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ADMINISTRATIVE AND CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS IN RUSSIA: RECENT TRENDS AT THE TIME OF TURBULENCE

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Abstract The article examines the changes in governance that have taken place in Russia since 2019, with a particular focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (which persisted until early 2022) and the ongoing military operation in Ukraine (which began in February 2022). The article discusses the specific characteristics of the reform efforts during these two distinct phases. Among the reforms of governance in Russia in this period, two central interrelated reforms, the reform of the civil service, and administrative reform are analyzed. The agenda of changes and their main directions have been studied for each of the reforms. It is argued that the main focus of the reforms is on the change of planning, the formation of integrated services, the digitalization of public service and services, the change in the regulatory climate, the “top-down” evaluation of the effectiveness of the apparatus, the development of flexible schemes of initiative budgeting. There is a change also in the orientation of education in the field of public administration.

The transition from COVID-19 to the sanction period of the reforms is characterized primarily by changes in the motivation of the apparatus, an emphasis on the security of managerial decision-making and the protection of electronic communications, a predominant increase in wages for the military and law enforcement services, a smooth departure from the stages of the Bologna education system (Master’s and Bachelor’s degrees).

Keywords: Civil service reform; administrative reform; COVID-19 Russian governance changes; Russian governance re-shaping under sanctions; Russian governance recent trends.

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Administrative reform, which is understood as the improvement of the structure and functions of state bodies, as well as the reform of the administrative apparatus (civil service) of Russia, jointly attributed as Russian governance reform, has been carried out since the first stages of the existence of the Russian Federation as an independent state that arose as a result of the collapse of the USSR. Since 1991, these two closely related reforms have gone through several stages: formation of the civil service system, creation of professional education in the field of public administration and advanced training for state and municipal employees (1990s, early 2000s); streamlining of the system of state bodies, and building a client-oriented ministerial-agency structure of state bodies, elimination of redundant and duplicative functions, development and implementation of administrative regulations (2003–2001); implementation of public service reform and development programs (2003–2010); formation of anti-corruption legislation (2004–2009); development of a single window system (since 2007); development of e-government (since 2011); creation of a national competition for the best personnel practices and dissemination of the best practices in the regions of Russia (since 2013); deployment of digitalization in public administration using big data (since 2013) (*The Oxford Handbook of Governance ...*, 2023). Last but not least, for these reasons, there has been a rapid breakthrough of Russia, its transformation into one of the economically progressive, socially oriented countries of the world with growing well-being of citizens. Of course, there were not only significant achievements on this path but also problems, in particular, if we talk about administrative mechanisms of public administration, we should mention the problems of eliminating mechanisms of excessive regulation, implementing schemes of participatory management, improving the professional level of civil servants, the prestige and image of the public service, improving anti-corruption measures with an emphasis on its prevention.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made adjustments to administrative reform and civil service reform, but the general direction of building the system according to Western theoretical and methodological models of extensive expansion of public services and professional development of the apparatus, as well as the progressive dynamics of the development of the Russian governance system, has remained. The governance system was able to successfully cope with the challenges of COVID-19 and adapt to the circumstances of the pandemic. It was necessary in an extremely short time to master new technologies of public administration related to restrictions on the movement of citizens and presence in public places, with the redistribution of resources for extraordinary medical purposes of disease prevention (including vaccination) and the transfer of a large volume of labor processes to a distant form, with a negative reaction to COVID-19 of a number of sectors of the economy (transport, tourism, sports, education, public catering, etc.). From 2019 to 2022, the social functions of the state have been significantly reformatted and even developed, at least not degraded (de Oliveira et al., 2021).

The weakening of the COVID-19 pandemic coincided for Russia with the beginning of a new testing period, surpassing in its scale, political challenges, economic stress, and social consequences the tests that were generated by the pandemic. Conflict in Ukraine, which has a deep history of degrading relations

in the 2000s, moved in February 2022 into an acute phase of hostilities, a proxy-war with complex participation of NATO block, which is called by Russian officials a Special military operation (SMO). This confrontation has affected all sides of the economy, the social sphere, and governance in Russia. So, before the outbreak of hostilities, the number of sanctions imposed on Russia was 2,695, and on July 14, 2023, according to Castellum et al. (2023), there were 16,535 of them. These sanctions, which are still being introduced and improved, block imports that are significant for production and consumption, cover entire sectors of the economy and individual enterprises, transport, restrict the free movement of goods and services, and apply to Russian citizens. Russia's GDP (GDP) fell by 2.1% in 2022, with the largest drop occurring in the areas of trade, export, and import operations. At the same time, state expenditures increased by 2.8%, which is primarily due to direct and indirect military expenditures (Tradingeconomics.com, 2023). According to a survey by the Public Opinion Foundation¹, the level of anxiety among citizens has increased from 35% (on September 18, 2022, before the start of partial mobilization), and up to 70% (on October 2, 2022, immediately after the start of partial mobilization).

