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Article



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CLUSTERS – SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES (SEZ) – TERRITORIES OF PRIORITY SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PSED) – SUPPORT ZONES OF DEVELOPMENT (SDA) – COMPREHENSIVE PROJECTS FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARCTIC ZONES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION. MESSAGE 3

Abstract: The article traces the emergence of support zones for the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation using state documents and carries out an examination of the definitions of their content. The main features of support zones are indicated: general and social functions, organizational form, economic model, spatial structure, type. For the first time, a comparative description and rating assessment of support zones was carried out using the Database of Indicators of Municipal Entities of Rosstat and with an emphasis on population dynamics, volume and structure of production, and the nature of local budget revenues. The assessment results made it possible to identify factors of strong differentiation of zones that adversely affect the socio-economic development of the Arctic regions. An overview is presented and an assessment is made of the regions' proposals for the design filling of support zones.

Key words: spatial development, support zone, Arctic, rating assessment, framework, natural resources, reindustrialization, territorial planning, clusters, management objects.

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Introduction

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Effective management of the territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (AZ RF) is an urgent scientific and practical task. Support zones of development are recognized as a key mechanism for achieving strategic interests and ensuring national security in the region. However, this tool does not yet have sufficient methodological, regulatory and organizational development. The evolution of the

normative economic and spatial image of the support zones of the Russian Arctic allows us to track the evolution of special documents on the development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (Table 1). Their study helps to identify the most significant features for the methodology of development and implementation of concepts for the formation of support zones: general and social functions, organizational form, economic model, spatial structure and the main features of the potential type of zone.

Table 1. Evolution of the content of support zones for the development of the Russian Arctic

Document	Information related to Development Support Zones (SDZs)
Strategy for the development of the Russian Arctic and ensuring national security for the period until 2035. Section "Spatial development of the Arctic: zones of advanced development...". Approved 2020	The possibilities for ensuring the global competitiveness of the Russian Arctic include the formation of priority development zones (shelf development of the Pechora-Barents Sea province, Polar-Ural pioneer development; Belkomur industrial; Kola innovative, etc.). Has no spatial aspect.
State program "Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2035" 2024	Key implementation mechanisms: frame-cluster approach; formation of support zones for development; selective state policy for the development of Arctic territories.
"On the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation." April 2021. Ch. 1, clause 5, art. 3 "Basic concepts used in this Federal Law."	OZ is "a part of a subject of the Russian Federation, in which, in order to ensure the socio-economic development of this subject and the Arctic zone as a whole, as well as ensuring national security issues in the Arctic, it is planned to provide measures of state support for economic and other activities in order to create favorable conditions for the provision of investments, ensuring accelerated comprehensive development and creating comfortable conditions to ensure the livelihoods of the population."
"On the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation." New Year 2021. Art. 3 "Basic concepts used in this Federal Law."	OZ is "a comprehensive project for planning and ensuring the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone, aimed at achieving strategic interests and ensuring national security in the Arctic, providing for the synchronous interconnected application of existing instruments of territorial and sectoral development and mechanisms for the implementation of investment projects, including on the principles of state- private partnership".
State program "Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation". Implementation until 2035 August 2024	OZs are "comprehensive projects for the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone, aimed at achieving... (äãää ïîâêñðó ñâúøä)... on the principles of public-private and municipal-private partnership."
"On the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation." February 2021. Art. 3 "Basic concepts used in this Federal Law."	OZ is "the territory of the Arctic zone, where interconnected projects are being implemented aimed at the comprehensive socio-economic development of the Arctic zone, achieving... (in the text of the article)... PPP, as well as special regimes for carrying out economic activities and territories with preferential conditions for conducting business activities."

Support zones realize and develop the communication and resource potential of the Russian Arctic. They will activate the transport capabilities of the Northern Sea Route (NSR), meridional river and road corridors, air and railway communications, information communication to involve fuel and

energy, minerals, raw materials and biological resources of the Arctic into economic circulation, taking into account interregional interaction.

Social role. Support zones work for the development of their region and the Russian Arctic as a whole, ensuring an improvement in the quality of

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life of the population living and working here. The regional vector of development of each specific support zone is determined by the level and nature of the problems of the municipality on the basis of which it is formed. Directions and projects for the formation of the zone should solve these problems.

In organizational form, support zones represent a “project of projects”, consisting of a set of transport, industrial, social projects that must be linked to each other in time and space. The “struggle” of spatial and organizational forms manifested itself in changing definitions of the support zone. Sharing the point of view of one of the authors of the bill “On the development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation,” member of the Council for the Arctic and Antarctic under the Federation Council M. A. Zhukov, the authors consider the support zone to be the territory where projects are being implemented.

The economic model for the formation and functioning of support zones involves the use of public-private partnerships (PPP) and other state support mechanisms operating in an interconnected and synchronized manner in the implementation of investment projects on their territory.

The spatial structure of support zones is materialized by a transport-industrial framework, the planning and creation of which ensures their formation and development. The main elements of such a frame, namely:

1) highways providing access to the Northern Sea Route, communication with neighboring regions and their support zones and transport accessibility of new sources of raw materials;

2) transport (ports, stations), mineral resources (extraction and primary processing of raw materials) and multifunctional nodes and centers (resource processing, cargo transshipment, socio-cultural sphere, energy, construction, etc.).

The ideology of the transport-industrial framework grew out of the concept of the supporting framework - “the combination of the main focuses of the economic, social and cultural life of the territory and the socio-economic lines connecting them” - a classic analytical and constructive tool of economic geography. It also works in the formation of settlement and infrastructure frameworks (through the concentration of necessary resources) and the supporting framework for the reindustrialization of the Arctic.

Typical features of support zones determine: the level and nature of the development of natural resources, the associated maturity of industrial specialization, the relationship between the center and the periphery, as well as features determined by the specifics of the financial and economic mechanisms used for their formation and implementation. The beginnings of typification can be traced in the classification of priority development zones in the draft Development Strategy of the Russian Arctic for

2020 and in the type of Arctic territories (promising, active development, industrial development) identified in the State Program for the Development of the Russian Arctic until 2035.

An analysis of the Arctic strategies of foreign countries did not reveal direct analogues to Russian support zones. Territories of special attention in the Arctic policy of European countries and Canada are areas inhabited by indigenous peoples, which are allocated administratively in Denmark and Canada. Norway's Arctic strategy affects only the High North, which includes the provinces of Nurlan, Troms and Finnmark. A special approach within the framework of a special program (Northern Periphery and Arctic Program 2018–2035) is being implemented by the European Union, co-financing projects in various fields of activity in these territories through a regional development fund.

Main part

Large-scale development tasks in the Arctic regions of Russia have to be solved against the backdrop of problems that have accumulated over the past decades. At all levels, from federal and regional to corporate and small businesses, the search continues for the most effective forms of adaptation to complex realities using new methods of territorial integration and interaction between production, science and education while activating the social sphere. At the legislative level, approaches to the formation of new territorial formations of support zones are being developed on the basis of already existing attempts at cluster associations as powerful cores of the future socio-economic development of the Arctic. Despite all the expediency of forming support zones for development, the initial bureaucratization of the management process can be traced. Regarding the northern vector, Heartland faces the problem of reorganizing the Arctic zone. The space adjacent to the North Pole - the Arctic Ocean - is significantly increasing in importance with the development of aeronautics and especially rocket science, as well as due to the approaching shortage of natural resources at the global level. The shortest route between Eurasia and America passes through the Arctic, and the Arctic shelf is replete with poorly explored natural resources (according to preliminary estimates, up to 25% of all undiscovered oil and gas resources in the world lie there). In such a situation, every inch of Arctic land or maritime boundaries acquires a special geopolitical value.

Countries that today lay claim to control over the Arctic space are the USA, Canada, Norway, Denmark and Russia. The USA, Canada, Norway and Denmark are members of NATO, i.e. representatives of the Atlantic bloc. At the moment, the process of Greenland gaining independence is gaining momentum (at the moment it is autonomy within Denmark), but it is unlikely that a new country, under

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the control of the Inuit Eskimos (of which there are less than 60 thousand in the vast expanse of Greenland), will be able to someday, in the foreseeable future, to become an independent force. In the meantime, there are American naval bases on the territory of Greenland (Kanak). Therefore, from a geopolitical point of view, the balance of power in the Arctic is determined by Russia (Heartland) and the United States (together with other NATO countries). Recognizing the importance of Arctic resources, many other countries that do not have direct access to the Arctic are developing the construction of an icebreaker fleet (as, for example, China), which shows the enormous importance of this area for those who think strategically about the future. In recent years, Russia has begun to pay increased attention to the Arctic, closely dealing with legal issues, carrying out symbolic Arctic expeditions and rapidly re-equipping military-technical facilities located in this zone. All this can be considered constructive steps to consolidate the multipolar structure of the world. If Heartland's territories are invulnerable to possible air attack from the North American continent, and also have a large and legitimate share of Arctic natural resources, this will qualitatively increase the likelihood of establishing a multipolar model.

