

Interagency Collaboration in Providing Public Services in Russia: a Legal Perspective

Evgeny Styryn

National Research University
Higher School of Economics
101000 Moscow
str. Myasnitskaya 20
+7 495 621 39 87
estyrin@hse.ru

Andrey Zhulin

National Research University
Higher School of Economics
101000 Moscow
str. Myasnitskaya 20
+7 495 621 39 87
a.zhulin@hse.ru

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the legal aspects of sharing interagency information in order to provide electronic public services in Russia. Normative acts describing the provision process for 644 federal public services were analyzed. The goals implemented in the research were twofold: first, to identify and second, to prioritize those services that require interagency collaboration. Recommendations based on Russian experience in developing an incremental legal framework for providing public services are formulated as well.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

J.1. [ADMINISTRATIVE DATA PROCESSING]: Government

General Terms

Management, Legal Aspects

Keywords

Public services provision, single window, interagency information sharing, administrative regulation.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2004 the Russian government launched a Federal Program “the Public Administration Reform” to make the governing process centered around citizens’ needs. The key goal of public administration reform in Russia is to improve the quality of the public services provided. To achieve this goal, the federal government used two technological solutions launched in 2009 to implement interoperability among federal agencies. This enables citizens with a single window to access public services [1]. The Interagency Electronic Exchange System (IEES) is a transport layer for exchange of electronic documents on federal and regional levels of government. The federal one-stop shop e-services portal www.gosuslugi.ru serves as a single window to access all public services online. Unfortunately, technological solutions did not make the lives of the citizens easier in their

interaction with federal public agencies. The process of obtaining services continues to be provided mostly in paper form. The goal of this paper is to outline bottlenecks mostly in legal and partly in organizational issues that the Russian federal public agencies face in implementing the electronic public services provision online. To this end, we analyzed 644 administrative regulations that are agency normative acts describing service standards and peculiarities of the provision process

2. EVOLUTION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN RUSSIA

Government Order № 1555 (2009) established a clear plan for transforming public services maturity from a public information paper publication to an online transaction, with service processing traces and results easily obtained in electronic form by citizens. However, Federal Law № 210 “About public and municipal services provision in the Russian Federation” (2010) plays a key role. It states that every public service must have administrative regulation that states the citizens’ rights to control and claim public service provision and quality results (timeliness, payment method and size, and grounds for refusal).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

All the data about public services were taken from an official information system called the Public and Municipal Services Register (PMSR). Documents were analyzed for each service input and output. By input documents we mean all the necessary (according to administrative regulation) documents a citizen or organization must have to successfully initiate or apply for a service. By output documents we mean the results of providing the service (passport, license, permission, etc.).

To understand whether a service is eligible for interagency collaboration (we will call it “a complex service”) we classified the documents needed to apply for the service: personal documents (e.g., a citizen’s ID, passport, military status documents, school diplomas, property rights references, social security card, and individual taxpayer number), documents provided by the agency to which the citizen applies for the service, documents provided from other agencies, and auxiliary documents (required only as a part of an application package for some other service). According to our definition, a complex service for at least one input document needs at least one interaction with one or several other agencies for at least one type of citizen – a services user. We underscore that the complexity of public services depends on the citizen’s social status when he or

she applies for it. For example, to obtain a passport for a sailor necessitates going through different procedures in the Federal Migration Service than would be done for a pensioner. We define auxiliary services as those services that result in producing exceptional auxiliary documents.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Among the 644 federal public services analyzed in our research, the need to apply for interagency information sharing was found in 364 services (56.5%). In 82 public services (12.7%) we found that it was necessary to perform interactions between authorities at different government levels (federal and regional). There are 237 federal public services that request payment confirmation (it is considered as a separate document) (36.8%). An overall document exchange among federal agencies is necessary in 408 out of 644 public services. There are 305 documents, which, according to Federal Law №210, must be exchanged among the agencies without the citizen’s participation. Next, we will present the 5 most popular documents used in the exchange process among Russian federal agencies to provide public services.

Table 1. Popularity of documents used in the interagency information exchange

Agency	Name of the document	Rating	Ownership by citizens in paper form
Federal Tax Service	Individual entrepreneur or legal entity (company) registration certificate	118	Yes
Registry Office	Reference from the joint national Registry on property rights and deals with it	93	No
Federal Tax Service	Documents confirming registration at tax offices	72	Yes
Federal Tax Service	Reference from the joint registry of legal entities (companies) and individual entrepreneurs	45	No
Federal Tax Service	Accounting and financial reports	23	Yes

It is important to mention that among the 305 documents that are involved in an interagency exchange, 254 of them, according to the current legal framework in Russia, are possessed in paper form by citizens. In other words, citizens need to make a preliminary visit to the proper authority before applying for a service with regard to only 51 out of 305 documents.

There are only 4 complex services that need to share more than 10 documents and about 70 services that need to share 3 to 6 documents among the agencies. The remaining services need to exchange only 1-2 documents among the agencies.

5. INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION TRANSITION PROCESS IN RUSSIA

Federal Law №210 requires the agencies not to ask for any paper documents from public service applicants starting from July 1, 2012. This will remain a challenge for the agencies due to the lack of resources. That is why we propose an incremental strategy or a “citizen’s value proposition” business model for the Russian

Government [2]. This requires the step-by-step involvement of public services and their related input as well as interagency collaboration with output documents. In this model the public services have either a new design or the existing public services have been redesigned. In this way, needed changes in the legal framework have been made and the needs of specific groups of citizens have been met.

In the first stage we propose to integrate only complex services owned exclusively by federal agencies without the participation of third party organizations. This means excluding citizens’ personal storage (paper documents with photo ids issued by the agency processing the application) and auxiliary documents from the interagency exchange. In other words, we propose to concentrate on 17% of the documents (51 documents) that are eligible for the interagency sharing process. The burden of providing such documents in paper form to citizens is insignificant but they would benefit from faster, more tangible outcomes with electronic information sharing and would trust the project more. Incremental strategy works because many governmental information systems either do not always contain the right information or any information about the citizen. We recommend that federal agencies “clean up” their e-records as fast as possible by improving the quality and quantity of citizens’ personal data.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The interagency information sharing process is aimed at providing high-quality public services in Russia. To that end, public managers should take the following actions in an international context:

- Constantly modify an agency’s legal base by formalizing services provision processes and resolving legislative lockups and impasses;
- Formalize all difficult cases in an exchange of documents and manage them in a joint data base with the help of professional experts;
- Define which documents and citizens’ personal data are to be shared with other agencies through IEES;
- Improve the quality of data bases containing citizens’ personal data relevant to agency activities. Keep e-records of all the documents ever issued to the citizens;
- Establish clear requirements regarding the form and number of documents (paper or electronic) of a service that citizens can initiate by themselves;
- Avoid multiple responsibilities and clarify the redistribution of powers in service ownership and the delivery of results.
- Increase ICT literacy and information system usage skills on a permanent basis.

7. REFERENCES

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