

Darwin 14:45 Biodiversity in Tomsk Taiga

Minutes of Meeting at Tree Council, London, 6th February 2007

by Janet Sackman February 12th 2007

1. Attendees

Tree Council: Pauline Buchanan-Black (PBB), Margaret Lipscombe (ML)

WTA Education Services: Janet Sackman (JS), Wayne Talbot (WT)

Institute of International Safety: Svetlana Kozlova (SK)

2. Introduction

WT opened the meeting by explaining that SK had completed her training course at Traidcraft, including a visit to the Spring Trade Fair at the NEC in Birmingham. Whilst SK had reduced the number of days of her visit by making her date of return two days earlier and had arrived half a day later due to visa problems, WT felt that the time in the UK had been an essential part of the project's development and thanked PBB for the Tree Council's commitment and support for SK to be here.

3. Update on Traidcraft course

SK had attended a tailored training course provided by Traidcraft after negotiations with WTA to give her insight into the workings of the UK market and introduce her to the principles of marketing as an aid to developing trade in the various elements of the project.

Although SK declined to participate in the feedback session at the end of the training with Helen McCree of Traidcraft and WT, who had traveled to Birmingham on 5th February to be there whilst the feedback session took place, SK was positive about the experience of undergoing the training and said she had learned a lot of useful things.

JS would contact Traidcraft to obtain written evaluation from them on the course.

Action: JS to obtain written feedback from Traidcraft on the course. **Due:** 28th Feb 2007

SK presented her findings from the training in the form of the notes included here:

Topics to be discussed in Tomsk

- How to create the price for products
- Export issues such as who of the importer and exporter will be responsible for different kind of duties



- Assessment of logistics compliance with Health and environmental requirements and product specifications to be discussed with potential importers and exporters
- Review and communication trends in market and customer expectations for example organic foods, vegetarian options, growing interest in fair trade, environmental and social issues in food production
- Staff management in Traidcraft

Activities to discuss the topics in Tomsk

- Internal workshop for IIES staff
- Meetings with pine nuts companies and birch bark companies
- To prepare a briefing document about the development of the marketing with UK.
- To distribute briefing materials to relevant groups and stakeholders
- Seminar in May-June for Siberian exporters
- To write an article in the regional newspaper and radio

Key points about pine nuts

- Siberian pine nuts may be used as ingredients in specialty dishes
- We can promote Siberian pine nuts using environmental and social value of our pine nuts as value of Siberian including the importance of supporting of local communities to prevent illegal logging and birch bark cutting
- Siberian pine nuts can be introduced to potential importers using the principle of fair trade and sustainable forest usage through adopting the UK experience
- Negotiation about pine nuts was started with Quality Kernels Ltd during Svetlana's visit to UK.

Recommended strategy for pine nuts

- 1) Meetings with Siberia pine nuts companies will be conducted upon arrival of Svetlana to Tomsk to discuss questions from Quality Kernels Ltd and requirements of UK importers to the overseas suppliers
- 2) It was decided to send 20 kg of pine nuts to the Quality Kernels Ltd company in order to see how well they can be adopted by local manufacture equipment in the producing of the products by this company
- 3) Provision of pine nut recipes for evaluation as specialty foods and dishes by Quality Kernels
- 4) If the Quality Kernels Ltd company agrees to develop marketing with Siberia pine nuts company IIES will be as an intermediate between them in order to advice Siberia pine nuts company how to build partnership with UK importer



Birch bark

- There is a small opportunity for birch bark was identified during the visit. People in the UK do not know birch bark products either birch bark materials. Those who were trying to sell birch bark products 10-15 years ago failed and do not want to take a risk anymore. Nevertheless during Svetlana's visit to the Spring Fair One company (Russian experience) agreed to analyze birch bark jewellery and to let IIES know how successful can be to sell them. They also can try to sell them in their shop
- It was recommended by the Traidcraft to look at the whole marketing of non-food products and to find out what products can be made from Birch bark and be used by UK consumers in the dairy life. In this case it was recommended to think about different ranges of products that can be interested for UK consumers, new ideas of using of birch bark regarding UK people needs, for example, home office facilities, notebook, picture frames. Traidcraft can help to create new design and to test the new products among UK importers.
- It is also could be interested to engage schools pupils in the UK in producing of birch bark products like pupils of local schools do in the Tomsk region

Recommended strategy for birch bark

- 1) Meetings with Birch bark companies will be conducted upon arrival of Svetlana to Tomsk in order to discuss the problems identified in the development of birch bark products marketing in the UK and suggestions described above. IIES will let UK partners know opinion Tomsk birch partners about suggestions UK partners.
- 2) IIES will contact Russian experience company to ask their opinion about birch bark jewelry that were advertised by Svetlana during her visit in the UK and other products that they could be interested to sell in their shop.
- 3) If Russian experience company will be interested in birch bark products Siberia birch bark company could send them samples of the products to sell in their shop.
- 4) Review third year budget for opportunity to employ designer and pay for samples of UK focused products.

