

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

<b>Program:</b>	Master in International Management
<b>Student:</b>	Olga Barshai
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	Liability of foreignness analysis: case of Russian IT companies

**Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.** Justification of the topic choice; accuracy in defining the aim and tasks of the thesis; originality of the topic and the extent to which it was covered; alignment of the thesis' topic, aim and objectives.

The master thesis by Olga Barshai is devoted to the study of the liability of foreignness (LOF) phenomenon on the example of Russian IT companies with international operations. The goal of the thesis is to define the key sources of LOFs for Russian IT companies, and propose strategies, aimed for mitigation of these liabilities. The topic relevance is very high due to the dramatic importance of LOF for emerging market firms going abroad, and the deficit of respective studies in the Russian context. The goal is supported by the set of research objectives, namely: to develop theoretical framework for LOF analysis; develop propositions regarding the key sources (drivers) of LOFs, based on case-analysis; propose mitigation strategies, targeted at those specific drivers. The topic is fully covered, being aligned with the goal and objectives of the thesis.

**Structure and logic of the text flow.** Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.

The thesis is written in the accordance with the standards of the master thesis preparation, being consistent, structural and logical. The paper consists of five chapters, including introduction and conclusion, the list of the references, and appendices. The structure of the research is consequent and logical. Both theoretical and empirical components are presented and well balanced in the thesis.

**Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.** Adequacy of objectives coverage; ability to formulate and convey the research problem; ability to offer options for its solution; application of the latest trends in relevant research are for the set objectives.

The topic, goal and objectives of the thesis are well aligned, logically presented are covered fully in the thesis. The relevant sources of the information were involved and the analytical capability while doing the study was well demonstrated. In her thesis author recommends Russian IT companies to be much more diligent in conducting market research prior to entry, even if they have experienced success in CIS countries. Another advise is to enter a market through a dealer in order to get the insights about it and build up a brand reputation and legitimacy, before opening a subsidiary, in order to avoid negative country-of-origin effects.

**Quality of data gathering and description.** Quality of selecting research tools and methods; data validity adequacy; adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods; completeness and relevance of the list of references.

The data gathered fully meets the requirements of the thesis's aim and objectives. Author has analysed an impressive amount of contemporary literature in the area of the internationalization of emerging market firms. To better explain the context, author has relied actively on the primary data, getting the access to several Russian IT companies and conducting interviews there. All data is valid and fits the thesis objectives. The relevant list of the references is provided in the end of the master thesis.

**Scientific aspect of the thesis.** Independent scientific thinking in solving the set problem/objectives; the extent to which the student contributed to selecting and justifying the research model (conceptual and/or quantitative), developing methodology/approach to set objectives.

Author has demonstrated the independent scientific thinking in solving the goal and objectives of the research. The extent of author contribution to the research content and quality is high. The methodology for the research is valid and consistent for master thesis standard. The methodology selected is in line with the respective literature and work in progress in the area of internationalization of Russian software firms.

**Practical/applied nature of research.** Extent to which the theoretical background is related to the international or Russian managerial practice; development of applied recommendations; justification and interpretation of the empirical/applied results.

The research validity is high and the practical orientation of the thesis is obvious. The results of the thesis can be applied in the course of the international strategy development by Russian IT firms, as well as by other information-intensive companies from Russia.

**Quality of thesis layout.** Layout of tables, figures, references.

The layout of thesis, including tables, figures, and references, is correct. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence.

The Master thesis of Olga Barshai fully meets all the requirements for master thesis of Master of International Management program, thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Andrei Yu. Panibratov  
Professor, GSOM  
September 20, 2013

