Red Cross and Red Crescent, which, together with the local communities, play the key role on the ground, in order to eliminate the gaps in the system of information dissemination [with regard to an effective system of early warning on global geophysical natural phenomena], calls to cooperate with wider circles of civil society and eliminate barriers on the way to public participation with regard to application of carbon dioxide storage technologies [in the frame of the Forum on Carbon Dioxide Reduction]; assert the need to encourage organization of public hearings and civic education, based on the principles of tolerance, as well as strengthen increase understanding among cultures. One of the first tasks here is the work with civil society in order to achieve complete public rejection of terrorism.⁵

According to the data from the State Committee on Statistics of the RF, the number of registered non-governmental non-commercial organizations as of 1 January 2002 reached 600 000. According to various estimates, at least as many civil society groups work in Russia's regions without official registration as a legal entity. It should be noted that many unregistered civil society organizations and groups carry out the work of social importance and its results are in demand by the local population. An important function of the grassroots organizations is work with marginalized groups of population, an absolute scope of which in Russia is great (for example, poor, single parents, homeless, street children, victims of home violence, etc.).

One of the most comprehensive studies of civil society in the World – Civil Society Index (CSI) - was developed and implemented by the World Alliance for Citizens Participation

³ More details on the structure and role of NGOs and civil society groups see USAID NGO Sustainability Index for Russia, CIVICUS Civil Society Index for Russia.

⁴ Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and Civil Society Organizations. The World Bank. Draft from 24 October 2003 and final version from March 2005

⁵ Final documents, adopted at the G8 Summit, Gleneagles, Great Britain, 8 July 2005/ Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the RF, 11 July 2005./ www.mid.ru/

(CIVICUS). In Russia the CSI was implemented by the St.Petersburg Center “Strategy” using the following definition of civil society (developed by the project National Advisory Board):

“Civil Society is an arena, situated for the most part outside family, state and market, at which people voluntarily interact for promotion of their own, public interests and the common good”.

In this definition separation of civil society from the state is reinforced by putting political parties outside the civil society framework, since civil society does not seek to occupy political positions in official state bodies or make politics their professional activity.

Speaking of “political activity” of civil society organizations we should understand whether we are taking politics or policy (both words correspond to one word in Russian language). Politics/policy can be presented in the unity of three interlinked aspects: 1) as a sphere of public life, social sub-system, performing the functions of achieving balance between public and private interests, achieving goals of public importance; 2) as one of the many types of activity of social actors, their collective and individual behavior; 3) as a type of social relations – between individuals, small groups and bigger entities; as well as 4) a political course, consciously chosen social strategy.⁶ In this wider understanding of politics/policy, the majority of Russian citizens undertake “political activity”.

Opinions differ on the extent to which Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) influence public opinion and attitudes in local communities. Whatever its advocacy positions, the ability of a CSO to influence public opinion depends on its capacities and resources (human, financial, etc.), the external environment in its area of operation (legislative climate, relations with authorities, etc.), the size of its membership and/or number of beneficiaries, the organization’s visibility and information activities. In other words, the ability of a CSO to influence public opinion exists, and the extent of this influence depends on a complex number of factors and can be adequately assessed only on a case-by-case basis.

An important condition for civic engagement is that participating civil society organizations themselves observe democratic principles of own operations. The mentioned above study of J.A.Scholte, Director of the Center for the Study of Regionalization and Globalization by the Warwick University (UK) entitled “Democratizing the Global Economy. The Role of Civil Society” outlines the major internal CSO democratic matters of concern. These include ensuring the necessary knowledge and competence to deal with the issues in question; tackling challenges to offer equal opportunities of involvement to all people, regardless of age, class, faith, nationality, race, sex and other social categories; maximizing own visibility and their own answerability to stakeholders and the wider society.

Different forms of civic engagement are available to international organizations and national decision-makers. These include, first of all, 1) consultations with civil society to sound out the views of various social actors and stakeholders on issues of key importance for international institutions and national authorities, and the creation of 2) consultative bodies. The latter can be standing councils with regular meetings on current and pending programs/projects of the institution/ ministry, and should be based upon clearly defined criteria for the selection and replacement of its members, democratic mechanisms of coordination and decision-making, and accountability to various social groups.

⁶ Politologia. Ed. by A. Мельвиль and a group of authors. Moscow, MGIMO RF, 2004.

Other forms include 3) public opinion research on pressing societal matters (most of such data is being gathered by a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations)⁷ and 4) independent expertise, that is, outside experts invited to monitor project implementation and final post-project evaluation. Such public expertise can verify that the project in question incorporated recommendations received in the course of consultations with civil society and other stakeholders.

International organizations and Russian officials can also organize 5) formal public hearings following individual or public consultations on projects: for example audits of project results may be put forward for discussion. In such public hearings the role of executive and legislative authorities is of particular value. Finally, there is 6) information dissemination to raise public awareness and make an institution/ agency's work understandable to citizens. Information on international institution's work should be disseminated not only by an institution itself, but also by CSOs that specialize in monitoring and analyzing the work of IFIs.

Finally, on the issue of 7) funding, major existing mechanisms include sub-contracting agreements, grant agreements (договор целевого финансирования, пожертвования), indirect funding through a foundation created with the support of an international institution, or through an independent foundation; a grant agreement with the federal or regional government and CSOs. Grant or charity funding should be based on strict reporting mechanisms (to Russian control agencies, grantmakers, etc), on one hand, and impossibility to treat charity funding as profits or "dubious" activity, on the other hand.