In the early 2000s, governance reform in Russia largely followed in the wake of the best administrative practices of Western countries, which met the goals of developing an open market economy. Now this path requires modifications. It can be said that the previous period of development of the economy, social sphere, and governance in Russia has ended, faced with the realities of sanctions pressure, the need to focus on import substitution, the restructuring of international relations, the transition to accelerated development of industries related to the provision of defense orders. This entails changing the requirements for directions and tools, for the very content of governance reforms. The previous agenda of the Russian governance reform requires rethinking and adaptation to new conditions. Not because the attitude towards "Western values" has changed, but above all for quite practical reasons caused by sanctions, restrictions, and a change of priorities. Following Western reforms in the mainstream, copying theoretical attitudes of client orientation and public participation becomes not the main thing, it is forced to obey the logic of mobilization management. At the same time, the conditions of technological progress and its decisive role in the reorientation of the economy and public life to mobilization needs make it impossible to implement the historically proven Soviet scheme of mobilization economy and strict administrative management, since flexibility, speed of reaction to changes and challenges, the turbulence of the economic and social spheres require managerial initiative. Managerial development according to the "Western canons" seems to have ended, it has exhausted itself. New approaches and solutions are required that meet the challenges of sanctions and military confrontation with the West and the search for new directions for Russia's development.

For Russia, which is currently in an unprecedented confrontation with the West, the agenda of administrative reform is even more important than in the

¹ The FOMnibus survey September 30 – October 2, 2022. 104 localities, 53 subjects of the Russian Federation, 1,500 respondents.

quiet years of the early 2000s. The quality of public administration is one of the few controllable factors in ensuring the stability, development and competitiveness of the country. The need to make economically inefficient political decisions, the loss of a large share of revenues, the restrictions on foreign trade, the reorientation of spending for military needs make it a priority to respond flexibly to the constantly emerging challenges, to increase the efficiency of the use of available resources and to improve the overall effectiveness of the regulatory system.

Definitely, not enough time has passed since 2022 for new approaches to administrative reform and civil service reform in Russia to be finally formed. Many vital goals, such as ensuring the stability of the economy, spatial reorientation of foreign economic relations, solving problems in the field of science and technology, require the formation of new approaches at all levels of governance, the creation of adaptable regulatory regimes. While in the first stage of confrontation with the West much was solved in the manual control mode, for long-term stability under the new conditions, innovative institutions and mechanisms of governance are required. In general, a new agenda has been formed, trends have emerged that allow us to talk about strengthening the flexibility of management (agile), primarily at the regional level, reorienting towards data-dependent approaches, changing governance resource support systems.

We will describe the trends and reforms of the civil service and administrative reforms since 2019 in their main parameters (agenda, trends, examples).

We will start with the transformation of the Russian civil service, because the readiness of the bureaucracy for change is a necessary condition, the most important tool for the transformation of the structure and functions of state bodies.

The description of changes in the civil service will be carried out using data and examples taken from the materials of the annual competition of the best practices of the Russian state and municipal service (Federal state bodies, state bodies of Subjects of the Russian Federation, and municipal authorities), conducted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Russia (Ministry of Labor RF, 2023). The results of the first “post-COVID” competition in 2022–2023, which were summed up in May 2023, showed clear trend shift in the development of the Russian state apparatus, which can be explained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent confrontation with Ukraine that followed this pandemic.

The most significant changes in the civil service of Russia that occurred in 2019–2023, include changes in the areas: 1) digitalization, 2) motivation, 3) evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of public servants’ activities, remuneration of state and municipal employees, 4) education and advanced training in the field of public and municipal administration. Important shifts have been observed and recorded both in local practices and at the Federal bodies’ level.

Digitalization of public service

The accelerated transition of personnel processes to an electronic form was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to limit personal interaction of personnel services with employees as much as possible, replace it with a distant one and thereby preventing the spread of the disease. The demand for remote HR tech-

nologies has increased dramatically during COVID-19. In particular, the selection of candidates for public service began to be carried out remotely. This is reflected in the new practices of informatization of personnel processes developed by the subjects of the Russian Federation. In this regard, the following examples should be provided: a software and information system for selecting candidates for public service positions (Belgorod City Administration), a resource for the electronic submission of information by candidates for participation in competitions (the Government of the Voronezh Region), a program for the formation of electronic registers of independent experts for participation in competition commissions (the Administration of the Governor and the Government of the Irkutsk Region), podcasts to attract young people to public service in the format of video and audio recordings with answers to questions about the specifics of public service in the subject of Russia (Administration of the Governor and the Government of the Novosibirsk region). The best digital practice for selection for the civil service in 2022 was the practice of the Republic of Bashkortostan, where a structured information and analytical system for the comprehensive assessment of candidates for public service positions was created, with a distant assessment of the competencies of candidates for positions based on a case designer testing competencies in those areas that are necessary for a specific position. Thus, in Bashkortostan, the selection of personnel for public service has largely been transferred from personal physical appearance to the form of distant selection.