Russia is creating a military base in the Arctic. Last October, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said about this: "We are not hiding this from anyone - we have actually completed the creation of a base on the New Siberian Islands, on Kotelny Island. This is such a large base that did not exist in Soviet times, it is a modern structure, with everything necessary to equip those borders." The head of the defense department noted that a group of Russian troops in the Arctic has been deployed and is equipped with all the necessary weapons. At the same time, according to him, bases smaller than the one on Kotelny will be built on Wrangel Island, on Cape Schmidt, on the eastern coast of Chukotka, as well as on the Kuril Islands. Let us recall in this regard that at the end of 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the creation of a separate strategic direction "North". New structure formed on the basis of the Northern Fleet of the Russian Navy, became operational on December 1, 2018. It included all sea, air and ground forces located in the Arctic. In fact, the very restoration of Russian military infrastructure in the Arctic began back in 2016. As part of this program, implemented by the military department, the construction and repair of facilities is carried out both on the Arctic islands and on the continent, in particular, in the Bering Strait and on Franz Josef Land. In addition, the Russian military will also fight the harmful effects of Arctic pollution. On June 15, 2019, the Russian Arctic National Park was created in the Arkhangelsk region. It included a territory with a total area of 1,426,000 hectares, of which land - 632,090 hectares, sea waters - 793,910

hectares. In fact, The park is both a huge nature reserve and a research center. In addition, large-scale studies of the Arctic part of the biosphere and geological formation are being conducted. What is drawing Russia to the Arctic? There are several reasons for moving in this direction. Russia cannot afford to lose in the struggle for survival that will unfold in the 21st century. In fact, she has already begun to enter the acute phase. The resources and spaces of the Arctic are precisely the zone around which battles will flare up in the first half of the 21st century. The Anglo-Saxons have already paid attention to the region and are trying in every possible way to facilitate the implementation of the Russian Arctic program. One of the geopolitical imperatives for the development of Russia - Eurasia is the North Arctic. The strategic direction "North" is upholding our country's right to national security and national interests; in a sense, this is another milestone in the creation of a multipolar world. The future of humanity, according to the forecasts of competent analysts, is associated with a tough battle between states and transnational corporations for the possession of not only space, but also resources. Rich in minerals and other resources, the Arctic can and should become part of the Russian raw materials economy. At the same time, modern technologies make it possible to extract resources without disturbing the ecosystem. Resource famine threatens humanity with disaster. If an Anglo-Saxon globalist lays his paw on the resources of the Arctic, then humanity may forget about their fair distribution, as well as the distribution of income from them. For competent development of the Arctic space, appropriate technologies are required. This mobilization task will require the development of science and technology, which will inevitably entail a number of discoveries that can be applied, for example, to the space program or to defense. In the social sphere, this will be reflected in the creation of many jobs, which is extremely necessary for Russia in an era of increasingly unfolding crisis. Again, personnel shortages due to new jobs will require positive changes in the education system. Russia was the first in the Arctic space. The development of this region began with the Russian Pomors and other indigenous peoples of the North. Russian navigators continued to study it, then they were replaced by Soviet scientists and military personnel. Following imperial logic requires the peoples of Russia-Eurasia to continue the begun path to the North. From the point of view of Tradition, it is in the North that Hyperborea, the cradle of humanity, lies, hence the development of the Arctic, in a sense, is a return of Russia to its metaphysical origins. That is why the Arctic development program is a geopolitical, strategic, cultural and historical imperative for Russian development. The slander and provocations that Russia encounters on its northern path are the

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essence of a geopolitical and information war against the Russian state, led by the Anglo-Saxon aggressors. This war itself, coupled with the statements of our liberals, only means that we are going the right way. The Arctic is a component of Russian destiny, through it our country will gain a new dimension, a new direction of development. This direction should not be missed under any circumstances. Russia has adopted an Arctic development strategy for the period from October 2020 to 2035. Reflecting the hopes and perceived threats associated with the progressive warming of the Arctic, it aims to accelerate the development of the region's rich resources, primarily oil and gas, and improve the living conditions of the population. In the longer term, the Kremlin hopes to make the Northern Sea Route a new global shipping artery. Moscow is also concerned that an increasingly ice-free Arctic could create new territorial vulnerabilities in its Far North, and is responding by restoring its military presence there. Finally, Moscow also wants to maintain environmental balance in the region. However, there are signs that the interests of the energy sector and the military will be respected, and funding to improve environmental protection and living conditions will remain insufficient. On October 26, 2023, Vladimir Putin officially adopted the new "[Strategy for the development of the Russian Arctic zone and ensuring national security until 2035](#)" It is based on "[Basic principles Arctic policy](#)", adopted in March, and replaces "[Arctic Strategy 2020](#)", adopted in 2018. The political importance of the Arctic in Russia has grown steadily since the late 2000s, as reflected in various policies, programs and presidential speeches, as well as the reactivation and modernization of military bases in the region. The Arctic region will also be in the spotlight in May 2021, when Russia is due to take over the Arctic Council for two years. Although the new strategy is largely built on continuity, shifts in Russian domestic and foreign policy since 2018 are also visible between the lines: the strategy does discuss opportunities for international cooperation, but devotes more space to threat scenarios. And where civil society organizations were named as implementing partners in the 2018 Strategy, they are now simply absent. In addition, the assessment of climate change has also changed. Improving living conditions in the Arctic is the most important priority of the new Strategy. It aims to end the population decline that has affected the entire Arctic region since the collapse of the Soviet Union by 2035.

Climate-related permafrost melt is already having devastating consequences and is expected to affect 70 percent of infrastructure in the coming years. At the same time, many projects proposed at the regional level for the construction of roads, railways and ports remain unrealized due to the lack of government funding. From Moscow's point of view, the Arctic is just one of many problematic and

structurally weak regions of the Russian Federation. The state program for the socio-economic development of the Arctic was launched in 2014, but only 17.6 billion rubles (190 million euros) are allocated from the federal budget for 2021–2023. For comparison, the social and economic development program for Crimea provides for more than 300 billion rubles (3.2 billion euros). The lack of adequate government funding for the priority goals of past Arctic strategies leaves Russia's powerful energy sector as the driving force for development in the High North. The Arctic accounts for more than 90% of Russian natural gas production and 17% of oil. New major projects such as Novatek's Yamal and Gydan LNG terminals are driving the expansion of local infrastructure.

[National goals](#) President Putin by 2035 provides for a fourfold increase in the annual volume of cargo along the NSR to 80 million tons. Currently in Moscow there are [disagreements](#) regarding this goal, which is now considered unrealistic. The Russian state should take on one third of the investments required for the NSR, which Rosatom estimates at [US\\$11.7 billion](#); the rest is Rosatom, Rosneft, Novatek, Gazprom Neft, Gazprom, Norilsk Nickel, banks and future users of the route. Moscow hopes that commercial projects to develop offshore oil and gas fields will also stimulate development. To date, Western sanctions have largely blocked such initiatives. China looks attractive as an alternative to the West, but its ability to supply technology (including for seismic exploration in the Barents Sea) and the necessary capital are limited.

It is also questionable whether future oil prices will justify the development of these remote reserves. In order for offshore fields in the Arctic to become profitable, a price of at least \$80 per barrel is required; current price is approx. [US\\$48](#) and the lifting of US sanctions. Progress on planned development of new coal deposits is also slow. The window of opportunity for extracting these distant fossil resources is likely to gradually close as international efforts to protect the climate reduce demand for such resources, but this is controversial. Historically, extreme climate conditions have acted as a natural barrier protecting Russia's long Arctic coastline. Therefore, the melting of "permafrost" is a cause for concern. The new strategy speaks of the growing conflict potential in the Arctic, requiring the constant expansion of Russia's military presence in the region.

