

Editorial

Russia, the world's largest nation, borders European and Asian countries and the Pacific and Arctic oceans. Its landscape ranges from tundra and forests to subtropical beaches and so there is significant potential for tourism development. As a follow on to *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (WHATT)*, Volume 8, Number 3, 2016 (*What are the main trends, challenges and success factors in the Russian hospitality and tourism market in the experience economy era?*) I am delighted to welcome back the theme editor Marina Sheresheva who assembled a team of more than 20 academics, practitioners, regional authority and industry association representatives to investigate the emerging patterns of diversity and new destination development in the Russian hospitality and tourism industry. I should to thank Marina and her team for providing a fascinating and detailed analysis of the current issues that are shaping the industry's future.

WHATT aims to make a practical and theoretical contribution to hospitality and tourism development, and we seek to do this by using a key question to focus attention on an industry issue. If you would like to contribute to our work by serving as a *WHATT* theme editor, do please contact me.

Richard Teare

Managing Editor, WHATT

Why is the Russian tourism and hospitality market becoming more diverse with new destinations?

The Russian Federation is actively developing an array of opportunities for leisure and business travel, and there are potentially competitive advantages which can (and should) be realized to enable Russia to become a more attractive destination. Russia has a large number and wide range of attractions, and excellent natural resources for active tourism (such as skiing, water-based tourism, hiking, mountaineering, cycling, sailing, equestrian tourism), especially in the south of the country – the Urals and Siberia (among others). Coupled with this, there is a growing awareness in Russia that tourism has untapped potential and could contribute more toward achieving the national development objectives. In view of this, federal, regional and local authorities are making a sustained effort to exploit potential competitive advantages by improving weak tourism infrastructure, developing new destinations and differentiating the tourist product. In this endeavour, Russian and foreign companies can profitably explore the opportunities that now exist in the market. Although impressive growth occurred in the first decades of the twenty-first century, the potential competitive advantages of the Russian tourism and hospitality market have yet to be fully realized. Incoming tourism – most often for cultural purposes – is usually limited to visits to Moscow and St. Petersburg or quite traditional routes (such as the Golden Ring and cruises on the river Volga) which are the most famous cultural destinations in Russia. In view of this, there is an obvious need for practitioners to identify underused opportunities for doing business in the fast-growing Russian tourism and hospitality market. In this theme issue, examples and likely business solutions are proposed by Russian academics from different universities, as well as local practitioners from a number of Russian regions and representatives of small cities and new tourism routes who have worked together to share their experiences. An aspiration arising from this collaboration is that we hope to attract an international readership that will appreciate the underrated and untapped potential of



Russia as an attractive tourist destination. We hope that you will enjoy this issue and visit Russia soon!

Editorial

Marina Y. Sheresheva
Theme Editor

399

About the Theme Editor

Marina Y. Sheresheva is Professor, Department of Applied Institutional Economics, Director of the Research Center for Network Economy and Head of the Laboratory for Institutional Analysis, Faculty of Economics, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia. She gained her qualifications in the USA, Canada and Europe in various institutions, including the IESE Business School, Bologna University, Harvard Business School and the University of California, Berkeley. She has published widely on clusters and business networks, marketing, consumer research, the experience economy, and in hospitality and tourism. Her publications have appeared in the *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues* and in other academic and professional journals, monographs and conference proceedings.