

would be somebody, though there would be nothing that can help to control the ways. RZD takes care of the huge projects, but forgets about its simple parts.

WI-FI technology in the trains

That's the thing that I'm waiting for! When a person should travel a lot, 'specially on business trips, the Internet connection is priceless.

The first train with Wi-Fi in Russia was going to be «Nevsky Express» which connects Moscow and St. Petersburg. The question about tariffs was discussed, but the approximate speed was- 690 kbit/s, that was in 2007.

The latest news

Wi-Fi in Sapsan isn't provided for a comfortable using. You can find the RZD connection while travelling, but it isn't fast and it is intermittent. In the LiveJournal a RZD consultant described the situation. He said that WI-FI in the Sapsan is used only for technical connection among the personnel, and sometimes passengers are able to find the net-connection. The public Wi-Fi is still under construction. But this description can lead to plenty of questions.

For example, why the technical connection isn't locked.

The Russian Railways is controlled by the Government. And almost every part in this big structure was in need of renovation after 1991. However, it still is in need of it. That's why the IT and RZD are objects to speak about.

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INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRES: PROSPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

(SPbGUEF, St. Petersburg)

The creation of an international financial centre in Russia is the government's strategic task, successful achievement of which will definitely reinforce the country's position in the world economy. The international financial centres of New York, London, Tokyo, Frankfurt, Geneva and Zurich are considered to have historically arisen in economically developed countries on the basis of the national capital markets. Gradually major cities in emerging economies began to attain the status of international financial centres, too. The brightest examples are Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Dubai, Mumbai and others. Many «young» financial centres operate rather as offshore banking centres, though notably liberal currency and tax environment in the international financial and credit operations are typical of practically all international financial centres, because their formation follows the concept «the more freedom, the more money». Therefore over the last decades an increasing number of countries build their financial systems on principles of free movement of capital.

The purposes of international financial centres are similar for different countries; these are capital inflow to the city and country as a whole, replenishment of the revenue section of budget, city infrastructure improvement, maintenance of population employment. All of the factors finally promote the growth of the country's gross

national product. Some experts emphasize that ecological environment enhancement has an additional effect on the development of the financial sector, the reason for this being the reduction of industrial enterprises sector. However, it is impossible to ignore the threats for the country as a result of active integration into the world financial market: increasing the economy's vulnerability, a risk of capital fast outflow, greater probability of financial swindle, growing dependence on a political situation in the country.

Recently the strategy of Moscow international financial centre creation has been implemented against the background of economic and financial sector strengthening. Consequently, the research into theoretical and practical aspects of international financial centres has been put forward as a totally relevant subject. The research comprises such essential issues as the necessary conditions for creation and promotion of an international financial centre in Russia and its estimated impact on the Russian economy. The next point under consideration is Russia's IFC competitiveness against international financial centres, which have already consolidated their position on the world financial scene.

An international financial centre (IFC) is a cluster of banks, specialized financial institutions and the like, coordinating international financial transactions in the certain region of the world. These are the five basic directions to implement the conditions and requirements for international financial centres.

1. A stock market.

If we have a good look at the organization and dynamics of equity trade over the recent years, we can see that the stock market in Russia has been dramatically expanding. However, the auction activity at stock exchanges is low, as all companies listed on Russian stock exchanges in fact are only Russian issuers, while public offering constitutes single occasions.

A significant factor influencing trading activity on stock exchanges is the data transfer rate for equity market participants. On some days the exchange trading density is so high that failures in the ICT systems for a few minutes can result in considerable financial losses. Standard telephone lines used before by the majority participants as a voice tool to transfer their verbal bids and offers to brokers cannot provide any reliable communication system to guarantee trouble-free work at overload periods. This problem has been solved only after the launch of Internet trading technologies.

2. A bank sector.

Over the recent years the Russian banking system rating according to leading world agencies has invariably lagged behind their potential competitors in the financial markets, such as Poland, Hungary, the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Taiwan, Philippines, India, Malaysia.

The Russian banking system has quite noticeably developed, as evidenced by the growth of borrowed and invested capital, foreign exchange transactions volume, credit companies revenue, etc.

Many banks operate universally offering a wide spectrum of services with minimum deadlines and high quality standards, which is essential for maintenance of high functional efficiency. This is consistently not viable without using modern ICT methods of data collection and processing.

3. A regulatory and legal base.

Providing adequate legal environment means building up certain mutual relationship among the financial market participants based on strict compliance with the legislation, absolute trust in the judicial system, business transactions transparency, etc. Negative trends in the global economy and the world financial and economic crisis have forced the Russian government to modernize the legislation radically. In particular, a more accurate registration system of professional activities in the financial market and qualified investors has been introduced. In addition, tender procedure for the stock market has been altered (especially suspension and renewal of the auctions), the access to the capital markets has been facilitated for certain categories of issuers.

As regards the business transparency, the scope of the information subject to disclosure has been widened, as well as the list of people responsible for it. This measure is designed to raise the efficiency of investors' rights protection.

It is necessary to focus special attention to punishment toughening for offenses in the banking, foreign exchange, securities and stock market sectors. The amendments brought in the Administrative Code and the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation refer to new kinds of punishment (for example, disqualification of officials), substantial increase of the size of penalties and imprisonment terms.

4. The city economic development.

By relative economic indicators Moscow yields to no other established financial centres of the world in compliance with the results of 2007: the city share in the country's GNP accounts for 23,8%; the city share of the foreign trade turnover makes 38,3% of the general indicator. Moscow has concentrated more than 30% of the financial intermediary organizations in the Russian Federation. On all economic indices Moscow meets the requirements for an IFC formation.

5. Social sphere.

In the view of transport and business infrastructure development Moscow loses to the emerging financial centres, since there is underdevelopment of the transport communication, lack of sufficient commercial and accommodation property in the city, both in terms of quantity and quality. To solve this problem a number of computer designing technologies have been employed, which enable to eliminate design errors up to 40 percent and also to keep more than 10 percent of the contract cost due to timely error identification and reduction of design terms.

Yet the last years show intensive construction of large business, the telecommunication infrastructure buildup is in progress.

In the aspect of life standard, Moscow is still non-competitive according to such indicators as the level of social culture, public health care services, recreation activities, personal service quality.

Apparently there cannot be any unequivocal estimation of the IFC creation in Russia. Although the current economic environment of the country tends to yield to other competing international financial centres, positive trends allow for the optimistic forecast in the future.