



BISNIS BULLETIN

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AN EYE ON THE OIL & GAS SECTOR IN TURKMENISTAN

by Irina Begjanova

Turkmenistan's abundant oil and gas resources make it a country to watch in the next millennium. A country of only some 4.9 million people, Turkmenistan borders on Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the Caspian Sea. Its hopes for rapid and lucrative development of its energy resources in the post-Soviet era were dashed by the dearth of export outlets to hard currency markets. In March 1997, Turkmenistan's only paying export route, through Russia's pipeline system, was shut down due to nonpayment problems with Ukraine, causing a sharp drop in export earnings. The Government of Turkmenistan is now looking to implement several proposed export pipeline projects and to develop its production and refining capabilities.

Natural Gas

Turkmenistan has the world's fourth largest known natural gas reserves—after Russia, the United States, and Iran—with estimated reserves totaling 13-21 trillion cubic meters of gas. In 1992, Turkmenistan produced 84 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas, but only half of that amount was produced in 1996. Faced with limited export pipeline options and nonpaying customers, gas production fell even further in 1998 to just over 13 bcm. A new but small (8 bcm capacity) gas pipeline to Iran, built in 1997, currently enables Turkmenistan to export about 3 bcm of gas per year. To increase exports, Turkmenistan is actively pursuing a project to construct a pipeline to Turkey via the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, and it is also exploring options for exporting gas to China and through Afghanistan to Pakistan.

Oil

Turkmenistan has significant oil reserves amounting to 6-8 billion tons. Turkmenistan produced 6.3 million tons of oil in 1998 and around 4 million tons of oil during the first eight months of 1999. The country's two oil refiner-

ies—in the Caspian port city of Turkmenbashi and in the town of Seidi—are both in need of modernization. The Turkmenbashi refinery, where most Turkmen oil is refined to meet domestic needs, is currently being upgraded. The Seidi refinery, which is currently running at 6-8 percent of capacity, will also be reconstructed.

Government Energy Policy

The Turkmenistani Government is looking for foreign investment to develop its oil and gas industry and export routes to hard currency markets. Eight oil

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PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICES FOR BUSINESSES IN RUSSIA

by Igor Abramov

The U.S. and Russian Governments are taking steps to draw attention to the importance of good business conduct and to facilitate change among Russian businesspeople and officials. Working bilaterally to create conditions for significantly increased trade and investment is a key goal of the U.S.-Russia Business Development Committee (BDC) under the Joint Commission chaired by the U.S. Vice President and the Russian Prime Minister. The BDC, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation and in consultation with Russian and American businesses, has developed *Basic Guidelines for Codes of Business Conduct* to promote good business practices and ethical behavior in commercial relations.

The *Basic Guidelines* are a set of general principles that are widely accepted in international business. Key areas addressed by the code of conduct include:

- Principles in Personal and Professional Relations

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SABIT FY 2000 Program Calendar

The U.S. Department of Commerce's **Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT)** program announces several new programs for fiscal year 2000. SABIT provides funding to U.S. organizations to conduct stateside management training for business executives and scientists from the NIS. SABIT identifies a pool of NIS scientists or managers in specified fields and awards grants to U.S. companies to help pay to host and train an English-speaking NIS colleague.

Northwest Ports

Application Deadline: Sept. 14, 1999
Program Dates: Oct. 25-Nov. 19, 1999

Russian Regional Development - Novosibirsk Region: Technological Commercialization

Application Deadline: Feb. 18, 2000
Program Dates: April 1-29, 2000

Environmental Technologies (ET) - Mining Industry Cleanup

Application Deadline: Oct. 25, 1999
Program Dates: Jan. 15-Feb. 26, 2000

ET - Pulp and Paper Industry Cleanup

Application Deadline: Feb. 7, 2000
Program Dates: April 1-May 13, 2000

ET - Air Pollution Management

Application Deadline: April 10, 2000
Program Dates: June 10-July 22, 2000

Central Asia Programs (topics TBA)

Session #1

Application Deadline: Dec. 3, 1999
Program Dates: Feb. 5-March 4, 2000

Session #2

Application Deadline: Feb. 25, 2000
Program Dates: April 29-May 27, 2000

Session #3

Application Deadline: May 5, 2000
Program Dates: July 8-August 5, 2000

For more information, contact SABIT at (202) 482-0073, or visit its website at www.mac.doc.gov/sabit/sabit.html.