The other administrative processes, related to working with civil service personnel, were also digitized. Thus, IT services of internal interaction of civil servants with personnel offices (the Federal Tax Service of Russia) were developed, digital accounting was centralized with the creation of a unified personnel service of subjects of the Russian Federation (the Government and executive authorities of the Sakhalin Region), automatic processing of personnel data according to specified algorithms was introduced for HR analytics (the Apparatus of the Government of the Tula Region), a chatbot for the formation of corporate culture has been developed (the Government of the Samara region), information and communication technologies have begun to be actively used in the Vologda region when working with the personnel reserve for the replacement of higher positions, etc. The personnel processes and decisions at both the regional and Federal levels are now increasingly based on digital tools, and this breakthrough in the digitalization of public service in Russia was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since mid-2022, under the influence of SMO and sanctions, the digitalization of the civil service has continued and taken a new direction. There are calls for increased attention to be paid to the security of remote communication channels through which confidential state information circulates. In this regard, since the government agencies cannot use Western software that is not protected against hacking, there is a need to develop Russian tools for video conferencing, data exchange and storage. Russian government agencies have begun to define their software and remote communication requirements. The development of import substitution in the field of computer personnel technologies has become one of the main activities of the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation.

Motivation of civil servants

There has been a turning point in the transformation of the motivation of civil servants after 2019, which indicates a departure both from classical career motivation (Weber's motivation for the growth of professional competencies as the basis for appointment to higher positions, so-called competency-based promotion) and from the emphasis on material motivation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, attention to intangible and non-career-oriented motivation began to increase. The practice of stimulating prosocial motivation aimed at providing high-quality public services spread rapidly. For example, a competition to select the best inspectors of environmental supervision began to be conducted by the Federal Service for Supervision in the Environmental sphere. Another example could be provided, a two-stage competition for the provision of municipal services, consisting of an assessment by citizens of the quality of services, as well as internal monitoring of the compliance of services with standards and the quality of their transfer to electronic mode, is conducted by the Kaluga City Council. Professional competitions and tournaments to determine the best in the profession began to be held. For example, the Moscow Government held an accounting tournament among the centralized accounting departments of the city of Moscow, in which, in addition to online test tasks, a third stage was provided in person, at which participants were offered complex practical tasks. The state enterprise "Moscow Metro" holds contests for the best Metro employee and the best HR specialist. The competition for the cup of the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia on strategy and management (the Global Management Challenge project) using a business simulator is aimed at developing teamwork skills in the Ministry. During the pandemic, additional directions of simulating prosocial motivation began to develop. For example, encouraging parents of employees with letters of appreciation is practiced by the Federal Antimonopoly Service. The range of intangible rewards and badges, commemorative gifts, virtual honor boards (Agency of Labor and Employment, Krasnoyarsk Territory) have significantly expanded. All these practices are indicative of the changes in the motivational tools of the Russian bureaucracy during the COVID-19 period.

Even deeper changes in the transformation of the motivation of the state apparatus have been taking place since the second half of 2022, they are predetermined by the circumstances of the SMO. Prosocial motivation is being replenished (often even replaced) by the motivation of patriotism. The relationship between these two motivations is unclear, it requires additional research. When patriotism is motivated, other behaviors of officers occur that significantly correct prosocial motivation towards its transformation into patriotic service motivation. For example, there are many cases of civil servants volunteering, signing military contracts and temporarily resigning from the civil service (including from high positions of heads of regional and municipal levels). These new personnel practices are actively promoted by the media. The introduction of new signs of encouragement and regional non-material awards, other incentive measures related to assistance to injured citizens, also supports patriotic motivation, it is beginning to spread primarily in the administrations of the Southern regions of Russia (Belgorod, Kursk regions).