In a sense, Russia is gaining new external borders that need to be protected from potential aggressors. The naval threat could theoretically come from the east through the Bering Strait or from the west through bases in Greenland and Norway. Thus, shrinking ice creates new vulnerabilities to invasion. From Russia's point of view, its oil and gas terminals are also high-priority facilities requiring protection. In response to the threat, many of the Soviet-era bases

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that had been closed since 1990 have been restored and new ones built, including ten search and rescue bases, sixteen deep-sea ports, ten new air bases (out of fourteen), and ten air defense facilities. The military is often deployed there where civilian facilities are found to be insufficient or prohibitively expensive; search and rescue operations are one example. So a growing military presence does not necessarily indicate expansionism. However, there has been a significant increase in military activity, including simulated air attacks on radar installations in Vardø, Norway, jamming of GPS signals in Finland, and increased submarine patrols.

In October 2019, ten submarines passed through the Norwegian Sea on their way to the North Atlantic, the largest such maneuver since the Cold War. And in August 2020, a Russian military aircraft pursued an American bomber into Danish airspace during NATO exercise Allied Sky.

Following its naval doctrine, Russia seeks to strengthen its position as a maritime power, especially in the Arctic and Atlantic. The role of the Northern Sea Route is to guarantee Russia's access to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Thus, the Northern Fleet on the Kola Peninsula has absolute priority; in the event of conflict, it is also expected to be protected by ballistic missile submarines, which make up two-thirds of Russia's naval nuclear deterrent. A revived Soviet-era "bastion concept" envisions the creation of a "reserve" from the Barents Sea to Iceland. In the event of a conflict, the Russian fleet will provide access to the Atlantic, preventing enemy forces from entering the Russian Arctic. Air patrols along the NSR to protect the bastion and its fleet resumed in 2007. In 2019, new air defense missiles were deployed and a hypersonic missile was tested near Novaya Zemlya in the Barents Sea as a show of Russian power. In addition, S 350 mobile SAM launchers integrated into the Area Denial Denial (A2/AD) strategy protect bases on Franz Josef Land, Severnaya Zemlya, New Siberian Islands, Novaya Zemlya and Wrangel Island. The area of the system as a whole covers all islands and archipelagos along the NSR. Russia takes a defensive position in the Arctic, but is ready to respond quickly if a conflict arises. This could include offensive operations to defend the bastion, including the occupation of parts of northern Scandinavia. Moscow sees not only new challenges on its external borders, but also new threats to its internal security. The consequences are felt negatively by members of Russian civil society working on environmental issues in the Arctic and defending the rights of indigenous people. Large economic development projects regularly provoke local protests. Some civil society organizations [supported](#) state, others [are subject to repressive measures](#). Those who receive funding from abroad are labeled as "foreign agents" and subject to strict oversight and restrictions. The Kremlin's new Arctic strategy confirms its intention to protect the

Arctic environment. This is definitely necessary. Collapsing heavy industries, climate change impacts such as thawing permafrost, and local government failures are creating a toxic mix for the Arctic's fragile ecosystems. This became evident in early June 2020, when more than 20,000 tons of diesel fuel leaked into the Ambarnaya River after thawing permafrost moved beneath a large reservoir. In 2019 (and again in 2020), wildfires grew out of control in the Russian Arctic. The Arctic Strategy now proposes to modernize fragile infrastructure to cope with climate change. It is also planned to create new nature reserves and direct government support to the waste management sector. In the new project, pollution in the Russian Arctic will be regularly monitored, including pollution for which North America, Europe and Asia may be responsible. While many states are stepping up their global efforts to protect the climate, the Kremlin has increasingly avoided linking global warming to carbon emissions. And while the 2013 Arctic Strategy still made reference to man-made climate change, the new document makes no mention of the causes of global warming. Thus, Moscow's climate policy remains ambiguous. She is taking up the issue at the UN to distinguish herself from the Trump administration and emerge as a responsible player. Despite that, legislation regulating CO₂ emissions is under discussion, Russia's emissions targets under the Paris Agreement are actually higher than current levels. There is no plan to phase out oil and gas production. On the contrary, Moscow intends to further expand production and exports. The same goes for coal, which is particularly bad for the climate; here annual production could increase to 668 million tons by 2035. The door to international cooperation is not completely closed, even if the new Arctic Strategy has expanded the space devoted to countering threats. Sometimes conflicting interests - for example, the defense of national sovereignty against the internationalization of the sea route - are reflected in an ambivalent position that contains elements of both confrontation and a desire for cooperation, emphasizing political competition or practical cooperation (depending on the situation). The new Arctic strategy has a separate section dedicated to international cooperation, in which foreign investment plays a central role. Here Moscow is mainly interested in technology and investment in the energy sector, which is subject to Western sanctions. Western firms can collaborate on infrastructure projects and environmental issues. German-Russian cooperation in the natural sciences has been less problematic for the Kremlin and remains successful. The New Arctic Strategy proposes to develop a comprehensive plan for joint international research on ecosystems and the impacts of climate change. The issue of development of the Arctic zone is global in nature, all its stages will be implemented. This was stated on September 11 during the session of the Eastern Economic Forum

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(EEF) “Trade and logistics centers in the Arctic: a new opportunity for the development of northern and Arctic territories,” said Maxim Dankin, director of the department for the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and the implementation of infrastructure projects of the Ministry for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic. He recalled that the key strategy and framework of state policy were approved by the president in 2023. “The strategy was signed until 2035. Three stages of the strategy: until 2025, stages are being implemented that trigger many mechanisms,” he emphasized. Dankin continued that the mechanisms will be updated from 2026, they will begin to work in full, since a pilot implementation project has already begun for a number of instruments. “For example, it is associated with the development of key stronghold settlements. The President gave instructions only this year, and we are now forming this list and by next year we will be ready to formulate it,” he explained. The speaker also clarified that the Arctic now creates one fifth of Russia’s income and even more.

“What is important is that global economic projects are being implemented here. Take the Northern Sea Route infrastructure project alone – this is one of the largest strategically important projects in our country,” he continued. The authorities will try to launch those mechanisms that improve the quality of life of northerners and the local population, Dankin concluded. Earlier at the EEF, the special representative of the President of the Russian Federation on environmental issues, ecology and transport, Sergei Ivanov, at the session “World Transport Northern Route” indicated that [the role of the Northern Sea Route \(NSR\)](#) for the population of the Russian Federation is huge, but there is still a lot of work to be done in this direction. He clarified that a climate change monitoring system is being created and climate testing sites are being constructed.

Earlier, on August 24, 2023, the President of Russia [Vladimir Putin](#) instructed the government to set a rate of 2% for young families purchasing housing in the Arctic zone. He announced the extension of preferential mortgage conditions to the Arctic zone back in July during a meeting on the development of closed administrative-territorial entities and Arctic cities.

The President indicated that [The Arctic zone is strategically important for the Russian Federation](#) from a defense and security point of view. The text of the updated State Program for the Development of the AZ of the Russian Federation (2023) outlines the

goals and objectives of the support zones, the mineral and raw material nature of their projects and their close connection with the development of transport. The large section “Participation of government bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in the implementation of Program activities” presents material that requires updating on the formation and functioning of eight support zones of the Russian Arctic regions. With the inclusion of three municipal districts of Karelia into the Arctic zone of Russia in July 2017, the Karelian support zone was added to this eight. In the last two years, the formation of a statistical base for the macro-territory has been underway: section 2.5 has been introduced into the Federal Statistical Work Plan. “Indicators of socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and ensuring national security”, The State Statistics Committee website presents the Publication Calendar of official statistics. However, for now the information is provided in general for the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation or for regions that include Arctic territories. In this article, using available statistical materials, a socio-economic characterization of the support zones is carried out, they are compared using a rating assessment, and the factors influencing interzonal differentiation are revealed. We chose the municipality as the operational unit of comparative analysis, which is due to the different status composition of the support zones. The main information source was the passports of municipalities; additional data (for example, on the execution of municipal budgets) were collected on the websites of the respective districts. The general indicators of support zones were determined by summing up similar indicators of municipalities, which provides a unified methodological and information basis for assessment and representativeness of the characteristics of the Arctic zone itself, and not the totality of the subjects of the Federation, of which only four are included in it entirely, and five are separate municipalities. The calculation of zone ratings for each indicator and the summary average as its place in a series of nine reference zones was carried out according to the author’s methodology. To assess the socio-economic situation of the support zones, data for 2021 was used, which allows us to get an idea of the starting situation of their development (Tables 2 and 3). The paucity of indicators is due to the focus on assessing production development and the lack of information on individual indicators and municipalities.