BISNIS

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BISNIS is an information center for U.S. companies doing business in the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Operated by the **Market Access and Compliance** unit of the **International Trade Administration**, BISNIS disseminates information in print form, electronically, and through consultations by its staff of trade specialists. For more information, please contact:

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Articles by non-U.S. Government employees express the views of the authors and should not be construed as a statement of U.S. Government policy.

Crowds Descend on the Seventh Annual BISNIS Open House

BISNIS' seventh annual Open House, held on September 17 in the lobby of the U.S. Department of Commerce building, brought together some 400 businesses and organizations from across the United States to network and gather information on doing business in the NIS. All BISNIS representatives from the NIS were on hand to answer questions about opportunities in their specific regions and provide insight into doing business effectively in the NIS.

A number of organizations—including finance groups, such as the U.S. Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, NIS embassies, and key nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—displayed information at the Open House and were available to network with business representatives. This event surpassed BISNIS' expectations, underscoring that there is still considerable interest from U.S. companies in pursuing trade and investment opportunities in the NIS.

KEY ISSUES IN RUSSIAN POWER SECTOR INVESTMENTS

by Mayra Rodriguez Valladares

Currently, most Russian power sector analysts and bankers remain neutral to bearish on the power sector. Cash collection rates, although improved over the last quarter, remain relatively low by Western standards. Also, with upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections, officials are not focusing on necessary reforms in the power sector. Despite the weakness of the sector, now is a good time for U.S. investors to conduct significant due diligence on the Russian electricity sector, which is the country's second largest in terms of market capitalization and daily trading volumes. Investors need to approach the Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy, United Energy Systems (UES), and the regional utility companies (energos) if they are interested in electricity sector investments. Also since regional governors exert significant influence on companies, particularly utility companies, in their regions, visits to regional governors and their staff are an important part of the due diligence process.

One key for any investor contemplating investments in the Russian power sector is to understand the sector's reform process as it is currently being undertaken.

The Status of Reforms

Despite talk about reform, the power sector has not been restructured or privatized. Generating, distributing, and transmission assets have not been separated. The United Power Grid of Russia, which is the world's largest power pool with centralized management, is one of the most controversial aspects of the Russian power sector, since it is controlled by UES. UES has stakes in most of the country's regional utility companies, and it establishes the prices at which these utility companies can buy and sell electricity from the grid, posing a significant conflict of interest. Also, industrial customers are not able to buy directly from the grid as can customers in emerging markets such as Hungary. This restriction hinders industrial customers from having a choice of electricity providers and means that there is no incentive for utility companies to compete. In addition, industry continues to subsidize consumers for their electricity use.

Electricity tariffs for industrial or residential users only cover about 50 percent of costs. Given that parliamentary and presidential elections will take place this year and next, respectively, tariff realignment is unlikely before 2001. It is not surprising that Russian power companies have a significant nonpayments problem, recovering anywhere from 70-80 percent of their revenues. Only between 15 and 30 percent of these revenues are in actual cash. The rest is barter, which takes the form of actual goods exchange or tax-offsets where electricity companies do not pay taxes to the government because government entities such as hospitals and schools often do not pay their electricity bills.

Challenges to Reform

Five major challenges exist in reforming the Russian power sector. First, the obvious, the scope and size of the sector are enormous not only because of the size of country and the extent of the networks, but also because of the great differences in fuel type capacity throughout the country. Domestic and international government officials must have great patience in instituting reforms and must be aware of the vast differences between Russia's 89 regions.

Second, because the ownership of the sector is so diversified, reform becomes even more difficult. When the Russian Government began electricity reforms, the sector was already partially restructured and privatized. Most developing countries usually begin reforms by already having one fully integrated state-owned electricity monopoly and then move from there to separate distribution and generation and to privatize the whole sector.

Third, the nonpayment problem needs to be tackled at the source. That is, insolvent government entities and companies should be made bankrupt and their power supplies cut. This is a challenge to which the government has not risen because of the potential for political backlash. Moreover, the country would need significant funds to restructure the sector and to provide a social safety net during the reform process.

Fourth, from the government to the worker on the ground at a power plant, a commercial mentality needs to be encouraged. The Russian Government and even UES see UES' role in the sector as insuring stable power supply throughout Russia and investing to meet future needs, but not in maximizing the investment value of UES or of the energos. Decisions are often made without considering how the value of the sector can be increased. In essence, profit margins practically do not exist.

