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INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR REFORM OF WASTE
MANAGEMENT IN RUSSIA (ECOLOGY NATIONAL PROJECT)

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Abstract

The successful implementation of the *Ecology* National Project, one of the tasks of which is the formation of an integrated system for the management of municipal solid waste, is closely connected with the understanding of its role in the reform by each stakeholder. This is achieved through a well-built system of information and educational measures, i.e. appropriate information support for ongoing and planned changes. Information support for the waste management reform should be aimed at communicating the necessary information to target audiences through various information channels, actively involving the participants into the implementation of the project, and establishing the corresponding feedback. The analysis of the current situation shows that despite a significant amount of activities and publications on the topic of waste management, social mobilization and the inclusion of stakeholders (population, business) in the process are often destructive, and sometimes confrontational. The successful waste management reform requires strategic, systematic and measurable information support of the process and involvement of all stakeholders.

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Keywords: Ecology National Project, waste management, resource management, information support, patriotism, civic responsibility



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1. Introduction

In the last decade, the regulatory framework in the field of environmental management and protection has been dynamically changing. An important step on this path was the definition of national goals and strategic objectives for the development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2024 and the implementation of the *Ecology* National Project (hereinafter Ecology NP). Key objectives of the national project is to ensure efficient management of production and consumption waste (including the liquidation of all unauthorized landfills identified as of January 1, 2018 within the urban borders), to reduce atmospheric air pollution in large industrial centers, improve the quality of drinking water for the population, including for residents of settlements not equipped with modern water supply systems, to preserve biological diversity, including through the creation of new specially protected natural areas, to ensure ecological improvement of water bodies and preservation of unique water systems, to provide the balance of disposal and reproduction of forests.

The passport of the national project was developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia pursuant to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 204 of May 7, 2018 *On National Goals and Strategic Objectives for the Development of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2024* (SPS, 2018) and includes 11 federal projects in 5 areas:

- Waste: Clean Country, Integrated System of Solid Municipal Waste Management, Infrastructure for Waste Management of Hazard Classes I-II;
- Air: Clean Air;
- Water: Clean Water, Improvement of the Volga, Preservation of Lake Baikal, Preservation of Unique Water Bodies;
- Biodiversity: Conservation of Biological Diversity and Development of Ecological Tourism, Conservation of Forests;
- Technologies: Implementation of the Best Available Technologies.

The implementation period of the *Ecology* National Project is from October 2018 to 2024.

The Integrated Municipal Solid Waste Management System is one of the most complex and socially sensitive federal projects listed above. In recent years, the Russian Federation has been reforming the waste management system thus affecting legal, technical, economic and other aspects of activities in this direction. The key principle of the new system is active participation of all stakeholders. However, lack or inadequacy of information hampers the regional waste management systems and impedes the successful reform of the industry as a whole (Avdonina & Nikiforov, 2020).

2. Problem Statement

Information support for the reform should be understood as a pre-planned and developed set of measures aimed at increasing the efficiency of interaction between government, business and society by raising awareness of stakeholders about the main aspects of ongoing and planned changes using all available information channels (media, social networks, etc.).

The term “information campaign” is very close to information support, which refers to “comprehensive, pre-planned and coordinated actions in the field of political communications under a certain program” (Vasilenko, 2014, p. 148).

3. Research Questions

The quality of information support for any reform certainly determines the success of its implementation, the nature of the relationship between the authorities and civil society during and after the changes. The rational organization of information flows increases the degree of social integration and interaction in solving social problems (Panin, 2011). Public support and endorsement are essential to the effectiveness of the reform. Therefore, taking into account public opinion, active information and inclusion of every citizen is a necessary element of social change policy (Solovyov, 2006).

The study uses a set of general scientific and special methods, such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, systematic approach, the study of documents, the method of expert assessments, etc.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the existing and developed formats of information support for the waste management reform.

5. Research Methods

In order the society expectedly responds to changes, adapts to them faster, the authorities need to constantly increase the transparency of the program implementation, find new information channels for communicating the necessary information to stakeholders and use modern technical solutions when implementing the Ecology NP.

Since information support is a pre-planned long-term process organized and financed by authorities at different levels, coordination and interaction of administrative structures are required to obtain the necessary overall result. There are the following areas of such interaction:

- interaction of authorities in horizontal and vertical planes;
- interaction with the media;
- interaction directly with the population;
- interaction with educational organizations, etc.