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Table 2. Characteristics of support zones for the development of the Russian Arctic

Support zone for the development of the Russian Arctic	General characteristics of support zones				
	Area, km ²	Population as of 01/01/2017, people	Share of urban population, %	Social population density, people/km ²	Home-produced goods shipped, completed services in-house (TSPiUSS), thousand rubles.
Arkhangelskaya	185 617	650 755	92.8	771,533	351 868 546
Kola	139 523	634 282	92.8	838.516	401 431 288
Nenets	176 810	43,937	72.4	307,604	324 557 313
Taimyr-Turukhanskaya	1,095,095	227 220	90.4	31,164	1 036 785 268
Karelian	43 377	43 930	67.2	1.315	8 714 223
Yamalo-Nenets	769 667	536 049	83.7	272,914	2 524 084 683
Vorkutinskaya	24180	80 061	99.4	-	41 580 714
Chukotka	723 489	49,822	70.0	84,733	83 144 623
North Yakutskaya	593875	26 190	50.5	0.048	25 844 772

The analysis revealed contrasting differences in support zones in composition, area, size and social density of the population, the cost of goods produced and services provided, and the share of manufacturing industries in it. Common to the support zones is the predominance of the urban population (with the exception of North Yakutia), low and very low population density and the road network. The general trend of “northern outflow” of the population is intensified by the production decline (Vorkuta and Karelian zones), but the trend reverses in those zones where production is developing (Nenets and Yamalo-

Nenets zones). The “earned” revenues of local budgets are directly dependent on the nature and power of the municipal economic basis.

The identified differences are largely explained by the accumulated transport and industrial potential of mineral resource development, which makes it possible to distinguish old and new industrial Arctic territories. The first include Arkhangelsk, Kola, Vorkuta, Taimyr-Turukhansk, Karelian, the second - Nenets, Yamalo-Nenets, Chukotka, North Yakutsk.

Table 3. Rating assessment of support zones for the development of the Russian Arctic

Support zone development of the Russian Arctic	Indicators used to calculate ratings						
	Population decline 2022 to 2014, %	Physical population density, people/km ²	Share of manufacturing industries in TSPi-USS, %	TSPiUSS shipped per resident, thousand rubles/person.	Share of tax and non-tax revenues in the own revenues of local budgets, %	Road density, km/100 km ²	Summary rating
Arkhangelskaya	-6.3	3,506	59.3	541	78.5	1.159	3.9
Kola	-15.0	4,546	28.8	649	73.0	0.566	4.8
Nenets	5.8	0.248	6.3	7387	78.4	0.067	4.8
Taimyr-Turukhanskaya	-20.1	0.207	46.0	4563	56.6	0.050	5.8
Karelian	-26.1	1.013	14.3	198	55.3	3,731	6.0
I have little-Nenets	5.7	0.696	13.9	4709	37.2	0.162	6.1
Vorkutinskaya	-40.3	3.311	1.5	519	46.9	0.496	7.3

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Chukotka	-7.4	0.069	0.9	1669	32.0	0.043	7.7
North Yakutskaya	-21.0	0.044	0.2	987	35.4	0.031	8.2

The Arkhangelsk and Kola support zones are especially distinguished by the balance of the economy and the maturity of the industrial complex (diversification of the sectoral structure of industry, the ratio of production and processing, etc.). In them, as well as in the Karelian zone, the main elements of the transport and industrial framework of the AZ of the Russian Federation were formed - the Arctic port and the railway connecting it with the federal railway network (Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, Belomorsk). In other zones, even those with great resource potential, the industrial and transport components are poorly and disharmoniously developed; rare centers cannot overcome the influence of the vast periphery.

Spatial and economic imbalances are caused by single-profile specialization and, in fact, the dependence of the economy of a particular territory on the state and development plans of one company. Transport inaccessibility is the main limitation for the implementation of investment projects and the formation of new mineral resource centers in support zones.

Closely interconnected integrated resource and (especially) infrastructure areas are the main frontiers (frontiers) for the development of Arctic territories [Zamyatina, Pilyasov, 2018]. Their prospects depend primarily on the availability of access to the Northern Sea Route, the formation of the main transport axis, the level of network trunking, and the stage of frame formation. A preliminary assessment of the frames of support zones with an emphasis on the primary transport component, carried out using open sources, revealed the following, namely:

- the framework is developing in the Arkhangelsk, Kola, Karelian zones, which is manifested in the reconstruction of Arctic ports and the ongoing plans for the construction of the Belkomur railway (Arkhangelsk - Syktyvkar - Solikamsk);

- the framework is being formed: actively with powerful corporate participation in the Yamalo-Nenets zone (Sabetta port on the NSR, Northern Latitudinal Railway); moderately, but with real funding under the State Program for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation in North Yakutia (reconstruction of ports on the Lena River, the port of Tiksi, construction of a shipyard on the basis of the Zhatai shipyard);

- the frame is being designed: the Syktyvkar - Naryan-Mar highway is being built in the Nenets zone, a pre-design feasibility study for the port of Indiga has been completed, the construction of the Barentskomur railway line (Indiga - Sosnogorsk - Solikamsk) is proposed; in the Vorkuta zone, the

Northern Railway is being modernized, possible railway exits to the NSR through Arkhangelsk "Belkomur", Indiga "Barentskomur", Ust-Kara (or Amderma) "Karskomur" are being considered;

- the framework requires reconstruction in the Taimyr-Turukhansk (port of Dikson, new coal ports "Chaika" and "Sever") and Chukotka zones (port of Pevek) and formation in the Chukotka zone (construction of the Kolyma - Omsukchan - Omolon - Anadyr highway).

Thus, for the Nenets and Vorkuta zones the main task is the railway access to the NSR port. For the Kola, Arkhangelsk, and Karelian regions, the development of the transport network through all types of transport (multi-highway transport) is essential; for the remaining zones, it is the strengthening of the main transport axis "river-sea" or "road-sea" with the reconstruction of ports on the NSR.

Regional initiatives to form support zones.

The formed or completed frames are the transport basis for anchor projects that create the production base of support zones and determine their industrial profile.

According to the implementation plan for the State Program for the Development of the AZ of the Russian Federation, in December 2018, a Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation on the procedure and criteria for selecting projects for inclusion in the list of priority ones within the framework of support zones should be adopted. This issue is considered in the scientific literature, as a rule, in the aspect of describing the largest investment projects. We were unable to find a comparative analysis of project initiatives for all support zones from the point of view of complementarity. Below, based on materials from various sources, proposals from the Arctic regions for potential anchor projects are summarized.

Kola support zone. The region is positioning itself as a successful investment site, combining traditional and new types of economic activity in the Arctic. The strategic function of the zone can be designated as an outpost of the Northern Sea Route.

The basis of the production potential is made up of enterprises in the mineral resources, mining, metallurgical and chemical sectors, which are part of the largest national financial and industrial groups. The necessary transport and energy infrastructure is being formed to meet their current needs and potential capabilities. An indisputable advantage is the presence of an ice-free Murmansk seaport and a base for the Russian icebreaker fleet. The traditional core, which includes the fishery complex, is complemented

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by a new cluster for the construction of offshore hydrocarbon production and processing facilities, as well as the tourism sector.

As an economic model of the support zone, a combination of tax and administrative regimes provided under the terms of special investment contracts, targeted rehabilitation programs for single-industry towns (in seven municipalities) and the creation of a territory of priority socio-economic development (PSED) in Kirovsk was chosen.

Arkhangelsk support zone. The main emphasis in its development is on the creation of an Arctic transport system. The strategic function associated with supporting the NSR is close to the Murmansk region, but with some restrictions that may be of a fundamental nature.

On the territory of the Arkhangelsk region there are strategic enterprises with developed competencies in the field of shipbuilding and ship repair, united in the Severodvinsk cluster. Their specialization is mainly military in nature, while civil shipbuilding is considered as a promising direction. Work has begun on the creation of the Arkhangelsk production and logistics complex, which will work both in the interests of the Russian Ministry of Defense and for commercial orders.

The production potential of the region is represented by the woodworking and pulp and paper industries, which in the long term are unlikely to be able to provide sufficient cargo flow along the NSR, unlike the mining, metallurgical and chemical enterprises of the Murmansk region. Projects for the development of the region's mineral resources are so far limited to the Pavlovskoye silver-bearing lead-zinc deposit. However, its location on the Novaya Zemlya archipelago does not contribute to the loading of the Arkhangelsk port, which also freezes in winter and requires constant dredging. Commercial fishing is in an uncertain state and its impact on the support zone is still difficult to determine. Among the projects that have potential competitive advantages over other Arctic regions are:

The economic model of the Arkhangelsk zone is associated with the realization of the advantages of the priority development territory and the widespread use of the cluster approach.