Efficiency, effectiveness, and remuneration

Since 2019, there have been three new trends in the tools for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of public service, and remuneration of civil servants. Firstly, there is a transition from the evaluation of processes to the evaluation of results. The increase in turbulence and uncertainty in all areas of governance, associated with the challenges of COVID-19 and the current extraordinary situation of the sanctions restructuring of the economy and social sphere, destroys the routine of official processes. Process indicators are a priority in the case of stable activity of state bodies, however, when stability is violated and the ongoing reorientation of state bodies to new, rapidly changing circumstances, processes become less important, they change “on the go”, the processes are not stable. Results are more important. In recent years, Federal bodies, as well as regional bodies, have begun to develop new systems for evaluating the performance of civil servants based on such indices and indicators that are directly related to the overall performance of state bodies, and for the Subjects of Russia – the governors of these Subjects. In the proposed perspective practices of evaluation, the central idea of the decomposition of the established indicators of bodies to the level of indicators of the effective performance of individual civil servants is carried out. A good example is the development of computer tools for evaluating the effectiveness of the performance of the executive authorities of the Sakhalin region based on the decomposition of the performance indicators that are used for calculating the rating of governors. Such an assessment is not requiring the personal presence of the evaluated employees at the commission’s meetings of state bodies, it can be carried out distantly, using IT. It should be noted that not only the performance indicators of managers are evaluated, but also the performance indicators of line employees. Another example of a results-oriented assessment was the formal system of strategic and tactical indicators developed by the Ministry of Economic Development of the Tula Region (these indicators are taken from the strategies and development programs of state and municipal bodies of this region), which is further decomposed using a formal algorithm down to the performance indicators of individual employees.

Secondly, the evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of civil servants is increasingly becoming associated with the collection of data and with the development of evaluation software offered by the government agencies. These software tools consist, as a rule, of data blocks reflecting the values of established indices and indicators; mechanisms for collecting this data, often in an interactive mode, entering information by civil servants themselves, their managers, personnel and financial services; blocks of software data processing. The process of spontaneous adaptation of the best regional and federal practices of data collection and processing by other Federal bodies and regions has begun (for example, the practice developed in 2020 in the Leningrad region), which indicates the demand for this indicative assessment of the quality of public service. Remuneration systems are beginning to be built taking into account the results of work of civil servants, thereby becoming more flexible and adapting to the changing demands of governance in the current circumstances. Such changes in wages can be noted in St. Petersburg, in the Sakhalin region, and in the Tula region.

Thirdly, starting from 2022, the beginning of SMO, according to the Ministry of Finance of Russia, the percentage of state budget expenditures on defense and security is significantly increasing (in 2023, these expenditures in the approved budget amount to more than 9 trillion rubles, that is, 60% more than in 2021 (Ministry of Finance RF, 2023)). The level of remuneration in the military and law enforcement spheres of public administration is growing at a faster pace. So, in June 2023, a resolution of the Russian Government was adopted in this regard (Resolution of Government of RF, 2023). Considerable funds are spent on contracts with volunteers entering military service to participate in a military operation. Spending on public administration in the new circumstances is increasing despite the budget deficit.

Education and professional development training

Modern requirements for governance differ significantly from those that existed before 2019. Flexibility in decision-making, prompt response to rapidly changing circumstances, prioritization in the context of budget deficits, require changes in public administration education and professional development training of civil servants. These changes cover all bachelor's and master's degree programs without exception, as well as post-graduate educational and research programs in public administration.

If before 2019 education in public administration did not have independence, it was included as a small compartment in the field of management first, and then economics, then after 2019 the situation changed. The changes can be described as complex and cover the ways of implementing higher education programs and training, the transformation of state educational standards, the specialties nomenclature of the Higher Attestation Commission of Russia, duration of the programs.

As for the ways of implementing educational programs, during COVID-19, distant technologies began to spread rapidly in the field of education and training. During the periods of the particularly acute course of the pandemic (winter 2021), almost all educational bachelor's and master's degree programs in public administration and public policy at universities, as well as training courses for civil servants, were transferred to a distant form. After the end of the pandemic, the return of universities to face-to-face education with physical presence in site began, but distance learning continues to be in demand. In particular, the distant training has taken root in programs for civil servants, in 2023, training centers in the regions of Russia, their technologies for working with personnel reserves, continued to reorient on distant format preferably.

New Federal State Educational Standards for Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Public Administration were adopted in 2020: Bachelor's degree in August 2020, with changes and amendments in November 2020 (Bachelor's Degree Standards, 2020); Master's degree in August 2020 (Master's Degree Standards, 2020). The distinctive features of these standards are flexibility (educational institutions can determine for themselves the disciplines in which students' professional competences are developed); the possibility of implementing programs using e-learning and distance learning technologies; requirements for internships in administrative institutions; requirements for participation in real applied governance projects; requirements for

participation in research work. It should be noted that Bachelor's and Master's degree programs in public administration are now no longer classified under management or economics, but are a distinct type of higher professional education programs.

