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Interaction of Public Authorities in Strategic Planning

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of the paper is determined by the authors' intentions to solve the problems of national economic strategy to a greater extent than issues of purely academic interest, since the effectiveness of domestic strategic planning, despite the efforts actively made to organize this process, including in terms of legal regulation, is clearly insufficient. The principal method of research is the comparison of existing legislative provisions with each other, with elements of foreign experience and with the actual state of things, and their linking into a single logic. The authors analyzed system and tactical problems of the strategic planning and management, considering the involvement of public authorities in this process. System problems include the absence of both a hierarchy of documents and an analytical planning entity of high capacity, as well as a lack of performers' competencies. Tactical problems include the unsatisfactory state of affairs at the municipal level and the overload of the strategic planning system of inferior quality documents. The primary task of the study is to determine the fundamental ways to resolve systemic and tactical problems. Separately, the authors highlight an importance of introducing the public authority legal category that is going to synchronize strategies of all its levels in the future. Based on the analysis of the internal logic of the development of a strategic planning and management system, as well as the best practices of foreign experience, the authors conclude that the state system of strategic audit. According to the results of the study, this system is inadequate to the tasks of effective implementation of the state strategy. Also, the authors concluded the need for digitalization of strategic planning to reconstruct existing connections, methods of interaction and the use of new, informational analysis methods. The practical significance of the research is determined by the possibility of applying the authors' recommendations being in the normative regulation of the process of domestic strategic planning and management.

Keywords: strategic planning; public authorities; strategic planning documents; documents hierarchy; strategic audit; digitalization

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of “public authority” was given legislative formulation after March 2020 in the process of updating certain provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation.¹

According to the Russian Federation Law on Constitutional Amendment Act of 14.03.2020, No. 1-FCL (Federal Constitutional Law) “On Improving the Regulation of Certain Issues of the Organization and Functioning of Public Administration”² in order to ensure effective territorial administration in the interests of the population living in those territories, the *State authorities and local authorities have been merged into a single system of public authority in the Russian Federation*. The process of legislative development of the provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation in this direction was continued: the concept of “unified system of public authority” was expanded and an updated model of the organization and activities of its bodies in the territories of the subjects of the Russian Federation was defined.³

The concept of “public authority” is a new form of organization of power

functions at the federal level. The constitutional reform makes adjustments to the current realities: a clear list of jurisdictions of the Federation is defined, the head of the unified system of interaction and coordination of public authorities is the President of the Russian Federation, the territories of the country get the opportunity to establish a special regime of public authority (examples of the implementation of this innovation are some territories of Mexico and Australia), etc. Such a unified system approach is designed to unite and centralize the vector of socio-economic development of the Russian Federation through more meaningful and coordinated interaction between the federal centre and local authorities, which gives the former an opportunity to participate in the formation of the executive power apparatus of the region.

The type of development chosen, the advantage of which is the creation of a structure without duplication of authority and initiatives at the district level, should be examined in more detail from the perspective of institutions, functions and organisation.

From the point of view of the institution of power, there has been a unification of federal and local government by level of subordination. Thus, there has been some restriction of freedoms “on the ground”.

The above-mentioned possibility of the federal centre, namely its participation in the appointment and formation of local executive bodies, thus enables the development of the organisational form of their management.

In many ways, this is a continuation of the organisational logic of the power

¹ Constitution of the Russian Federation (Adopted by popular vote on 12.12.1993 with amendments approved by a nationwide vote on 01.07.2020). URL: https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_28399/

² Russian Federation Law on Constitutional Amendment Act of 14.03.2020, No. 1-FCL (Federal Constitutional Law) “On Improving the Regulation of Certain Issues of the Organization and Functioning of Public Administration”, part 3, article 132. URL: https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_346019/

³ Explanatory note to the draft federal law “On the general principles of the organisation of public authority in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation”. URL: <http://sozd.duma.gov.ru/bill/1256381-7> (accessed on: 31.08.2022). Federal Law of 08.12.2020 No. 394-FL “On the State Council of the Russian Federation” (latest version). URL: https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_370105/

vertical: once it has been established, it is time to put things in order locally and use the resource of local initiative. A similar system is working quite successfully in Canada. In spite of the fact that it exceeds Russia almost twice as much in GDP per capita, such parameters as large area, deficit of labour resources and wide range of national structure of population, make it quite close to our country by conditions of state management and national economy.

