

## ОРИГИНАЛЬНАЯ СТАТЬЯ



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## ORIGINAL PAPER

# National Goals of Environmental Development until 2036

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## ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the targets and tasks set by the President of the Russian Federation in May 2024 within the framework of the national goal “Environmental well-being”. It has been established that these targets and tasks fully meet the need to solve the prevailing environmental problems fixed in strategic documents of a conceptual, doctrinal and strategic nature. The fact of the planned extension of measures to radically reduce harmful emissions into the atmosphere to all cities with high and very high levels of air pollution has been recognized as extremely positive. The provisions requiring clarification and detail in the development of specialized federal projects are noted. It is proposed to pay attention to the increase in the planned indicators of reforestation, taking into account the observed increase in the number and volume of forest fires in a changing climate. It is also considered advisable to supplement environmental protection projects with measures to restore degraded land in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Safety Strategy of the Russian Federation.

**Keywords:** national goals; environmental safety; national project; state strategic planning; environmental protection; air pollution; production and consumption waste; untreated wastewater; reforestation; eco-tourism

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## INTRODUCTION

Despite all difficulties encountered in the transition to sustainable development, this process has already led to major changes in the global distribution of strategic investments and structural shifts in the world trade.

Our country does not stay away from the global trends. The environmental factor is becoming one of the most important factors in the system of strategic and operational development plans of Russian companies. Nevertheless, the environmental situation is still quite complex. The territory is considered to be unfavourable in this respect, although it accounts for almost 15 per cent of the total terrain of the country, however, this is the area of massive concentration of majority of the population, the major production facilities and the most productive arable land.<sup>1</sup>

The purity of atmosphere in cities and industrial areas has not still significantly improved, the volume of industrial polluted wastes dumped into the main water resources is high, and accumulation of production and consumption wastes remains a source of concern as well.

Economic damage caused by the growing of environmental pollution are estimated at 4–6 per cent of GDP.<sup>2</sup>

Unfavourable ecology affects the health level and mortality of population, which leads to negative social and economic consequences.

In economic terms, environmental programs become an important factor that needs to be taken into account in strategic planning due to inevitable increase in demand for human resources to be employed at waste re-processing facilities and variety of services. For example, by 2030, the Euro-

<sup>1</sup> URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41879>

<sup>2</sup> URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41879>



pean Union will need nearly 700 thousand-strong labour force [1].

Thus, under the current conditions, the environmental pillar inevitably makes an essential part of public administration in general and strategic planning in particular. As N.A. Piskulova noted quite correctly, “ecology is increasingly becoming a core element of the State and international strategy and, actually, it intercedes with the entire system of State and international regulation” [2, p. 208].

The basis for the implementation of environmental policy in our country is the national project “Ecology”<sup>3</sup> and the State program “Environmental Protection”.<sup>4</sup> In May 2024, the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation updated the national development goals up to 2030 and in the perspective up to 2036, including certain environment issues. The adoption of a new package of national goals was made during a drastic change in the country’s economy. As A.P. Prokhorov notes, “upgrading of implementation of national projects of the Russian Federation is carried out in the framework of a new model of economic development of the country” [3, p. 18; 3, p. 18]. In such circumstances, there is a growing necessity to build rationally and effectively the system of measures within the framework of perspective environmental federal projects. Therefore, it is feasible to reflect on the new environmental initiatives of the President of the Russian Federation in the current system of environmental protection and rational nature management, their interrelationship with the prior plans and projects, as well as to develop proposals to improve effectively their achievement and implementation.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

During the research, the methods of interpretation of normative acts, standard analytical procedures within the framework of the comparative method were employed.

<sup>3</sup> URL: <https://ecologyofrussia.ru/proekt/>

<sup>4</sup> URL: [https://www.mnr.gov.ru/docs/gosudarstvennye\\_programmy/gosudarstvennaya\\_programma\\_rossiyskoy\\_federatsii\\_okhrana\\_okruzhayushchey\\_sredy\\_s\\_izmeneniyami/](https://www.mnr.gov.ru/docs/gosudarstvennye_programmy/gosudarstvennaya_programma_rossiyskoy_federatsii_okhrana_okruzhayushchey_sredy_s_izmeneniyami/)

The structure of the research work is based on consistent examination of the main provisions of the environmental section of the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated of 07.05.2024 No. 309 “On the national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 and in the perspective up to 2036”<sup>5</sup> (hereinafter — the Decree 2024).

