INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION IN RUSSIA ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE NORTH-WEST FEDERAL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a trend of growth and dominance of stagnant regions in the Russian Federation. The reasons for this are, among other things, low innovative activity of the periphery, deindustrialization, predominance of the share of extractive industries, growth of social and property stratification, and other, no less urgent, reasons. So it becomes extremely necessary to search for new drivers for the regional economy, support the most promising sectors, and effectively allocate resources. Interregional cooperation is one of the most important factors of the regional development on the basis of establishing long-term, equal and mutually beneficial relations between the regions. The barrier in its' development is the absence of a well-thought-out socio-economic policy of the state in relation to the regions. In this regard, the current task is to systematize the best domestic and foreign practice of interregional cooperation, and to develop on this basis methodological aspects of interregional cooperation evaluation. The developed proposals may be

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applied by the public administrations to increase the efficiency of using the factor of interregional cooperation as a driver of the growth of the regional economy when developing normative, legal, strategic and program-planning documents at the regional level.

Key words: interregional cooperation, business, economy

1. INTRODUCTION

The problems of social and economic development of the Russia Federation regions at the present stage are considered in the works [1–33]. The authors write that a gradual transition from indictor planning for institutional changes is required, that the alignment of the regions should start not with smoothing the GRP indicators, but with changing and developing the institutional environment. To the contradictory factors of regional development experts refer: globalization, the degradation of innovative potential in peripheral areas, the innovative passivity of domestic enterprises, the increasing role of human capital in social and economic development, the exhaustion of sources of the export-raw type of development [34,35].

One of the founders of the theory of interregional cooperation - Michael Porter - emphasized in his works [36] the fact that the level of competitiveness of the region in the external market is determined, as a rule, by the intensity of competition in the domestic (national) market. In addition, a number of authors indicate that the degree of regional involvement in interregional relations largely determines its economic growth [37–40].

The role of interregional cooperation in the development of regional socio-economic systems is manifested in:

• strengthening of innovative activity of regions [41–43];

• improving the regional policy efficiency [44];

• developing of international relations of the region [44].

However, according to T.V. Uskova, "regional authorities do not pay due attention to these processes and use the mechanisms of influence on economic entities insufficiently" [45].

The scientific tasks of the research are: to determine the nature and criteria of interregional cooperation evaluation, to classify the factors of interregional cooperation, and to develop a methodology for interregional cooperation evaluation for the Russian Federation.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of the research are both general scientific and method-oriented tools for solving specific scientific problems: content analysis of normative and planning documents, systematization, comparison, logical analysis and synthesis, statistical processing of information, evaluation of efficiency. Information base of the research was made up of normative and legal documents of all levels of state administration, documents of social and economic development of the RF regions, Internet resources, official statistical materials, economic research data, forecasting and analytical materials.

3. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

In Russian science, interregional cooperation is considered mainly through the content of relations between the regions [46,47]; in foreign approaches the emphasis is on the form of such relations [41,44,48]. Under interregional cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the "IRC") we propose to understand the complex of resource exchange flows carried out within the framework of agreements between authorities, legal entities and individuals of different regions taken de jure or de facto, with the aim of representing common interests in national and world economy and increase the level of sustainable development of cooperating regions. The proposed definition considers all types of interactions (horizontal, cross-cutting) between target groups (authorities, business structures, budget organizations, population) in various forms (formal and informal).

Management entities of IRC on macro level (within a federal district) are:

1. Bodies of the public administration: executive bodies of the regions, the office of the Russian Presidential Envoy in the federal district.

2. Partnership infrastructure - a set of institutions whose activity is to form partnerships between the target groups of regional development. Examples are: Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Centers for Support of Entrepreneurship Development, Russian Export Center and Centers for Export Support in the Regions, Interregional Associations of Economic Cooperation. In the North-West Federal District this is primarily the Strategic Partnership "North-West", created in 2012. The partnership is designed to ensure the cooperation of state authorities, business and public organizations in the development and implementation of social and economic policies of the North-West Federal District, to support interregional investment projects implemented on the basis of public-private partnership. In 2016, the partnership coordinated 45 investment projects, the vast majority of which are intraregional.

3. Interregional integrated structures - associations of target groups of regional development in two ways:

• integrated business structures (diversified industrial groups, integrated business groups, business networks), whose main purpose is to increase their competitiveness;

• integrated structures of public-private partnerships (technological platforms, interregional financial and industrial groups, industrial (sectoral) clusters) whose objectives are to increase the efficiency of communications, develop innovation, increase competitiveness [49].