The main concern of the Canadian authorities is infrastructure development and the development of large territories i.e., land use planning and management, which implies a very high degree of decentralisation. For this reason, the distribution of public expenditure at the levels (federal, provincial, and municipal) is correlated as 35:45:20 [1]. In order to coordinate federal, regional and municipal strategies, Canada's federal ministries, totalling 29,⁴ and in various pro-government organisations⁵ there are specialised departments for territorial coordination.

SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Unification of the functions of all public authorities should, taking into account the innovations, be expressed in a unified vector of strategic management, planning and forecasting.

To date, during the improvement of the legal framework that ensures the processes of strategic planning, considerable experience has been accumulated in this area at all levels of territorial ad-

ministration, and a significant amount of work on the organization of relations between its participants and methodological support for the formation of documents and their implementation, etc. has been done.⁶

However, there are many difficulties of both systemic and tactical nature, in the current strategic planning system.

One of the fundamental problems in ensuring the state's commitment to strategic development in terms of the three processes involved: planning, management and forecasting, is the "turbulence" in the area of changing laws and coordinating regulations and rules. As a consequence, there is a lack of a clear hierarchy of strategic development documents, a lack of a system for checking their quality, and a lack of the necessary formal criteria for their content. In addition, the formulated national objectives and priorities are rather general and do not form the basis for the construction of the tree of goals and objectives based on a systematic analysis, but are interpreted by sectoral and territorial authorities, including public authorities, to the extent of their understanding of the objectives set.

This is largely due to the fact that, in domestic practice, there is no state or governmental body of great power carrying out strategic planning, and it is implemented by separate disparate analytical groups.

The current paradigm of state strategic planning suggests serious contradictions both in the structure of public authorities and in the processes themselves. There is currently no understand-

⁴ Government of Canada. URL: <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/ministers.html> (accessed on: 21.09.2022).

⁵ Там же. URL: <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/dept.html> (accessed on: 21.09.2022).

⁶ State automated information system "Governance". URL: <http://gasu.gov/statplanning> (accessed on: 26.07.2022).

ing of what kind and for what purpose individual initiatives are put forward, the tools of the planning process and the mechanisms for possible synchronization of interaction are not clear.

Since 2010, national programs have become the dominant mechanism for implementing the state's priority objectives, accumulating the main budgetary and administrative resources required for their implementation (around 78% of total budgetary allocations). But the cascading shortcomings in some of them demonstrate the need to revise not only the principles of their organization, but also to address the causes of the current administrative and coordination failures.

Despite the high rate of integration of public authorities [2] into budgeting and resource planning processes, state programs [3] suffered (and in many respects still suffer) from several inherited systemic "diseases", most of which are caused by issues of goal-setting and coordination. It is a violation of the fundamental principles of the management theory that formation, execution and monitoring of programs are carried out by the same body.

One of the serious problems of current public administration and strategic planning is the lack of necessary competencies of the top officials, who are used to operating within vertical bureaucratic systems, where the main professional skill is the ability to win political competition. Any interaction in the chain of command runs through a confusing apparatus of rules and regulations that does not allow for swift responses to sudden changes. For this reason, there has been a growth in state structures, although it would be logical to assume a decline not only in the state apparatus

itself but also in the state apparatus as a whole [4–8].

The main task of the Russian economy is the transition to an innovative type of development, which implies the presence of an appropriate innovative management apparatus capable of absorbing and accommodating its cumulative complexity. The current system cannot solve such problems, and the main problem here is not so much in the area of improper structural design, as in the personnel policy and principles of its arrangement.