Karelian support zone. The region declared its specialization to be the introduction and use of environmentally friendly technologies for environmental management and production in the Arctic.

The project content is expected to be achieved through the creation of a multimodal transport hub with a deep-water seaport in Belomorsk, which should become a key element of the transport corridor facilitating the development of the natural resource potential of the republic.

The existing industrial potential is represented by a mineral resource complex for the development of

deposits of common and strategic minerals, and it is proposed to develop it through a biotechnological cluster, combining projects in the field of advanced processing of timber, biological resources of the White Sea, and wild plants.

The specialization of the Karelian zone in renewable and alternative energy turned out to be unique for the European sector of the Russian Arctic. In the future, the region can provide itself with the most environmentally friendly energy, becoming a leader in the pace of low-carbon development. The direction of economic diversification, as in other Arctic territories, is the promotion of ethnocultural, environmental, fishing and rural tourism.

There is no definite vision yet regarding the economic model for the functioning of the Karelian zone.

Neenets support zone. Since the Neenets Autonomous Okrug is the least populated and poorly diversified region of the Russian Arctic, the ideology of development of its support zone is determined by the development of transport infrastructure for more efficient development of hydrocarbon resources on the sea shelf and onshore part of the Timan-Pechora oil and gas province.

Most of the hydrocarbon production projects in the western sector of the Arctic, including the shelf zone (Varandey terminal and Prirazlomnaya platform), are already being implemented in the region. This allows the district, in planning its prospects, to rely on the experience of implementing commercially successful projects in the Arctic without special tax and administrative regimes.

With regard to the economic model, it is especially emphasized that the development of oil and gas fields already makes it possible to accumulate the necessary financial and technological resources for the formation of a modern system of settlements with high standards of quality of life. The development of transport infrastructure will make it possible to use the economic potential of the territory even more effectively, as well as strengthen ties with the central part of Russia and strengthen the country's position in the Arctic basin.

Vorkuta support zone. The Komi Republic is the only Arctic region of Russia that does not have direct access to the Arctic Ocean and, accordingly, to the infrastructure of the Northern Sea Route.

The specialization of its support zone in the context of fulfilling strategic tasks at the national level is a production and logistics complex that provides transcontinental connections between the ports of the Kara, Barents and White Seas with the ports of the Pacific Ocean, which will allow mining and processing enterprises in the regions of the European North, the Urals and Siberia to reach promising global markets in the West and East. The second component of the specialization is national security. Its development is based on the infrastructure of the

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Arctic group of troops and the Ministry of Emergency Situations. In order to ensure self-sufficiency of the support zone and fulfill the tasks of socio-economic development of the Komi Republic, it is assumed that Vorkuta will specialize in preserving the coal industry, developing telecommunications,

In the future, it is planned that the support zone will reach the sea by extending the branch of the Northern Railway “Karskomur” from Vorkuta to the potential seaport of Arcturus [Litovsky, 2016] on the shore of the Kara Sea in the village of Ust-Kara, or the village of Amderma, Nenets Autonomous Okrug. An important factor in the development of the transport and logistics hub is the construction of the Northern Latitudinal Railway. The connection of transport corridors, in the zone of influence of which new mineral resources and processing centers may arise, will ensure the filling of cargo flows of the NSR and optimization of the load of Arctic ports.

For the development of the Vorkuta zone, it is proposed to use mechanisms to support depressed territories by granting the single-industry GO “Vorkuta” the status of a PSEDA. To strengthen the financial base, it is proposed to change the standard for crediting the tax on mineral extraction in the form of hydrocarbon raw materials to the regional budget to 5%.

Yamalo-Nenets support zone. One of the most actively developing territories of the Russian Arctic. Positions itself as a transit corridor providing connections between the industrial centers of the Urals and the oil and gas centers of Yamal with the European part of Russia. Essentially, it consists of three elements - operating anchor projects for the extraction and production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Yamal, the new seaport of Sabetta and the Northern Latitudinal Railway, which is under construction, which has a chance of being faster than other options (Belkomura and Barentskomur) to materialize the transport link “Ural – Komi – North-West” that is strategically important for interregional development.

The transport and industrial framework is complemented by a strong humanitarian block in the form of numerous environmental, educational and scientific projects for the comprehensive study and natural rehabilitation of this sector of the Russian Arctic.

The zone uses a wide range of economic mechanisms in the implementation of projects: private investments are attracted (Yamal LNG), government funding (the port of Sabetta), a PPP mechanism is used along the Northern Latitudinal Railway in the form of a concession, supplemented by regional investments in the construction of the road part of the bridge across the river. Ob.

Taimyr - Turukhansk support zone. Its specialization is formed on the basis of mining. At the moment, there are two active cores - the Vankor oil

and gas cluster and the Taimyr coal mining center. In the future, two more oil and gas fields may be added to them - Ust-Yenisei and Khatanga. At the same time, only the coal industry and metallurgy, which is being developed in the Norilsk industrial region, are focused on the transport capabilities of the Northern Sea Route (interestingly, the current port of Dikson, according to plans, will be focused only on receiving cargo, and two new ones - “Chaika” and “Sever” - on exporting coal to export). Existing oil and gas flows are tied to a system of trunk pipelines in a southwestern direction outside the zone of influence of the Northern Sea Route and other Arctic territories.

A feature of the economic model of the Taimyr-Turukhansk zone is the high degree of involvement of raw material corporations in the construction and operation of transport infrastructure for their own projects. This, on the one hand, increases their feasibility and independence from government investment (but only during favorable market conditions). On the other hand, it consolidates the export and raw materials specialization of the territory with all the accompanying socio-economic risks.

North Yakut support zone. The fundamental feature of the development of the territory can be considered the basin approach, due to the lack of alternatives to inland water transport, complete dependence on northern supplies and the connection of all Arctic and northern territories of Yakutia with the Northern Sea Route (via inland waterways). It is noteworthy that the authorities of the republic classify as territories of integrated development not only five uluses classified as AZ RF by Presidential Decree of May 2, 2014, but another eight that are rightfully proposed for expansion of AZ RF and the North Yakutsk support zone.

The river-sea transport infrastructure is the framework of both the support zone and the republic as a whole. At the same time, two vectors of Arctic specialization are clearly distinguished. External (latitudinal) is aimed at ensuring the activities of the Northern Sea Route along the entire coast of Yakutia, including servicing ships and vessels with nuclear power plants in the port of Tiksi. The internal (meridional) vector reflects the realization of the region’s own interests in the Lena basin. The key project here is the construction of the high-tech Zhatai shipyard.

The design content of the industrial core of the support zone is supposed to be linked with potential mineral resource centers for the development of acutely scarce and strategically important resources. However, the degree of preparation of projects varies greatly, which casts doubt on their feasibility in the near future. The most relevant in this regard remain the anchor projects of the Anabar territory (diamond, rare earth and oil and gas), as well as the Zyryansky coal center of the Kolyma territory.

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Among the government support measures that could intensify the formation of the North Yakut support zone are TASED and PPP. In addition, it is proposed to extend to this territory some procedures of a free customs zone and other measures to simplify business activities.

Chukotka support zone. The specialization of the easternmost support zone of the Arctic is fully formed and cannot be changed. Based on the use of the geographical advantages of direct access to the Pacific Ocean and the proximity of the markets of the Asia-Pacific region, two practically isolated territories will be developed here - the Chaun-Bilibino and Anadyr industrial zones. The first specializes in the extraction of polymetallic raw materials, the second - in the development of traditional fuel and energy resources. A special feature of the territory is that its infrastructure framework needs serious modernization of all three subsystems: energy, transport and telecommunications, and so far, unlike other Arctic regions, it is considered not as a competitive advantage, but as a deterrent.

The economic model of the support zone is based on the Beringovsky TASED in the south and the extension of the preferences of the Free Port of Vladivostok to the port of Pevek in the north of the region.

The development concept of the North Yakutsk support zone presents passports of anchor investment projects with an assessment of costs and efficiency, as well as information on mineral resource centers, which distinguishes it favorably in terms of the degree of development from other support zones of the Russian Arctic.

Let us note that the description of project initiatives touches on the proposed mechanisms for the creation and functioning of public health organizations.

Several publications by the authors of the article and other researchers are devoted to this issue, including on the basis of comparison with foreign experience.

The enormous importance of the Arctic region is no longer in doubt, as well as the realization that this region cannot be developed using the methods of the Soviet five-year plans, and as we move to high latitudes (to the Arctic shelf, to the coastal zone and coastal territories), the volumes increase required investments and financial risks.