Table 1 shows the variety of forms used to inform stakeholders.

Table 1. Some forms of interaction of authorities with stakeholders in the framework of information support of the Ecology NP

Format (term)	Examples of implementation in Russia*
Press Conference	16.12.2019. Development of a new waste management system in Moscow Region. 26.02.2020. Launch of a mechanism for waste sorting and its recycling in Russia. The bill <i>On Amendments to the Federal Law On Production and Consumption Waste</i> was submitted.

	<p>10.03.2020. Environmental responsibility of business. Self-disposal of waste from the use of goods and packaging. It is devoted to the implementation of standards for waste disposal from the use of goods and packaging by the largest associations of producers and importers of consumer goods.</p>
Exhibition	<p>22-24.10.2019. Wasma 2019 (Moscow). Organized with the support of the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation. The site showing a wide range of equipment for collection, processing and disposal of all types of waste and waste water treatment technologies.</p> <p>4-6.06.2019. Waste Teck 2019 (Moscow). The site, which brings together the representatives of government, business and society, thereby contributing to solving the problems of the waste management, provides an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the latest equipment and technologies for collection, utilization and disposal of waste, as well as to learn about the experience of leading regional operators around the world.</p>
Media Competition	<p>1.06-1.12.2019. Media competition to cover the SMW reform and the Ecology National Project. Organizers: Pure Country Association with the support of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia.</p>
Press Tour	<p>25.01.2019. Press tour to the waste recycling plant in Novokuznetsk (EkoLand LLC). Participants: journalists of the city, regional and federal media, representatives of authorities.</p> <p>4-5.02.2020. Business mission and press tour ZERO WASTE in Kotka (Finland). Organizer: St. Petersburg Business Development Fund. Agenda: familiarization with the best practices of Finnish manufacturers of environmentally friendly packaging, exchange of experience, discussion of the possibility of cooperation and establishment of new contacts.</p>
Briefing	<p>14.01.2019. During the briefing the Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation Dmitry Kobylkin answered topical issues of the waste management reform.</p> <p>09.01.2020. Briefing of the representatives of Biotechnology, which has become a regional operator in one of the zones of Vladimir Region. The main topic was the question of violating the schedule for the SMW export during long New Year holidays.</p>
Hotline	<p>Hotline for the population on the implementation of the SMW reform. The list of already operating hotlines is given on the website of the Ministry of Natural Resources, it is constantly replenished.</p> <p>Most regional operators have their own hotlines.</p>
Round Table	<p>25.10.2019. Round Table: Waste management reform: What will happen to garbage collection tariffs in 2020? Organized by the National News Service.</p> <p>14-16.04.2020. XI Round Table: Problems and solutions in waste management (online format). Organizer: Paradigm Professional Education Center.</p>
Workshop	<p>18-19.02.2020. All-Russian practical workshop: Management of production waste in 2020: new requirements, payments, liability with the participation of specialists of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia, the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia, Rosprirodnadzor, the Federal Operator for Waste Management – RosRAO and leading industry experts. Participants: representatives of regional authorities, business. Organizers: Center for Interregional Communications and Codex Consulting Center.</p>
Public Hearings, Public Discussions	<p>08.05.2019, Novosibirsk Region. Public discussions on the draft adjustment of the territorial waste management scheme, including solid municipal waste (SMW) of Novosibirsk Region</p> <p>June-July 2020. Kirov Region. Public discussions of the territorial waste management scheme. Materials for discussion are available on the official website of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Kirov Region. In accordance with the received proposals, the following sections will be adjusted: finding sources of waste generation, amount of generated waste, places of waste accumulation, data on planned construction, reconstruction, decommissioning of treatment, recycling, neutralization, waste disposal, including SMW facilities.</p>
Press Release	<p>03.06.2020. Press release of the Corporate Communications Service of Sverdlovsk</p>