The list of CE forms above is of course not comprehensive and does not cover all the multitude of existing CE forms. Nevertheless, the listed forms give an understanding of the key CE categories with participation of IFIs. The WB and EBRD developed quality policy documents, which regulate interaction with CS, as well as had some progress in implementation of these policy documents in Russia.

CE Policy of the Russian Executive Authorities

The possible strategic approaches to develop and implement a CE policy of the Russian executive authorities are to:

Sustain interaction with CS (for example, sustain existing mechanism of CE), which is only based on the current political situation and addressing certain singular political goals of various ministries and regions.

Streamline and widen CE policy and practice (for example, through adoption of a suitable concept of CE or agreeing on a "societal concord") based on concrete cases of successful interaction, which proved their efficiency in Russia; clear demands and open criteria of formulation, development, sustaining and implementation of the corresponding policies.

⁷ Comprehensive research of the Russian CSOs (results of which are in open access) in 2005 were carried out only by the USAID (NGO Sustainability Index, etc.) and the World Alliance for Citizens' Participation together with the St.Petersburg "Strategy" Center, State University-Higher School of Economic and coalition "We, Citizens!" (Civil Society Index). Furthermore, similar research is carried out by the National Project Institute (INP) and CAF-Russia.

Today CSOs in Russia in many cases already are, and if external limitations are lifted, to a greater degree “could become good, really irreplaceable partners of the state in resolution of most acute problems, such as “could become good partners in fighting HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, harmfulness, assistance in social rehabilitation of disabled persons, development of territorial self-governance”.⁸

An important step to recognition of importance of CSOs in Russia was the Civic Forum of 2001, the largest gathering of CSOs, who expressed interest in interaction with authorities. The practice of conducting Forums was continued in 2002 in Togliatti, in 2003 in Nizhni Novgorod under the name of “Russian Forum” with an active participation of private sector. The Law of the RF “On Creation of the Civic Chamber” was initiated by the President of the RF, which he first voiced on 13 September 2004: “...such a Chamber should become the place for conducting civic expertise of those key state decisions, and, first of all, legislation, that touched upon the development perspectives of the whole country and have national importance”.⁹

However, like for the majority of the Russian consultative bodies, it will not be the Law, to define the importance of the Civic Chamber, but the personalities of its members, representation of various Russia’s regions, degree of their independence and the political process of practical work of the Chamber. It is also important that the Chamber does not monopolize the public control function, but contribute to the creation of a mechanism of public control at all levels – from municipal to federal. Furthermore, in the work of the Chamber it’s important to escape lobbying of interests of particular narrow CSO sectors and their target groups.¹⁰

According to public opinion polls of the beginning of 2005 (and still it is the case) the majority of people did not understand the goals for creation and key functions of the Civic Chamber – around 70% of respondents said they did not understand, while only 12% understood or approved of the idea to create the Chamber. Clearly, the work on public awareness rising is required, which should be combined with the practice of “real work” of the Chamber, which would prove its independence from authorities, representation and high expert potential.

Before the official announcement of the plans to create the Civic Chamber of the RF, the Council on Civil Society Development and Human Rights by the President of the RF appeared. It was created on the basis of the Commission on Human Rights by the President of the RF by the Decree of the President from 6 November 2004 #141711. Only eight months later, on 20 July 2005 did the first meeting of the President with the Council members take place. The Council holds regular meetings and works on matters of social importance, with a special focus on providing feedback on cross-sectoral interaction between the society and authorities. The key instruments in such work, which partly overlap with the functions of the Civic Chamber, should be public expertise and public control.¹² At the meeting on 20 July

⁸ Minutes of the meeting of the Russian President V. Putin with members of his Council on Development of Civil Society and Human Rights on 20 July 2005. 22.07.05. Moscow, Kremlin // Web-site of the Council / <http://www.sovetpamfilova.ru/>

⁹ Kutsilo V. Another Kremlin Chamber. *Kommersant Vlast* #25 from 27 June 2005. PP. 15-17.

¹⁰ Nagornyh I. I know they will get a lot of PR (Interview with E. Pamfilova). *Kommersant Vlast* #25 from 27 June 2005. PP. 18-19.

¹¹ Web-site of the Council: <http://www.sovetpamfilova.ru/>

¹² Zemskova E. Ella Pamfilova: “In Whose Interest it is to Make a Dictator out of the President Putin?”. *Strana.Ru*. 20 July 2005.

2005 the President put forward on the agenda four issues: informing the citizens on the reforms implemented by the authorities, creation of the Civic Chamber, development of NGO sector, as well as development of a multi-party approach to provision for human rights.