The main difficulty in introducing new approaches and methods in the formation of space, cells of the territory's framework is that the inertia of already established structures and management methods is still great, and new proposals, developed and even enshrined as mandatory in government documents, have difficulty making their way. This situation can be explained by the difficulties of the transition from the usual strictly centralized management to the need to establish equal rights for

different participants in the process of Arctic development. Even with the understanding that they all have a common goal - the modernization of outdated industries and the creation of new ones based on progressive technologies that correspond to the principles of sustainable development of territories and meeting the social needs of the population, uniform rules have not yet emerged. Arctic zone of Russia, consisting of the northern parts of eight subjects of the Federation, due to completely unique circumstances, has practically approached the position of a special and independent object of state regulation and management. These circumstances include: the huge and diverse resource potential of the territory; the determining role of extracted raw materials in the country's export earnings; the high vulnerability of the Arctic ecological system, on which the state of many regions of the world depends; urbanization of developed territories (80% of the population lives in cities and towns). Exorbitant costs in industrial production and maintenance of public utilities inevitably stimulate the search for methods and solutions to reduce costs, hence the objective need to build an innovative economy here. It depends only on the success of this direction, will the Arctic develop in the modern format of the 21st century, or will it get stuck in the 20th century with its worn-out funds and the continuing outflow of population to more prosperous regions. Only the state can be a guarantor and necessary participant in the movement of the Russian Arctic along the innovative path of development. Hopes for private capital and the market did not justify themselves. Private companies, which have taken possession of what was developed in Soviet times, are not engaged in the development of the territory, but in the exploitation of rich deposits, more in their own interests than in the Arctic or the country and its population. This is evidenced by the insufficient level of investment in R&D and low expenditures on corporate social responsibility, despite the fact that almost all owners of Russian mining companies appear on the Forbes list.

However, even under such unfavorable circumstances and despite all the contradictions of state policy, a new space is gradually being built in the Russian Arctic with modernized enterprises serving large government orders and the needs of large companies, thereby forming regional clusters, which will play a major role in the formation her new look.

New avant-garde areas of development, as a rule, are tied to the localization of the largest deposits of strategic types of raw materials, cities and towns serving these deposits or producing the necessary equipment and materials for them, as well as seaports and port points associated with sea and river transport routes with access to to the Arctic, Pacific and Atlantic oceans. In recent decades, the polar territories, regardless of their national protectorate, have increasingly become an area for the implementation of

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pilot projects to introduce innovative development methods, the latest eco-friendly production technologies, information technologies and communications, monitoring of natural and social processes. Such approaches to the development of resources and space in the Arctic in the modern world order are dictated, on the one hand, plans to create a powerful raw material and production base of the polar countries in extreme natural and climatic conditions, and on the other hand, high investment risks and market requirements to meet international standards. Products created in the Arctic must not only be in demand in the domestic and world markets, but also competitive. At the same time, today the task is also not to destroy those unique resources of this region, which are still less involved in economic development or are classified as resources of deferred demand, but in the future may be of even higher importance than the reserves of energy and mineral raw materials that are so in demand today. There are still obstacles to the implementation of such large-scale plans in Russia, which, unfortunately, cannot be overcome tomorrow or in the near future. These include: insufficient, and more often meager, financing due to budget deficits and the choice of other priorities for government injections (expenditures on the military-industrial complex and military operations, on new Crimean facilities, etc.); an acute shortage of professional personnel in the absence of effective incentives to attract specialists to work in a difficult climate and in conditions of primitive infrastructure; lack of own technologies and the depressing state of science designed to develop these technologies (during the period of reduction in funding for “northern projects”, many scientists and engineers working in this field went abroad); the lack of an effective system for managing complex resource-territorial objects and, finally, a corrupt corps of managers of all ranks, slowing down useful initiatives and transferring state support funds into inappropriate expenses. All these negative factors are well known, and there is no doubt that they were taken into account when developing numerous program documents on the Arctic: these are the “Concept of sustainable development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation” (2018), and “Fundamentals of state policy in the Arctic until 2020 and beyond” (2035), and “Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone” (2035), and the State Program for the Social and Economic Development of the Arctic Zone until 2035 (2023). However, if we take a realistic approach to the situation on the ground and take into account people’s sentiments, it becomes obvious that social policy will play almost the leading role in achieving Russia’s ambitious goals in the Arctic. Today it is quite difficult to achieve the voluntary resettlement of people to areas with unfavorable natural and climatic conditions, especially in the absence of modern production and social

infrastructure. Besides, The older generation, who spent decades working in Arctic fields or at weather stations on the polar coast and lost their savings during the “shock therapy” of the 1990s, has already popularly explained to their children the dubious advantages of working in the North.

Let us present the results of surveys in the Arkhangelsk region, which are very typical for most northern regions. The main problems pushing young people out of rural areas, respondents consider the impossibility of decent employment (79%), lack of modern leisure facilities (52%), lack of comfortable housing (45%), uncertainty in the future of the settlement (32%), low incomes and inaccessibility of education (14% each). Residents of coastal settlements massively focus on the lack of access to medical and educational services, the inaccessibility of transport territories, the absence or degradation of agricultural and industrial production, the impossibility of using their abilities, education and qualifications. The next stage of lawmaking for the formation of new spatial structures in the Arctic was the draft of the new Federal Law “On the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation” (2020). In it, this zone of the Russian Federation is considered as a single management object, with the formation of a federal executive body and a new integrated approach to territorial and socio-economic development - the creation of support zones. The support zone is defined as “a comprehensive project for planning and ensuring the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone, aimed at achieving strategic interests and ensuring national security in the Arctic, providing for the synchronous interconnected application of existing instruments of territorial and sectoral development, as well as mechanisms for investment projects, including on the basis of public-private and municipal-private partnerships.” In total, it is proposed to create eight support zones in the Arctic (Kola, Arkhangelsk, Nenets, Yamalo-Nenets, Vorkuta, Taimyr-Turukhansk, North Yakutsk and Chukotka). Each zone in terms of infrastructure will be based on ports, and, accordingly, they will all be connected by the main transport route - the Northern Sea Route. At the present stage, the new seaport of Sabetta (the eastern coast of the Yamal Peninsula) has occupied an important place in the Yamalo-Nenets support zone, which has already sent the extracted oil from the Novoportovskoye field by tankers to the west. It is unlikely that anyone will deny that an integrated territorial approach is more effective than a sectoral one, especially in a region such as the Russian Arctic, with its vast expanses, large differences in natural, resource, ethnographic and environmental plans, not to mention the different levels of development of certain territories. This was well understood back in the years of the USSR, when the strategy of creating territorial production complexes (TPC) was adopted as the main concept for the

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development of new territories. The social and economic effect during the formation of the industrial complex was achieved through the comprehensive and rational development of the entire production infrastructure, the use of local natural (land, water, raw materials) and labor resources. The creation of the TPK was recognized as the most effective spatial form of organization of productive forces, in which the advantages of specialization, cooperation, and combination of various elements of the economic system are realized. Large TPKs created in the Soviet years in the northern regions of Russia are still operating. Murmansk, Timan-Pechora, North Ob, North Yenisei TPK represent the industrial framework of the entire Arctic. There has never been and could not be a complete territorial development in the Arctic, due to extremely unfavorable natural and climatic conditions, and too high costs for all types of production work, social infrastructure and personnel maintenance. In addition, continuous territorial development in Arctic latitudes is also unacceptable for environmental reasons, since highly vulnerable natural systems are able to withstand anthropogenic loads that are extremely limited in space.

