



# Industry Briefing Papers 2016

## ASIA: RUSSIA

### 1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to spa, wellness, wellness travel or well-being?

While on a working trip to the Altai Territory in Siberia, on 26th August the Russian president Vladimir Putin chaired a meeting of the State Presidium Council on measures to enhance the investment appeal of the health resort sector in Russia.

It is believed that regular treatments at health resorts can increase a life span by 3 to 15 years. To date, there are 1,875 resort organisations in Russia. Nearly 46 percent of facilities at state resorts are idling. The renovation and modernisation of the existing resorts will cost about 37 billion rubles. It is obvious that we need a comprehensive and well substantiated strategy for the development of the country's health resort complex, with state funding priorities and a procedure for attracting private investment.

The history of Russian health resorts started almost 300 years ago, when Tsar Peter the Great ordered a search for mineral waters in Russia. In 1719 the first Russian mineral spring spa "Marcial Waters" was established in Northwest Russia. The principles of kurortology (curative science) were established in Russia in accordance with best Eastern European resort models.

In Russia there are all types of mineral waters, all climatic zones and there are resorts with no equivalent abroad. Unique nature combined with effective treatment methods used at modern Russian resorts is a solid foundation for enhancing their competitiveness and increasing demand for them in Russia and internationally.

The spa and wellness concept is becoming trendy and therefore, the modern resort sector of the market is already rapidly growing, which is demonstrated by the number of new investment projects, which have either recently been proposed or are already in progress. Several projects of a high international standard have been built or redeveloped in the Krasnodar region (and particularly in Sochi), which hosted the Winter Olympic Games in 2014. Among them include "Grand Hotel & Spa "Rodina"" 5\* (Sochi), the all-inclusive "Riviera Club Hotel&SPA" 4\* (Anapa), Hotel&SPA "Dovil" 5\* (Anapa), the hotel "Imperial & Champagne SPA" 4\* (Abrau Dyurso).

**2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think is the most important development in your country for each of the following wellness sectors:**

**Spas:**

Russian spas are now internationally recognized and they are winners of international spa awards, e.g. World Spa Awards (<http://worldspaawards.com>): Luceo Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Lion Palace St. Petersburg - Russia's Best Hotel Spa 2015 and 2016, Mriya SPA & Wellness at Mriya Resort & Spa (Crimea) - Russia's Best Resort Spa 2016; The Professional Spa and Wellness Awards (London) (<http://professionalspawellness.com/site/WorldSpaandWellnessAwardsWinners>): The spa at Old House Resort & Spa, Rostov-on-Don, Russia - Hotel Spa of the Year 2015: Eastern Europe).

**Beauty:**

Rapid development of the Russian cosmetic industry is due to challenging economic conditions in Russia, consumers shifted towards more rational choices for beauty products which encouraged local cosmetic companies to develop and compete with the multinational giants.

**Fitness:**

Fitness has become a part of healthy life style rather than a status; it rapidly develops in the mass sector and in the regions of Russia; 10-15% of clients are people over 50; most popular are functional trainings and outdoor activities; among the latest trends are dance/yoga studios.

**Nutrition:**

Nutrition is a popular trend for healthy living from the mass population encouraged by famous tv - programmes such as Health by Elena Malysheva to scientists researching connection between nutrition and epigenomics.

**Wellness Tourism:**

More socially active people from 30 to 50 years old prefer holidays in Russian 4-5 star resorts with comfortable accommodation, medical treatments and curative facilities of the destination (Altai region in Siberia, North Caucasus, Crimea, Sochi region).

The most famous town-resort is Sochi where you can combine health treatments in numerous health resorts and tourist activities: swim in the warm sea, sunbathe under the subtropical sun, and then in an hour can ski or do trekking on the mountain slopes.

**Wellness Communities or Real Estate:**

From 10 years ago when the redevelopment of outdated health resort territories was obliged by law to include some wellness facilities in the infrastructure of real estate villages, to now when almost all elite real estate complexes are designed for healthy living and include fitness, aqua, spa and other wellness facilities, e.g. real estate complex "First Line. Life Energy Resort" near St. Petersburg (<http://komarovo1.ru>).

### **3. Our theme this year is “Back to the Future.” What do you feel is your country’s most significant contribution to what is now a global wellness economy?**

Well-known “Russian banya” - traditional Russian steam bath.

Russian banya is a unique kind of steam bath in terms of combination of temperature and humidity (roughly - temperature 65 C and humidity 65%) has been known in Russia for many centuries.

The bubonic plague epidemic in Medieval Europe (the Black Death) took the lives of between a quarter to a half of the population of France, Italy and England. The epidemic that started in China and India and spread to almost all of Europe stopped exactly at the boarder of Lithuanian Russia - which is also the edge of the banya culture. In contrast to Europe where public and private baths were not available to the majority of the population, even the poorest Russian household (both in towns and villages) had their own private well with fresh water and bath-house (banya). Foreigners who lived in Medieval Russia wrote that Russians used banya 2-3 times a week and banya served for them as universal cure against all illnesses.

Banya is usually a stand-alone log building with a steam room (called ‘parilka’). In the parilka people sweat and enthusiastically beat themselves with a bundle of dried birch leaves (venik). This gentle birching (or banya’s massage) helps open the pores and rid the body of toxins. However, if there are some health problems like heart disease or hypertension, banya’s ritual is not recommended without medical supervision. Banya is adored and enjoyed by the Russian people - especially by men. If banya had been recognized as a type of spa, 90% of Russian men and up to 40% of women would be counted as regular spa goers.

### **4. What do you feel is the biggest challenge in your country when it comes to growing the wellness economy?**

In 2015-2016, Russia continued to suffer greatly from difficult geopolitical and macroeconomic realities. The wellness economy is not growing due to the economic recession and lack of investment. Record inflation of local currency combined with substantially deteriorated economic conditions in the country significantly hindered consumers’ purchasing power which shows low priority in wellness goods and services in the majority of the Russian population.

However, some measures such as one of the strictest law in Europe regarding the sale of alcohol and cigarettes introduced during the recent years, wide popularization of healthy eating and healthy living, obligatory and voluntary medical insurance, corporate health and wellness plans are aimed at increasing of life expectancy and improving of healthcare services.

**5. While no answers are right or wrong, we would like to know what you feel is the difference - if any - between the terms/concepts of “wellness” and “well-being” in your country.**

In Russia we use both terms translated from English in a very similar way. Therefore, their interpretation is very subjective. The word “wellness” is often translated as “healthy way of living” and now we have a Russian word “велнес” for “wellness” with the same pronunciation. It is now a widely used noun, but it has not been adopted yet by the Russian linguists (it does not exist in official Russian dictionaries). To my perception we more use “wellness” for physical state but “well-being” for being healthy, wealthy and in harmony with mind, body and spirit. Anyway, for many Russians health of the body is closely connected to health of the soul which is linked to spiritual virtue of our people.

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