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Institution Transformation: Pooling the Efforts of Municipalities, Socially-responsible Businesses and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Rio+10 Summit discussions and analysis helped to understand that besides general idea of sustainable development of mankind each country has its own level of sustainability. This level is conditioned on nature, and human resources capacity, and economy development history, and institutions operating including cultural traditions that each country possesses and masters. And there are some common management rules and approaches that

Institutions changes in environmental protection and nature resources management in Russia during the last tree years led to weakening of the state ecological agencies at territories; majority of Oblasts Ecological Funds were closed down. Such a situation promotes NGOs and municipal authorities to take more active position in environment and nature protection issues. But their activities are not effectively supported legally; it's still lack of democratic management mechanisms and models in the country.

International co-operation and adaptation of more democratic approaches to decision-making in all aspects of environment protection and nature management brought into life in Russia a block of so called "social" tools, that include involving a wide citizen participation, establishing cities/regions Co-ordination Councils, building social partnership, supporting public eco-expertise, introducing new information strategies, strengthening environmental education, undertaking concrete activities, designing and implementing local action plans. The most efficient models combining different mechanisms of democratisation of decision-making at local levels are environmental local action plan (LEAP) and community actions plans (CAP). These models were tested and adapted in many post-socialists countries by ISC- Institute for Sustainable Communities - an NGO with a head-quarter in the US, that carried out (together with the local staff from its overseas offices) about 30 projects in 14 country at grass-root level during last 10 years, including program ROLL in Russia.

All these tools were tested and successfully applied within ROLL program - Replication of Lessons Learnt - that has been implementing in Russia since 1996. More then 300 projects were supported within ROLL program; they address short and mid-term socioeconomic issues with the solution of environmental problems. The ROLL program was designed to help attain these goals by supporting sustainable economic growth; implementing and replicating low-cost and effective nature protection and pollution reduction measures; and building bridges among businesses and governmental and non-governmental organizations to solve common environmental problems at the national, regional, and local levels. Thus program ROLL turned out to be the apt illustration of efficient international cooperation in upgrading environmental policies in Russia in accordance with the global community's new priority, i.e., strategies for sustainable development.

Almost all these projects demonstrate practical activities and show approved "good practices" in "brown" and "green" categories. ROLL projects: established the basis for new laws and regulations; improved natural resources planning and management; disseminated new low-cost methods of pollution prevention and reduction; developed and disseminated new environmental education methods and curricula; expanded the use and acceptability of health risk assessment methods to assist environmental managers; improved the status and broadened the role of NGOs in environmental and health decision-making.

The program is open to variety of ecology concerned organisations business, NGOs, state-run. The main impact of multiple-subject environmental projects initiated on a local level is synergetic effect, due to introducing "model of engagement", or "community-based strategy"

that mean building a partnership relations with local and regional authorities, independent experts, combining efforts of intellectual and organizational resources in solving crucial issues in Russia. The municipals at different levels were given a chance to "learn through doing" working with all sectors in such subprograms, as "Advanced energy and resource-saving technology in the Volga Federal District", "Support initiatives for the introduction of or improvement in ecological management and environmental technology".

These six year of activities in introducing new democratic tools, and models of management in environmental protection area generated the main impact of the whole program- more then 60 % of projects implemented within ROLL continue to utilize the same "good practices", and found financial support for their projects; about 1500 local partner organizations and about 2000 interested and responsible institutions involved into projects continue to use new tools in their regions.