Ecotourism

- There is an interest for developing of ecotourism in Siberia was identified focusing on activity holidays such as cycling, walking or skiing.
- Siberia is considered to be new niche for international ecotourism that has been developing last years mostly. UK tour operators are seeking for the new places for their visitors and they could be interested in Siberia.

Recommended strategy for ecotourism

- 1) To conduct marketing research for ecotourism in Siberia in order to find out appropriate tour companies that could be interested in the developing of their tours there.
- 2) To form a group of chosen tour operators to visit Siberia and confirm them ability to implement proposed tours. Conduct a visit of chosen tour operators to Siberia in order to show them proposed hotels, restaurants and tours.



- 3) To analyze opinion of the tour operators and improve proposed tours.
- 4) To develop cooperation with those tour operators who will be interested in Siberia tours after their visit.
- 5) To create a network in Siberia with representatives of authorities, restaurants and others groups who could be involved in the development of ecotourism.
- 6) Traidcraft and its partners have experience in the development of local tours like IIES propose and ready to cooperate with IIES and implement required research.

4. Discussion of training outcomes

Topics to be discussed in Tomsk

All agreed that the training at Traidcraft seems to have provided SK with invaluable insight into the functioning of UK markets and how this knowledge could be applied in Russia to support the endeavours to introduce FSC certification as well as develop trade in pine nuts, birch bark products and ecotourism.

Activities to discuss the topics in Tomsk

SK's plans to develop a seminar / workshop in which to explain her findings in the UK were outlined and the timings discussed regarding the article in the local newspaper. Given that a trip to the UK was in itself a newsworthy item, it was explained by SK that such publicity in advance of the workshop would have the effect of generating more interested participants than the potential venue could hold, based on previous experience. It was agreed that the newspaper article would be produced after the seminar to avoid this happening.

Action: SK to ensure newspaper article / other publicity appears after the seminar not before.

Key points about pine nuts

PBB and ML welcomed the suggestion that the back story of Siberian pine nuts be used as a selling feature for the nuts, as this would give profile to the forest and the lives of the people involved in their harvesting.

Recommended strategy for pine nuts

The significance of the contact with Quality Kernels Ltd was discussed. This company had been identified as an interested potential importer by Jackie McAdam's piece of market research produced by Traidcraft in 2006, and JM made contact with them prior to the departure of SK and other Traidcraft staff to the Trade Fair in Birmingham. As the representative of Quality Kernels lived near Birmingham it was possible for her to travel to meet with SK in the company of Helen McCree of Traidcraft and WT on the 5th February to pursue potential business. WT had taken SK's sample of pine nuts with him to the meeting after SK forgot to take it to Newcastle and Birmingham.

The interest shown by Quality Kernels needs to be acted upon quickly by SK when she returns to Tomsk, so that this potential business is not lost.

Action: SK to follow up plans to ship 20 kg of pine nuts to Quality Kernels. **Due:** 15th Feb 2007



Birch bark

SK highlighted the problem of introducing the concept of marketing the birch bark products in the UK in terms of the difference between what Russian manufacturers assumed people would want and what might actually sell here. SK had spent time with a designer as part of the Traidcraft tailored course and saw the possibility of having more time with a designer to help create a range of products that could be made and then sold in the UK.

The Russian Experience Company had expressed some interest in birch bark products at the NEC trade fair, a contact which SK would be following up.

Action: SK to contact Russian Experience Company when back in Russia. **Due:** 28 Feb 2007

JS reminded SK of the interest shown by Pricebatch Altai (UK) in a bespoke specialised hat box product, which Heather Godsmark, one of the PB directors, had asked her to quote for. SK said she had forgotten about this and it was agreed that she would follow this up, as this was an example of finding a UK specification and translating that into potential business.