The object of management within the IRC is the types of interregional cooperation, the essence and evaluation criteria of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Essence And Evaluation Criteria For The Types Of Interregional Cooperation **[50]**

IRC type	Essence	Evaluation criteria
IRC of public administration	cooperation on the basis of contractual relations of the regional authorities in addressing common problems and developing infrastructure	number of agreements and programs of cooperation between state authorities of the regions
Industrial IRC	cooperation of regional business structures to solve common problems, the creation of production and technological chains, clusters, associations	number of agreements on cooperation, established integrated structures and strategic partnerships
Public IRC	cooperation of budgetary organizations (educational, scientific, law, cultural and other institutions) and NGOs in the field of formation of network structures, implementation of	number of agreements on cooperation between budget organizations and / or NGOs, agreements on the implementation

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IRC type	Essence	Evaluation criteria
	common projects, exchange of experience	of certain functions of state management
Interregional public-private partnership (PPP)	cooperation of state authorities in region 1 and business structures in region 2 in creating favorable conditions for managing and investing	number of concluded agreements on PPP, investment agreements between authorities and business structures, sectoral agreements
Territorial marketing	information impact directed at the population of the region 1, carried out at the initiative of the regional authorities 2, to create a positive image of the region 2 in the region 1	the number of information messages broadcast in the region 1, initiated by the state institutions of the region 2
Market IRC	formal and informal cooperation of business structures of region 1 and the population and state sector of region 2 in the markets of goods and services, the labor market	interregional flows of goods and services, correlation of changes in GRP of interacting regions

* Source: developed by the authors

As a result of the analysis of strategies for socio-economic development of the North-West Federal District regions, it was revealed that most of the regions use industrial cooperation and territorial marketing (Table 2); IRC of public administration is reflected in interregional cooperation agreements.

Table 2. Types of IRC in the strategies of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District regions

Region	IRC type					Total
	Industrial	Public	PPP	Territorial marketing	Market	
Novgorod region	+	-	+	-	-	2
Leningrad region	+	-	-	+	-	2
Vologda region	-	+	-	+	+	3
Pskov region	+	-	-	+	-	2
Republic of Karelia	-	-	-	-	+	1
Republic of Komi	+	+	+	+	+	5
Nenets AA	+	+	-	+	+	4
Murmansk region	-	-	-	+	-	1
Archangelsk region	+	-	-	-	-	1
Total:	6	3	2	6	4	

* Source: developed by the authors as a result of the analysis of strategies for social and economic development of the North-West Federal District regions

The process of IRC managing is directly influenced by the *factors of the external and internal environment* of regional development. The weakening of the IRC in the Northwest Federal District after the dissolution of the USSR is due to the following main factors (internal environment):

1. The severance of interaction between enterprises for the supply of raw materials and finished products, operating in a planned economy under the authority of the Council of People's Commissars. For example, in the 50s of the 20th century many Pskov enterprises were established as branches of Leningrad enterprises, while the center retained the functions of product development. Prior to "perestroika", strong economic ties were observed in the Leningrad Region with Novgorod, Velikiye Luki, Pskov [35].

2. Degradation of transport infrastructure. The radial structure of the transport infrastructure of the Russian Federation with its center in Moscow weakens the opportunities

for interaction between peripheral regions. For example, at present, only 5% of Russian imports and 10% of Russian exports pass through the territory of the Pskov region, which has borders with 3 states.

3. The North-West Federal District is the largest foreign trade operator of the Russian Federation: 93% of the NWFD's investment projects until 2030 are related to the implementation of the external economic function [35].

4. Deindustrialization, which manifests itself in the degradation of industrial potential, the reduction of production, the replacement of industrial sites with trade, office sites and spots for residential development, the degradation of innovation potential in peripheral areas.

The factors that affect the IRC at the federal level include: alignment and balancing of regional development, strengthening of economic differentiation of regions, orientation to import substitution, restriction of foreign economic activity, lack of a fundamental normative legal act in the sphere of interregional cooperation.

