

СОВЕРШЕНСТВОВАНИЕ СИСТЕМЫ ПРОЕКТНОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ НА РЕГИОНАЛЬНОМ УРОВНЕ

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Аннотация: Статья посвящена рассмотрению системы проектной деятельности на региональном уровне в контексте государственного управления. В работе подчеркивается важность проектного подхода как инструмента повышения эффективности государственного управления и улучшения качества государственных услуг, выделяются методологические, организационные и терминологические особенности, связанные с реализацией проектов разного уровня. При этом отмечается, что, несмотря на внедрение ряда процедур, направленных на повышение эффективности проектного подхода, таких как, например, «проектная гильотина», продолжают сохраняться общие несовершенства, а сам подход требует развития. В работе рассматривается пример успешной модернизации системы теплоснабжения Санкт-Петербурга, выполненной ГУП «ТЭК СПб», и обсуждается вклад данного проекта в экономическое и социальное развитие региона. Также приводится обзор нормативно-правовой базы, регулирующей проектную деятельность в органах государственной власти Российской Федерации. Отмечается, что нормативно-правовая база Российской Федерации предусматривает четыре типа проектов, при этом на уровне субъектов единой терминологической системы не сложилось. Авторы подчеркивают необходимость устранить терминологическую несогласованность региональной и федеральной нормативно-правовой базы, что будет способствовать повышению эффективности реализации проектной деятельности.

Ключевые слова: государственное управление, проектная деятельность, приоритетный проект, региональный проект

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IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

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Abstract: The article examines the project activity system at the regional level within the framework of public administration. The authors highlight the methodological, organizational, and terminological aspects of implementing projects at various levels and stress the value of the project approach as an instrument for boosting public administration efficiency and raising the quality of public services. It is noted that despite the introduction of a number of procedures aimed at improving the effectiveness of the project approach, such as, for example, the “project guillotine”, general imperfections remain, and the approach itself requires further development. The article examines the State Unitary Enterprise «Fuel and Energy Complex of Saint Petersburg» as an example of a successful heat supply system modernization project and explores how this project has benefited the region's social and economic development. Additionally, the study provides the summary of the legal and regulatory framework that the Russian Federation's public authorities use to oversee project activities. The article points out that the regulatory and legal framework of the Russian Federation provides for four types of projects, while no unified terminological system has developed at the regional level. The authors emphasize the need to eliminate the terminological inconsistency of the regional and federal regulatory and legal framework, which will contribute to improving the efficiency of project activities.

Keywords: public administration, project activities, priority project, regional project

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Introduction

The competitiveness of national and regional economies, the socioeconomic well-being of the population, and favorable conditions for starting and conducting business are all dependent on the effectiveness of public administration [Bryson, Crosby, Bloomberg, 2014; Dima, Lobonț, Moldovan, 2016; Rajhlina, Patrusheva, 2022]. Additionally, citizens have consistently asked for better public administration and services [Graham, Amos, Plumptre, 2003].

In 2005, the project approach was institutionalized in the Russian public administration system as one of the instruments for raising the quality of public administration. Since then, the principles of project activities have been actively employed to develop the operations of federal executive authorities, executive bodies of state power of the Russian Federation's constituent entities, and local self-government bodies.

Despite the expertise gathered in overseeing national projects and several initiatives to enhance instruments and processes, like the 2022 «project guillotine», key actors still identify remaining flaws. For example, examining regional project offices' operations reveals the methodological, organizational, and informational issues that still exist [Valuysky, 2023].

Using the implementation of Saint Petersburg's priority project, «Conversion of heat supply sources of the State Unitary Enterprise «TEK SPb» to energy-efficient fuels, reducing the negative environmental impact», as an example, this study looks at the specifics of project activities at the federal level. Saint Petersburg has extensive experience organizing project activities and is a successful example of management quality and communication support. According to the Saint Petersburg Administration's official website, the implementation of five city projects and over 40 regional projects that are a part of the national projects is scheduled for 2024. In addition, the priority project covered in this article is the first of its kind that the city has implemented. As a result, Saint Petersburg and other Russian Federation constituent entities can benefit from the experience gained from its implementation in process and procedure improvement.