The changes also affected the postgraduate programs in the field of public administration, which became a separate level of professional education. The Ministry of Education and Science of Russia has approved a new nomenclature of scientific specialties (Order of Ministry of Education RF, 2021), according to which a Passport of a scientific specialty in state and municipal governance was adopted in July 2023. For the first time, this science is recognized in Russia as an independent field of research within economics. The way is open to the formation of dissertation councils for public administration in educational and scientific institutions.

Since the beginning of SMO in Ukraine, many ties with foreign universities have been severed, cooperation agreements have ceased to operate. Orientation to the Bologna standards for the duration of Bachelor's and Master's degree programs (4+2 years) has not become a priority: in contrast, educational programs of more flexible duration, oriented to the needs of the domestic market, have become in demand. The transition from Bachelor's degree to specialty programs (duration 4–6 years), and from Master's degree to specialized education programs (duration 1–3 years), was approved in the Decree of the President of Russia dated May 12, 2023 (Decree of the President of Russia, 2023). A list of 6 universities has been identified in which such programs will be piloted from September 2023. In the field of public administration, such programs are currently being developed, their adoption will affect the qualification requirements for public service positions, make these requirements more flexible and take functional positions into account.

If we evaluate in general the trends in the Russian civil service system from 2019 to the present, it can be observed that the primary focus has been on several key areas. These include the adoption of electronic technologies, flexibility, patriotic motivation, performance evaluation using data, transition to national standards of professional education.

There are also significant shifts in the contemporary agenda of the **Russian administrative system transformation**. If before a full-scale confrontation with the West the goals of increasing the attractiveness of the Russian economy for foreign investors, unification and integration of the regulatory environment with Western standards were important, now attention is focused on the stability of the national economy in its not so much financial as real dimension, on the diversification of production, reorientation of foreign economic relations. New priorities require different mechanisms and criteria for the effectiveness of public administration.

The main creative challenge is that no “best practice” has been developed for the new political and economic situation. It is necessary “on the go” to invent new and adapt the existing tools of public administration. The experience of the planned, mobilization economy of the USSR, which some Russian political scientists and economists refer to as a panacea, can hardly be the remedy for solving present-day problems. There is no reason for it. Direct government regulation, administrative planning methods have not shown sustainable results, while the market and entrepreneurial initiative have just provided some stability during the years of the pandemic and the increasing sanctions pressure.

Planning

In the near future the Russian Federation will have to find a combination of planning, regulation, and the market that is acceptable for the modern conditions. The new system of public administration should proceed, on the one hand, from the fact of increasing the role of the state, centralization of its functions, strengthening the role of planned, administrative mechanisms, and wider use of “manual control”. At the same time, it is vital to preserve space for the market and competition, continue efforts to improve the business climate, reduce administrative barriers, create an understandable and as far as possible, predictable business environment, transparent and rational forms of interaction between the state and business and citizens. The new system, unlike the previous one, will use to a lesser extent the principles of NPM in terms of efficiency priority and incentives, as well as the approaches of Good Governance in terms of public participation, and will focus more on the model of the ideal bureaucrat, enhanced by digitalization, AI technologies, and social credit. It will be more important to achieve defined results than effectiveness, discipline in execution than seeking consensus. Significant changes are required in the system performance management, primarily in planning and strategic management. The system of strategic planning in Russia is established by Federal law, which defines the comprehensive system of sectoral and regional, long-term, medium-term, and short-term plans and outlooks at the level of Federal, regional, and local governments. When drafting the law, it was assumed, that plans, programs and projects would be coordinated according to the main parameters among themselves and linked to budgets of different levels, ensuring balance and spending funds in accordance with priorities. Despite the good wishes reflected in the law, it was not possible to implement the goals and principles set out in it in practice. The multi-level planning system has not been fully launched, many targets have not been achieved and will not be guaranteed to be achieved under the new conditions. First of all, this concerns the goals of technological and social development, budgetary policy, and foreign trade. Moreover, the goals set were not achieved during the pandemic and the introduction of numerous packages of sanctions but also before that.

It must be recognized that not only most of the strategic planning documents have lost their relevance, but their very structure and development procedure do not correspond to the current situation. The continuation of the practice of unrealistic planning for unpredictable periods not only costs the state dearly (according to our calculations and estimates of the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia, it costs billions of rubles annually and a lot of time spent by highly qualified specialists) but most importantly, creates unrealistic benchmarks. Market agents, to whom government plans and targets are also addressed, often do not believe them, and the signal function of planning is not implemented. In conditions of high uncertainty and limited resources, it is better not to have a plan at all than to plan with obviously big mistakes.