Analysis of the results of Russian and foreign studies has shown that approaches to the evaluation of the IRC include: a comprehensive analysis of the intensity of cooperation between regions, the evaluation of separate types of IRC, and assessment of the effectiveness of interregional clusters (Figure 2). Comprehensive approaches to analyzing the intensity of cooperation between regions in the RF have been developed and tested for border regions with foreign economic orientation [51,52]. Assessment of interregional cooperation within the country is carried out in practice either through analysis of its separate types (for ex., interregional flows of goods and services) [53], or through an assessment of the efficiency of the clusters [54–56].
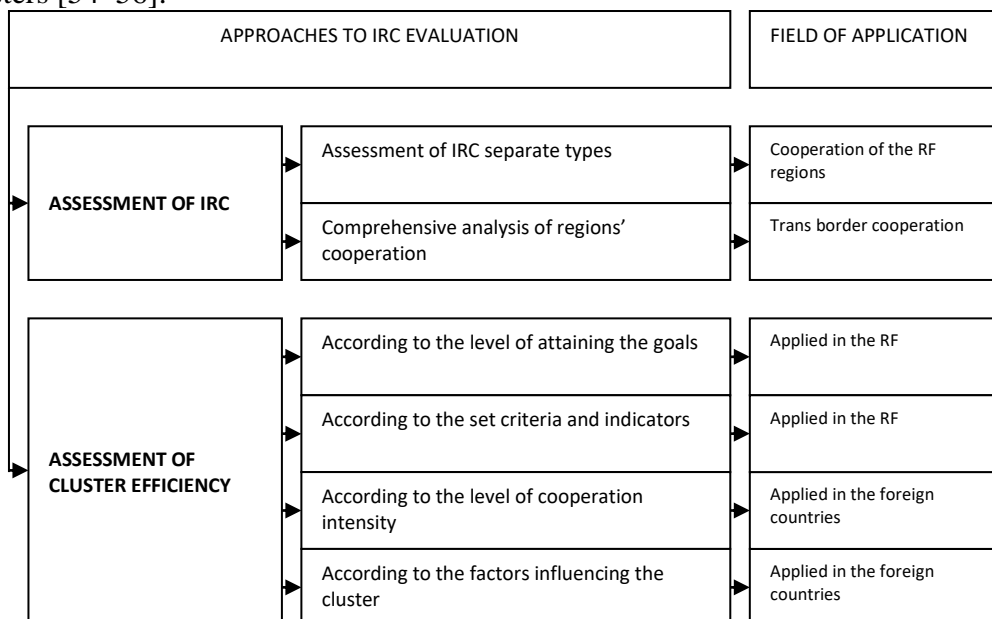
APPROACHES TO IRC EVALUATION		FIELD OF APPLICATION
ASSESSMENT OF IRC	Assessment of IRC separate types	Cooperation of the RF regions
	Comprehensive analysis of regions' cooperation	Trans border cooperation
ASSESSMENT OF CLUSTER EFFICIENCY	According to the level of attaining the goals	Applied in the RF
	According to the set criteria and indicators	Applied in the RF
	According to the level of cooperation intensity	Applied in the foreign countries
	According to the factors influencing the cluster	Applied in the foreign countries

Figure 1 Systematization of approaches to IRC evaluation.

Within the framework of the research, a comprehensive approach to the IRC evaluation was developed by studying the practice of implementing all types of cooperation between the regions of the Russian Federation (Table 3).

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Table 3. Methodology for IRC evaluation for the RF regions

Step	Description of the step	Methods	Data
1. Internal environment analysis	Assessment of the socio-economic development of the region (goals and objectives, principles and management approaches)	Analytical (analysis of the level of achievement of strategic objectives)	Data of the Federal State Statistics Service
2. External environment analysis	Analysis of the influence of the IRC factor on the regional economy in the areas of socio-economic development	Factor analysis, the method of expert assessments	Data of the expert survey
3. SWOT-analysis	Identification of priority types of the IRC and strategic partners	Method of expert assessments	The results of steps 1, 2
4. Evaluation of the revealed priority types if the IRC	Assessment of types of interregional cooperation according to certain criteria	Analytical method (assessment of indicators)	Normative-legal and contractual base, statistical data
5. Recommendations for IRC factor influence intensification for the regional social economic development	Development of recommendations on the: - development of priority types of IRC; - establishment of strategic partnerships with other regions; - improvement the effectiveness of the use of the instruments of the IRC	Method of expert assessments	The results of the analysis and evaluation stages

* Source: developed by the authors

As a first step, the strengths and weaknesses of the socio-economic development of the region are analyzed using statistical indicators. Next, a factor analysis of the IRC conditions is carried out to determine the threats and opportunities of the external environment. As a result of SWOT analysis, priority types of IRC and strategic partners are identified. At the fourth step, the practice of implementing certain types of cooperation between regions is assessed. In conclusion, recommendations are being developed on the use of the IRC cumulative effect in the socio-economic development of the region. The developed methodology had been tested on the example of the Pskov region cooperation with the regions of the Northwest Federal District. Strategic partners and priority types of IRC for the Pskov region had been identified: development of interregional market cooperation with the Vologda region and the Republic of Karelia; creation of pro-production and innovation clusters with the Leningrad and Novgorod regions; development of interregional industrial cooperation: with the Novgorod region in tourism and the timber industry; with the Vologda region in the sphere of construction; with the Leningrad and Arkhangelsk regions in the transport and logistics complex; with the Leningrad, Novgorod and Archangelsk regions in the field of machinery building; with the Leningrad and Novgorod regions in the electrical industry.

