

Citi Foundation



**Press-release
November 25, 2008**

Over \$150 000 to Support Small Business and Expand the Labor Market.

*Citi Foundation and the Fund for Sustainable Development have announced its new program
"Improving Communities Right Now"*

November 2008 - the Fund for Sustainable Development is launching a new CITI Foundation funded 2-year program Improving Communities Right Now Program at two location: Gorodetsky Region in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Nevyansky Region in Sverdlovskaya Oblast. The budget of this Program is \$157,000.

This new initiative will help communities gain more confidence in conditions of a market economy by offering new business opportunities to community members, including first-time entrepreneurs and youth.

The Program will promote sustainable community development by offering support to small businesses and expanding the local labor market. Such activities are especially topical in view of the full-scale introduction, since January 1, 2008, of Federal Law # 131 "On the General Principles of the Organization of Local Self-Government in the Russian Federation".

Oleg Fokin, FSD Executive Director, said: "Improving Communities Right Now Program is targeted toward making the lives and work of people living in the two selected municipalities more secure in market conditions by opening new business opportunities. It is of exceptional significance to strengthen civic and business initiatives in remote rural communities and raise all available local resources (material, financial and intellectual) for their development. The goal of our joint Program with Citi is to successfully attain these objectives."

Tatiana Avramenko, Community Relations Officer at ZAO Citibank said: "We believe that in today's rapidly changing environment support for micro entrepreneurs is of key importance. Thus Citi assists the public in making the right choices in their financial planning and getting confidence in the future."

Objectives:

- Analyze local community priorities
- Identify small business needs to adapt it to the changing conditions of a market economy
- Training for first-time entrepreneurs
- Consultations on business project development
- Grant contest of projects designed by entrepreneurs and a practical implementation of these projects

The Program consists of four components:

- I. Needs assessment and stakeholder engagement
- II. Training for the target group
- III. Grant contest of business projects
- IV. Program monitoring and evaluation

The Program will provide training to community members planning to start their own business and also to local officials in the practical aspects of opening, running and further developing a small private business in the forest, agriculture and ecotourism sectors. Local residents will have a chance to prepare their own business projects of starting new or modernizing already

existing small businesses. FSD will organize grant contests of business projects developed during the training.

FSD will manage the Program in cooperation with local partners: Environmental Education and Information Center, an NGO from Yekaterinburg, and Nature-Saving Technologies Center, an NGO from Nizhny Novgorod.

As a result of the Program, nearly 100 community members will attend 4 seminars at which they will design at least 30 business projects of opening/developing their own small businesses; and the best six projects will be granted financial support on a competitive basis. It is expected that at least five small businesses will be opened or modernized and nearly 30 new jobs will be created.

The Fund for Sustainable Development (FSD) is an independent, nongovernmental, non-profit Russian foundation created to carry out projects addressing environmental issues and supporting socially responsible community development throughout the Russian Federation. The mission of FSD is to enhance public-private cooperation in fulfilling targeted projects that emphasize sustainable regional and community development. www.fund-sd.ru

Citi Foundation

The Citi Foundation is committed to enhancing economic opportunities for underserved individuals and families in the communities where we work throughout the world. Globally, the Citi Foundation is focusing its giving on Microfinance and Micro entrepreneurship, which helps individuals become economically self-sufficient; Small and Growing Businesses leading to economic expansion and job creation; Education, which prepares young people for personal and professional success; Financial Education, which helps individuals make informed financial decisions; and the Environment with a focus on sustainable enterprises that generate jobs and stimulate economic growth while preserving the environment. In the U.S. and Canada, the Citi Foundation supports Community Development programs that help build and revitalize neighborhoods and Education programs that prepare students for college and careers. Additional information can be found at <http://www.citigroupfoundation.org>

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