Ecotourism and support of culture of ethnical minorities at Lake Baikal

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Project "To the clean peaks of Buryatia"

- create an ecotourism model, capable to solve social-economic problems of ethnic minorities of the Baikal Region, environmentally friendly and protecting the unique culture of ethnic minorities and nature of one of the most remote and beautiful places of Buryatia – the Okinsky District.
The first results reached during the project implementation:

- Experts from GRAN organized and held 2 seminars for the Oka people. As a result of seminars and consultations, the first three families from Orlik Village decided to start receiving tourists in their houses.
- As a result of joint efforts of Baikal Information Centre "GRAN" and Global Nature Fund 2 tours were worked out: "Geser's Area" and "Soyots of the Mountainous Oka".
- 2 Tourist Information Centres in Orlik and Sorok Villages were equipped: with furniture and office equipment;
- Within the frames of the conference an international seminar was organized with about 60 participants, and a group of German experts visited the district to evaluate the presented tours.

The first conclusions we made during the project:

- It's necessary to organise a painstaking work with the local population, involved in the tourist business (guest houses, service provided at comfortable tourist spots, tour guides, excursions, catering, souvenirs production);
- Coordinated activity with the local administration is needed, for solving many problems appearing during the project;
- It's necessary to prepare professional staff: first of all, tour guides, preferably among the locals;
- Positioning on the external markets is needed, and strengthening of the advertisement-informational supply of the district's tourist potential, which is actively being done today with the help of GNF.
In the near future we’ll solve the following project tasks:

- Work out a complex tourism development programme in the district taking into account modern tendencies of ecotourism development;
- Make an accent in ecotourism development on the complex product, including environmental, ethnographic and religious directions;
- Scientific tourism may become independent product – study and observation rare animals, birds, plant species and unique ecosystems;
- Oka Eco-product positioning must take place in the segment of expensive and VIP tourism (for achieving the maximum economic effect while leaving the minimal recreational capacity on the environment).

Perspectives

- We hope, implementation of the project “To the Clean Peakes of Buryatia” will bring tangible results, and on the example of one area, an effective model of introduction the ecotourism technologies into the traditional type of living of the population, will be created.