Russian Arctic Policy Supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arctic

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Introduction

In 1992, Russia accepted the basic principles of sustainable development and made a commitment to follow them by signing international agreements – Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity. This involved commitments to ensure sustainable development through relevant national policies and legislation. Over the last three decades, Russia has taken meaningful steps towards sustainable development by issuing environmental strategy and creating legal and regulatory foundations for socio-economic development and environmental protection. Transitioning towards sustainable development, Russia participates in all international initiatives based on the principles of sustainability. In 2015, countries, Russia included, revised their approaches to sustainability and adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[1] On January 1, 2016 these new goals officially came into force. The new Goals are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet.

Due to the fact that the Arctic is both fragile and rich in resources the unique Arctic environment requires special attention. Being the Arctic state Russia must adhere to sustainable growth and development of the Arctic territories.

In 2019-2020 the Russian scholars from Tyumen State Universities have conducted a research with the main objective to investigate if Russia has made any meaningful steps towards sustainable development in the Arctic concerning new sustainability goals and if any complying rules are incorporated in Russian arctic-related legislation to contribute to sustainable development transition. For this purpose, the researchers examined several groups of official documents from the perspective of SDGs to discover if the federal and regional strategies, laws, regulations and target programs make sustainable development goals applicable in the

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[1] UN General Assembly, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', Resolution 70/1, 25 September 2015, https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

Russian Arctic[2]. The research methods included the content and legal analysis of legislation and reports; comparative analysis of relevant documents adopted in Russia.

The research exemplified that all the documents were worked out prior to 2015 and, on the one hand, it seems as new sustainable development goals have had no impact on the Arctic legal framework. The further finding was that just few provisions on sustainable development can be found in a number of legal norms regulating the Arctic use and protection. For example, Federal program "Social and economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation" practically does not address the concept of sustainable development as the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions. Moreover, the term "sustainable development" itself is mentioned in this document just a few times. But does this mean that Russian Arctic policy is not following the sustainability approach? The deeper analysis revealed adherence of the Russian Arctic regulations to the sustainable approach. What was found out is that the term "sustainable development" in Russian Arctic policy is used in different contexts: "sustainable development of indigenous peoples", "sustainable development of related industries". With this angle, principles and rules formulated in the laws and programs can be considered the description of the SDGs compatible for the Russian Arctic and constitute a specific domestic roadmap according to the Arctic priorities for the next 15 years.

[2] President of the Russian Federation, 'Strategy for the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and ensuring national security for the period up to 2020', 13 February 2009, http://government.ru/info/18360/; President of the Russian Federation, 'Strategy for the Development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and ensuring national security for the Period up to 2035', 26 October 2020, No 645, http://docs.cntd.ru/document/566091182; President of the Russian Federation, 'Principles of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period up to 2020 and further, 8 September 2008, No 1969, https://rg.ru/2009/03/30/arktika-osnovy-dok.html; Government of the Russian Federation, 'Federal Program of the Russian Federation "Socioeconomic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020", 21 April 2014 No. 366, http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/830/events/; President of the Russian Federation, 'Framework of state policy in the field of environmental development of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2030', 30 April 2012, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/page/492; Federal Law, 'On Environmental Protection', 10 January 2002 http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_34823/; President of the Russian Federation, 'Strategy of Ecological Safety of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025', 19 April 2017 No. 176, http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41879; Government of the Russian Federation, 'Energy Strategy of Russia for the period up to 2035', 9 June 2020 No. 1523-p, http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_354840/; President of the Russian Federation, 'Climate doctrine of the Russian Federation', 17 December 2009, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6365; other environmental and natural resource laws and codes.

Results

Analyzing the Arctic related legislation of the federal and regional level, the authors have come to the conclusion that industrial development is the cornerstone of Russia`s Arctic policy. The primary task of the Russian government is the exploitation of Arctic resources. According to the Federal program "Social and economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation" almost two-thirds of all Arctic projects are directly related to the development of the mineral resource base. In the meantime, the comprehensive analysis reveals that Arctic related legislation of the federal and regional level, federal and regional target programs, grassroots and Arctic local communities' initiatives as well as operating companies' incentives are, to a certain degree, relevant to the new SD goals and applicable with the sustainable approach of the Arctic development.

