

Consulting Services: Environment & Health

Environmental and health concerns have come to play an increasingly important role for companies interested in doing business in the nations of east-central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Unresolved problems in these sectors have opened up opportunities for western firms offering appropriate products and services but have also created potential pitfalls for other firms interested in trade or investment in the region.

Environmental and health matters comprise one of Okno Group's core specialties. Whether your firm offers products or services in these sectors, or if environmental and health policy affects your operations in the region, Okno Group offers a range of services that can help strengthen your business.

Environmental legislation and regulation

Okno identifies and analyzes laws and regulations that affect your industry, including: pollution limits and fees; permitting; liability issues; and standards requirements. We pay close attention to the way these regulations are implemented, at both the national and local levels, and to impending changes.

Health policy and standards

We keep our clients up-to-date on health care policy and financing issues, medical insurance rules and tax considerations. Okno can also review rules governing health and safety liability issues and the licensing and certification of medical and consumer products, as well as their implementation.

Opportunities in these sectors

For firms who offer products or services in the environmental and health sectors, Okno can identify promising opportunities and areas where solutions are most needed. We follow the current state of medical facilities, the availability of medicines and supplies, and the training of health care providers. Okno also keeps track of the environmental problems faced by these nations, technologies currently in use, and funding opportunities for pollution control and prevention.

Policy environment

Clients can rely on Okno's considerable experience in policy analysis to get a full picture of the policy preferences of national and local leaders, of current regulatory emphases, and of how political trends affect both enforcement and future rules. Given the growing importance of regions and localities, Okno gives particular attention to local politics, policy priorities, tax and budget considerations, resources and local expectations.

Coping with legacies

Political and economic change in the region did not wipe out attitudes and habits shaped by the old system. Okno can interpret and track popular attitudes toward environmental and health concerns, as well as toward our client's industry and product. We can also illuminate the attitudes and assumptions of policy makers, the local partners, the workforce, local residents and consumers.

Okno services:
Environment &
Health
continued

Okno has been advising clients about eastern Europe since the early days of the transition

Our specialization in environment and health affairs grew out of our work on the policy environment for business in the region

Okno's experts have many years' experience in the political and economic analysis of environmental policy

Okno can help your business make the most of the opportunities presented by these new markets

Okno brings knowledge and experience

Okno Group has been advising clients about eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union since the early days of those nations' shift to a market economy. The group's substantive expertise is backed up by the language skills, contacts and cultural understanding that makes our work possible. We began working on, and living in, the region well before the transition began. As a result, Okno is unusually qualified to advise our clients not only on developments in these countries but on how the past has given those developments a unique shape. We help our clients tailor their business strategy accordingly and avoid unnecessary risk.

Regional expertise. Okno's specialization in environmental and health affairs has grown in the context of our consulting work on the policy environment for business in the region. We have worked with a wide range of firms on a variety of topics, for instance: consulting with Fortune 100 companies on joint venture law and labor management issues in the former Soviet Union, and helping a small venture capital firm perform a due diligence review of a potential investment. Okno has advised a Canadian government agency on export policy in one Russian region, and our colleagues have helped negotiate joint ventures in Poland.

Putting knowledge to work. In addition, our partners have written widely on economic policy, commercial law and business practices in the region, including books on doing business in Poland and the former Soviet Union; book chapters on foreign investment law in Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz economy; and numerous articles on privatization policy, monetary policy, trade disputes, and other issues. Okno also publishes the *East/West Letter*, a respected journal which for seven years covered business, economic policy and politics in the region. The *Letter* now focuses its coverage on environmental and health affairs (see below).

Experience in these key sectors. Okno Group's experts have considerable experience in the environmental and health sectors. Our partners have many years' experience in the political and economic analysis of environmental policy; one colleague managed a U.S. Government-funded project to improve rural water quality in Russia. In addition to our experience following health care policy, we have been involved at the ground level as well: Okno has been helping a small U.S. firm find a market for its medical products in the region, and we advised a client who is setting up a food processing venture tied to a local government's efforts to improve the health and nutrition of its citizens.

Along with their consulting work, our partners and associates are active in writing and teaching about environmental and health issues in the east European region. They have written analyses of environmental problems, national regulation, and the nascent environmental services industry in the region. Our colleagues have also authored numerous articles on health care policy in Russia and book chapters on the medical profession in the region. Okno took advantage of this in-house expertise by introducing two specialized publications: the print *Environment & Health* in 1996, and the electronic monthly *E&H Online* in 1998. Strengthened by the merger between the *East/West Letter* and *E&H*, our publications keep our clients apprised of news and policy developments in the environmental and health sectors and provide the kind of analysis our readers have come to expect.

We can help

Doing business in these "countries in transition" can seem daunting, but the risks are manageable and the opportunities growing. Okno can help your business make the most of the opportunities presented by these important new markets.

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