The outcome of any reform consists of two factors: the reform itself and those who implement it. As things now stand, the ideas that are implemented rarely represent a stumbling block. In many cases, the bottleneck is a pernicious human resources policy that suffers from over-politicization, since it is this policy that determines the positive outcome of the reforms implemented. The incumbent leadership does not have the necessary competences and cannot be trained for the reason that the transfer of necessary knowledge is only possible through special educational processes which are incredibly complex and take a long period of time.

The recent initiatives of the Russian Government Office to appoint Deputy Prime Ministers as supervisors of high-tech industries perfectly illustrate that the real mechanism of success is the access of top officials to political and administrative resources for the purpose of their distribution (depending on the need or as appropriate). Such decisions demonstrate the inability of the state apparatus to solve problems of a systemic nature. In fact, governance is reduced to linking a high administrative official

to a specific task which must be dealt with manually.

This in turn gives rise to the main problem of interaction between public authorities, with sluggish competition for resources at all levels of the state apparatus, not only within the structures themselves, but also between individual officials.

But that is not all — the constant expansion of the bureaucracy and the succession of conflicting reforms creates an unmanageable set of actions (without a clearly defined area of responsibility) in which it is not entirely clear which body or official is responsible for which initiatives, leading to a situation where it is much easier to create the appearance of work than to actually do it. This is why there is still a lack of understanding of how, in what form and through which instruments each public authority and individual official is involved in the achievement of national goals.

TACTICAL PROBLEMS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

One of the main tactical problems in strategic planning sphere that needs to be solved is the lack of effective interaction between public authorities, especially at the municipal level.

There are currently over 20,000 municipalities in the Russian Federation. This fact leads to justification of a large number (about 50,000) of strategic planning documents at this level, which leads to the low quality of their development and implementation and complicates the methodological support and control of strategic planning processes by the federal and regional state bodies. It should be noted, however, that out of the five such documents

at the municipal level, only three are mandatorily developed and implemented.

This situation can be explained by the fact that many Russian municipalities lack the necessary financial and human resources to organize and carry out the work on the integrated development of their territorial formations.

The improvement of *interaction between public authorities*, including in the field of strategic planning, should be facilitated by the adoption of the law “On General Principles of Organization of Local Self-Government in the Unified System of Public Power”, the draft of which was adopted in the first reading on January 25, 2022 by the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.⁷

This document envisages a change in the legal subjectivity of the existing eight types of municipalities through their enlargement, in the fact that three types of municipalities will be considered as administrative-territorial units in the system of local government of the Russian Federation: municipal district, urban district and intracity territory (intracity municipal entity) of a city of federal significance. Their total number will be reduced from 20,000 to 4,000, which should increase the financial and personnel autonomy of municipalities and their ability to resolve issues of their functioning and development.

In this case, municipalities, having become full participants in the process of formation of strategic guidelines in the Russian Federation, will be able to fully participate in the development and implementation of strategic planning

⁷ Draft Law No. 40361–8 “On the general principles of the organisation of local self-government in a unified system of public authority”. URL: <https://sozd.duma.gov.ru/bill/40361–8> (accessed on: 10.11.2022).

documents, the number of which (it is assumed) will be significantly reduced, along with an increase in the degree of their interrelation and universality at the federal, regional and municipal levels of development. This will facilitate the automation of the processes of their creation and adjustment.

Today in the Russian Federation in the context of strategic goal-setting, forecasting and planning at all levels (federal, regional and municipal) a significant number of documents is being created and approved, including those of paramount importance, such as the National Security Strategy; Economic Security Strategy until 2030; Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development until 2035; Spatial Development Strategy until 2025, etc.⁸

But, unfortunately, all of them differ significantly in terms of their duration, the goals set in them are largely unrelated to each other, and there is an overlap in their individual elements. This state of affairs is largely due to the lack of a theoretically deeply developed, comprehensively discussed in society, fundamental strategy for socio-economic development of the Russian Federa-

tion. Attempts to create one were made in 2017, 2019 and 2021, but were not brought to fruition.

Thus, the first priority is to develop just such a strategy for the development of the country, as well as of the constituent entities and municipalities of the Russian Federation.