	<p>Railway – branch of Russian Railways: Sverdlovsk Highway is developing a system of responsible waste management, successful practice of selective waste collection and involvement in secondary circulation has continued. This year, more than 80 tons of secondary resources (paper, glass and plastic) will be transferred for processing.</p> <p>13.06.2020. Press release of the press service and information department of the government of Chelyabinsk Region: Reclamation of Chelyabinsk landfill will be fully completed by November 2021, it is completely closed for waste reception from September 11, 2018. The document was prepared based on the results of the working visit of the governor of the region to the facility.</p>
Interview	<p>31.03.2020. Interview of the head of the Waste Sorting environmental movement Tatyana Nagorskaya to Rosbalt information agency. Main topics: course of the “garbage reform” in St. Petersburg, adjustment of territorial waste management schemes of St. Petersburg and Leningrad Region, organization of waste sorting.</p>
Interactive Map	<p>Interactive Recyclemap (Greenpeace, https://recyclemap.ru/).</p> <p>Interactive map of waste collection points (Moscow Region, http://tko.upravdommo.ru/).</p> <p>Geoinformation resource “Our Nature” (Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation): work with citizens’ appeals on environmental issues.</p>
Master Class	<p>31.07.2019, Trans-Baikal National Park. Master class: Waste management in specially protected natural areas (as part of the project <i>National parks without garbage</i>).</p> <p>Participants: representatives of the Lake Baikal Foundation, international experts in the field of sustainable waste management (Austria, Switzerland), specialists and students of ESSUTM (Republic of Buryatia), employees and administration of the Trans-Baikal National Park, representatives of tourism business.</p>
Business Breakfast	<p>19.12.2018, head of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia Dmitry Kobylkin took part in the discussion held as part of the Business Breakfast (<i>Rossiyskaya Gazeta</i>).</p> <p>Topical issues of transition to a new system of solid municipal waste management from January 1, 2019 were considered. Not only the representatives of the media asked questions, but also the residents of the regions using video recording, the Internet site.</p> <p>20.02.2019. Ecobusiness Breakfast: Office according to green standards as part of sustainable development of the company. Traditional Green Club event. Presentation of the new Russian certification system for office real estate operated by SDS EcoGreenOffice.</p> <p>16.01.2020. Business Breakfast: Climate agenda: what will change everything? (within the framework of the Gaidar Forum – 2020)</p>
Open Day	<p>19.12.2019, Department of Rospotrebnadzor in Moscow Region, territorial departments. Open Day for Entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Purpose: to help the business community quickly receive answers to questions about interaction with the department. To provide advice to entrepreneurs on emerging issues, explain the requirements of the Russian legislation in the field of sanitary and epidemiological well-being of the population</p> <p>20.02.2020. Open Day of the new GIZ office in Russia. The German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) GmbH together with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation has been implementing the <i>Climate Neutral Waste Management in the Russian Federation</i> project since October 2018.</p>

*Note: for information support of the Ecology NP and the implementation of the waste management reform in the Russian Federation, not earlier than 2018.

The program may be covered both through traditional means and through the Internet sites of state authorities, their web pages on social networks (Artemovsky, 2018). The necessary condition is free access of any stakeholder to information on the implementation of the project, what activities ensure the access of citizens to information on the activity of public authorities according to the requirements of the Federal Law 8-FZ of 9.02.2009 (SPS, 2009), including in the sphere waste management (SPS, 1998).

In addition to the above forms, information support implies awareness-raising and educational formats, including:

- Training of teachers and experts;
- Development of programs, courses in the areas of reform implementation in the field of waste management;
- Retraining and further training of civil servants in the reform areas.

The development of the project information support content and the choice of priority communication channels depend on the target audience.

The purpose of any reform should be to improve the quality of life and the well-being of the population, i.e. the realization of the constitutional rights of citizens. Therefore, feedback from stakeholders is an essential step in the information support of the reform and implementation of public and regional waste management strategies. The experience of foreign countries shows that large amounts of data for analysis can be generated on the basis of surveys of the population and business, for example, on the dominant source of information, on the readiness for waste sorting, etc. (Miltojević et al., 2017; Ors, 2012; Tonglet et al., 2004).

Such target indicators as the proportion of respondents aware of the reform; the share of authorities that inform the public about the progress and results of the project activities, etc. are used to assess the effectiveness of information support.

In February 2019, VCIOM conducted an all-Russian survey covering 1,600 people in 80 regions. Less than a half of respondents (41 %) heard the phrase “national projects”. Only 2 % of respondents know well what it means. People aged 45 to 59 are best aware of national projects, the worst is youth – 18-24 years old. The projects leading in awareness include health (25 %), entrepreneurship (23 %), education and ecology (22 %), and roads and demography (21 %) (VCIOM, 2019).