## Findings of the research work

*Formation of a closed-cycle economy, ensuring by 2030 the sorting of 100 per cent of all annually generated municipal solid waste (MSW), dumping of no more than 50 per cent of such waste and involvement in economic turnover of no less than 25 per cent of production and consumption waste as secondary resources and raw materials.*

The Decree 2024 determines achieving the national goal “Environmental Wellbeing”, within the framework of which, target indicators and objectives are grouped into five blocks. The first one includes target indicators and objectives related to the sphere of production and consumption waste management. The first block also contains targets and tasks of the federal project “Closed-Loop Cycle Economy”<sup>6</sup> adopted within the framework of implementation of one of the forty-two strategic initiatives of the Government of the Russian Federation. One of the declared objectives includes foundation of a closed-loop circular economy. The term “foundation” should be understood as a process, not as a final stage, since the closed-loop circular economy means a whole system based on activity related to the integrated processing raw materials: from reducing the generation of waste disposal to re-cycling, reutilisation and recovery of materials [4].

A joint objective is declared in the sphere of production and consumption waste management to improve ecological conditions for 750.000 Russian citizens living in the territories of unfavourable ecological conditions. It also

<sup>5</sup> URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/50542>

<sup>6</sup> URL: [https://news.solidwaste.ru/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/EZTs\\_pasport.pdf](https://news.solidwaste.ru/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/EZTs_pasport.pdf)

declares a more specific objective: reduction of waste generation of all hazard categories per unit of gross domestic product by 1.6 times. It should be pointed out that previously all strategic documents only stipulated the reduction of generated *solid municipal (household) waste*.<sup>7</sup> Later an expanded provision of measures aimed to minimise waste generation was included in the federal project “Closed-Loop Cycle Economy”.

The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 204 dated of 07.05.2018 “On national goals and strategic objectives of the development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2024” (hereinafter — The Decree 2018)<sup>8</sup> the main objective declared was to maintain the effective management of production and consumption waste, including the elimination of all unauthorised landfills within the urban boundaries, for which it was considered necessary:

a) to establish an integrated management system to deal with solid municipal waste [which was provided for by the Integrated Strategy for Solid Municipal (Household) Waste Management<sup>9</sup>];

b) to set up an effectively functioning public-control system aimed at identifying and eliminating unauthorised landfills. Despite the fact that production and consumption wastes are mentioned as the objective, in fact, only solid municipal waste are included in the list of measures.

The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 21.07.2020 No. 474 “On the National Development Objectives of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030” (hereinafter — The Decree of 2020),<sup>10</sup> duplicated the objectives of establishing a whole system of measures regarding solid municipal waste. However, it has an important clarification: to achieve a 100 per cent level of sorting and twofold reduction of waste transported to landfills.

The objective of the Decree 2024 “to ensure the disposal of no more than 50 per cent of solid municipal waste” looks like a complete duplication of the objective from the previous strategic document, so that one can make hastily conclusion that it is not an ambitious goal enough, especially taking into account the fact, that in recent years, the trend was obvious: solid municipal waste decreased and, accordingly, the maximum planned disposal volume is decreasing too.

Never the less, involvement of a certain share of production and consumption waste in economic turnover is a certain innovation, as it was not included in previous program and projects. At the same time, the 2018 Decree referred to generating conditions for recycling waste, but this only applied to waste which were banned for dumping. Involvement of a large amount of waste in the economic turnover logically leads to the goal of reducing the waste that are meant for waste dumping.

Currently, the main activities to achieve national goals and objectives in the sphere of solid waste management are carried out within the framework of the federal project “Integrated Maintenance System for Solid Municipal Waste”.<sup>11</sup> By the end of 2022, the share of solid municipal waste driven for sorting was 49.9 per cent. According to the plan for 2024, this indicator was established as 50.2 per cent. The share of solid municipal waste aimed for disposal, including sorted stuff, in the total mass of generated solid municipal waste in 2022 was 81.7 per cent compared to 92.4 per cent according to the plan for 2024.<sup>12</sup>

Notably, despite the relative procedure of its calculation, in fact, the indicator of the share of landfilled solid waste is of an absolute character: it does not depend on the base level and does not allow for discrepancies in the calculation procedure. The methodology of accounting for disposed solid municipal waste is defined and information on its volumes is regularly published. At the same

