**OSF Russia Project**

**2012-2013 Strategy Summary**

The Open Society Foundations’ Russia Project (RP) is a civil society program, which seeks to promote and invigorate public life in Russia. Working with a budget of $6 million per year, the RP divides its grantmaking into two strategic priorities: **Expanding Public Space** and **Spotlighting Russian Voices in Global Debates**.

Under the first priority of expanding public space**, inspiring and broadening opportunities for public voice** is a central goal. Specifically, the RP supports spaces for debate and discussion, both physical and digital, as well as online informational platforms for stimulating public engagement. To ensure that the stimulation of voice also pays social dividends, **achieving a more public role for third sector actors** is also a goal; multiple debate and discussion platforms are necessary but not sufficient levers for social change and must be complemented by efforts to strengthen the public role of independent activists, intellectuals, and journalists, among others. As a consequence, the RP’s grantmaking also seeks to increase the quality of and broaden access to policy-relevant information, which includes mainstreaming think tank and practical policy research at universities.

**Spotlighting Russian voices in global debates** is the RP’s second major strategic priority, with a goal of identifying meaningful global contexts for Russian intellectuals, activists, and practitioners to overcome their isolation. This includes inspiring Russian participation on global issues and providing opportunities for a more diverse array of Russians to collaborate with non-Russians on matters of joint intellectual and practical concern.

A new priority this year is **professionalizing and raising the legitimacy of the third sector.** This includes the development of managerial capacity, strategic planning, and effective communication skills of NGO partners. It also includes funding for tools that enable the activities of informal social movements and independent activists. Strengthening NGO coalitions and regional networks is a key objective.

The RP’s funding is a mix of project and core support. There are a few large multi-year grants to long-standing partners, but the majority of grants are made year-to-year, both to past grantees and to new projects. A number of small pilot grants are given each year. The RP also funds capacity building for key grantees, ranging from participation in trainings to in-depth evaluations and strategic planning sessions. In addition, the RP funds a representative in Brussels to do advocacy on behalf of two core partners, ADC Memorial and SOVA. In all of its grantmaking, the OSF Russia Project seeks to partner with those who have worked actively to remain relevant, by reaching out to new audiences, identifying new constituencies, and renewing and reanimating their activities in various ways.