The discrepancy between plans and reality is the result, on the one hand, of the inconsistency between the format of the tools used and the dynamics of changes in planning objects and the external environment. On the other hand,

there are bureaucratic, departmental interests, lack of adequate responsibility and incentives for execution. As well known, decisions made without personal risk and real responsibility cannot be reliable. The introduction of elements of personal responsibility by appointing deputy Prime Ministers of the Government of the Russian Federation and ministers in charge of the implementation of national projects is designed to partially solve the problem of responsibility. However, under conditions of constantly increasing sanctions and uncertainties, reduction of budget revenues, it is extremely difficult to determine the level of personal responsibility for failing to achieve previously set goals.

There is a “fatigue” from planning. A survey conducted among specialists in strategic planning shows that over the past 25 years, the strategic planning system in Russia has transformed from a system that has the elements of originality, creativity, ambition, self-development, publicity, to one for which such characteristics as template, detail, measurability, pragmatism, paternalism and lack of openness (Zhikharevich et al., 2022)².

Clearly, such a state of the planning system cannot be satisfactory, especially in conditions that require objective and up-to-date information and a quick and balanced response to the challenges of the external environment.

In recent years, the system of monitoring and control of performance indicators of National projects and State programs has been improved. The mechanisms of their adjustment have become more flexible. Reporting indicators are generated automatically by the Russian Statistical Agency and independent sources, which reduces the risk of manipulation. Passports of projects and State programs are approved together with the draft budget. However, all this can be attributed to technical improvements.

A more important innovation was the creation in early 2021 of the Coordination Center of the Government of the Russian Federation as an adaptive form of Agile management. The objectives of the Center are to coordinate the activities of Federal and regional authorities in the elaboration of strategic decisions, prompt response to emerging situations, as well as the management of priority projects of the Government. Digital technologies and various information resources, including big data, are widely used in the work of the Center. When creating the Center, the experience of similar coordination centers for the preparation of the Olympic Games in Sochi in 2014 and the World Cup in 2018, large-scale National projects, was used. Ministerial project offices with similar functions began to monitor the risks of non-fulfillment of State programs and Federal projects in their area of responsibility. To a certain extent, the creation of the Center means a positive departure from the non-viable, mechanistic strategic planning scheme provided for in the Federal Law “On Strategic Planning”.

The efficiency of Performance management and Planning in the coming years will depend on whether it is possible to find a successful combination of operational and strategic management. Without this, priority inevitably will be shifted to up-to-date issues at the expense of tasks that require a long time to solve, and

² The survey was conducted by the Resource Center for Strategic Planning of the International Centre for Social and Economic Research – “Leontief Centre”.

more attention will be paid to doing things right vs doing the right things. According to experts, ambitious indicators in the strategic planning system are now less than 50%, and departmental, routine indicators are about 70%.

It is also necessary to find an appropriate mechanism of responsibility for the quality of planning and the achievement of goals and results, which will require the development of effective feedback, motivation, and objective control of the results achieved. The low level of responsibility leads to the fact that optimistic scenarios prevail at different levels of planning, which are easier to accept than to fulfill. The plans include tasks that do not have adequate resource support. Little attention is paid to ensuring resilience, i.e., strengthening their capacity to manage unforeseen challenges and potential shocks.

We will have to revise the list and formats of planning documents from the point of view of their relevance in management practice, budgeting, and control system. There is no need to develop plans for unrealistic deadlines, or to build programs in the areas where there is no obvious connection between the activities and the planned results.

In 2021, the modernization of the management of state programs, the main tool for planning and performance management in Russia, was carried out. The goals of sectoral programs were more clearly correlated with the goals of National projects. Program management is based on project principles: administrative process (routine bureaucratic functions) and project activities focused on achieving of results are separated. The institute of curators and managing boards of programs has been established – which is aimed at increasing responsibility.

In 2022, decisions were made to strengthen the relationship between programs and the budget, which, if necessary, allows for a more flexible redistribution of funds between programs.

Since 2022, it is allowed to redistribute the budget allocations of the Federal budget provided for the implementation of state programs both within the state program and between them without amending the budget law within 10% of the total amount of financial support for state programs for the corresponding year.

Digitalization of the planning and performance management system, which provides for the creation of a platform for the justification and implementation of management decisions, monitoring and control, risk management based on a single network of distributed data, can give a certain result.

Since 2019 the information support activities for strategic planning have been combined in a separate project, which is part of the Federal project “Digital Governance”. Within the framework of the project it is planned to create an environment of interaction between the actors of strategic planning.