The main result of the research was the classification of 17 SDGs, as they are addressed in the Arctic legal frameworks, and according to which they can be grouped in three blocks. The criteria of grouping were their applicability and availability of legal and financial mechanisms for their implementation. Thus, the first group is for the goals which are "much addressed, officially implemented with substantial budgetary provisions and effective tools provided". The second

Table 1

Group 1 "SDGs much addressed"	Group 2 "SDGs declared"	Group 3 "SDGs not responded"
Goal 1 "No poverty"	Goal 8 "Decent work and economic growth"	Goal 5 "Gender equality"
Goal 2 "Food security"	Goal 9 "Industry, innovation, and resilient infrastructure"	Goal 6 "Clean water and sanitation"
Goal 3 "Good health and well-being"	Goal 12 "Responsible consumption and production, recycling"	Goal 10 "Reducing inequalities"
Goal 4 "Education and life-long learning opportunities"	Goal 13 "Climate action"	Goal 11 "Sustainable cities"
Goal 7 "Energy"	Goal 7 "Affordable and clean energy"	Goal 16 "Justice and inclusive societies at all levels"
Goal 17 "Global partnerships"	Goal 14 "Sustainable use and conservation of the oceans, seas and marine resources"	
	Goal 15 "Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, forests, lands"	

group is for the goals which are "declared as significant for further implementation but lacking relevant funding and practical instruments". The third group comprises the goals which are "not responded either by the government or by the public and industries". This classification is presented in Table 1.

Discussion: Prospects of implementation of SDGs in the Russian Arctic

To illustrate the process of Russia's transition to sustainable development in the Arctic within the framework of SDGs we can describe the specific goals and how they are reflected in program and regulatory documents. For this paper we selected three goals from each classification group.

Goal 4 "Education and Life-Long Learning Opportunities" (Group 1)

Education is, perhaps, the most discussed issue in the Russian Arctic, compared only to environmental security. There are several federal target programs employing various measures to support education in the Arctic – "Development of Education in 2013-2020"[3], the Federal Program "Social and economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation"[4] which also comprises section on education. The core principle of the Arctic education is to provide professional training and retraining, advanced training of specialists in the system of secondary professional and higher education for work in Arctic conditions.[5]

The areas covered by these target programs are:

- social support for vocational education;

- development of preschool and general education;

- social support and professional development of the teaching staff;

- compensation system to the teachers who are the residents of the northern territories.[6]

The Arctic regions of Russia concretize the basic provisions of the federal programs developing their own policies and regulatory frameworks in accordance with the regional specifics. In Murmansk Region, for example, the

[3] Government of the Russian Federation,' Federal program "Development of education in 2013-2020", 26 December 2017 No. of 1642, http://docs.cntd.ru/document/499091784;
[4] Government of the Russian Federation, 'Federal Program of the Russian Federation "Socioeconomic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020", 21 April 2014 No. 366, http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/830/events/
[5] President of the Russian Federation, 'Principles of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period up to 2020 and further, 8 September 2008, No 1969, https://rg.ru/2009/03/30/arktika-osnovy-dok.html
[6] Ibid

system of secondary vocational and higher education is actively changing, especially the structure of educational programs bringing them closer to the economic needs. A special role is assigned to the system of secondary vocational education and vocational training (in 2015-2016 academic year, 16,000 people were trained in 105 educational programs of secondary vocational education).[7] The idea of the region is to perform breakthrough training for qualified personnel of complicated Arctic projects. For this purpose, the Center for Arctic Competences is projected in the region to provide comprehensive life-long learning provided for employees of enterprises operating or ready to work in Arctic conditions.[8]

The regional target program of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District is "Development of Education in 2014-2020".[9] Within this one and its several sub-programs the system of boarding schools is being introduced. The primarily objective is to develop new curricula considering sociocultural features and specific talents and capabilities of local children living with their parents in the tundra. These boarding schools are now being transformed into specific centers of ethno-cultural education, covering all the territories of traditional residence and traditional economic activities of indigenous peoples in Yamal.[10]

Most attention in the educational system in the District is paid to:

- teaching native languages

- teaching indigenous peoples in places of traditional residence and nomadic routes, without separating children from parents and for maintaining the traditional way of life.