At the meeting, V. Putin raised the issue of interaction between the state bodies and CSOs. The President of the RF underlined that “special efforts should be made to build the financial basis for independent work of human rights organizations, on providing grants for such work. At the same time, it is impossible to allow for direct funding of political activity in Russia”.¹³ In this reading the term “political activity” (politicheskaya deyatelnost) may be understood two-fold: both as a strive to influence political-electoral process in a country (English word “politics”) and as a strive to influence authorities in order to increase the transparency and accountability to the society, advocacy in favor of interests of the society in general and particular social groups (English word “policy”). The activity of civil society groups, also known as public policy, is an important component of the work of CSOs not only in Russia, but also in all other democratic states. Furthermore, a separate category of CSOs defines public policy as a key direction of their work. Centers for public policy – are non-commercial non-governmental organizations, working both in the sphere of analytics/ research, and in the sphere of their practical implementation. The link between theory and practice actively promoted by centers for public policy, surfaces centers’ important communicative function. The more active are centers for public policy (CPP) in implementing their communicative function, the more successful they are. “Publicity” as a characteristics of CPP derives from their name, pre-supposes openness of the centers’ work for all stakeholders and social groups, pro-active information dissemination about own work of various target groups.¹⁴ Other important functions of CPP include: research, educational, creative, and implementation¹⁵.

At present a number of ministries and governmental agencies, as well as Committees of the State Duma of the RF explore the possibilities to create civic consultative and expert councils. Furthermore, interested authorities identify special forms of internal and external of interaction of own public relations specialists at the federal and regional levels, including interdepartmental groups of public relations specialists, consultative mechanisms, expert councils, standing seminars, etc. Among such forms of CE by state authorities the following are worth listing:

Council by the President of the RF on Civil Society Development and Human Rights;

(1) Interdepartmental group of public relations specialists, (2) Consultative Council of the Subjects of the RF on International and Foreign Economic Relations, (3) Consultative Mechanism on Involvement of CSOs into preparation of the G8 Summit (St. Petersburg, 2006) and (4) Russian civil society Committee on celebration of the 60-th anniversary of the UN - all by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs;

Civic Council by the Federal Anti-Monopoly Agency;

Expert Council by the Committee on Education and Science of the State Duma;

Standing methodological seminar “Monitoring of Legislation and Law-enforcement Practice” of the Commission of the Council of Federation on Methodology of Enforcement of Constitutional Powers of the Council of Federation.

¹³ Press-release from 20.07.2005. Press-service of the Presidential Council on development of civil society and human rights. <http://www.sovetpamfilova.ru/>

¹⁴ Проскурякова Л. Подотчетность обществу и критерии легитимности исследовательских центров// Публичная политика в области мягкой безопасности: Балтийское измерение // Под ред. Сунгурова А. Проскуряковой Л. Торхова Д.. СПб, Норма, 2003 г.

¹⁵ Санкт-Петербург, г. Пушкин, 14-15 сентября 2004 г.

Provided such councils operate openly, have clear and understandable criteria of their work, including professional qualifications and balanced representation of their representatives, such structures may considerably raise the efficiency of work of the authorities in question.

Worth mentioning are quasi-mechanisms of public participation that do take place from time to time. This for includes interaction with CSOs, created and fully funded by the authorities (quasi-CSOs). Funding of such CSOs is effectuated by closed and/or dependent grantmakers, etc. These mechanisms of “civic engagement” are not only nearly ineffective, but also pull more financial, human and other resources than real CE forms; and moreover may cause a number of unpredictable negative consequences (seizure of existing forms of inter-sectoral dialogue, protest campaigns, waves of publication in the Western media, etc.).

Practice shows that the usage of quasi-mechanisms of CE, as well as usage of CE for resolution of the current political issues are most likely to lead to the following unintended consequences:

Seizure and non-acceptance of social and economic reforms by various social groups;

The raise of protest mood among various social groups of population (for example, demonstrations and marches or protest, strikes, protest voting);

Drop down of citizens’ (political) activism (active citizenship) in general, political apathy (for example low turnout at elections);

Absence of feedback from the population and groups of population on gaps, mistakes and malfunctioning elements of various governmental reforms;

As a consequence of absent feedback, considerable expenses on fine-tuning and reformulation of legislation and reforms, which could have been avoided through introduction of the CE practice at the early stages of development of bills/reforms.

Boycotting and non-acceptance by key CS actors of a number of political initiatives on CE, initiated by authorities

Under the conditions of domestic suppression, constant appeal of CS actors to influential public opinion actors (foreign media, international organizations, etc.).

Social and Economic Matters in Russia and the IFIs Investments

As of end of the year 2003 the World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Agency) portfolio in the Russian Federation encompassed 33 projects and 3 grants, constituting \$9.7 billion of net obligations of the World Bank to the Government of the Russian Federation.

Russia became a shareholder and a member of International Finance Corporation (IFC) in 1993. As of June 1, 2005, IFC has invested around USD 2 billion of its own funds and syndicated over USD 200 million in more than 100 projects across a variety of sectors, and its committed portfolio stands at USD 1,404 million. At present, Russia is the first largest country exposure in IFC. Recently, IFC has significantly increased its commitment to Russia, investing \$486 million in FY04 and nearly USD 450 million in FY03. A growing part of these investments is in Russian owned companies - a strong vote of confidence in Russia’s private

sector and a signal to other investors. To support Russia's efforts to diversify its economy, IFC also increased its investments in the real sector, becoming a leading investor in Russia's private infrastructure, forestry and IT. IFC's investments in Russia spread across the country's most important sectors including banking, leasing, housing finance, mining, agribusiness, pulp and paper, construction materials, oil and gas, telecommunications, information technologies, aviation, retail, and health care.