<sup>7</sup> URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/70345114/>

<sup>8</sup> URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71837200/>

<sup>9</sup> URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/70345114/>

<sup>10</sup> URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/74304210/>

<sup>11</sup> URL: [https://economy.samregion.ru/upload/iblock/4b7/Pasport-FP-Formirovanie-kompleksnoy-sistemy-obrashcheniya-s-tverdymi-kommunalnymi-otkhodami\\_red.-ot-21.12.18\\_.pdf](https://economy.samregion.ru/upload/iblock/4b7/Pasport-FP-Formirovanie-kompleksnoy-sistemy-obrashcheniya-s-tverdymi-kommunalnymi-otkhodami_red.-ot-21.12.18_.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> URL: <https://2022.ecology-gosdoklad.ru/>



time, the indicator of the share of sorted municipal solid waste will require to be clarified when a federal project aimed at achieving this goal will be in development. The point is that sorting, per se, is not included, another words, it is absent in the classification of activities in the sphere of waste management constituted by the Federal Law No. 89-FZ dated 24.06.1998 “On Production and Consumption Waste”.<sup>13</sup> A stage of waste management also includes, component disassembly and degreasing along with sorting. Obviously, it is necessary to rely on the concepts adopted in the legislation and conditioned technologically, when specific project activities should be developed.

If we speak about “involvement of production and consumption wastes into economic turnover as secondary resources and raw materials”, we may recognise such quite acceptable brevity for formulating national goal. However, it should be noted that even meanwhile developing the relevant federal project, it will be necessary to specify the content of this concept. This conclusion is based on the fact, that there are several methods of rational waste recycling, the application of which depends on its type. In the Federal Law No. 89-FZ of 24.06.1998 “On Production and Consumption Waste” waste management was meant in the following terms:

- reusable management of the waste for its original intended purpose (recycling);
- return of the waste into the production cycle after a certain processing (regeneration);
- extraction of useful components from the waste (recovery);
- processing solid municipal waste as a renewable energy resource.

Obviously, all these methods vary in dependence of technological complexity, volumes of required investments, volume and cost of useful output. In the process of determination of objectives and development of federal project activities, it is necessary to take these nuances into account and specify the assignment in order to improve overall efficiency. If the share of waste management becomes a main

target indicator, there are potential risks of non-comprehensive or exclusively volume-intensive approaches.

It is necessary to pay the utmost attention to economic mechanisms and instruments, because the existing ones do not fully meet the requirements for active recovery of secondary resources, specifically, they do not stimulate the costs of recycling [5, p. 53].

To develop an effective programme, it is also important to take into account the differentiation in the level of waste recycling and disposal, which ranges from 0 per cent in the Transbaikal and Altai area, Kirov and Ryazan regions, as well as in in other 14 regions to 33.3 per cent in the Moscow area.<sup>14</sup>

The discrepancy in the level of processing (sorting) of solid municipal waste is even more striking. In 13 regions households do not sort their waste at all, meanwhile the indicator in Moscow, Tambov and Tyumen areas is 100 per cent, and in Orel area and in the Republic of Kalmykia it has reached 99.7 and 98.4 per cent respectively.<sup>15</sup>

Such a problematic point — a significant degree of differentiation of regions by target parameters — hampers the development of universal mechanisms for achieving the set goals and objectives, which experts and analysts often pointed out in their scientific publications. [6, 7]. Subsequently, the set tasks oriented to the average target indicators for some regions will most probably become unrealistic for some others within the planning horizon, and this will have no incentive value due to the already achieved level.

*By 2036, it is envisaged to make a gradual twofold reduction of emission of hazardous pollutants that have the worst negative impact on the environment and human health in cities with high and very high levels of air pollution.*

Currently, air and water pollution makes a cardinal problem. The need for such solution was declared in the Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation.<sup>16</sup> Atmospheric air and water pollution is called a threat

<sup>13</sup> URL: <https://base.garant.ru/12112084/>

<sup>14</sup> Compiled by the author URL: <https://rpn.gov.ru/>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> URL: [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/1688732/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/official_documents/1688732/)



in the Strategy for Environmental Security of the Russian Federation until 2025,<sup>17</sup> which, particularly indicates the necessity of the following objectives:

- a) prevention of pollution of surface and underground waters, improvement of water quality in polluted water bodies, restoration of aquatic ecosystems;
- b) prevention of further pollution and reduction of atmospheric air pollution in cities and all other settlements.