In a word, the focal type of development based on large deposits of strategic types of minerals, both today and in the future, remains the only acceptable one in the Arctic. But now we are faced with the urgent task of modernizing the existing heritage and especially the introduction of more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly production technologies. It is clear that Soviet approaches to the formation and development of the TPK (by the way, very effectively and creatively used in many foreign countries) today require rethinking and modernization. In the new Russia, the development of production entirely at the expense of the state budget is unacceptable, as is the use of a certain contingent in northern enterprises that does not require high wages for hard work. The ideology of TPK in spatial economics has been replaced by a cluster approach, which has been successfully operating in all Western countries for a long time and has huge potential in the Russian Federation. Clusters, as zones of high concentration of economic activity of business entities, make it possible to introduce new forms of innovative processes that increase labor productivity and the level of specialization of all participants. The purpose of the cluster approach is to intensify activities for the implementation of production projects in a certain territory, which should ensure an increase in production efficiency, diversification and improvement of the structure of the economy, increasing its competitiveness, when not an individual enterprise, but a large industrial complex will compete in the relevant market. For example, the model of the oil and gas cluster in the Arctic represents a balanced interaction of a group of production, service, scientific and educational organizations (oil refining

enterprises, petrochemical, geological exploration and oil production companies, icebreaker and tanker fleet services, port infrastructure, universities and scientific organizations). However, as international experience shows, the most successful clusters are formed where a “breakthrough” is made or expected in the field of technology and production technology with subsequent entry into new market niches. “Collecting” clusters from “debris and waste” of industries and market sectors that are in a state of decline, as a rule, does not lead to success. In our opinion, in the Arctic it is advisable to develop such clusters on the basis of existing main centers for the extraction and processing of resources, maximally tying them to the intersections of transport routes: sea, river, air, railway. Leading economists including academicians A.G. Aganbegyan and A.G. Granberg, proposed to begin updating the production potential in the Arctic precisely with the restoration and further formation of local port-industrial hubs or centers, with their gradual transformation into modern aqua-territorial production complexes. An analysis of the clusters that are currently forming in the Arctic zone allows us to identify several leading sectors that, it seems, will receive the most intensive development in the near future: fuel and energy, timber industry, logistics, ecology and tourism, biotechnology, agro-industrial complex. The most industrially developed Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions have significant potential for the formation of clusters. Each of these regions has its own specifics, both are historically focused on serving the oil and gas sector and participating in activities that support the operation of the Northern Sea Route.

However, it must be taken into account that the process of innovative restructuring with the formation of interaction between many players, from firms to regional authorities, requires a lot of time. In addition, since a difficult economic situation has developed in the Arctic zone, due to an almost twenty-year period of oblivion and stagnation, it is obvious that the cluster approach cannot be implemented here without special training, government subsidies, intensive cooperation of efforts of both business at all levels and municipal and regional authorities. In 2018, the Federation Council, together with the Higher School of Economics Research University, with the assistance of the Russian-Canadian NORDEP program, prepared “Methodological recommendations for the implementation of cluster policy in the northern regions.” The recommendations identified a wide range of issues regarding the participation of all levels of government in supporting and promoting regional clusters, carried out an analysis of existing cluster initiatives in the northern regions, and considered the tasks and instruments of cluster policy. As already mentioned, the idea of support zones in the Arctic is set out in the draft of the new Federal Law “On the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian

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Federation,” presented in the summer of 2020 for discussion by interested departments and the scientific community as the main form of spatial development of the regions. To date, there is no final decision: whether the new bill will be adopted as the main federal act or will turn into “targeted” by-laws. While it is under consideration by the Government of the Russian Federation, the analysis of proposals from the regions, as well as the financial possibilities for its implementation, continues. The prospects for the latter are not very bright: the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, taking into account the comments of the Ministry of Finance, proposed reducing expenses for the state program for the development of the Arctic from 2018 to 2025 fourfold (from 209.7 billion to 50.9 billion rubles). However, regardless of the amount of future funding, the bill raised many questions among the expert community. For example, doubts arise about the appropriateness of the proposed mechanism for managing the development of the Arctic zone. For these purposes, it is proposed to create a new authorized executive body, and for each support zone (there are eight of them, according to the number of subjects of the Federation in the zone) - a “Project Office of the Support Development Zone.” Judging by the list of rights and responsibilities of new formations, two more heavy bureaucratic structures are being created, intermediate between federal authorities and enterprises operating in the region. All powers to develop scientific programs and select topics for inclusion in the state scientific research plan will be transferred to a new executive body, which will have to, together with the leadership of the Arctic subjects of the Federation and local governments, coordinate this plan and monitor its implementation. Is there a need to create a new body when there are a large number of highly professional scientific centers that have accumulated a large amount of analytical and information material on the Arctic and the North, and present scientifically developed plans for long-term research based on many years of work to study the entire range of problems? Are we, in the person of the new body, building another Skolkovo, where billions of budget funds have been invested? but scientific results corresponding to such investments have not yet been obtained. In our opinion, diverting financial resources to support and operate another bureaucratic structure with an extremely limited budget is unlikely to help solve the problems of specific enterprises that need support with preferential loans and taxes. Moreover, in the new law, the northerners did not see answers to the questions that concern them: will the Arctic be developed on a rotational basis or are full-fledged settlements with a full range of services needed; when will the problem of traditional land use for the indigenous peoples of the North be resolved; Is the regional practice of setting lease payments for reindeer pastures at the level of 300 thousand rubles

legal? per year (in the Vorkuta region, despite the fact that in the Nenets district similar payments amount to 18 thousand. in year); when will the law on free and indefinite use of lands for the indigenous population be adopted; When will they finally introduce rent payments for the development of mineral resources in the Arctic, or, for example, a tax on progressive capital, so that this region can begin to fully develop?

Unfortunately, this is not the first time we have encountered quasi-approaches in regional politics, which obscure the real picture on the ground, create bureaucratic barriers to free development, introduce additional reporting and inspections, and hamper healthy initiative from the localities with their regulations. Compared to the 1990s, the situation in the regions has changed; local self-government bodies and entrepreneurs’ unions have acquired economic and social literacy and a vision of their prospects. Obviously, today it is worth paying more attention to the experience of Western countries that have significantly succeeded in clustering: they provide good examples when the assistance and participation of government agencies is provided as needed and does not fetter the initiative from below). There are three stages in the process of creating and forming support zones in the Arctic. On the first (until 2020)) it is planned to develop their concept and launch an information support system, in the second (2026–2030) it is planned to launch pilot projects of support zones, filling them with scientific and technological solutions, in the third stage (2031–2035) they will begin full-fledged work. Each support zone will have its own development strategy. In general, the implementation of the state program “Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2035” will require 260.2 billion rubles. The Kola, Arkhangelsk and North Yakutsk zones are considered to be the most prepared today for the formation of a supporting framework for the reindustrialization of the Arctic. All of them have strong economic prerequisites for accelerated development and in recent years have focused on the formation of clusters of a certain specialization on the basis of existing industrial enterprises and companies associated in their activities with a specialized center. The implementation of the Kola Support Zone project on a full scale requires certain decisions at the federal level, in particular on granting the Murmansk seaport the status of a special port zone, as well as on the mechanisms for the formation of the so-called Pomeranian zone in the Barents region (the latter project also affects the Arkhangelsk region). Based on the industries that currently determine the specialization of the region, marine, mining and chemical and fishing clusters can be formed. They are represented by a number of large companies that are competitive not only in the national market, but also on the world stage. The region has port facilities

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(operating and projected), vessels of various profiles and an icebreaker fleet, a repair base, highly qualified workers and management personnel. Creation in the Murmansk region of a non-profit organization “Association of Oil and Gas Industry Suppliers “Murmanshelf””, which included representatives of the Regional Government, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the Northern Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Statoil company, marine enterprises, etc. (96 organizations in total), can be considered as the initial phase of the formation of the sea industrial cluster. Arkhangelsk support zone. In recent years, most enterprises in the Arkhangelsk region have been focused on supplying products for large-scale oil and gas projects (development of the Prirazlomnoye oil field, construction of the Varandey terminal, as well as the development of the Bovanenkovo gas field on the western coast of Yamal). Eight years ago, the Constellation association was created in the region, which included, in addition to such large enterprises as Sevmash and Zvyozdochka, hundreds of medium and small enterprises - suppliers and contractors of the oil and gas industry. High-tech engineering companies are attracted, connections are established with regional and foreign industry operators. The Yamal LNG project alone became the core for attracting 70 local companies. That is, an oil and gas cluster is practically already being created. In general, there are three more clusters operating in the region - shipbuilding, timber and social, and two more are in the process of creation - biotechnological and fishing.

Great prospects are associated with the Yamalo-Nenets and Nenets support zones, where the main centers of hydrocarbon production in the Arctic are located. These two subjects of the Federation have not only achieved success themselves thanks to the development of extractive industries and transport infrastructure, but are also major customers of various products outside their regions, attracting many enterprises, firms, research centers, forming modern-type oil and gas clusters. The proposal to create a North Yakut support zone was perceived by local authorities in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) as a very promising project with a large backlog. First of all, a rationale has emerged for the revival of the seaports of Tiksi and Zelenomyssky, where both concrete piers and hydraulic bases have been preserved; the river-sea class fleet is undergoing renovation, which will be provided by the modernized Zhatai shipyard. In the future, it is planned to launch the shortest meridional transport corridor from northwest China to Western Europe through Skovorodino, Yakutia and the Northern Sea Route.