As of 31 August 2005, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) approved 228 investment projects in Russia for the total amount of 6,526 bln. EURO. Parallel to own funding, EBRD additionally attracted 11,6 bln EURO. 81 percent of all investments were made in the private sector. In 2004 EBRD investments in Russian reached 1,24 bln. And overall disbursements reached 853 mln EURO. Total commitments of the Bank reached 5.9 bln EURO. In Russia there was no sovereign-based lending since 2004, and the majority of projects approved in 2004 were in the production sphere. 25 percent of all EBRD investments are made in Russia. On average, the Bank invests in Russia 1,2 bln EURO a year.

Issues of poverty reduction and most acute issues of social and economic development are a priority for the WB and EBRD in Russian since 1991. Fighting poverty and speeding up social and economic development of Russia were highlighted by the President V. Putin as priorities of Russias development since 2003. According to EBRD, "Russian Federation – Transition Report Update"¹⁶ for 2003, as of the year 2000. 23,8 percent of the Russian population lived in poverty. The Report also shows the negative dynamics of a number of social indicators in the RF from 1995 through 2003. At the same time the inequality of revenues of various social groups in Russia Jinni coefficient (statistic inequality measurement) increased from 47,1 in 1995 to 52,1 in 2001. Data from the State Committee on Statistics testify to the negative development of the human capital in 1990ies.¹⁷18 At the times of limited state funding of the social welfare sphere, an important role for their resolution shifted to CSOs, such as All-Russia Union of Disabled Persons, self-help groups, credit unions, etc.

A pressing problem for Russia today is the rapid spread of social infectious diseases: TB, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infectious diseases. A spread of drug use ARV drugs. Thus, by the end of 2004, official number of HIV cases, registered in the RF since the beginning of the pandemic, reached over 340 000.¹⁹ However, the factual overall number of cases is much higher: according to estimations of the people, living with HIV/AIDS in the RF, as of 2003 the number of cases reached 860 000 (420 000–1 400 000).²⁰ The biggest share of the new HIV-infections is with young people. Each year over three quarters of the new HIV-infections is diagnosed with people aged 15-29.²¹ The pandemic in Russia is spreading through a great number of young people, using ARV drugs.²² Russian and international CSOs, including European Cities Against Drugs (ECAD), NAN Foundation and Transatlantic Partners Against

¹⁶ Report "Russian Federation – Transition Report Update". Официальный сайт Европейского банка реконструкции и развития <http://www.ebrd.org/>

¹⁷ See Proskuryakova L. Changing Security Agenda in Russia and Europe's North. The New Role for Cross-Sectoral Interactions in New Security Challenges as Challenges to Peace Research. St.Petersburg University Press, 2004.

¹⁸ Glaziev S., Kara-Murza S., Batchikov S. The White Book. Economic reforms in Russia 1991-2001. Moscow, 2003. P. 33-34

¹⁹ AIDS Center in the RF, 2005; EuroHIV, 2005

²⁰ Data of the UNAIDS, 2004

²¹ Pokrovsky, 2005; EuroHIV, 2005; Field, 2004

²² See Special Report on HIV/AIDS prevention, December 2005 / UNAIDS <http://www.unaids.org/epi2005/index.html>

AIDS (TPAA) make a significant contribution to fighting HIV/AIDS through introducing innovative methods to fight social diseases and attracting alternative sources of funding.

The average life expectancy in Russia decreased and average life expectancy among men dropped to 57,3 years. According to the joint analytical report of violence in Russia, issued by the Ministry of Healthcare of the RF and the World Health Organization on 7 July 2003, annual suicide rate in Russia almost 3 times surpassed the similar figure in the Western Europe. Another matter of importance in Russia is home violence: according to research data, around 70 percent of women are subject to violence at a certain time of their life²³. Resolution of these problems is the work of CSOs, for example the Foundation for the Support of Civic Initiatives "FOCUS", Center "Anna" (Association No to Violence), Consortium of women's NGOs, that also cooperate with regional authorities and intergovernmental organizations (UNIFEM, UNDP, etc.).

Ключевые элементы политики взаимодействия с общественностью Всемирного банка в России

According to the WB data, around 70% of the Bank's projects, approved since 2000, previewed various opportunities for civic engagement.

Members of the WB Board of Directors were broadly supportive of analytical research of the WB's paper "Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and Civil Society Organizations", and its key lessons and issues that have emerged over the past few years of the Bank's experience of engaging CSOs in implementation of concrete field operations, as well as in the process of policy dialogue, including the outlined 10-point action plan, aimed at improving the Bank's engagement with CSOs. The following provisions of the action plan are relevant at the national level and one may hope they will be implemented in Russia:

Pilot a new Bank-wide monitoring and evaluation system for civic engagement.

Conduct a review of Bank funds available for civil society engagement in operations and policy dialogue, and explore possible realignment or restructuring.

Review the Bank's procurement framework with a view toward facilitating collaboration with CSOs.

Institute an integrated learning program for ... capacity-building for CSOs on how to work effectively with the Bank and its member governments.

As of end 2003 the Bank's structure comprised 120 specialists on interaction with civil society to cover the whole range of CE issues and to provide for all Bank's obligations in this sphere. As a rule, these are social scientists and public relations specialists, which have the necessary qualifications to interact with civil society. Specialists on social and environmental sustainability are integrated in various Bank's Departments and Country offices (for example in IFC this is true for 60 percent of such specialists).

²³ Fifth periodical Report of the RF at the Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of the UN (CEDAW/USR/5), 543th and 544th sessions, 25 January 2002.