In the initial version of the State Programme it was envisaged to cut the volume of pollutant emissions from stationary sources per unit of GDP by 2.2 times (base — 2007). Measures to cut air emissions were supposed to reduce the number of cities with high or very high levels of air pollution (air pollution index (API) >7) by 2.7 times and improve ecology for 36.1 million Russian citizens in cities that meet the named conditions.

The Decree of 2018 already referred to the reduction measures of lower air pollution, albeit not radically, and only in large industrial centres, and at the same time cutting the total volume of emissions by at least 20 per cent in the most polluted cities. The list of 8 cities, where the target was to significantly reduce air pollution, was later expanded to 12, and then the project was expanded to 29 furthermore.

Among the objectives, the introduction was envisaged to implement the best available technologies at all facilities which make a negative impact on the environment in order to reduce pollution as much as possible.

The Decree of 2020 did not contain such meticulous details, just only a national goal interpreted in the most general way: a twofold reduction in the volume of emissions of hazardous pollution that have the worst negative impact on the environment (relative to the actual volume of emissions in 2020). It should be pointed out, that this indicator was not featured in the federal project. Instead of it, the indicator was a reduction in the total volume of emissions in the cities which are involved in the project. Another words, the developers actually supported the concept in the Decree of 2018,

which by the end of 2022 amounted to 88.9 per cent, against indicated in the plan — 92.0 per cent (if the basic value of 2018 is accounted as 100 per cent).<sup>18</sup>

As we can see, in 2024 the objective related to the reduction of emissions into the atmospheric air is formulated likewise as in the Decree of 2020, except the only clarification that reduction of emissions should primarily affect cities with high and very high level of pollution. If the objectives of the related federal project go fully in line with the formulated national goal, this should be evaluated as an obvious progress. The point is that the current approach, according to which measures of radical reduction of emissions account only for project participants (and the methodology how to select those participants was not quite clear), does not fully correspond to the scale of objectives worth of the national level [8]. As to the concept of reduction of air emissions of the most dangerous pollutants *in all cities* with high and very high levels of air pollution, it seems to be more in line with the national level. As a matter of fact, it is an attempt to reduce air pollution in cities on a mass, national level. It is also important to point out that meanwhile the current version of the federal project “Clean Air”<sup>19</sup> is aimed to reduce emissions in general, without specifying the class of their harm and danger inflicted to human health, it seems to be more reasonable and effective that the national goal in the Decree 2024 proposes focusing on reduction of the most harmful and dangerous emissions.

In fact, of all the cities which were participants in the project, only one of them indicated reduction of a very high level of pollution. But as a whole, there was registered a growing number of cities with a high and very high level of atmospheric pollution. According to the data provided by The Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources “Rosprirodnadzor”, the number of cities with the index of atmospheric pollution, or IZA > 14 (which

<sup>17</sup> ULR: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41879>

<sup>18</sup> URL: [https://www.mnr.gov.ru/docs/gosudarstvennye\\_doklady/gosudarstvennyy\\_doklad\\_o\\_sostoyanii\\_i\\_ob\\_okhrane\\_okruzhayushchey\\_sredy\\_rossiyskoy\\_federatsii\\_v\\_2022/](https://www.mnr.gov.ru/docs/gosudarstvennye_doklady/gosudarstvennyy_doklad_o_sostoyanii_i_ob_okhrane_okruzhayushchey_sredy_rossiyskoy_federatsii_v_2022/)

<sup>19</sup> URL: [https://www.mnr.gov.ru/activity/directions/natsionalnyy\\_proekt\\_ekologiya/federalnyy\\_proekt\\_chistyy\\_vozdukh/](https://www.mnr.gov.ru/activity/directions/natsionalnyy_proekt_ekologiya/federalnyy_proekt_chistyy_vozdukh/)



is a very high pollution) in 2022, compared to 2016, has doubled (from 20 to 40), and with IZA > 7 (high pollution) almost tripled (from 44 to 129).<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the range of potential sites for inclusion in the list of a new version of the federal project is quite impressive. The situation became more complicated in 2021 when a downward revision of maximum permissible concentrations (MPC) was adopted for a number of polluting chemicals, which changed the assessment of the degree of air pollution in cities. In fact, it means that more rigid regulations impose increased requirements for the objectives of the future federal project.

