

Commentary

New Publication

Regional Consulting: Invitation for Creativity

N.Y. Zamyatina & A.N. Pelyasov (2017)

Saint-Petersburg: Mamatov Publishing House

In this compact book, N.Y. Zamyatina and A.N. Pelyasov share their more than 15 years of experience in preparing strategies and programs for social and economic development of cities and regions of the Russian Arctic and the North. From the very first pages, they formulate the main principles of their work on the preparation of strategic planning documents for cities, districts and regions of the Russian Arctic and North:



- Absolute uniqueness and unity of each created scientific product (regional strategy, city program, integrated investment plan) – standard fordist-like technologies are totally inappropriate here;
- Necessity to work at the microlevel of modern spatial development, using for this purpose the tools of municipal statistics, sociological surveys and interviews, necessity to see the role of local factors of entrepreneurial energy and the creativity of the local community, network structures and projects in regional development;
- Great attention to the rhythm and characteristics of the Arctic space, which should materialize in the techniques and technologies of zoning of the Arctic regions and the preparation of maps as a tool for prompt and effective decision-making in the field of strategic planning;

- An interdisciplinary approach to the development of strategic planning documents as a result of inclusion in the development team of economists, sociologists, cartographers, demographers and anthropologists;
- Knowledge of advanced foreign experience and practices in the field of strategic planning, including the mechanisms for the formation of local innovation systems, local clusters and industrial areas, the activation of knowledge flows - and the ability to creatively apply it in specific spaces of the Russian North and Arctic and work in a new ideology of endogenous economic growth, new economic geography and new industrial policy;
- A combination of knowledge of federal norms and rules and live expeditionary knowledge of the problems of Russian cities and regions in the North and Arctic as the result of active communication in expert communities at the federal, regional and local levels.

The main idea of the book is that a “one size fits all” approach does not work in these extreme territories, that each case is absolutely unique and it is necessary to select recipes for treatment and development for each city, district and region of the North and the Arctic.

The question arises: how can this be done? In preparing recommendations on the prospects for the development of cities and regions in the Russian Arctic and North, attention should be paid to the details of the local community, the local business class, the peculiarities of local government policy and corporate structures. After all, innovation is not only about “iron,” it’s also about a creative search for residents of the Arctic and North, who create their regional and local development on a daily basis, at their own peril and risk, and the task of experts is to help them in this process.

The book is formed as a collection of case studies. For the task of “loading” the reader into the



Рис. 1-1. Жилой дом по ул. Советской, 98: пример трансформации недостроенного панельного пятиэтажного здания

practical kitchen of strategic planning in the Arctic and in the North, the research methodology of case studies fits better than others. The most interesting excerpts from the strategies are designed to show that the establishment of a creative search for new development paths can work equally effectively at the level of cities, districts and regions. But at the same time for each level it is necessary to select its unique “palette of colors” – a concrete toolbox of research methods – that allows to solve

the problems of designing the future image of a given place most effectively.