Recommendations on CE could be found in at least 15 operational policies of the Bank and operational directives. The recent reports of the International Development Agency (IDA), the World Development Reports for 2000 and 2004, cover a number of approaches to CE, integrated in the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).²⁴ Comprehensive documentation on CE developed by the WB should become the matter of thorough study by the Russian executive authorities in order to build on this experience. Formal WB papers on public consultations are already in demand at the highest level. For example, heads of G8 states, upon the results of the 8 July 2005 Summit in Gleneagles, expressed their intention to suggest that the WB develops and implements, based on best practice and in consultation with the Governments of the host countries and local communities, the Guiding Principles tasked to provide for its investments into the climate-sensitive sectors, in order to define what impact could climate risks have and what are the possibilities to manage these risks more efficiently”. Furthermore, it was decided to suggest that other multilateral and bilateral agencies working on development issues approve the Guiding Principles of the WB or develop and implement similar Guiding Principles.²⁵

In 1998 the WB issued the paper “The Bank’s Relations with NGOs: Issues and Directions”, which gives an overview of relations between the WB and CS from 1981 through 1998. The document, not being an official Bank’s document, was reviewed and adopted by the WB’s Board of Directors in August 1998. To make a comparison with similar research carried out by CSOs in Russia, it can be suggested that Russian executive authorities organize tender competitions for research on CE matters, the outcome of which would be later taken into consideration in development and implementation of comprehensive social and economic, sectoral development strategies.

An overview of the Bank’s relations with CSOs at a later (recent) stage from 1998 to 2003 was made in the paper “Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and Civil Society Organizations”, first draft of which issued on 24 October 2003. In March 2005 the paper was finalized and considered at the Board of Directors. This documents introduces three categories of the WB’s interaction with CS: (1) facilitation, (2) dialogue and (3) partnership and consultation.

A multitude of CE forms ideally should be previewed at all stages of project, implemented with the financial support of the WB. Below are some examples of the WB CE practices in Russia.

A number of informal meetings with CSOs were carried out by the WB Country Director in Russia and the WB Vice-President for ECA region. The meetings were organized as one-time informal events (for example, luncheon meetings). In the course of the meetings, CSOs had an opportunity to express their concerns on a number of issues, to which they would like to draw WB’s attention. Among these issues of concern are: legislation unfavorable for Russian NGOs, facilitation of dialogue with the authorities, environmental matters, etc. In cases when high-ranking officials of members of the Board of Directors make business trips to countries of operation, their working schedule usually implies meetings with CSOs.

²⁴ Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and Civil Society Organizations. A Draft for Discussion, 24 October 2003. Civil Society Team, External Affairs Vice-Presidency, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Vice-Presidency, The World Bank.

²⁵ Documents, adopted at the Summit of the Heads of States and Governments of the G8, Great Britain, Gleneagles, July 7, 2005./ Russian MFA, 11 July 2005 / www.mid.ru/

In December 2002, Russian country office of the World Bank for the first time gathered Civil Society Consultative Council. At the beginning, the Council was for the most part composed of Moscow-based CSOs. By the end of 2004, participants to the meetings of the Council were organizations from Barnaul, Novokuznetsk, Novosibirsk. Moreover, the Council had representation of various CS sectors, including credit unions, gender groups, research centers, national and ethnic minorities' groups, organizations of people with special needs. It is obvious that possibilities for participations from various Russia's regions and CS sectors to take part in the meetings, should be further widened.

The Council does not have a permanent membership, which may vary depending on the issues on the agenda. Each time around 15 CSO representatives attend the meetings, which makes the Council composition rather flexible.

The largest consultations with stakeholders (CSOs, business groups, etc.) were carried out on implementation of the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for the years 2003-2005. Consultations were organized in Russia's regions in the summer of 2003. Unfortunately, for this term of CAS the Bank did not preview opportunities for consultations before CAS was approved at the Board of Directors, when there still existed a possibility to take into consideration comments received and incorporate them in the text of the Strategy.

The World Bank actively disseminates information about own activity and contributed to information awareness. However, most part of this work is concentrated at the global and regional (ECA) levels. Events at the ECA level include monthly newsletters in Russian and English, as well as weekly information updates (at the global level), reviews of press on the WB in general and thematic новости (например, по вопросам сокращения бедности, исследованиям и др.), electronic newsletters by country and by region, electronic newsletters on Bank's partnerships initiatives and global programs. The WB's staff called Civil Society Group (at the regional and departmental level) and the Civil Society Team (at the global level) also prepare newsletters on key issues of their work.

A separate part of the WB's portal is devoted to CE matters and has references to WB's publications and studies; announcements of CS consultations; lists of the WB's civil society staff at all levels; links to web-sites of CSOs that specialize in monitoring of the WB, including those that take a critical stand with regard to WB's operations.

Taking into consideration the obligatory maintenance and updates of web-sites and other e-resources by the Russian ministries and agencies, it is advisable to develop similar information resources with interactive options for dialogue with civil society.

Despite the serious efforts of the WB to organize efficient interaction with CS, a number of Russian CSOs, its members and experts are concerned with an absence of well-thought regional priorities and interaction with Russia's regions (not only regional capitals) and limited practice of attraction of local experts. Many emerging conflicts or disputable matters from the part of sub-contractors – project executors (private sector organizations) tend to take long time until a decision from a higher-ranking authority is taken.