Fifth, the power sector is extremely politicized at both the national and regional level. Moreover, Gazprom has been increasing its influence by acquiring electricity assets in exchange for utilities' bad debts to the company. Because of the intertwined nature of the power sector with every facet of Russian life, whatever party or business entity that controls UES controls Russia. As such, until after the presidential elections, officials will spend their time trying to control UES and the regional utility companies, rather than reforming and improving this vital sector.

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(TURKMENISTAN, continued from p. 1)

and gas resource areas have been made available for joint venture projects and production sharing. The government is also interested in developing offshore oil fields in the Caspian Sea. An international tender for bidding on Caspian Sea offshore oil field development was held in 1997. However, an unresolved dispute with Azerbaijan on the Serdar oil field has discouraged the winners of the tender from developing their concessions. Currently, **Western Atlas** (U.S.) is conducting a geological study of the shallow water area and the Karabogazgol Gulf of the Caspian Sea. An international tender for the right to explore and produce oil in the Caspian Sea is expected to be announced by year-end.

The Law on Hydrocarbon Resources adopted in March 1997 provides a detailed legal framework for conducting oil and gas activities in Turkmenistan. Under this law, three types of licenses can be issued on the basis of tender results or direct negotiations: an exploration license, an extraction license, and a single exploration and extraction license. Two types of agreements can be signed for oil production: a production-sharing agreement (PSA) and a joint venture agreement. A few foreign companies have already begun operations by signing PSAs in the oil sector. The government expects more foreign oil and gas companies to come to Turkmenistan in the near future.

Foreign Investment Projects

Thus far, U.S. direct investment in Turkmenistan has not been significant. In 1998, **Mobil Oil**, in alliance with **Monument Oil** (Great Britain), signed a production-sharing agreement with the state **Turkmenoil** company and invested more than \$40 million in the development of the Burun oil

field in western Turkmenistan. In summer 1999, Mobil received a license to explore the Garashsyzlyk oil field, and planned to increase its investment in Turkmenistan.

Several other foreign companies have invested in Turkmenistan. Since 1996, the Malaysian oil company **Petronas** has invested around \$60 million to explore and develop three offshore oil fields in the Caspian Sea (block 1—the Gubkina, Barinova, and Vostochny Livanova fields). The **Chinese Oil Corporation** invested \$14 million to restore and overhaul 30 oil wells. Monument made some investment in 1997-1998, and planned to invest \$55 million in 1999 in the development of the Burun and Garashsyzlyk oil fields. Since 1993, **Dragon Oil**, an Irish-registered company whose major shareholder is Dubai-based **Emirates National Oil Company**, has invested around \$125 million in the Larmag Cheleken joint venture with Turkmenoil to develop two offshore oil fields in the Caspian Sea (block II—Lam and Zhdanova fields).

On February 19, 1999, the Government of Turkmenistan chose **Pipeline Solution Group International** (PSG), a joint venture between U.S. companies **Bechtel** and **GE Capital**, to lead the **Trans-Caspian Pipeline Consortium** (TCP). An agreement concerning the sale/purchase of Turkmen natural gas has been signed between Turkmenistan and Turkey. The TCP will transport natural gas 1,800 kilometers from Turkmenistan westward under the Caspian Sea across Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey. PSG and its 50/50 consortium partner, **Royal Dutch/Shell Exploration**, are expected to arrange financing and manage construction of the estimated \$2.5 billion project.

Caspian Finance Center Support

In 1999, the U.S. **Caspian Finance Center** was opened in Ankara, Turkey, to assist American companies in entering the energy rich markets of the Caspian region. The center is run by three U.S. agencies: the **Trade and Development Agency**, the **U.S. Export-Import Bank**, and the **Overseas Private Investment Corporation**. Working with the commercial and economic officers of the Departments of Commerce and State, the multiagency trade finance team offers services designed to maintain U.S. commercial interests in the region and better position U.S. firms over foreign competition.