Within the framework of the federal project “Clean Air”, 29 settlements of the Russian Federation are involved in an experiment conducted on quotas for pollutant emissions based on consolidated calculations of atmospheric air pollution. In accordance with the Russian Government Resolution No. 1852-r dated 07.07.2022,<sup>21</sup> the list of settlements included in the experiment and the stages of its implementation were determined, so that consolidated calculations of atmospheric air pollution and assessment of risks to human health should be completed in 2024, and in 2025, a comprehensive action plans to reduce emissions of pollutants into the atmospheric air should be developed and approved. The implementation of these plans is scheduled by the end of 2030. In view of this planning horizon, it is obvious that the work on implementation of such measures should be included in the new federal project.

*Elimination of no less than 50 hazardous sites of accumulated environmental damage by the end of 2030. By 2036, waste management and decontamination of at least 50 per cent of the total volume of wastes of class I and 2 class of hazard.*

The 2018 Decree manifested the need to establish a modern infrastructure aimed to ensure the management of waste of I and 2 class of hazard. Obviously, the target in the 2024 Decree require the waste management and decontamination of

at least 50 per cent of the total volume of this class of waste and it is based on the fact that the relevant infrastructure has been created.

One of the national goals determined by the Decree of 2020 was elimination of the most hazardous installations, which accumulated environmental damage, and this was also one of the tasks established for the government. The updated 2024 version specifies the number of installation of accumulated harm to be eliminated, but it does not specify whether they are classified as the most dangerous.

During the implementation of the federal project “Clean Country”<sup>22</sup> the number of unauthorised waste dumps within the city boundaries which were eliminated accounted for 58 (57 with regards to the plan), and the number of eliminated objects of accumulated danger for the ecology 74 (74 with regards to the plan). By 2030, it is scheduled to eliminate another 50 waste dumps of accumulated harm, which means the work goes on in this direction.

As part of the activities of the federal project “Infrastructure for Hazard Class I–II Waste Management”,<sup>23</sup> Rosprirodnadzor reports the degree of readiness of production and technical infrastructure for hazardous waste treatment and neutralization at 35.7 per cent; by the end of 2024, this indicator should reach 100 per cent. Besides, the federal scheme, as well as the information system for accounting and control of class I and 2 waste of hazard management must be approved before that date. The share of decontaminated waste in the total volume of waste of hazard categories I and II should be no less than 65 per cent. If these targets are accomplished, the goal proclaimed in the new strategic cycle — to achieve utilisation and decontamination of 50 per cent of the volume of waste of hazard of class I and 2 seems to be somewhat underestimated.

*Reducing twofold by 2036 the volume of untreated wastewater discharged into major water bodies and preserving the unique ecological system of Lake Baikal.*

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> URL: <https://base.garant.ru/404967269/>

<sup>22</sup> URL: <http://static.government.ru/media/files/B3JtWzMSWVAHKTd6plVchwnOLWEYmF9f.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> URL: [https://dprea.adm-nao.ru/media/uploads/userfiles/2019/03/01/Отходы\\_I\\_II\\_классов\\_опасности\\_Паспорт\\_Q7P1XNH.pdf](https://dprea.adm-nao.ru/media/uploads/userfiles/2019/03/01/Отходы_I_II_классов_опасности_Паспорт_Q7P1XNH.pdf)

The Strategy of Environmental Security accepts one of the most important areas of environmental policy the prevention of furthermore pollution of surface and groundwater, improvement of water quality in polluted water bodies and restoration of aquatic ecosystems.

The 2018 Decree set the goal of improving the quality of drinking water for the population, and one of the objectives was ecological rehabilitation of water bodies, including reduction of polluted waters discharged into the Volga River. The overall objective was to preserve unique water bodies, which, along with Lake Baikal, also includes the implementation of measures to clean up the coastal areas of Russia's largest rivers: the Volga, Don, Ob, Yenisei, Amur, Ural and Pechora, as well as lakes: Teletskoye, Ladoga and Onega.