It may be concluded that the potential of interaction with Russian CSOs is not fully realized by the WB in Russia: complex hierarchy of decision-making and great bureaucracy, noted by Russian CSOs, seriously hamper interaction between CSOs and the Bank. A conclusion can be made here on the necessity of a more active public awareness, in particular provision of information to grassroots organizations, about Bank's work in Russia. This may be done, for example, through electronic information updates of the WB Russia Country Office.

Moreover, more widely should be used the practice of compiling short reports (including summaries of the comments received and the prospects of their consideration) by the end of the WB's meetings and civil society consultations in Russia. Issues that are central at CE events, could be better worked through if additional time and resources could be devoted to their (issues') preliminary development. In this case, at the CE events the WB would have an opportunity not only to facilitate opinions' exchange, but also contribute to the search for solutions to pressing problems.

Educational and information programs on the WB in Russia may be organized by the research and educational centers that specialize in global economic issues. Most likely, there is also the need to provide multiple-approach information the journalists on the essence of the WB's and other IFIs' work in Russia, as the current publications are at best not properly structured.

However, it should be stated that a well spelled out CE policy of the WB faces a number of challenges in its implementation in Russia, which not only lower the quality the policy, but also lower the quality of project and reforms. Among these challenges one could list regular cases of incompatibility of such policy and practice. For example, Russian authorities which are partners in implementation of the WB projects, at times only formally follow recommendations (i.e. invite co-opted organizations, publish information in newspapers with little circulation, etc.). Cases are often when certain Russian bodies of executive authorities force IFIs to interact with quasi-NGOs. In some cases, the WB's rules for CE contradict the disabling Russian legislation on the matter. Furthermore, a number of Russian legislative acts, sectoral norms and practices of the Russian legislation contradict the exemplar practice of CE events. These inconsistencies should be minimized by development of the Russian legislative basis, in particular in the part of unmotivated complicated budgetary limitations and prohibitions that apply to all CSOs operating in Russia, with the use of open mechanisms of public discussion.

In cases of mistakes caused by difficulties in implementation of CE policy, Russian citizens would as a rule blame the Russian authorities and appeal to IFIs and other intergovernmental bodies (UN, European Court on Human Rights, Council of Europe, foreign national authorities, etc.).

Key element of CE of EBRD in Russia

EBRD does not have a separate document devoted to CE. Principles of CE are integrated in the sectoral and strategy policy papers in the countries of the Bank's operation.

Certain principles of CE were published in the EBRD Public Information Policy (PIP) in September 1997. All Bank's obligations to ensure transparency of its operations are based on PIP and on the Rules of Procedure on the establishment of the Independent Recourse Mechanism (IRM) created in 2004. Both of these documents and a number other key policy documents were translated into Russian and placed on the Bank's web-site. In the course of formulating Country Strategies, EBRD previews the e-consultation process, organized at its official web-site. The people and CSOs may learn about any Bank's project from its Project Summary Document (PSD), which contains brief project description, its goals, key financial indicators and an outline of its environmental impact assessment.

The institutional structure of EBRD does not preview specialists, responsible for CE in the EBRD country offices. Only two specialists, a manager and a consultant, are directly tasked to work on civic engagement issues at the EBRD headquarters in London, in the Communications Department, Outreach and NGO Relations Unit. There specialists provide

for an effective information exchange on CE matters between the country offices and Bank's headquarters. Outreach and NGO Relations Unit is responsible for gathering and processing comments, obtained in the course of consultations with civil society on Bank's policy and strategy papers, as well as other information requests from CSOs, addressed to EBRD, which should not remain unanswered. Taking into consideration the number of countries of Bank's operations, all of them requiring implementation of CE principles and actions, one can imagine the great volume of work of these specialists. By all means, the overall number of CE events and projects in general would have increased if EBRD introduced new positions of CE specialists in its country offices.

The key stakeholders and parties for interaction for EBRD are local communities, non-governmental organizations, international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral environmental organizations and other structures, including national and sub-national authorities and business.

In 2005 EBRD for the first time prepared and disseminated the special NGO Newsletter, prepared in two Bank's official languages – Russian and English. This newsletter is one of a series of information resources, which include EBRD News updates; e-consultations with civil society through EBRD web-site; NGO Dialogues mailing list (available to NGOs only upon request and registration of an NGO by the EBRD staff) and NGO updates (available also to the public). Of special attention is the worthy intention of EBRD to create separate web-sites for each country of its operation in local languages.

Useful advice for NGOs, also placed at EBRD web-site in 2005 is a brief overview of the Bank's rationale to work with NGOs. Furthermore, the advice covers concrete opportunities/mechanisms for CSOs to actively engage with the Bank.

Like in the WB, in cases when EBRD senior managers or members of the Board of Directors travel to countries of operation, their working agenda as a rule includes meetings with CSOs. In selecting from CSOs-candidates for participation in the Bank's events, such as annual meetings or consultations with CS, EBRD, like the WB, relies of its country offices. However, unlike the WB country offices, EBRD, unfortunately, does not have specialists responsible for the work with CS. The key criterion for selection of the participants is the direct connection between the issues discussed with the organization's field of activity, previous experience of interaction with the Bank, etc.

Like the WB, parallel to the official program of the annual meeting, EBRD arranges for a special agenda and meetings for CSOs that take part in the event as observers. In formulating such a side program, the Bank makes a effort to cover a maximum number of topics of interest for participants.