Still, there is a lack and a big demand in deeper research and providing more qualitative level of education in the following areas:

- prevention and treatment of deer diseases (anthrax, brucellosis, catarrhal and pulmonary diseases of calves);

- reclamation of land erosion of the tundra;

- domestication of reindeer feeding;

- restoration and stimulation of reindeer moss growth with the help of

[7] Government of the Russian Federation, 'Federal Program of the Russian Federation "Socioeconomic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020", 21 April 2014 No. 366, http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/830/events/

[8] Ministry of Education and Science of the Murmansk Region, 'On the establishment of the Center for Arctic Competencies', 28 December 2015 No. 2353.

[9] Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District Government, 'Target program "Development of the vocational education system of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District for 2016-2020", 28 April 2016 No. 394-P.

[10] Department of Education of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District (2015) Education in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District: state and development trends, Salekhard.

biostimulators and water-retaining polymers (lichenology);

- processing medical products from plants growing in the area for prevention and treatment of animals and people;

- identification and comprehensive study of sacred, cult places of indigenous peoples;

- encouraging indigenous peoples to do research and get focused scientific degrees.

Goal 13 "Climate Action" (Group 2)

Global warming has myriad implications for the Arctic environment, residents, and nations. Climate change is one of the most discussed topics in the Arctic as it is affecting marine ecosystems and marine life, terrestrial ecosystems, animals and people who depend on them. Climate impacts include effects on access to food and resources; health and wellbeing. Community cohesion, traditions, and culture are other dimensions of sustainable development.[11] To respond the climate issues some policy and regulatory measures are taken in the country, for example, the Climate Doctrine approved in 2009[12] suggests measures for reducing emissions. Although not legally binding, the Climate Doctrine became a strong statement of intent. It sets strategic guidelines and targets and serves as a foundation for developing and implementing climate policy, covering issues related to climate change and its consequences.[13] On 31 March 2015, the Russian Federation submitted to the United Nations its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), proposing to reduce its emissions of net GHG by 25% to 30% below the 1990 level by 2030.

However, the ambitious goals announced by the Russian Federation are not supported by the current federal legislation. The Climate Doctrine of 2009 and the Comprehensive Plan for the implementation of the Climate Doctrine adopted in 2011 do not contain effective tools to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the Comprehensive Plan is financially provided neither by the federal budget

[11] See, for example, Arctic Resilience Report, 'The Arctic Council', 27 March 2017, http://arctic-council.org/arr; Bruce Forbes, 'Land use and climate change on the Yamal Peninsula of north-west Siberia: some ecological and socio-economic implications', Polar Research 18 (2): 367-373 (1999).
[12] President of the Russian Federation, 'Climate doctrine of the Russian Federation', 17 December 2009, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6365.
[13] Michal Nachmany, Sam Fankhauser, Jana Davidova, Nick Kingsmill, Tucker Landesman, Hitomi Roppongi, Philip Schleifer, Joana Setzer, Amelia Sharman, Stolle C. Singleton, Jayaraj Sundaresan and Terry Townshend (2015) The 2015 Global Climate Legislation Study: A Review of Climate Change Legislation in 99 Countries: Summary for Policy-Makers. London, UK: Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, GLOBE International.

nor by regional budgets and extra budgetary sources.[14] State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Environmental Development for the period until 2030[15] declared a number of global environmental problems associated with the loss of biodiversity, desertification and other adverse environmental processes alongside with the problem of climate change. But this document, on the analogy with the Climate Doctrine, lacks practical measures and the ways of achieving the targets are not traced.[16]

The Federal Program "Social and economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation" sets the goal to protect vulnerable Arctic objects and the population from dangerous impacts of climate change. This goal is associated with one climate related result, that is the installation of equipment for forecasting and assessing the consequences of global climate change. Again, practical measures and the ways of achievement of this target are lacking.[17]

Environmental legislation in Russia has not changed to a big extent in the wording of climate change. A few articles were supplemented to the Federal Law "On Environmental Protection" defining the ozone-depleting substances (Article 1) and setting the goals of ozone-layer protection and the powers of federal authorities in this issue (Article 54).[18] These provisions cannot be considered sufficient in terms of establishing legal framework for climate change mitigation in the country.