4. POLEMIC OVER THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The relevance of the proposed methodological aspects for IRC managing in the Northwest Federal District is determined by the following factors:

- the overwhelming IRC in the North-West Federal District occur between the center (St. Petersburg) and the periphery; in connection with this, the problem is the activation of interactions between peripheral regions among themselves;

- the peripheral regions of the North-West Federal District have a small scale of the territorial system; the Leningrad region and the Komi Republic are leading in terms of the economies of scale from all regions of the target group (Table 4);

- all regions of the North-West Federal District, with the exception of the Leningrad Region, have a low (compared with the average Russian) number of people employed in the regional economy, which is evident in view of the low total population of such regions (Table 4);

Table 4. Indicators of the scale of the economy of the North-West Federal District peripheral regions, 2015 (comparison with the average Russian level),%

Indicator / Region	Volume of production of goods and services	Volume of revenues of the consolidated budget	Number of employees in the regional economy
Novgorod region	0.0005	3.7250	0.4304
Vologda region	0.0010	7.2259	0.7869
Republic of Komi	0.0010	8.3908	0.6132
Archangelsk region	0.0005	9.7586	0.7575
Leningrad region	0.0018	16.4916	1.2682
Pskov region	0.0002	3.3404	0.4307
Murmansk region	0.0006	8.2838	0.5802
Republic of Karelia	0.0003	4.3311	0.4129
Nenets AA	0.0003	2.2987	0.0291

* Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of the official site of the Federal Service of State Statistics http://www.gks.ru/ and methodology of the Rating Agency "RIA Rating" http://vid1.rian.ru/ig/ratings/rating_regions_2017.pdf

- in terms of the efficiency of the economy, the following four regions of the target group exceed the average Russian values: the Republic of Komi, the Novgorod, the Leningrad and the Murmansk regions; these figures are explained, in our opinion, by a small number of employed in the regional economy (with the exception of the Leningrad Region) (Table 5);

- in terms of the share of profitable enterprises, none of the target regions exceeded the average Russian value, which is confirmed by the thesis about the impact of the number of people employed in the regional economy on the overall economic performance (Table 5);

Table 5. Indicators of the efficiency of the North-West peripheral regions economy, 2015 (comparison with the average Russian level), %

Indicator / Region	Volume of production of goods and services per 1 resident	Investments in fixed assets per capita	Share of profitable enterprises
Novgorod region	120.66	119.30	91.52
Vologda region	124.34	71.36	93.74
Republic of Komi	169.40	204.64	92.63
Archangelsk region	62.76	44.60	89.71
Leningrad region	151.74	113.02	99.03
Pskov region	52.35	41.17	89.71
Murmansk region	120.78	132.98	84.84
Republic of Karelia	66.34	51.59	79.55
Nenets AA	1072.38	2610.48	86.51

* Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of the official site of the Federal Service of State Statistics http://www.gks.ru/ and methodology of the Rating Agency "RIA Rating" http://vid1.rian.ru/ig/ratings/rating_regions_2017.pdf

- despite the relatively low level of unemployment, the target regions have social indicators below the national average (including the ratio of the monetary incomes of the population to

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the cost of a fixed volume of goods and services and the expected life expectancy at birth) (Table 6).

Table 6. Social sphere indicators of the North-West Federal District peripheral regions, 2015 (comparison with the average Russian level), %

Indicator / Region	Ratio of money incomes of the population to the cost of a fixed set of consumer goods and services	Unemployment rate	Life expectancy at birth
Novgorod region	93.97	82.14	95.25
Vologda region	84.05	121.43	98.05
Republic of Komi	100.00	125.00	96.65
Archangelsk region	92.24	121.43	98.05
Leningrad region	77.16	91.07	98.05
Pskov region	70.26	123.21	95.25
Murmansk region	97.85	139.29	98.05
Republic of Karelia	79.74	157.14	96.65
Nenets AA	165.95	141.07	99.45

* Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of the official site of the Federal Service of State Statistics http://www.gks.ru/ and methodology of the Rating Agency "RIA Rating" http://vid1.rian.ru/ig/ratings/rating_regions_2017.pdf

The current realities of the social and economic development of the North-West Federal District regions are associated with the forced replacement of habitual development priorities based on external economic openness and the search for new drivers of growth. One of the ways to intensify regional development is to intensify interregional cooperation, both for the purpose of sharing resources and for expanding sales markets. The existing model of the relationship between the center and the periphery determines the competition of regional authorities for obtaining the resources of the federal center. In addition, the regions turn out to be competitors in the foreign market, they also try to attract the resources of foreign investors. As a result, the potential synergetic effect of interregional cooperation is not used by the regions as a driver of growth and development.

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