*To contact the **Caspian Finance Center**, call Deborah Forhan, Director of Business Development for TDA in the Caspian Region, at tel: +90(312)468-6110; fax: +90(312)466-6082; or email: dforhan@tda.gov.*

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*For more information on doing business in Turkmenistan, see the 2000 Country Commercial Guide, prepared by the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat, at **BISNIS Online** www.bisnis.doc.gov/bisnis/country/cntasia.htm#Turkmenistan.*

SELECTED PRIORITY INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN TURKMENISTAN

1. Construction of a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline (1,800 km) to transport natural gas from eastern Turkmenistan via the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to Turkey (Erzurum). The projected capacity of the pipeline is 16-30 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas per year. *Estimated cost: \$2-3 billion.*
2. Upgrading the Seidi oil refinery (commissioned in 1991) to an overall annual capacity of 6 million tons of oil. *Estimated cost: \$300 million.*
3. Construction of a gas and chemical production complex in Seidi with an annual capacity of 200,000 tons of polyethylene. *Estimated cost: \$800 million.*
4. Installation of gas collector at the 94 km Beshkzyly-Yelkui-Uchadji route. *Estimated cost: \$50 million.*
5. Development of oil fields at Eastern Cheleken, Northern Erdekli, and Southern Kamyshldja. *Estimated cost: \$30 million for each oil field.*
6. Rehabilitation of the Shatut, Ekerem, and Nebitlidje oil fields. *Estimated cost: \$50-60 million.*

(GOOD PRACTICES, continued from p. 1)

- Corporate Governance: Relationships with Shareholders
- Relationships with Employees
- Relationships with Other Enterprises
- Relationships with the Global Community
- Relationships with Government Authorities
- Proper Checks and Balances
- Prevention of Extortion and Bribery

Recognizing that laws, regulations, and other circumstances specific to an industry or company might require special adaptation in implementing the *Guidelines*, they are offered as a tool that can be used by businesses as a foundation for developing their own codes of conduct and professional standards.

The BDC is also working on several other commercial rule of law projects, including (1) a handbook on commercial dispute resolution in Russia to assist companies and practitioners in better understanding the existing mechanisms for resolving commercial disputes in Russia, which is expected to be ready for distribution before the end of this year; (2) a handbook on corporate governance to encourage fairness and transparency for shareholder rights and best business practices; and (3) a manual of recommendations on recognition and enforcement of foreign and domestic arbitration awards and court judgments as a means for improving mechanisms for arbitral awards and court judgments.

Novgorod as Pilot Program Region

As part of implementation of the *Guidelines*, the BDC reached an agreement with the Novgorod regional government, city, and businesses to implement the *Guidelines* in Novgorod as a pilot project. Understanding that foreign investment is critical to developing and fostering an open economy in the region, the government adopted investor friendly legislation in 1996. Currently, some 200 joint venture companies with foreign capital are active in the region.

Novgorod's efforts to prove itself an investor friendly environment make the region an attractive site for testing the *Guidelines*. The region of Novgorod views implementation of this project as an important tool to attract additional foreign and domestic investment. Having a reputation as a noncorrupt region where business is done legally and ethically gives the Novgorod region a better image than an expensive public relations campaign.

OECD Conference in Novgorod

A number of international organizations are working to promote integrity, accountability, and transparency in business in Russia. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other international organizations have expressed keen interest in the *Guidelines*, and the BDC is working with these organizations to establish cooperation on implementing the *Guidelines* through private-

public partnership initiatives. As a first step in this cooperation, the OECD held a two-day conference, "Integrity in Private Sector Development in the Russian Federation," in Novgorod on July 22–23, 1999. The conference concentrated on the issue of ethical behavior for the private and public sectors, establishing codes of conduct within companies, administrative barriers to doing business, and adhering to the principles of rule of law in conflict resolution. Attended by approximately 90 participants, the event attracted Russian federal and regional officials, Russian private sector executives, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Next Steps—Creating an Enabling Environment

The BDC wishes to provide a long-term, sustainable initiative that can be institutionalized over time and that will best serve the business community in Novgorod and Russia's other regions. To achieve this purpose, the BDC has developed a pilot program to train individuals from Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novgorod in the United States as consultants for three months. Following the training, these individuals will return home to help local companies design and implement business codes of conduct and professional standards.

Implementation of the *Guidelines* through broad-based participation of multilateral and lending institutions, governments, the private sector, and NGOs—such as the U.S. Export-Import Bank and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—is a key goal of the BDC. As part of this effort, there are plans for a follow-up workshop in summer 2000 in another region of Russia to demonstrate the results of implementing the *Guidelines* in Novgorod and other regions. The OECD will organize the workshop in cooperation with multinational institutions, Russian federal and local governments, and NGOs.