Public services

The most successful direction of modernization of the Russian governance is the civil service. The improvement of this sphere through the creation of One-Stop-Shops services and electronic services began more than ten years ago. According to the Federal project “The State for the People” for 2022–2030,

it is planned to increase the level of satisfaction with services from 50% in 2022 to 90% in 2030 (Government News (a), 2023).

A One-Stop-Shops system “My Documents” has been created and is successfully functioning in the country. In 2009 the “Unified Portal of State and Municipal Services” was launched. By 2022, on average, more than 18 million services were successfully provided through the portal per month, i.e. more than 200 million public services per year. In general, 85% of all public services applicants receive online. The quality of services is subject to constant monitoring (Ministry of Digital Development, 2023).

The list of services provided online is constantly expanding. For example, in Moscow on the portal mos.ru along with traditional public services, there are services such as renting urban spaces and sports areas, making an appointment with a notary, issuing a parking permit, and transmitting information about checking or replacing water meters³.

The next step in the development of public services is the creation of so-called super services, i.e., complex proactive services for life situations (birth of a child, admission to university, migration, online pension, receiving social allowances, etc.). Super services are designed to control which public services are needed by a particular user, independently select the data and documents necessary for the performance of the service, pay fees, and monitor the process of rendering the service.

The launch of super services will allow on average to halve the waiting time for receiving public services, dramatically reduce the number of documents requested, and ensure that the client is informed around the clock. The need to visit the department will be minimized.

Regulatory climate

One of the priorities under the sanctions is to improve the internal regulatory climate. The general direction in this area is the development of evidence-based and risk-based approaches, both in organizational and methodological aspects.

The goals of improving regulation are, firstly, to reduce the accumulated ineffective regulations and limit the flow of new regulations, requirements, instructions that do not have a clear concept and justification and are often directly related to the local interests of bureaucratic groups. Secondly, to overcome the limited and non-correct views of the developer of regulatory norms (intentional or unintentional), which manifests itself in insufficient consideration of the overall burden on market participants as a result of the introduction of the projected norms of regulation.

Thirdly, it is necessary to extend the use of evidence-based methods in assessing regulatory impact, improve and standardize methods for calculating expected costs and damage prevented. This will increase the objectivity of the

³ Moscow topped the rating of the quality of electronic public services for the third time in a row. URL: <https://www.mos.ru/news/item/108856073/> (accepted: 15.08.2023).

choice among alternative regulators and avoid the most inefficient of them. Fourth, it is important to analyze alternatives when achieving regulatory goals. Traditional tools are various kinds of prohibitions, restrictions, and admissions, while behavioral approach methods are rarely used, although in some cases they may be more effective. Fifth, algorithmic regulation tools related to digitalization and the introduction of AI in public administration should be developed.

The foundations of these initiatives are laid down by two Federal laws on State Control and Supervision and on Mandatory Requirements. These laws made it possible to implement programs of the so-called Regulatory guillotine and the reform of State control, supervision and licensing activities.

As a result of the guillotine, i.e. the dismantling of inefficient regulations, more than 8.5 thousand Soviet-era regulations and more than 3 thousand acts issued after 1991 were canceled (KND Portal (b), 2023).

This has significantly cleared the regulatory field, reduced the administrative costs of doing business.

Unfortunately, the guillotine did not extend to all areas of regulation. A significant part of the mandatory requirements and restrictions were not affected. The monopoly of the regulator has been preserved, which often proceeds from the principle of “poor regulation is better than its absence”. The effectiveness of the guillotine should not be overestimated, and among the canceled acts were those that were not actually applied and did not contain mandatory requirements, i.e. did not affect the amount of administrative burden (Knutov et al., 2022).

Since 2021, a new system of control and supervisory legislation has been launched, aimed at establishing detailed rules for the organization of control and supervisory activities and creating a plain and simple system of mandatory requirements for businesses that correspond to the current level of technological development and a risk-oriented approach. This made it possible to reduce the number of inspections of enterprises in 2022 by almost 2.5 times compared to 2021 (KND Portal (a), 2023).

From March 2022 to the end of 2023, a moratorium on planned inspections has been introduced in the Russian Federation. During this period, inspections will be carried out only at objects of extremely high risk, and high-risk categories. This measure will significantly reduce the administrative costs of business: according to expert estimates, for a total amount of 160 billion to 180 billion rubles (Summary Report of Government of RF, 2023).

A notable step forward in the Russian regulatory system has also been the development of impact assessment methods based on the standard cost model. Proposals also have been developed to establish “significance thresholds” for the selection of requirements for which it is advisable to conduct a full-scale regulatory impact assessment.