At certain formal and informal meetings of EBRD managers with CSOs, NGO Outreach Relations Manager would take notes and prepare minutes of the meetings, which is later disseminated for comments among all participants, including CSOs, disrespectful of the fact that such minutes are an internal Bank's document.²⁶

EBRD organizes and hold consultations with CS on projects that require environmental impact assessment (EIA). CE events on projects, carried out with the financial support of EBRD in Russia are mostly linked with environmental and nature protection matters and take place at the project stage environmental procedures. The first consultations of a company-

²⁶ Interview with D. Caloianu, Head of the Outreach and NGO Relations Unit, EBRD (London), July 2005

contractor, according to EBRD procedures (likewise with IFC) are carried out at the very early stage of a project called scoping meetings. Such practice, provided comments and concerns received in the course of consultations from CSOs and local communities are taken into account, could be called a model practice, and could well be replicated by the Russian executive authorities in implementation of budget-funded projects, as well as set in the environmental legislation as a key requirement to commercial companies.

A difficult project for EBRD in Russia in terms of CE became the projects of oil and gas industry development “Sakhalin” (especially “Sakhalin-2”). Judging by the number of stakeholders, contradicting interests and CS protest actions, “Sakhalin-2” may be compared with the oil pipeline construction project Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan²⁷. EBRD developed “Sakhalin Oblast Action Plan” (April 2004), which was placed on EBRD’s web-site.

Watchdog CSOs, monitoring the work of IFIs, such as CEE Bankwatch²⁸, claim that oil and gas companies working in Sakhalin Oblast since 1994, evoke irreversible damage to the endangered Western Gray Whales species, marine environment of the region and traditional lifestyle of thousands of local fishermen. According to NGOs-members of the “Sakhalin Environmental Watch” coalition, most dangerous are plans to construct two 800-km oil and gas pipelines in the seismic regions, with the tentative support from EBRD. Russian and international CS organizations joined forces in a coalition and undertake a number of measures to advocate in favor of their position and the interests of the local population, including formal and informal meetings with EBRD officials and Russian authorities, also suggesting a number of changes, which should be accepted by the companies, implementing the project.

Despite all difficulties of interaction even in such large-scale and important projects, EBRD considers CE to be of crucial importance. The reason for such a position is that open information exchange and dialogue with CSO and local communities helps the Bank create a better impact in the region: a more effective project implementation, including: cutting down financial costs; prevent various risks; achieving mutual understanding between the companies, authorities, and local communities; escape unwanted delays in project implementation in the long run, etc.

Russian EBRD offices, as well as Bank’s office in other countries, do not publish large volumes of information materials on Bank’s work for wide public dissemination, as the Bank does not see such a need. With regard to concrete projects, responsible companies-contractors and Russian authorities initiate development and dissemination, as well as translation of project documentation for stakeholders.

If required, for example at the final project stage, or after project completion, the Bank organizes public hearings with participation of interested CSOs from the project region.

Recommendations on Development and Implementation of an Effective CE Policy

First of all, CE Policy should be formalized and institutionalized, as well as based on clear and understandable criteria. Individual human approach and informal dialogue should be noted and indispensable in CE events in outside Russia’s capitals and regional centers, not underestimating the importance of formal procedures.

²⁷ The project is co-funded by EBRD and IFC.

²⁸ CEE Bankwatch, <http://www.bankwatch.org/>

Secondly, after the CE documents were adopted, they should become obligatory for implementation for employees of an organization/agency at all levels. Circumvention or delays should not take place.

Third, if necessary, employees of an organization/agency may set up special educational programs and training on the best way to implement CE policies.

Fourth, all departments and units of an organization/agency or interdepartmental groups should take part in development and implementation of a CE policy.

Fifth, the principle of openness in development and introducing changes (review, amendments, etc.) to the documents, regulating CE policy.

Sixth, CE policy should be linked or integrated in the key policy documents of an organization/ agency (for example, corporate policies and strategies, such as EBRD Country Strategies, WB Country Assistance Strategy; mid-term development programs of the Ministry for Economic Development and Trade, etc.).

Seventh, CE events should be organized in a way that all stakeholders are represented (with consideration of age, gender, social and geographic difference/balance). All participants should be treated as equal and may freely express their opinions and positions. In cases of clashes of interest of multiple stakeholders, additional weight is with the local communities groups (affected groups), since their opinions may have a long-lasting delayed impact on the project outcome.

Eight, a special budget and other resources should be previewed for planning, preparation and implementation of CE events. For example, for the functioning of the Civic Chamber of the RF a separate budget line was previewed.

Tips for setting up CE mechanisms for IFIs and Russian Officials

In the strategy of interaction with the WB, developed by Russian NGOs in 2002, the following necessary forms of CE (also relevant for NGO engagement with EBRD) were outlined:

Organizing social meetings of CSOs for development of common positions and suggestions with regard to projects, funded by IFIs in Russia.

Take part in CS consultations on a number of pressing issues; make efforts to develop a consolidated position of interested social groups and local communities on strategic papers, programs and projects, funded by IFIs in Russia.

In order for suggestions to make amendments in official documents and project implementation plans to be taken into consideration should be introduced at the stage of project development (for example, the aforementioned CS consultations should take place at the early stages, for example in the form of scoping meetings).