Norilsk support zone in the Arctic part of the Krasnoyarsk Territory already has two powerful clusters, occupying one of the leading places in the Eastern Arctic. The core of the first of them is the Norilsk mining and chemical complex (one of the

main users of the Northern Sea Route). The second is being formed on the basis of the oil and gas fields of the Vankor group, located in the Taimyr and Turukhansk regions. The Vorkuta and Chukotka support zones are still seen as a contour image on the map of the socio-economic space of the Arctic, since their exceptional raw material potential, which was already tapped to a certain extent in Soviet times, in recent years, it has been underutilized: a significant part of the local mining centers have experienced a serious decline since the beginning of market reforms or have been withdrawn from industrial use. In the near future, obviously one should not expect a quick change in the situation: the state does not prioritize the industrial development of mineral deposits in these territories as a priority task, and private investors are not willing to take risks alone. It is important, however, that these territories will be legally declared as priority development zones, which, as the domestic and international markets become in demand and interested businesses emerge, will be able to receive government support.

Conclusion

After some surge in information and discussion activity around the transition from the sectoral to the territorial principle of development of the Russian Arctic (in the format of support zones), there has been a lull in the public space since 2017.

Meanwhile, according to the implementation plan for Subprogram 1 “Formation of support zones for development and ensuring their functioning...” in 2018, the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia was supposed to present “the concept of a project for the formation of support zones for development” (June 29), “develop and carry out research work” (30 November), “adopt regulations” (December 25). In December 2018, a Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation was to be issued on the procedure and criteria for selecting projects for support zones. Planned activities were not completed within the specified time frame. The Ministry of Economic Development is considering 30 regulations aimed at creating conditions for the effective implementation of investment projects in the Russian Arctic, as well as acts on amendments to the Tax Code, the Law “On Subsoil” and other laws.

The long approval in the government of the draft Federal Law “On the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation”, entirely dedicated to support zones, pushed back until 2019 the funding of research work, the result of which should be economic calculations for projects of support zones in terms of the necessary transport, energy, telecommunications and other infrastructure, volume of natural resources production, promising cargo flows. An important methodological position for developing concepts of support zones and selecting projects, according to the authors of the article, as well as the developers of the

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Concept for the formation of the North Yakutsk support zone, is the assessment of the multiplicative effects of their implementation, consistently carried out by colleagues from the Institute of Economics and Economics of the SB RAS.

In addition to regulatory and scientific activities, a significant support for the development of the RF AZ, in our opinion, should be coordinated organizational work, which presupposes the presence of a special structure (for example, a working group in the State Commission) coordinating activities on the formation and functioning of support zones, attracting scientific experts, clearly informing the public about the progress of the activities of the Subprogram on Support Zones, discussing issues of an interregional nature, in particular the organization and financing of the justification and selection of large infrastructure projects (promising railways, ports) in order to eliminate competition between zones. Russian President Vladimir Putin instructed to determine, by November 1, 2023, a list of strong hold settlements in the Arctic zone, including those performing national security functions, corresponding [order](#) published on the Kremlin website.

"To the Government of the Russian Federation, together with the executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, whose territories or parts of territories are classified as land territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation: determine a list of support settlements of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, including those performing functions in the field of ensuring national security and (or) functions as a base for the development of mineral resource centers, implementation of economic and (or) infrastructure projects in the Arctic," the order says.

The President also instructed to make decisions to support investment projects that provide employment for family members of military personnel living in closed administrative-territorial entities and settlements in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in which military formations are stationed. The deadline for execution of the order is December 1, 2023.

"To ensure the development of master plans for the development of support settlements in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, defined by subparagraph "b" of this paragraph, for the period until 2035 in order to improve the living conditions of citizens, increase the availability of social services and create opportunities for self-realization of citizens," it adds. instructions.

The deadline for execution of the order is July 1, 2024.

The President also instructed to develop, on the basis of master plans for the development of support settlements in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, and approve comprehensive plans for the long-term socio-economic development of such

settlements for the period until 2035, establishing sources of financing for the implementation of activities provided for by these comprehensive plans. The deadline for execution of the order is October 1, 2024.

Appointed responsible: Prime Minister of Russia [Mikhail Mishustin](#), Governor of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug [Dmitry Artyukhov](#), Governor of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug [Yuri Bezdudny](#), acting governor [Krasnoyarsk Territory Mikhail Kotyukov](#), and about. Governor [Chukotka Vladislav Kuznetsov](#), head of Yakutia [Aisen Nikolaev](#), head [Republic of Karelia Arthur Parfenchikov](#), head of Komi [Vladimir Uiba](#), governor [Arkhangelsk region Alexander Tsybulsky](#), governor [Murmansk region Andrey Chibis](#).

In addition, the President instructed the Government of the Russian Federation, together with the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation and the executive authorities of the Murmansk region, to ensure the overhaul of the sports center for marine and physical training (city [Severomorsk](#)) branch of the federal autonomous institution of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation "Central Sports Club of the Army" (SKA, city [Saint Petersburg](#)). The deadline for execution of the order is December 15, 2025. Those responsible for execution are Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mikhail Mishustin, Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation [Sergei Shoigu Shoigu](#), Governor of the Murmansk region Andrey Chibis.

The President instructed the Government of the Russian Federation, together with the executive authorities of the Murmansk region, to ensure the overhaul of the buildings of the State regional budgetary healthcare institution "Central District Hospital of the Closed Administrative Unit of Severomorsk". The deadline for execution of the order is December 15, 2025. Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mikhail Mishustin and Governor of the Murmansk Region Andrei Chibis were appointed responsible.

In addition, the President instructed the Russian Ministry of Defense to ensure the restoration of the building of the officers' house of military unit 06982. The deadline for execution of the order is December 15, 2025. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu was appointed responsible.

Consideration of the prospects for the development of support zones presented in the draft Federal Law "On the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" shows that the industrial scheme for the development of the Arctic based on resource-exploiting industries is preserved. Harmonization of the development process, which takes into account the importance of all types of natural resources on land and sea, renewable and non-renewable, is not prioritized in the document, and this is alarming. Meanwhile, the initial stage of

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development, typical for a significant part of the Arctic territories, especially for coastal zones, which are the most dynamic in nature and environmentally vulnerable, makes it possible to use the experience of already developed similar habitats in other countries, avoid historically accumulated mistakes, apply new world methods and technologies of the last 20 years. The new bill provides for financial support for activities and priority projects from the budget system of the Russian Federation and extra-budgetary sources, in a ratio of 1:4. But with such a distribution of financial investments, it is difficult to expect much enthusiasm from business. It is well known that in regions with difficult natural and climatic conditions, the state must lead the way and create infrastructure, which subsequently attracts business.

As in previous years, the Arctic faces a relatively low level of funding for investment programs. At the same time, it is obvious that for greater efficiency in the use of limited funds in the development of strategic documents and basic laws that will determine the conditions and directions of the Arctic zone, it would be necessary to more actively involve the already developed arsenal of scientific proposals from leading scientific centers that have been associated with the Arctic and its problems for decades. In fact, the main expected goal of the new law was to create a working algorithm for solving strategic problems for the future development of Russia in the Arctic region.

After almost 20 years of neglect of the Arctic by the state, the present period can be considered as a return to high latitudes, but with the understanding that in the 21st century. this must happen on a fundamentally new motivational and technological

basis. The previous period with the most active activity in the 1950–1980s was not only characterized by high financial and labor costs with the determining role of the state, but was also marked by the acquisition of vast experience in solving complex technical and technological problems, which brought the country to the forefront of Arctic exploration in the world. However, at the present stage, when developing new development concepts and approaches, it is necessary to take into account the main conclusions from the difficult experience of past decades, namely:

*The Arctic does not forgive mistakes, its development is not a sprint, but a long marathon;

*you cannot “fight” the Arctic, you need to understand its specifics and patterns of development and competently integrate into natural processes, without destroying the ecological balance through technogenic impact, so as not to complicate life and work here for future generations;

*the use of high technologies, knowledge-intensive products, and innovative approaches is a distinctive feature of the Arctic development process; their main goals are the efficient and safe development of resources, minimizing human participation in production processes, creating materials and technical means that help reduce costs for all types of work while maintaining high reliability of their operation;

*when developing new concepts for the development of the Arctic and preparing new legislative initiatives, it is necessary to take into account existing and proven effective scientific methods for organizing the socio-economic space.

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