In the Decree of 2020, the number of water resources subject to environmental rehabilitation was significantly reduced. The list of water bodies included the Volga River, Lake Baikal and Lake Teletskoye. A few federal projects determine measures to improve ecological conditions of the Volga River and preservation of Lake Baikal. The federal project "Conservation of unique water bodies" contains consolidated measures to rehabilitate Lake Teletskoye and a number of geographical water bodies not mentioned in the Decree of 2020 — Ladoga and Onega lakes, as well as the rivers Don, Ob, Yenisei, Amur, Ural and Pechora. Besides, the Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resource Usage do not always indicate in their reports, which water bodies are subject to cleaning treatment measures.<sup>24</sup>

The reduction of polluted wastewater discharged into the Volga River is ahead of planned target schedule (2.20 cubic kilometers at the end of 2022 against 2.42 cubic kilometers according to the plan). As to natural territory objects of the Lake of Baikal, it is completely in accordance with the plan.

The 2024 Decree has a vague notion "main water bodies", which is noteworthy. While developing a relevant federal project of special profile, it is

necessary to take into account that, like in previous years, the highest level of pollution occurs in such water bodies like the Volga and Ob river basins. They account for about 60 per cent of cases of high and extremely high pollution. The Neva, Dnieper, Amur, Yenisei, Don and other rivers are also among the objects of increased pollution level.<sup>25</sup>

Conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, sustainable development of specially protected natural areas and creation of conditions for ecological tourism in all national parks.

The Strategy for Environmental Security of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 has determined, that declining biological diversity and, consequently, destruction of ecosystem integrity is one of the four global challenges.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, the key condition in the strategic guidelines is "to preserve and restore the natural environment, ensure the quality of the environment necessary for healthy human life and sustainable economic development, eliminate accumulated damage to the environment as a result of economic and other activities under conditions of increasing economic activity and global climate change". The priority direction in Strategy for Environmental Security is "growing measures to preserve biological diversity, including rare and endangered species of animals, plants, other organisms, their habitats, as well as development of the system of specially protected natural areas". The main indicator is defined as "the share of the area of strictly protected areas of all levels in the total area of the Russian Federation".

The above mentioned document envisages a growing share of the area of the Russian Federation used for strictly protected natural territories (SPNTs) of all levels up to 13.5 per cent (the area under SPNTs in 2007 is taken as the base value).

The 2018 Decree envisaged to create at least 24 new strictly protected natural areas within the framework of the national goal of biodiversity conservation. In the list of objectives, it was determined to increase such territories by 5 million hectares. This goal has

<sup>24</sup> URL: [https://www.mnr.gov.ru/docs/gosudarstvennye\\_doklady/gosudarstvennyy\\_doklad\\_o\\_sostoyanii\\_i\\_ob\\_okhrane\\_okruzhayushchey\\_sredy\\_rossiyskoy\\_federatsii\\_v\\_2022/](https://www.mnr.gov.ru/docs/gosudarstvennye_doklady/gosudarstvennyy_doklad_o_sostoyanii_i_ob_okhrane_okruzhayushchey_sredy_rossiyskoy_federatsii_v_2022/)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41879>





almost been achieved: by the end of 2022, the number of federal strictly protected areas increased by 17 in relation to the base value of 2018, and by the end of 2024 it is planned to increase to 24 units.

The 2020 Decree did not specify the objective of forest conservation, meanwhile in the 2018 Decree this objective was mentioned as part of the national goal of forest conservation. — was set within the framework of the national goal of biodiversity conservation, including on the basis of reproduction on all areas of felled and dead forest territories.

To solve this problem, a federal project “Forest Preservation”<sup>27</sup> was developed. The main indicator is the cover of forest throughout the country’s territory. Its basic figure as of 2020 is 46.4 per cent, and this figure should remain status quo. Reforestation and afforestation are the main drivers of the project aimed at eliminating negative consequences of loss or destruction of natural woods and their use in the national economy. In the course of implementation, the annual ratio of reforestation and afforestation area to the area of felled and dead forests exceeds the planned ratio. Thus, for example, in 2022, it was 119.2 per cent against 85.6 per cent according to the plan. While maintaining the course of the measures, which generally proved to be positive, the new federal project will require adjustments in the volume of reforestation to a larger extent, if to be taken into account a growing number and the area of forest fires, as well as deterioration of climatic conditions.