Regional initiatives in the organization system for project activities within the Government of the Russian Federation

In 2005, the public administration system started implementing project management [Krasilnikov, Yakimova, 2015]. Over the past 20 years, the authorities have gained a lot of experience in developing and managing public projects, which is beneficial for identifying potential areas for system improvement. These projects include the priority national projects «Education», «Health», as well as territorial megaprojects «So-

chi-2014» and «Integrated Development of the Nizhny Priangarie» among others [Batmanova et al., 2015].

The Investment Fund of the Russian Federation (the Fund), created in November 2005 as a component of the Russian Federation budget and used to carry out national-level investment projects and later regional projects based on public-private partnerships, was a significant milestone in developing project management. Compared to federal projects, regional projects demonstrated a higher degree of efficiency. This is because the investment object is closer to the controlling authorities and has a smaller funding pool, making the outcomes of work done under regional project frameworks easier to manage. Additionally, they were implemented within the framework of a thoroughly tested monitoring and control system. The effectiveness of regional investment project work served as justification for further extending the Russian Federation's constituent entities' authority to choose and carry out Fund projects. Thus, since 2010, the Ministry of Regional Development has been establishing the legal and regulatory framework for creating regional investment funds. This initiative aims to improve performance quality, shorten the term for project selection, and make project support as targeted as possible [Travin, Semenov, Skachkovskaya, 2011; Shatyрко, 2012].

Although the Russian Federation's Investment Fund lasted until 2017, it stopped choosing and carrying out new projects soon after the Russian Ministry of Regional Development was liquidated in 2014. The experience of implementing projects at the federal and regional levels has established a strong foundation for the continued development of project management within the state system, even though some experts believe that the Fund's work is not sufficiently effective [Kolchugina, 2018].

Resolution No. 1288 of the Russian Federation's Government, issued October 31, 2018 (from now on referred to as Resolution 1288), approved the «Regulations on the organization of project activities in the Government of the Russian Federation». These regulations incorporated the Foundation's experience. Currently, it is the primary document that establishes the guidelines for project activity organization at the state level. One of the core characteristics of the projects carried out under Resolution 1288 is their «programmaticity», or vertical integration: federal projects use the target benchmarks set by national projects as a basis for setting regional projects [Anshin et al., 2008].

Therefore, according to the document, a **regional project** is «a project that ensures the achievement and (or) contribution to the achievement of goals and (or) indicators and implementation of measures (results) of a federal project, which is part of a national project, and (or) structural elements of the state program of the Rus-

sian Federation, and (or) state program of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation». Implementing regional projects contributes to completing tasks within the framework of federal projects because of the activities managed by the region and its corresponding municipalities. However, projects started at the federal level do not always reflect the subject's priority tasks. In this case, a Russian Federation constituent entity may start projects outside the project vertical because Resolution 1288 grants constituent entities the right to choose the institutional project management model.

How are these projects progressing, and what is the legal framework like? The following part will examine the unique characteristics of project management in the federal city of Saint Petersburg, one of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

Project activities in Saint Petersburg

Each Russian Federation constituent entity develops its project management model and establishes a project office that operates either as an independent unit within the body supporting the activities of the constituent entity's top official or as part of the executive authority in charge of project operations and interdepartmental communication. If required, the project office's tasks may be carried out by subordinate organizations [Meshcheryakov, 2019].

Reviewing the North-West Federal District's (NWFD) regional project offices' organizational structure has revealed that current executive bodies frequently carry out their duties. This function is carried out by the Committee for Economic Development and Investment Activity in the Leningrad Oblast, the Oblast Department of Strategic Planning in the Vologda Oblast, and the Project Department / Project Office of the Governor's Administration in Saint Petersburg [Zadumkin, Shcherbakova, 2023].

Each NWFD constituent entity's project activities are governed by distinct regulatory acts defining their organizational process, the range of projects to be carried out, and the management structure. In Saint Petersburg, this process is regulated by Saint Petersburg Government Resolution No. 591 of September 2, 2019, «On Organization of Project Activities in the Executive Bodies of State Power of Saint Petersburg», and Governor's Resolution No. 38-pg of July 23, 2019, «On the Council for Strategic Development and Project Activities in Saint Petersburg», where the first document establishes the procedure for project activities and the second document sets the structure of management bodies.

