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Zero Milestone

FIG.1 Museums and tourist industry technologies. Partnership environment project "Zero Milestone"

In 2009 the "Zero Milestone" partnership project has become the winner of the contest organized by the Vladimir Potanin's Charity Foundation "Changing Museum in the Changing World". **FIG.2**

The project has gained the award in the nomination "Museum technologies and tourist industry" and implies the development of a series of itineraries "Talking-walking tours in the Post Office Borough for townsmen and city guests" in Saint-Petersburg.

The project is submitted by the Federal State Institution (FSI) A.S.Popov Central Museum of Communications and is being implemented in the partnership collaboration of a number of museums: The A.S.Popov Central Museum of Communication, the State Museum of History of Religions, V.V.Nabokov Museum, which are situated at the territory of the Post Office Borough, as well as by the students and professors of the Saint-Petersburg State University (SPSU).

FIG.3

Animation and revivification, introduction of navigation system, indirect publicity and raise of attendance of the museums, is substantially vital for the project-member museums. The museum studies and monument protection department of the Saint-Petersburg State University is interested in employment of its alumni, in enhancement of education quality due to creation of an experimental operating site, where the professional skills can be practiced and gradually established, while the students of museum studies themselves wish to acquire experience as participants of the museum work, which they have chosen by their heart when entering the University.

The "Zero Milestone" project forms a part of the project of the Scientific Research and Implementation Centre "Museum Block" and a spot for presentation of the research findings and techniques.

The realization of the conceived project requires also the participation of other parties which would be interested in particular results to be achieved in the process of work. For example, the improvement of the urban district and the development of the tourist infrastructure are important challenges for the Administration of Admiralteisky District of Saint-Petersburg, and the named authority has already demonstrated its interest to the project. The Committee for Science and Higher School takes interest in the contribution of the initiative group of students and junior tutors of the SPbSU to the creation of new job positions for graduates of the museum studies departments, possessing new professional skills and competencies which is, in its turn, one of the factors affecting the combination

of potentials of the museums and higher school. The Russian foundation for scientific research in humanities is looking for the theoretical development of the concept of comprehensive museumification for the objects of cultural and historical heritage in the historical centre of Saint-Petersburg, the presented project making available interesting experience and unique result.

The Federal Postal Service Administration for Saint-Petersburg expressed its consent to render the required assistance for the "Zero Milestone" project in preparation of the actions and presentations of the project, and guided tours over the post office borough.

"Zero Milestone" FIG.4

The project embodies the author's idea of intellectual recreational walks and has no matches on the tourist market of Saint-Petersburg in terms of the manner of material presentation. Standard excursion itineraries with little element of walking within this area of the city are offered only by the museums –project participants, and such itineraries are traditionally implied for a specific category of visitors – Russian school children FIG.5. Thus the museums and tourist companies operating within this area are becoming prospective partners of the project and get the opportunity to substantially extend their own coverage.

The project addresses the environment issues. Firstly, the “Post Office Borough”, which was historically formed at the end of 18th century and located in the very heart of Saint-Petersburg on the so called “zero Milestone”, which is a reference point of all distances starting from Saint-Petersburg, is excluded from the historical environment of the city, and requires revival. Secondly, the living conditions in this area are comparatively lower due to poor public services. And finally, it is becoming more and more difficult to retain the young museum specialists having new skills and qualification in the profession, which they had chosen.

The project covers the tourist market for the city inhabitants and guests, and the leisure market as a pilot project in the series of actions, exhibitions, festivals held by the Scientific Research and Implementation Centre "Museum block". The quality of “Post Office Borough” environment will be improved due to urban development and revival of the borough. The labour and technologies market will provide jobs for the graduates of departments of museum studies and other humanities in Saint-Petersburg. The applicants and participants of the project's working group are absolutely sure that the series of itineraries “Talking walks for the city inhabitants and guests around “Post Office Borough” will trigger the solution of the set tasks, and, undoubtedly, will revive the area, the length of which is 6 km. About 20 historical landmarks can be found along the itinerary, which will be described by the guides from the point of view of the character they present. These will be unique walking tours with various interlocutors: a post office clerk, an architect, a writer, a freemason, a yard-keeper. They may be group walking tours, individual walking tours, family walking tours, recreational walking tours,

sport walking tours and social walking tours. During a walking tour it is implied to visit the museums participating in the project, the Central Post Office where the “Zero Milestone” obelisk is located, gallery of designed dolls, house of architects, house of composers, and other historical landmarks in accordance with the topic of conversation. **FIG. 6.**

The unique product received in the result of “Zero Milestone” project implementation will be of interest for a wide range of people loving history.