Action: SK to contact Heather Godsmark at Pricebatch Altai to investigate the potential hatbox birch bark product. **Due:** 07 March 2007

Recommended strategy for birch bark

The budgetary implications of investing in more market research from Traidcraft were discussed. JS pointed out that there was no more money in the budget for this and so to achieve it, we would need to reallocate funds to pay for any further market research. JS stated that the major unspent area of the budget was the funds identified for FSC certification, some £7,000, and that in view of the uncertainty surrounding the likelihood of this money being required for FSC, this was a potential source of funding.

SK said that this money was not to be spent on anything other than FSC and described how she had used the £7,000 in negotiating with one of the potential FSC commercial companies - identified in the first meeting as Magor Plus. SK described how Magor Plus had only agreed to consider going for FSC Certification providing the project paid 50% of the costs. As SK had revealed the amount in the original budget for this as £7,000, there was speculation from PBB, ML, JS and WT that this would turn out to be the amount required.

There was discussion about the different demands of the project and how difficult it was to translate the objectives for FSC, birch bark, pine nuts and ecotourism into practice, without a larger budget. It was explained to SK that the decisions about where the money would be spent would have to be taken by the full project management group i.e. the Tree Council and WTA, not just IIES. The concept of transparency and documentation of choices and actions was discussed and the need for relevant actions to be documented was reinforced.

This was especially important because of SK's intention to study for a PhD in FSC Certification. This raised the question of a potential conflict of interests on SK's part in recommending the direction in which FSC Certification should go within the project. All agreed that this was to be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the best use was made of Darwin funds for the sake of the project and the Tomsk community rather than individuals.

Action: SK to produce written evidence of quotes, costs and negotiations with potential FSC certification applicants.

Action: JS to ensure that documentation of project records is kept.



Action: SK to be open about how her plans for further study could impact on project decisions.

Ecotourism

The change in direction given by the course at Traidcraft was discussed and seen as a potential development opportunity, which seemed to have more going for it than the other strands previously discussed, such as bird-watching, looking at the environment, local culture.

Recommended strategy for ecotourism

The question of funding further market research was discussed and again the reality was described that we have limited funds with which to pursue any further research with Traidcraft. It was agreed that SK would develop the action points agreed in her paper whilst being careful to not incur greater than expected travel costs, especially as the travel costs for IIES for Year 3 had been reallocated to allow her to attend the course in the UK.

It was agreed that further funding opportunities be developed and WT would continue to discuss further potential collaboration with interest parties such as Taiga Rescue Network and BTO, and JS would continue to seek funding for such endeavours.

Action: WT to continue to find potential collaboration with existing and new project partners.

Action: JS to continue to seek further funding to support the project after the end of Year 3.

5. Defra Reporting and timing of visits to Russia

Defra Reporting

The Year 2 reports are due to be sent to Defra by the end of April 2007. All documentation for the write up of progress in Year 2 was to be sent to JS as soon as possible after the end of March. JS had already worked on reviewing the budget and actual to prepare to send to the Tree Council's Finance Officer for approval and inclusion in the Year 2 report. This was on target to be achieved within the deadlines.

Action: JS to prepare budget and actual review for Andrew Lane. **Due:** 7th April 2007

Action: JS to prepare the project reports for submission to Defra, circulating drafts to project partners for feedback. **Due:** End of April 2007 for final submission.

Visit to Russia by ML

The question of whether the project would benefit from ML visiting Russia in Year 3 was discussed. In the light of the progress made by SK already in the training she'd received, it was agreed that there would be no need for ML to travel to Russia to progress the actions with respect to the community projects. WT would review progress on community involvement in the development of trade in FSC, birch bark and pine nuts, as part of his project review.

Visits to Russia by WT

The question of how many visits WT would make to Russia was discussed; the budget would allow for up to three visits. The proposed timing of these was: April to follow up the action points identified at



SK's visit; July during the expedition to ensure all was going well and follow up progress on the project;
March 2008 as a final review prior to the end of the project.

Action: JS to finalise proposed dates for WT's trips and ensure travel is within budget.

6. Any other business

In view of the need for SK to leave for Heathrow airport to catch her flights home, the meeting ended at 4:30pm.

PBB closed the meeting by thanking SK for her input and updates and said she was pleased that the meeting had afforded the opportunity for constructive and open discussions of the project.