In Saint Petersburg, project management is organized and implemented according to federal standards, including establishing permanent and temporary management bodies. Permanent bodies include a regional project office in the Governor's Office and the Presidium

of the Council for Strategic Development and Project Activities. Departmental project offices and collegial bodies oversee and manage the work on departmental projects. Temporary bodies include project committees, supervisors, project managers, and administrators, as well as participants who work on the project in stages – initiation, preparation, implementation, and completion.

Project management in Saint Petersburg is unique because priority projects are assigned and carried out concurrently with departmental and regional projects in compliance with federal regulations. These projects aim to realize Saint Petersburg's socioeconomic development strategy until 2035. In 2023, the priority project, «Conversion of heat supply sources of the State Unitary Enterprise «TEK SPb» to energy-efficient fuels, reducing the negative environmental impact», was approved. The following section of the article will address the specifics of its implementation.

Experience in implementing Saint Petersburg's priority project SUE «TEK SPb»

Project description and specifics of its implementation

SUE «TEK SPb» is the North-West's largest heat and power company, accounting for approximately 48 % of the heat market in Saint Petersburg¹. SUE «TEK SPb's» participation in the «Project Olympus» federal competition for professional project management demonstrated that the company had acquired sufficient project management competencies by the time the project was launched. According to the evaluation findings, which were carried out among businesses with state involvement as well as commercial and public organizations, the company came in second place behind Public Joint Stock Company Mining and Metallurgical Company «Norilsk Nickel»².

As mandated by Russian President V.V. Putin and the directive of Saint Petersburg Governor A.D. Beglov, all boiler houses listed on the organization's balance sheet were to run on energy-efficient fuels by the end of 2023. 22 outdated boiler houses needed to be modernized in a short period of time. This required many tasks to ensure that consumers would have a continuous supply of hot water and heat during the modernization process, as well as coordination of technical and administrative solutions with city and executive authorities' resource-supplying organizations, the purchase and installation of new equipment, direct boiler house switching, and professional training under advanced training programs for operating personnel. Additional

1 <https://www.gptek.spb.ru/about/>

2 <https://ac.gov.ru/news/page/obavleny-pobediteli-konkursa-proektnyj-olimp-2022-27366>

work was conducted on communicating with the city's energy community about the SUE «TEK SPb's» plans to modify the city heat supply system. At the same time, resource-supplying organizations were planning to refine their investment programs to include the costs associated with ensuring the implementation of the project by SUE «TEK SPb». It also required the creation of a reservation for gas consumption. This multilevel complex of tasks necessitated a compound coordination and management system.

The project was given priority status on July 13, 2023, because it focuses on completing a strategically significant task for the city to «ensure the reliability and safety of municipal infrastructure and energy systems»³, which is to convert boiler houses to efficient and environmentally friendly sources of heat supply from fuels like coal, oil, or diesel. Furthermore, the project's goals and activities aligned with government programs and strategies aimed at reducing utility resource costs⁴ and lowering atmospheric pollution emissions⁵.

The project was overseen by Saint Petersburg Governor A.D. Beglov, while Vice-Governor S.G. Dregval served as the deputy supervisor, or senior official⁶, charged with energy and tariff regulation. The project was led by I.A. Boltenev, General Director of the SUE «TEK SPb». The project working group included employees of the SUE «TEK SPb», heads of administrations of some Saint Petersburg districts, and heads of committees, such as the Committee for Energy and Engineering Support and the Committee for State Control, Use and Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments, as well as top managers of the organizations involved in the implementation of project activities, LLC «PeterburgGas» and PJSC «Rosseti Lenenergo». Due to the working group's high political and administrative resources, the project was finished on time. However, the inclusion of representatives from all of the main actors in the work processes in the working group was associated with potential challenges with activity organization and coordination.