Besides, in order to preserve biodiversity, the 2018 Decree determined the task of creating infrastructure in national parks for ecological tourism, which is more in line with the concept of sustainable development than other types of tourism. Firstly, ecotourism contributes to socio-economic well-being of local communities involved in recreational activities. Secondly, the attracted funds “contribute to development of environmental preservation programs in protected areas, as well as to development and testing new approaches to preserve natural heritage” [9, p. 282]. The Strategy

for the Development of Tourism in the Russian Federation for the period until 2035,<sup>28</sup> highlighted ecological tourism as one of the top priorities that require special measures of state support for its development. The document outlines the following objectives: by 2035, the number of visitors attending preserved areas should reach up to 16 million and the implementation of the model of ecological tourism on the territory should be used for at least half of the national parks. According to Rospiroodnadzor, in 2022 the number of visitors to strictly protected areas has already reached 14.0 million (in 2018 it was only 6.0 million).

At present, the national goals do not include an indicator to show the growth in the number of visits to strictly protected areas, but it is obvious that if such an indicator is used in the development of the federal project, the above figure — 16 million people by 2035 should be revised upwards, taking into account the actual level already achieved. The increase in attendance is due to the expansion of accessibility of national parks for ecological tourism: the new version of the major domestic goals determines the task of creating conditions for it in *all* national parks.

Let us briefly dwell on economic efficiency of the implementation of the national project “Ecology”.

Its financing was planned in the amount of 4041 billion rubles, of which 701.2 billion (17.4 per cent) is allocated from the federal budget, 133.8 billion (3.3 per cent) from the budgets of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, and 3206.1 billion (79.3 per cent) from extra-budgetary sources.

Inspections of the project’s implementation made by the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation revealed a number of drawbacks related to its financing. In particular, its auditors operating in collaboration with independent experts came to the conclusion, that the planned financial resources were insufficient to achieve the goals in the national project ‘Ecology’.<sup>29</sup>

In a few cases, significant adjustment to activities was revealed regarding postponing their

<sup>27</sup> URL: [https://economy.samregion.ru/upload/iblock/4fd/Pasport-FP-Sokhranenie-lesov-\\_red.-ot-21.12.18\\_.pdf](https://economy.samregion.ru/upload/iblock/4fd/Pasport-FP-Sokhranenie-lesov-_red.-ot-21.12.18_.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/72661648/>

<sup>29</sup> URL: <https://base.garant.ru/77408125/>



implementation, which led to a lower level of allocations from the federal budget expenditures on these activities. In particular, this applies to the federal project “Revitalisation of the Volga River”.<sup>30</sup> The auditors found out the reasons of shortcomings in planning process of activities of the federal projects. There were also some cases of misuse of funds in a number of regions, particularly, during the implementation of the federal project “Clean Water”.

One of the most important problems is the actual lack of a detailed developed mechanism for attracting extrabudgetary sources, the role of which in financing project activities is highly significant. This is especially true for the Federal Project “Introduction of the best available technologies”,<sup>31</sup> whose budget of 2427.3 billion Rubles was allocated to the “Clean Water” project and it was planned to consist of 98.9 per cent of extrabudgetary funding. Probably, the lack of certainty with extra-budgetary financing led to the fact that by 31 December 2020 this federal project was completed ahead of schedule, however, the activities of the project related to transition towards the best accessible technologies of the major industrial facilities were transferred for the other projects: “Clean Air” and “Revitalisation of the Volga River”.

In the last two years of implementation of the abovementioned projects, the amount of funds allocated for the project activities from the federal budget was adjusted, which resulted in a lower level of funding by about 10 per cent. In 2023–2024 the most drastic reduction (by 50–56 per cent) influenced the project “Integrated System of Solid Municipal Waste Management”, meanwhile the projects “Clean Air”, “Revitalisation of the Volga River”, “Preservation of Lake Baikal” received a 4–26.6 per cent decrease in funding.

At the same time, the project “Clean Country” was funded with additional allocation of 4.2 per cent in 2023, and by 37 per cent in 2024, while all the others — “Conservation of Unique Water

Bodies”, “Conservation of Biological Diversity and Development of Ecological Tourism”, “Conservation of Forests” practically did not undergo any changes.<sup>32</sup>

An attempt to make a formalised and generalised assessment of effective implementation of the national project “Ecology” belongs to a scientific researcher E.B. Tyutyukina. She compared the results of the original methodology based on the ratio between the level of fulfilment of all target indicators and the level of fulfilment of the planned amount of funding for the year for each of the federal projects included in the national project “Ecology”. To bottom-line, the author stated, that only five out of eight (“Clean Country”, “Integrated System of Solid Municipal Waste Management”, “Clean Air”, “Revitalisation of the Volga River” and “Preservation of Lake Baikal”) were effectively funded in the time-frame period 2019–2021 [10].

