

National Ecology Project: State Priorities, Business Opportunities

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Environment is one of the state's priorities

"I'd go as far as saying that if it hadn't been for the Year of Ecology in Russia, the national project wouldn't have been started. Why? Because we believed that the major goal of the Year of Ecology <...> was to draw public attention to the fact that Russia owed a lot to itself and hadn't dealt with this issue for decades," Sergei Ivanov, Special Presidential Representative for Environmental Protection, Ecology and Transport.

"Implementation of the National Ecology Project will be carried out within the project office. We have launched 11 federal projects, as part of it. Roughly speaking they can be divided into four areas: water, air, waste, and biodiversity. The main document underlying the National Ecology Project is definitely the May Decree signed by the President of Russia Vladimir Putin. It is the source of all target values that we are going to use as a roadmap over these years <...> We are to create a new industry of waste recycling, sorting, incineration of some of the waste," said Dmitry Kobylkin, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Private investments and business expertise in waste disposal are main implementation instruments for the national project

"It is profitable to invest in the environment. Of course, there are projects that need subsidies, but there are projects that yield good profits. And one of those projects is our joint investment with Rostec and Hitachi into waste-to-energy recycling," said Kirill Dmitriev — Chief Executive Officer, Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).

"Safety in general, nuclear safety, environmental safety in nuclear experts' code is both the goal of our activity and the ultimate priority, because we have quite extensive experience in working with hazardous man-made waste, I mean, first of all, nuclear waste," said Alexey Likhachev — Chief Executive Officer, State Atomic Energy Corporation ROSATOM.

"The National Ecology Project is implemented under the May Decree of the President, this national project is calculated for the period until 2024, and over 4 trillion roubles is going to be spent on it, according to various sources <...> It is known that some of this money will come from the budget, but the larger share must be paid by private stakeholders, while there is going to be a certain burden on regional budgets," said Maria Morgun, Chief Editor of Live Planet TV.

PROBLEMS

Limited opportunities for natural reserves development

“We don’t have enough <...> new sites for development <...> We should distribute, we need a chance to show more, however, while we only have 2–3 well-promoted natural reserves we will have those problems,” said Petr Shpilenok, Director of Kronotsky State Natural Biosphere Reserve.

Not all citizens have access to pure water

“The following approaches were chosen: at the moment, according to the Chief Sanitary Inspector of Russia, 5% of people who use untreated water from central water supply systems live in urban areas. Therefore we took those 5% into account, and made an estimation of how much it would cost to bring purified water to households,” said Vladimir Yakushev, Minister of Construction, Housing, and Utilities of the Russian Federation.

SOLUTIONS

Strict compliance with environmental laws

“How many federal laws on environment have we adopted for the past 6 months? Plenty: on waste handling, on harm, on environmental fees <...> Recently, a law on forests has been adopted. It’s very easy – you plant as many trees as you have cut,” said Sergei Ivanov, Special Presidential Representative for Environmental Protection, Ecology and Transport.

Creation of unified information system

“Even more has to be done regarding the unified information system. The state must see what is produced where, what is the manufacturer’s responsibility, and how they invest money in their production, competences in waste removal. It means that a totally transparent, totally state-controlled information system is needed,” said Alexey Likhachev, Chief Executive Officer of State Atomic Energy Corporation ROSATOM

Creation of a federal waste management plan

“Everyone has the same task – not to let the fee grow. It means the most important part is to try to withhold it. Normally for that purpose, among other things, a public non-for-profit organization is established that would draw up a federal waste management plan and coordination of regional operators,” said Dmitry Kobylkin — Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Localization of waste recycling equipment production

“We have managed to localize the level of our equipment up to 50%, and our goal for 2024 is 80%, although, today, one can design a proper waste-recycling facility using up to 90% of Russian-made equipment,” Viktor Evtukhov, State Secretary, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation.

Using private initiatives for waste sorting

“We want to build a federal battery collection network in the country <...> Now, we already have 180 collection points all over the country. Before the end of this year we are going to set up more of those and make it to 560 or maybe even more,” said Yuriy Korotaev — General Director of Duracell Russia.

Developing tourism in protected areas

“Why do we need any tourism in protected areas? <...> To call for wide public support for nature preservation in the country in general, to shape the culture that we have spoken about. This is why people should arrive and – more importantly – to like it. Tourism is not the goal by itself, the goal is to have wide public support,” said Petr Shpilenok — Director, Kronotsky State Natural Biosphere Reserve.