In addition to the technical re-equipment of boiler houses, the project also reduces fuel consumption

during the energy generation process, utility infrastructure wear and tear, and harmful emissions into the atmosphere. Furthermore, because the boiler house fuel supply is the least secure against terrorist attacks, such as drone strikes, shifting to gas and removing fuel oil as a fuel source significantly lowers the threat of terrorism. A fuel oil spill and subsequent ignition could cause catastrophic damage and, most likely, the loss of critical infrastructure. The majority of the boiler houses are located in crowded parts of the city, which is also crucial.

The project's priority status played a significant role in its successful completion within the set timeframe. These benefits include, among other things, the ability to use more administrative resources, which sped up bureaucratic procedures and made it possible to assign tasks to all parties involved in the project. The governor and the relevant vice-governor's oversight of the project's implementation encouraged even more executive discipline. Secondly, there was high participation from representatives of executive authorities and resource-supplying organizations because each person was held accountable for reaching specific outcomes within the allotted time. Lastly, the project implemented contemporary management project technologies, such as responsibility allocation and planning, that are advised for use at all governmental levels.

Global experience in public project management demonstrates that the effectiveness of project implementation is primarily dependent on how efficiently each member of the project team coordinates and how cohesively they work toward the project's goals and objectives [Miroshnichenko, Shpiro, 2019]. The regulatory legal acts of Saint Petersburg, for instance, established a mechanism of priority project implementation that allowed the organizations involved in the process to work efficiently and successfully finish the project work despite the tight implementation deadlines. The project has received numerous honors and recognitions. Thus, the project helped SUE «TEK SPb» win the «Good Energy» category of the interregional multi-sectoral award for municipal utility professionals. Additionally, the project was acknowledged as a winner in the Sustainable Business category under the International Project «Ecological Culture. Peace and Harmony».

Issues with executive authorities' project management system: the problem of inconsistent terminology

On the one hand, as previously mentioned, the Russian Federation's legal and regulatory framework distinguishes four categories of projects: departmental, federal, regional, and national. At the same time, projects that are outside the framework of federal projects and intended to accomplish the authorized objectives of a Russian Federation constituent entity's

3 Strategy of socio-economic development of Saint Petersburg for the period until 2035. https://www.gov.spb.ru/gov/otrasl/c_econom/strategiya-ser-2035/

4 State Program «Integrated Development of Utility Infrastructure Systems, Energy and Energy Saving in Saint Petersburg». <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/822403593>

5 Presidential Decree No. 176 of April 19, 2017, «On the Strategy of Environmental Security of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025».

6 According to Saint Petersburg Government Resolution No. 591 of September 2, 2019, if necessary, a deputy project supervisor (senior official) may be appointed to carry out some of the supervisor's duties as part of the priority project's implementation.

Table 1. Terminology for regional-level projects

Notion	Definition	Supervising body	Source
Regional project	"A project that ensures achieving and (or) contributes to meeting objectives and (or) indicators and implementing measures (results) of a federal project that is part of a national project, and (or) structural elements of a state program of the Russian Federation, and (or) a state program of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation"	Regional project office	Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of October 31, 2018, No. 1288 (edited as of December 21, 2023), "On Organization of Project Activities in the Government of the Russian Federation" (together with "Regulations on Organization of Project Activities in the Government of the Russian Federation")
A priority project of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation (e.g., Saint Petersburg) or another regional project of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation	"A project aimed at achieving the goals of the socio-economic policy of Saint Petersburg set out in the Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of Saint Petersburg for the period until 2035, approved by Saint Petersburg Law No. 771-164 of December 19, 2018"	Priority project supervisor (e.g., in Saint Petersburg, supervisors are usually appointed from among the vice-governors of Saint Petersburg)	Regulatory and legal acts of some constituent entities of the Russian Federation (e.g., Decree of the Government of Saint Petersburg No. 591 of September 2, 2019, "On Organization of Project Activities in the Executive Bodies of State Power of Saint Petersburg")
Regional investment project	"An investment project, the purpose of which is to produce goods in the territory of the subjects of the Russian Federation named in the code or other subjects that have an appropriate regulatory and legal framework, and which fulfills the requirements regarding the region of the business activity direction and the volume of capital investments" [Article 25.8 of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation]	Authorized body of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation (e.g. Committee for Industrial Policy, Innovations and Trade, Department of Economic Development)	Tax Code of the Russian Federation
Priority investment project	"An investment project whose total volume of capital investments meets the requirements of the Russian Federation's legislation, included in the list approved by the Russian Federation's government"	Federal executive body authorized by the Government of the Russian Federation (Ministry of Economic Development of Russia)	Federal Law No. 39-FZ of February 25, 1999, "On investment activities in the Russian Federation carried out in the form of capital investments"
Priority investment project of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation (e.g. in Nizhny Novgorod Region)	"A project that has passed expert review and competitive selection, the implementation of which provides a positive economic and (or) social effect for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, approved according to the procedure established by the Nizhny Novgorod Region's government"	The supreme executive body of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation (e.g., the Government of Nizhny Novgorod Region)	Regulatory and legal acts of some constituent entities of the Russian Federation (e.g., Law 180-Z, "On State Support of Investment Activities in Nizhny Novgorod Region")