According to an opinion poll conducted by the special communications and information service of the Federal Security Service (FSS) in April 2019, about a third of Russians (almost 32 %) do not know anything about the implementation of national projects in Russia, two thirds know or “heard something”. At the same time, the respondents are best aware of the implementation of social national projects in the country. The FSS conducted a similar opinion poll in February: then 37.5 % of Russians reported that they did not know about the implementation of national projects in Russia (RBC, 2019a).

In the study conducted by the Federation Council and the Analytical Center of the National Financial Research Agency (NAFI) (May-June 2019), in preparation for the III Forum of Social Innovations of the Regions, 1,600 people were interviewed in 150 settlements in 50 regions of Russia. It was found out that 44 % of Russians heard about the implementation of national projects: 37 % of Russians know about national projects in general terms, 7 % are well aware of them, and 55 % first learned about them during the survey. More often, Russians responded that they had heard about the national projects *Health* (26 %) and *Education* (20 %). Less often – about *Housing and Urban Environment* (16 %), *Demography* (16 %), *Ecology* (14 %). According to the respondents, in the field of ecology, first of all, issues related to landfills and the creation of processing plants require particular attention (27 %). Every fifth (21 %) is sure that it is necessary to improve the environmental situation as a whole. 12 % of Russians consider it necessary to reduce the amount of pollution from production (RBC,

2020). It should be noted that not all of these objectives are reflected in the *Ecology* National Project: for example, the project passport refers to the elimination of unauthorized landfills only within the borders of cities, and, thus, numerous landfills located outside the settlements remain outside the sphere of its influence.

The expectations of Russians regarding the results of national projects are moderately pessimistic. Only 17 % of Russians believe that the state will be able to fully implement all national projects or most of them. Among the main obstacles to the implementation of national projects, the respondents noted corruption (32 %), unprofessionalism of performers (19 %) and lack of funding (17 %) (RBC, 2020).

Among the reasons why people know little about national projects, experts point out the following:

- lack of preliminary preparation and advance information about the forthcoming changes, information post factum;
- lack of a dialogue with the population at the initial stage of projects implementation;
- non-transparency, lack of regularity and openness in the actions of the authorities.

The principles of creation, promotion and provision of a product or service in the market, i.e. marketing principles, are laid down in the information support of state projects. One way to advance is to develop a corporate style – a visual image of an object represented by a set of graphic elements (logo, font, etc.). In September 2019, the Government of the Russian Federation agreed on a single standard for the visual style of national projects to increase their recognition. In particular, logos were presented, which development was assigned to TASS by the Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev back in April following the results of the forum *National Projects – Implementation Stage*. The general principle enshrined in each logo is the unity of three areas of national development objectives, on the basis of which the national projects were formulated: human capital, comfortable living environment and economic growth. The color scheme of the logos corresponds to the colors of the Russian flag. It was planned that the corporate style will be in demand by authorities, regional leaders, possibly public organizations. However, until now, such symbols have not become popular in the media and are not massively used in events.

In 2019–2020 a large number of platforms and resources were designed to provide information on the implementation of the *Ecology* National Project: *Ecology* National Project – TASS (<https://tass.ru/nacproekt-ekologiya>), Strategy 24 (<https://strategy24.ru/>), Government of Russia – *Ecology* National Project (<http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/848/events/>), online service *National projects through the eyes of people* (United Russia, <https://ngl.er.ru/>), etc. To increase the effectiveness of interaction between the government, business and society to promote national projects and provide the population with information on the implementation of national projects in all regions of the country, a single resource was created in April 2019 – the portal *Future of Russia. National Projects* (<https://futerussia.gov.ru/>). But, unfortunately, so far these resources are not generally known among the majority of the population.

In order to effectively solve the problems in the field of information support for the implementation of national projects, the Decree No. 2880-r established the autonomous non-profit organization National Priorities (hereinafter – National Priorities) and approved its charter. The purpose of the organization's activities is to increase the awareness of citizens about the opportunities and results

of national projects, increase the participation of citizens in their implementation, as well as coordinate the communication that is now being conducted by other departments and participants. This will eliminate different approaches to work, duplication or intersection of responsibilities, allow for clearer planning of information flows, reduce the cost of a number of works (for example, centralized purchases will provide savings in the purchase of advertising on broadcast TV). Up to two thirds of the budget previously allocated to ministries and departments for information support of national projects will be sent to the National Projects. At the same time, part of the work will continue to be carried out by ministries, in particular their press services (RBC, 2019b).