The Basic Guidelines for Codes of Business Conduct can be found, in both Russian and English, on OECD's website at www.oecd.org/daf/psd/acnetwork.htm and BISNIS' website at www.bisnis.doc.gov/bisnis/country/codebusen.htm.

Igor Abramov is Special Advisor for Trade and Commercial Projects in the U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of Russia and Independent States.

The BDC encourages companies to provide feedback on the Guidelines. Please address your comments to: Igor Abramov at tel: 202-482-2042 or igor.abramov@ita.doc.gov.

NOTICE

**BISNIS Online has a new address:
www.bisnis.doc.gov**

TRICKS OF THE TRADE**Choosing a Security Services Firm in Russia**

by Janna Agasieva

Security companies appeared on the Russian market in the mid-1990s, when Russia began its transition to a market economy and experienced a vast growth in private business. At that time, a tremendous need for professional security services arose and resulted in the establishment of a large number of agencies and bureaus providing a wide range of services connected with protecting business. However, the August 1998 financial crisis sharpened competition on the local market and forced local and foreign businesses to adopt new strategies and provide more sophisticated security.

The Russian commercial environment provides many reasons for requiring the services of a security agency: the imperfection of the local banking system and, as a result, risk of dealing with cash flow payments; high competition in the market; and insolvency of business partners are just some problems faced by businesses. For these and other reasons, it is necessary to guard business commodities, protect intellectual property, request information support in selecting business contacts, and use other security agency services.

Currently, the main security services required by most businesses—guarding property, freight escort, and personal security—are offered by the majority of agencies. One of the new trends in the security industry that only advanced security firms provide is information support. This service includes background checks of potential partner companies and potential employees, and checks on a bank's status, among other information.

In the past, security firms specialized in providing one or two specific services. However, the latest developments in private business in Russia show the market is maturing. As a result, well-developed businesses tend to deal with one reliable agency that provides a full spectrum of services.

Choosing the Right Security Firm

When choosing a security service, it is important to be careful and well informed. For example, according to one security services expert, among over 800 security companies registered in St. Petersburg, only about 80 are "dependable." This can be explained by the fact that there is no strict law in Russia on registering a security agency and there are no requirements that an individual must meet to establish such a company. Important steps include:

- *Fit Services to Needs.* Carefully select the agency that best meets your needs. Good sources of information are professional catalogues and specialized magazines where services of security agencies are reviewed and analyzed

in detail. Examples of these magazines include *Security and Safety* and *Security World*, monthlies published in Moscow that cover all of Russia. It is important to check if the company has all necessary licenses allowing it to provide a full range of services. All security companies must have a License for Security Services, which needs to be renewed every 5 years. Also, if the agency claims to undertake detective research, a special license for this type of activity is required.

- *Look for Availability of Qualified Personnel.* Make sure that the prospective agency's staff has been carefully selected. Managers of highly reliable local agencies prefer to hire former employees of the Ministry of Internal Security or the Federal Security Services because they have many years of experience and are physically and psychologically prepared.
- *Check for Solid Financial Background.* Ensure that the security agency can meet its financial responsibilities toward its clients. A professional security firm should be responsible for reimbursement of a client's expenses in case of a failure to provide services. A statement on this matter should be included in the agreement. Also, a solvent company normally has an agreement with an insurance company. If the limit of the insurance is not less than \$1 million, it guarantees the company's solvency.

Local Entities Can Assist the Search

As it is difficult to find a reliable company able to provide professional security services, local entities are taking steps to provide information on the business security and safety market. Professional security associations, the Federation of Safety Services and Security Enterprises in Russia, and city and oblast administrations organize specialized exhibitions and hold competitions and contests between security firms. For example, the third international open contest, "Anti-Crime," was recently organized by the Federation of Safety and Security Enterprises and held in St. Petersburg in the framework of the regional safety program.

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*For more information on FCS St. Petersburg services or the Russian security and safety equipment/services market, U.S. firms can visit **BISNIS Online** at www.bisnis.doc.gov, or contact Janna Agasieva at tel: +7 (812) 326-2560; fax: +7 (812) 326-2561/62, or email: Janna.Agasieva@mail.doc.gov.*

REGIONAL CORNER: Yaroslavl Oblast, Russia

by Olga Ananina

Yaroslavl oblast is situated 175 miles northeast of Moscow at the crossroads of important Russian auto and railroads, river ways, and air routes. Nearly 1.5 million people inhabit the region, which is the size of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island combined. The oblast is abundant in forests and lakes. The oblast has a major water reservoir, is a source of fertilizer, quartz, sand, gravel, peat, mineral waters, limestone, and clay, and is an industrial center.