This will make it possible to determine further logical continuity in the creation of documents of this orientation, their coherence and balance in terms of priorities, goals, objectives, indicators, financial and other resources.

Strategic planning and management at all levels should be based on the national development goals and priorities clearly formulated in the presidential decrees, but due to their rather general nature they should be specified in the national strategy for socio-economic development. In domestic realities, this is carried out by the subjects of strategic planning and executed by each of them to the extent of their understanding, often with the introduction of sectoral or regional egoism [9].

In this regard, the American experience is illustrative, especially since in both the U.S. and Russia about 80% of the federal budget is spent to finance various programs. The development agenda in the U.S. is called "National Security Strategy". But this document applies to all spheres of the country's life and the main directions of foreign policy and affairs.⁹ Its provisions formulate the draft federal budget, sectoral strategies and some 1,500 federal programmes, and formulate cross-sec-

⁸ Presidential Decree No. 400 of 02.07.2021 "On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation". URL: https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_389271/?ysclid=latikgt15u518807714; Presidential Decree No. 208 of 13.05.2017 "On the Economic Security Strategy of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030". URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71572608/?ysclid=latim8gfa1518278639>; Presidential Decree No. 642 of 01.12.2016 "On the Strategy for Scientific and Technological Development of the Russian Federation". URL: https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_207967/?ysclid=latinw1x2w8663046; Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of 13.02.2019 No. 207-d (revised on 30.09.2022) "On Approval of the Spatial Development Strategy of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2025". URL: <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/552378463?ysclid=latiqzlhzy411006545>

⁹ National Security Strategy 2022. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf> (accessed on: 21.09.2022).

toral priorities in accordance with the Public Administration Modernisation Act (GPRA Modernization act of 2010).¹⁰ The coordination, common understanding and subsequent monitoring of the implementation of the programmes and activities under the Strategy is carried out by the largest unit of the presidential administration — Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The monitoring parameters include the efficiency of financial management, the adequacy of financial procedures, the applicability of information technology, etc., and the process itself is constantly being improved, as reflected in special circular memoranda.¹¹ The implementation of the US national strategy is subject to an equally rigorous strategic audit by the Chamber of Accounts — GAO (Government Accountability Office).¹²

Based on the US experience, it seems advisable to establish a similar Office of Management and Budget in Russia, possibly as part of the Russian Presidential Administration.

PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES IN THE AREA OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Obviously, the problems in the area of strategic planning and management are systemic in nature and their solution

requires radical, if you will, political measures. At the same time, certain improvements and interaction of public authorities in this area can be achieved by strengthening the strategic audit and creating a unified digital platform.

Global experience in the implementation of national strategies shows that the effectiveness is directly proportional to the effectiveness of monitoring systems and strategic audit, which at the federal level is engaged by the Chamber of Accounts. Its authority to adjust the implementation of state programmes and national projects is rather limited and requires a lengthy procedure. At the same time, strategic audits are needed at all levels of national strategy implementation, and audit observations and suggestions need to be implemented very quickly.

The French Chamber of Accounts (Courdes Comptes), whose members have the status of judges, i.e., in accordance with the French Constitution they are fully independent of the executive branch of power¹³ is very representative of the breadth of powers available to them. Judging from the effectiveness of this body, the granting of such powers, including the possibility of swift intervention in the management process, is totally justified [10].

The main task of the strategic audit is to ensure independent public control on behalf of the state and society over the performance of the authorities in managing the public resources entrusted to them, and it is not limited solely to the audit of the financial statements of public entities [11]. The world standards

¹⁰ PUBLIC LAW 111-352—JAN. 4, 2011, GPRA MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2010. URL: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ352/pdf/PLAW-111publ352.pdf> (accessed on: 21.09.2022).

¹¹ MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/M-22-05-FY-22-FISMA-Guidance.pdf> (accessed on: 21.09.2022).

¹² U.S. Government Accountability Office. Role as an Audit Institution. URL: <https://www.gao.gov/about/what-gao-does/audit-role> (accessed on: 21.09.2022).