The expected result of the above activities should be increased public attention to the ongoing changes, support for the implementation of the reform by the population and business entities, and promotion of the achieved and expected results.

However, it should be understood that the presence of a great number, in part even excessive, resources and organizations, especially those created by official structures and parties, may lead to the opposite effect and reduce confidence in the information published there. Besides, the use of large amounts of information from official sources, dry-language figures unadapted to target audience reduces the quality and understanding of processes.

6. Findings

Analyzing the current state of affairs, let us note a number of features of informing the stakeholders about the implementation of the Ecology NP and the development of a waste management system.

1. Activities of the information support system should form an integral part of the Action Plan for the implementation of the *Ecology* National Project. Since, even at this stage, this section in the passport or other project documents is absent, the principle of preliminary (advance) planning can be considered violated.

2. Informing stakeholders is not a systemic process, may happen from time to time, often arises due to a conflict situation and increased social tension in the region. This is largely caused by the fact that the project developers consider information support not strategic, but operational activities (Kozlova & Solomakhin, 2015).

3. For most stakeholders, the source of information is Internet and social networks, where it is difficult to control the information flow.

4. In Russian practice, there is no training system and almost no retraining of journalists on reporting on the waste management reform.

5. Measuring the effectiveness of information support is haphazard, in a small amount, often only at the local level, not covering a wide segment of the population and business.

6. With low awareness of the population, there is also a weakness of feedback or its complete absence in relation to the implementation effect of the *Ecology* National Project. The channels for receiving a response are few (VCIOM surveys, online services with the collection of appeals, etc.), the information provided by them is more quantitative than describes the quality of the results.

The above features may reduce the success of the waste management reform.

In this regard, it is required:

- to develop the strategy to inform and educate all participants in the reform matters;
- to create and organize a single body coordinating information support of national projects, ensuring its financial and legal powers;
- to include information support as an independent section in the Action Plan for the implementation of the *Ecology* National Project and to allocate funds for these purposes (independent budget line);
- to train, educate, prepare all reform stakeholders, including the media representatives;
- to use the opportunities of all types of social advertising to focus attention on socially significant results of the national project;
- to prepare high-quality scientific, educational and awareness-raising films, informational videos, programs on objects and territories related to the implementation of the national project (for example, on protected areas, water objects (Volga, Baikal), etc.);
- to use informal information channels (reports of popular bloggers, the so-called “eyewitness stories”, work with opinion leaders in social networks and forums, etc.) and non-standard game formats (quests, battles, Pech Kucha, etc.);
- to define project information support performance indicators, to ensure their monitoring and evaluation. Special attention should be paid to the search for new indicators, since as the national projects are implemented, the PR effect of information work will decrease and give way to regular work on the search and information coverage of real changes in the socio-economic situation, including in the form of income growth, etc. Therefore, the increase in the number of people aware of national projects cannot remain a reliable indicator of changes in society;
- to use the developed corporate style of national projects when organizing events, publishing materials, both by the authorities and other participants in the implementation process: business, public organizations, expert community, etc.;
- to collect and replicate the best management, awareness-raising and educational practices of waste management.

Special attention is required to organize high-quality feedback through channels that are relevant, in demand and generate trust among each stakeholder (different social groups of the population, business, etc.).

The mechanisms to obtain information on the implementation of the *Ecology* National Project from the population can be based on a sense of patriotism, healthy enthusiasm, civic responsibility, to some extent financial interest or prospects for social or personal growth, a way of self-realization. For business, the implementation of the principle of social responsibility may be a motivation, although this mechanism alone will not be enough.

In this regard, the recommended feedback formats include the following:

- polls, discussions, non-standard thematic contests in social networks;
- focus groups with the representatives of different social groups;
- game forms of interaction;

- volunteer activities;
- involvement of activists in the activities of federal and regional authorities, work of public and youth organizations.

7. Conclusion

At present, the information of the population and business in the context of the waste management system is unsystematic, often targeted and random. To solve the above problems, the information support of the reform requires planning, development and further improvement based on the analysis of feedback from stakeholders in the implementation of the *Ecology* National Project.

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