A digital platform containing a register of mandatory requirements is also being developed, which allows planning and recording of all control measures, simplifying interdepartmental interactions and the work of inspectors. The platform allows for operational and objective monitoring of the control and supervision system and its results (KND Portal (b), 2023). The development of algorithmic regulation systems based on artificial intelligence is on the agenda.

Initiative budgeting/Open Government

The Institute of Open Government in Russia existed from 2012 to 2018. Nevertheless, at the Federal and regional levels of executive power in Russia, such elements of Open Government as public councils at executive authorities, portals for public consultations on various issues, including discussion of draft regulations and planning documents, Commissions for coordination of anti-corruption measures, etc. continue to operate.

In a period of sharp socio-economic changes, information wars, instability, and uncertainty, forced adoption of unpopular decisions, open government and participation mechanisms have to be treated with caution, given the possibility of their use in the interests of individual groups and manipulation. Despite the complexity of using open government mechanisms in the conditions of the difficult socio-economic situation of the country, unprecedented sanctions, and external information pressure, certain instruments of participation in public administration are adopted to current circumstances.

This can be attributed, for example, to the practice of so-called Initiative budgeting, which implies the involvement of citizens in the process of making budget decisions. According to the report of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation on the best practices of initiative budgeting in 2021 in 75 subjects of the Russian Federation, initiative budgeting has become an element of everyday activities at the regional and municipal levels (Ministry of Finance RF Report, 2022). Such practices as the “people’s budget”, initiative projects, improvement and development of rural areas, a comfortable urban environment, support for NGOs, and socially significant projects have become the most widespread.

Digitalization of services

Over the past decade, the digitalization of public administration in Russia has been proceeding at a high pace, which has allowed almost complete switching to online provision of public services, introducing a number of platform solutions in the public sector. In 2022, Russia entered the list of top countries in the digital transformation of the public sector in the World Bank rating. The rating takes into account achievements in the development of the Core Government Systems, Public Service Delivery, Digital Citizen Engagement, and Institutional Factors (GOVTECH Maturity Index, 2022).

Russia’s high place in the world ranking is ensured by the implementation of a number of state programs and projects since 2000. Currently, the National Digital Economy Project is being implemented, which includes tasks in the field of digital public administration: further digitalization of public services and government functions, database development and interdepartmental online interaction.

The successful implementation of digital services has also been facilitated by the relatively high digital readiness of the population, which consists of digital literacy and digital trust, i.e. people’s confidence in the reliability and security of digital technologies and processes.

An important prerequisite for integrated digitalization is also the development of information systems of the Federal authorities on the unified basis of the national GOVTECH platform – the cloud platform solution for federal and regional authorities for the rapid and efficient development of the government information systems and digital services (COVTECH, 2023).

The creation of a unified national digital platform is an important step to ensure the independence of the Russian public information technology sector and strengthen Russia's technological sovereignty. The first service launched on the platform was Federal Property Online. Users can submit applications for the purchase and lease of land plots, conclude transactions, etc. in electronic form. GOVTECH will actively develop machine learning and artificial intelligence technologies (Government News (b), 2023).

Along with the informatization of government agencies, including document management and the national data management system, an important direction is the creation of a Unified biometric system for remote identification of citizens. The use of biometrics will not only expand and make the portal of public services more convenient, but also increases the security of personal data, create electronic doubles, including personal documents.

In 2023, the transition of all executive authorities to the exchange of documents in electronic form is underway. This will help to begin the full digitalization of rule-making, the translation of norms and rules into a machine-readable format, increase the quality level and reduce the time required to develop draft acts. In the future, digitalization can also cover the process of rulemaking within such associations as the Eurasian Economic Union, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Conclusion

It should be stated that:

- 1) Digitalization of administrative processes and public service governance became the leading trend in governance reforms.
- 2) Agile governance, multi-level flexible result-oriented planning, including more flexibility in budgeting, in regulation, and the new procedures of public servants' result-orienting evaluation is the response of the governance system to challenges. The trends to simplify governance procedures are acting as the balance factor for the stabilization of the system of governance in present turbulent conditions.
- 3) Resilience and National Security are most important now for the Russian Government. The orientation on crisis management, SMO, and sanctions threats became the motto of the present system of Governance in Russia.

Thus, the changes in recent years (2019–2023) in the trends of governance reforms in Russia call into question the orientation of Russian reforms to the “standard” understanding of customer orientation and NPG. The reasons for the changes were external circumstances: first, COVID-19, and then the confrontation with Ukraine and the sanctions regime of the economy. Perhaps, as a result of these changes, a new national model of governance will appear, based on the requirements of the autonomy of the national economy and its resilience to sanctions, oriented on security, e-governance, and flexible response to external challenges.

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