¹³ Constitution of the French Republic. URL: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/France_2008.pdf?lang=en (accessed on: 21.09.2022).

include seven variants of audit; in the Russian Federation the three of its varieties are the most important and applicable.

The Strategic Audit Standard was approved by the Russian Audit Chamber (Chamber of Accounts) at the end of 2020.¹⁴ It should be noted that there are no international standards — there is performance auditing. But, as A. N. Vyvolokina, Y. A. Sazhina, and L. V. Gusarova rightly point out [12], these types of auditing should not be equated.

The difference is that the performance audit is one of the tools of strategic auditing, which evaluates the results achieved in the context of the need to adjust the strategic planning process in order to improve the achievable indicators at commensurate costs [12].

While it is important to develop domestic strategic audit practices, improving the monitoring of the implementation of strategic plans cannot be left aside. Since the latter are implemented both in Russia and the USA by implementing programmes, the American experience may again be of interest here.

Perhaps a well-developed monitoring system makes strategic auditing superfluous. This is indirectly evidenced by a study [13], the authors of which found that of the 20 countries they examined, strategic audit is fully practiced only in three, and in two others it is only partially represented. Among those countries that do not practise

strategic audit — there are successful states such as Germany, Israel and Japan, which is curious to note.

But in any case, when carrying out these or those institutional adoptions, extreme caution should be exercised, because they often produce a negative effect due to the difference in initial conditions [14].

To improve the quality of strategic management in the country, as well as to improve the control of information flows and more effective use of information stored in information systems: state (GIS) and organizations with state participation (IS), it is necessary to create a unified digital information space with a guaranteed compatible IS of strategic planning participants and consistency of the data contained in them.

At the same time, some possible challenges to the implementation of digitalization should be taken into account. Considering it as a new paradigm for strategic planning, it should be understood that the main source of change lies in the redesign of existing relationships, modes of interaction and the application of new, information-intensive methods of analysis. Unfortunately, over the last decade there has been no fundamental change in the field of digitalization, indicating a real shift in the right direction: in fact, the situation is at the first stage — the digitization of paper documentation. But even here, successes are variable. The real efficiency of information management is due to two combined factors:

- reducing the number of people involved in management (which increases speed);

¹⁴ External Public Audit (Control) Standard SPA 105 “Strategic Audit” (approved by the Resolution of the Board of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation of 10.11.2020 No. 17RB). URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/400157141/> (accessed on: 21.09.2022).

- increasing the number of information links (both vertical and horizontal).

In practice, there has been no tangible change — instead there have been scattered developments, whose interconnectedness and interoperability were already lacking at the concept-generating level. Today, there are around 300 public information systems on the register, most of which have no purpose or technical necessity.

In theory, the new information reality should act as an integrating force capable of bringing decision makers and the agencies they manage closer together. In terms of potential development, it is necessary to create a common information policy that could integrate individual initiatives into a coherent service and information platform and involve in this process public authorities whose functions are not legally linked to strategic planning.

Briefly summarizing the main directions of improvement of interaction of public authorities in the sphere

of strategic planning [15–17], it is necessary to highlight the following:

1. The formation of units to coordinate strategic plans.

2. The creation of an analytical-monitoring body (following the example of the American OMB — Office of Management and Budget) is possible in the structure of the Russian Presidential Administration in order to specify national development directions and national priorities, as well as to carry out effective monitoring of the implementation of strategic plans and state programs.

3. Developing the practice of strategic audit and its effectiveness, for which it is necessary to expand the powers of the Chamber of Accounts of the Russian Federation, up to enabling it with the right to cancel the execution of strategic plans and programs that are ineffective or do not correspond to national priorities or national development goals.

4. Building a unified digital information and analytical platform for strategic management.

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Authors' declared contribution:

Belyaev I. I. — generalization of the study's results, formation of the research's conclusions.

Pobyvaev S. N. — critical analysis of literature, collection and systematization of data.

Silvestrov S. N. — the issue statement, working out on the paper's concept.

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