Initiate and take part in civil society (independent) expertise of strategies, programs and projects, funded by IFIs; hold social and gender audits and other forms of CS expertise.

Gather public opinion data on acute issues linked to implementation of strategic documents, projects and programs, funded by IFIs in Russia.

Cooperate with already existing consultative bodies at the national, regional and global levels, such as: ECA region NGO Working Group on interaction with the WB, Joint Facilitation Committee, WB's External Gender Consultative Group, etc.

Organize information campaigns through joining efforts and resources of CSOs and IFIs on matters of mutual interest.

IFIs could be more active in awareness rising and information dissemination, in cooperation with CS network organizations, including via mass media, on work, including general principles of work and policies, as well as implementation of concrete projects.

IFIs may create ad hoc expert groups in the fields of own activity, using the mechanism of wide public participation in CE events. For example, participation in CE events of various stakeholders, including those that traditionally have limited opportunities, such as: youth, local (grassroots) organizations, etc.

IFIs and executive authorities could arrange for an independent expertise of its grant programs, including the feedback from grant recipients and evaluation of the projects-winners of grant competitions. Thus, international organizations and executive authorities could considerably raise effectiveness of their grant programs, even those with relatively small grant budget, track possible corrupt practices in the course of grant competitions and project execution. In the course of grant competitions, it is important to form an independent expert council/board (or other independent body), which takes final decisions in selecting the winners. Furthermore, announcement of the grant competition and grant documentation should be standardized and include the text of grant agreement, principles of expert councils composition, rules for reporting and project evaluation (audit), as well as other relevant information that is freely accessible to public.

International organizations and national decision-makers may decide to arrange for and regularly update own database of CSOs, or use the existing databases. In any case, it is useful to request a selection of organizations and their contact information by sector/region in the NGO support centers or national/regional umbrella organizations.

It is not very effective to conclude an agreement to organize CE events with commercial companies, since commercial sub-contractors in many cases have difficulties finding common language both with CSOs and authorities. It would be of greater use to attract professional expert CSOs as mediators to hold consultations with CS and dialogue between IFIs, authorities, business and CSOs (for example Russian Regional Resource Center, CEE Bankwatch, etc.).

An absolute necessity if the translation of the project documentation into Russian, which should be double-checked for accuracy of terminology.

Structural units of international organizations on evaluation of own work should be able to accept for consideration complaints from the part of CSOs from the countries of operation.

Organization of CE events

At the meetings with CS, is a Moderator has a pre-defined list of presenters and/or interventions, the procedure for compiling such a list should be clear for all participants.

Participants from the part of CSOs should be informed in advance on such a procedure. Another option is to have the procedure discussed at the beginning of the meeting/event. International organizations that aim to launch a more active consultation CS process, may do so with the leading role of their country office, in addition to e-consultations.

At a CE event, it may well be possible to select two co-moderators, one of which will be from among CSOs and another will represent authorities or an international organization. Co-moderators may change each session, giving a possibility to moderate the meeting to various CS organizations. If the agenda of the meeting is agreed in advance with international agencies / authorities, this process should be open and transparent. Co-moderators of the meeting should observe neutrality in relation to the issue discussed. Moreover, CSO representatives, chairing the meeting, should be both independent organizations monitoring the work authorities/IFIs, and partner organizations of authorities/IFIs (for example sub-contractors).

A possibility for CSOs to influence upon the agenda is a good practice. However, it is not advisable that one CSO or a group of CSOs monopolizes the process. A solution here could be the decision to invite a number of competent and strong international CSOs that will lead the agenda thematically and time wise.

During the meeting it is important to observe the time schedule for interventions of participants. All CSO participants should have equal time for an intervention and comments/questions disrespective of the seeming importance of an issue.

Evaluation and analysis of the work undertaken

It is advisable to develop and disseminate an evaluation questionnaire for participants in order to get a feedback on the level of their satisfaction with the event and identify the weak spots in logistics of content. The participants should be reminded of the importance to fill in the forms, and the agenda should preview special time for this.

It is most likely that an active information dissemination and awareness is required through CSOs from various regions and networks on the possibility to take part in annual meetings and other events open for CSO participation, organized by international agencies; public hearings organized by national authorities; grant programs of international agencies and authorities. In selecting the candidates for participation in events (when the number of participants is limited) priority should be given to organizations, which have professional analytical/expert knowledge, or organizations that represent interests of larger social groups (have big membership, wide network of partners within and outside the country, are members of national or international network, provide assistance to a great number of beneficiaries from their target group).

List of acronyms

CE	Civic Engagement
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe region
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizens Participation, international civil society umbrella organization
CPP	Center for public policy
CS	Civil society
CSI	Civil Society Index, international project of CIVICUS
CSO	Civil society organization
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECA	Europe and Central Asia region (by the WB classification includes Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States, Turkey and South-East Europe)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, part of the World Bank Group
IDA	International Development Agency, part of the World Bank Group
IFC	International Finance Corporation, part of the World Bank Group
IFI	International financial institutions
IRM	Independent Recourse Mechanism, part of EBRD
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OSI	Open Society Institute
RF	Russian Federation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	the World Bank Group. The present paper looks at 3 out of the 5 institutions of the World Bank Group – IBRD, WBI and IFC.
WHO	World Health Organization
WBI	World Bank Institute, part of the World Bank Group