socioeconomic policy are distributed in a separate group among certain constituent entities. Nevertheless, this set of projects lacks a common terminology. For example, the term «priority project» is introduced in the regulations of Saint Petersburg, Leningrad Oblast, or Volgograd Oblast, whereas «other regional project» is used in Rostov Oblast or Altai Krai. Apart from the status of «regional», «other regional», or «priority» projects, which are determined by regional legislation on the coordination of project activities, a project carried out at the level of a Russian Federation constituent entity may be eligible to receive the status of a regional investment project or a priority investment project if it satisfies several requirements outlined in regional investment legislation.

For example, Saint Petersburg's legislation allows for the implementation of regional investment projects; however, it does not enshrine projects of the priority investment type. According to Saint Petersburg Government Resolution No. 267 of May 11, 2021, «On Measures to Implement the Law of Saint Petersburg «On Regional Investment Projects Implemented on the Territory of Saint Petersburg», the Committee for Industrial Policy, Innovation, and Trade of Saint Petersburg is the executive body that decides whether to add an organization to the list of regional investment project participants. Such a project must fulfill several requirements, including being categorized as a manufacturing project, being carried out by a single party, and meeting minimum investment thresholds.

The definitions of project types found in federal and regional regulations are shown in **Table 1**.

As we can see, the definitions in federal legislation and the legislation of the constituent entities may differ. The regulatory legal acts of the Russian Federation's constituent entities may not allow for certain types of investment projects at all. Since all the regulatory acts listed in the table enshrine tax incentives or other state support for projects, using similar terminology concerning regionally implemented projects may lead to misunderstandings and disagreements among investors and, more importantly, financial and economic issues.

Obtaining the status of a priority investment project of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation or a regional investment project is an essential mechanism for supporting investors – legal entities willing to invest their money in projects that aim to achieve the region's strategic development goals. The term "priority investment project" is widely used in regional legal acts. The term appears in federal-level documents such as the Russian Federation's Urban Planning Code, which regulates issues related to the integrated development of territories, and the Russian Federation's Forest Code, which governs problems associated with the development of forest complexes.

As a result, the effective regional project activity implementation necessitates terminological consistency with the federal regulatory and legal framework, which

provides a more comprehensive set of instruments for initiating projects, attracting the necessary resources, and achieving project goals. Additionally, it helps to respect the interests of a broader range of potential stakeholders in the implementation process.

Conclusion

Even though there have been notable advancements in the institutionalization and actualization of project activities at the federal level, regional efforts to test legislative mechanisms and identify current issues and areas for improvement are still ongoing. This study examines the initial implementation experience of the Saint Petersburg priority project. The analysis has demonstrated that the processes established by legal and regulatory acts enable forming a diversified project team with substantial administrative and political resources and efficient coordination of its interactions. This allowed for completing a complex set of works in a socially sensitive area in a very short time. The project has also identified a terminological disconnection issue, which could be a barrier to executing additional high-priority initiatives in the area. It is less appealing for commercial organizations to participate in projects of strategic importance for the region because they are currently not covered by investment support measures when implementing priority projects.

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