Objectives of the project

Three key objectives are vividly highlighted, being intended for: firstly, enhancement of the appeal of former “Post Office Borough” area, and creation of a new topical tourist product within Saint-Petersburg. Secondly, improvement of the quality of leisure for the inhabitants of post office borough and nearby areas through promotion of walking. Thirdly, conditions are being formed for subsequent adaptation of graduates of humanities departments to the work of museum specialists through implementation of a new excursion entity within the “Museum Block” centre, whose territory is vaster, and the list of participants is longer.

In the course of the project objectives attainment using the granted funds and with support of Admiralteisky District Administration the territory will be landscaped and itineraries will be marked within “Post Office Borough” area.

The approval of itineraries of the walking-talking tours and arrangement of advertising for promotion of “Zero Milestone” project are essential components of the project’s success, and keeping of a diary at the web-site of V. Potanin Charity Foundation describing the project implementation progress, will enable the benefactors to see the consistent performance of works under the project, which is an evidence of reliable attainment of the final result.

Project implementation

The project participants are presently actively engaged in the preparatory works connected with forming of a team of partners, and forging of relationships between participant-museums, representatives of tourism industry, and higher education institutions of Saint-Petersburg. The content working group is engaged in archive research, preparation of historical references, and elaboration of itineraries, programs and scenario of walking tours. The project is scheduled to start in September 2009 and to end during the “letter week” in October 2010 by holding a theatrical presentation, which eventually will result in emergence of a new unique tourist product – “walking-talking tours”. **FIG.7**

The project will be implemented in four stages, starting from September 2009, and ending in October 2010.

The first stage implies the performance of comprehensive historical and cultural expertise of the specified area; elaboration of five itineraries for the talking-walking tours “History of Post Office Borough”; elaborating of the

project's corporate style by designers, elaboration of advertising strategy; market investigation; scientific and methodological workshop for employees of Russian museums "Walking tour as a museum product"; presentation of the project at a workshop for representatives of tourist companies.

At the second stage landmarks will be selected, and the content of outdoor information markers (navigation) will be elaborated, preparation for the pilot project, approval of walking-talking tours, issue of theme booklets for individual visitors and tourist companies, elaboration of souvenir design.

The third stage includes training of students for running of a series of walking-talking tours "History of Post Office Borough", making of outdoor information markers (navigation), making of guide's paraphernalia (props), making of souvenirs.

The final fourth stage will be connected with implementation of all developments and researches, and implies the installation of outdoor information markers (navigation), commencement of a series of regular intellectual recreational pedestrian itineraries, presentation of "Zero Milestone" project for mass media, press-conference of the board of trustees, promotion action.

The presentation of "Zero Milestone" project within the area of Saint-Petersburg Central Post Office in terms of time coincides with the "Latter week", and includes theatrical representation of the five talking-walking tours run by a post office clerk, an architect, a freemason, a writer and a yard-keeper, with engagement of actors-students-guides and respective distinctive props.

The whole performance will be shown accompanied by live music to invited guests, the board of trustees, representatives of V. Potanin Charity Foundation, and representatives of Saint-Petersburg Government. In addition, memorial cancellation of special "Zero Milestone" post cards will be performed during the ceremony by a special first day cancellation stamp.

The project will be implemented by the working group consisting of the project participants **PIC.8.** The board of trustees will control the performance of works under the project.

Project continuation prospects

The "Zero Milestone" project is a part of the project of the Scientific Research and Implementation Centre "Museum Block" and a spot for presentation of research findings and techniques.

After completion of the "Zero Milestone" project the five talking-walking tours around the post office borough will be included into the general package of excursions of the Scientific Research and Implementation Centre "Museum Block".