Although Yaroslavl's telecommunications need significant improvement—only 16 out of every 100 homes have a telephone—the transportation system is adequate. The region's transportation infrastructure and convenient location facilitate connections and business with the rest of Russia and beyond. Vehicle transportation is the most popular mode of freight traffic, but rail and river routes are also used.

Industrial Activity

In 1997, Yaroslavl Oblast achieved 7 percent industrial growth and its industrial output per capita was the largest among the Central Russian regions. Located on nonfertile lands, the oblast is famous for its heavy machinery (diesel engines and electrical equipment), refined petroleum products, textiles (one of the oldest and largest textile mills in Russia is located in Yaroslavl), aviation equipment, and synthetic rubber and tires.

The region's machine-building sector plays an important role in Russia's economy. Leading subsectors of the local machine-building industry include chemical and petrochemical machinery (polymeric machines, refrigerating equipment, and gas-purifying equipment), machine tools (wood-processing and metal-cutting equipment), instruments (for defense, aviation, and shipbuilding, and radio equipment), diesel engines, and road machinery.

The chemical and petrochemical industry and the fuel sector (oil and gas refineries) are also of major importance for the regional economy.

Investment Activity

The Yaroslavl administration has taken steps to promote the oblast as an investment friendly region. The regional law "On State Support of Investments on the Territory of the Yaroslavl Oblast" provides various tax breaks to companies operating in the region. The regional Duma is currently working on the creation of an investment guarantee fund. A local organization, the International Investment Center (IIC), led by a former Russian Federal Duma deputy and U.N. consultants, is very active in supporting local businesses.

The United States and Sweden are reportedly the leading investors in the Yaroslavl Oblast, but Denmark, Italy, and Germany also have a presence in the region. **General Electric** (USA) and **Aero Support Corporation** (Canada) have set up joint production of airplane engines together with **Rybinsk Motors** company. **Baltic Beverages Holding** (Sweden) is participating in the reconstruction of a brewery. French company **Eurobach** is jointly producing environmentally safe varnishes and paints with local company **Lakokraska**. A Belgian company is involved in milk processing.

Olga Ananina is a BISNIS representative in Moscow.

*For more information on Yaroslavl Oblast, including contacts, visit **BISNIS Online** at www.bisnis.doc.gov/bisnis/country/regions.html#Central. Additionally, **BISNIS** distributes news updates on Central Russia to interested U.S. companies. To receive this information, send an email with name, company, and address to bisnis@ita.doc.gov.*

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)—USAID and IREX have announced round IV of a grants competition in support of strengthening existing partnerships between U.S. and Russian organizations as part of the Sustaining Partnerships into the Next Century (SPAN) program. The request for proposals (RFP) is available online at the SPAN websites both in the United States, www.irex.org/programs/span, and Russia, www.irex.ru/span. The websites feature a frequently asked questions section to help answer any questions concerning the RFP. Additional questions can be addressed to Natasha Savicheva of IREX/Moscow at natalya@part.irex.ru or Rebecca Liston of IREX/Washington at rliston@irex.org.

International Center for Accounting Reform (ICAR)—ICAR, assisting Russia's transition to International Accounting Standards (IAS), is funded by various organizations including USAID. It is organizing the 1999 Moscow Fair Value Accounting Week, November 1–5, which will include a series of events concerning fair value accounting and IAS valuation and audit implications. It will feature a major international conference on Friday, November 5, with headline international speakers and Russian Government officials and the release of the 1999 official Russian-language translation of the IAS bound volume. Most events will be in Russian and English. For more information, contact Helen Zakrevskaya at tel: +7 (095) 937-7046, fax: +7 (095) 937-7040, or email: helen@icar.ru.

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Website:	www.online.ru/people/strax	
Sector:	Food & beverage technology, processing & packaging machinery	
Consumer/FoodExpo Uzbekistan	November 9–12, 1999	Tashkent
Organized by:	TNT Productions	
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Facsimile:	(703)406-8543	
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Inwecom/Networks	November 23–27, 1999	St. Petersburg
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UPCOMING CONFERENCES

**AZERBAIJAN IN THE
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