There are no climate related initiatives on the regional level either.

Thus, the perspectives of implementing Goal 13 in the Arctic are seen in protection of vulnerable Arctic environmental and the population from dangerous impacts of climate change with the focus on:

[14] Ларсен А. Х. и соавт. (2012) Изменение климата и возможности низкоуглеродной энергетики в России. [Larsen A.H., et al. Izmenenie klimata i vozmozhnosti nizkouglerodnoi energetiki v Rossii [Climate change and the possibility of low-carbon energy in Russia]].

[15] President of the Russian Federation, 'Framework of state policy in the field of environmental development of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2030', 30 April 2012, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/page/492.

[16] Elena Gladun, 'Sustainable Development of the Russian Arctic: Legal Implications', NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy, XII, No. 2 (2019 /2020).

[17] Government of the Russian Federation, 'Federal Program of the Russian Federation "Socioeconomic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020", 21 April 2014 No. 366, http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/830/events/.

[18] Federal Law, 'On Environmental Protection', 10 January 2002, http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_34823/.

- installation of equipment for forecasting and assessing the consequences of global climate change

- to find effective legal tools and financial mechanisms for achievement INDC targets

- to develop climate related initiatives on the regional level.

Goal 11 "Sustainable cities" (Group 3)

Issues of sustainable cities in the Russian Arctic are mostly an academic discussion. There is no relevant federal or regional policy, regulations or target programs on the issue. However, to date, all the cities of the Russian Arctic face the challenge of transformation from industrial hubs to locations providing service, intellectual resources and innovative decisions for their areas and residents.[19]

Much research is devoted to the renovation of the Arctic cities and rethinking of their role and objectives in the development of the Russian Arctic. In these circumstances the focus of state policies and regulations should be, first of all, on introducing effective measures based on local initiatives.

Conclusion

In the Russian Federation, a gradual transition to sustainable development is being achieved, providing a balanced solution of socio-economic problems and environmental issues and natural resource potential in order to meet the needs of present and future generations.[20] Russia welcomes the adoption of the new 2030 Agenda for Development and the country's leaders stand ready to support the successful implementation of the Agenda. However, basic strategic documents related to socio-economic development and environmental protection remain rather declarative and focus on enumeration of the state's main objectives which have yet to be realized, as they are not supported by any legal mechanisms. It has also become apparent that most SDGs are not integrated into the Arctic related legal frameworks and poorly adapted for the Arctic regions. Meanwhile, large-scale industrial projects have been recently launched in the Russian Arctic regions; and their sustainable development should be the country's priority. The draft bill "On development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation" are being considered in the country for

[19] See, for example, Alexander Sergunin (2019) Russian Arctic Cities' Sustainable Development Strategies In Vasilii Erokhin, Tianming Gao and Xiuhua Zhang (ed) Handbook of Research on International Collaboration, Economic Development, and Sustainability in the Arctic, Chicago: IGI Global, p. 495-513.

[20] President of the Russian Federation, 'Concept of the Russian Federation's Transition to Sustainable Development', 01 April 1996 No. 440, http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/9120.

several years and it's crucial that this core document will contain legal rules adjacent to SDGs and in this way improve Arctic related legislation in accordance with sustainable approach.

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5. Ларсен А. Х. и соавт. (2012) Изменение климата и возможности низкоуглеродной энергетики в России. [Larsen A.H., et al. Izmenenie klimata i vozmozhnosti nizkouglerodnoi energetiki v Rossii [Climate change and the possibility of low-carbon energy in Russia]]