Thus, due to various reasons, financing of the national project “Ecology” in general does not look outstanding in regards of stability and compliance with the project tasks, which could not but affect the effectiveness of its implementation. The auditors of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation and representatives of scientific and expert communities forwarded a number of comments and proposals to make the planning process and mechanisms of financing the project more sophisticated, which should be taken into account for the development of new editions.

Summing up the brief analysis of the new package of national environmental objectives, it is necessary to mention another significant layer of environmental problems, the solution to which, unfortunately, has not yet been implemented neither in the current projects, nor in the newly set goals and objectives. This is the problem of preserving land resources.

The Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation declares the need to introduce environmentally sound methods of land resources cultiva-

<sup>30</sup> URL: <https://ksp.r52.ru/ru/11/?nid=892&a=entry.show>

<sup>31</sup> URL: <https://ecologyofrussia.ru/proekt/vnedrenie-nailuchshih-dostupnyh-tehnologij/>

<sup>32</sup> URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/15834185>



tion, to preserve and restore natural fertility of soils. The Environmental Security Strategy notes a continuing trend towards quality deterioration of land and soil conditions and the impact of negative degradation: water and wind erosion, waterlogging, underflood, etc., thus over 1 million hectares of the territory lost its economic value. Twenty-seven constituent entities of the Russian Federation have a problem of such desertification of land with more than 100 million hectares affected to a greater or lesser extent.

In view of this factor, it should be noted that the role of agricultural production in the economy of the Russian Federation is still steadily growing. Agriculture (and primarily the grain complex) remain the major component of the country's food security and becomes an increasingly important source of export revenues for the Russian Federation. Anyway, if such negative trends in the dynamics of land resources persist, the further perspective of active growth of agricultural production may be questionable. In view of that, as experience reveals, it is possible to drastically expand the directions of environmental policy, as, we believe, it is advisable to develop a special federal project, which would develop sanitation and rehabilitation measures of land resources.

### CONCLUSIONS

The target indicators and tasks declared in the Decree 2024 fully meet the challenges in the field of ecology, which were recorded in strategic documents of conceptual, doctrinal and strategic nature. At the same time, the following top priority problems exist that are supposed to be solved within the framework of achieving the national goal "Environmental Sustainable Well-Being": generated production and consumption wastes (including solid municipal wastes), existence of objects of stock-piling damage and formation of waste of high hazard classes, emissions of harmful pollutants into the atmosphere, discharge of pollution wastewater into major water bodies, threats to biodiversity and forest conservation. However, the scale of these problems requires continuation

of efforts to be taken in the short-term strategic perspective, which serves to updating environmental goals nationwide with the subsequent adoption of specialised federal projects as the main formats for consolidating practical efforts to achieve these goals.

In most cases, targets and objectives serve as an update of those targets and objectives declared earlier. Although, for example, the goal to bury no more than 50 per cent of solid municipal wastes by 2030 looks insufficiently ambitious, as 82 per cent of solid municipal waste was already disposed by the end of 2022, and its further reduction goes ahead of the plan.

All technological terminology used to formulate national targets in developing federal projects should be brought in line with the legislation. For example, the relevant legislation does not use the term "sorting". This stage involves treatment, which along with sorting includes disassembly and cleaning of waste. In addition to this, the content of some concepts used to formulate some national targets should be elaborated in a more detailed way, such as "major water bodies". Besides, the phrase "involvement of production and consumption waste into economic turnover as secondary resources and raw materials" implies the possibility of using different technology, which differ significantly in terms of complexity of the process, amount of investment required and the yield of a finished product.

In addition, it is necessary to take into account the existing traditional differentiation of regions in terms of degree of waste processing and sorting during developing measures for federal projects.

An important progressive approach in contrast to the current approach (which assesses reduction measures of extending radical emission to only a limited number of cities) is the concept of all cities involved with high and very high levels of air pollution – the approach outlined in the new package of national goals. This approach seems to us more rational and effective.

The objective of forest conservation within the framework of existing programme and project activities is being solved ahead of schedule. However, if generally successful approaches are maintained,

the relevant federal project should envisage a major increase in reforestation volume, taking into account the growing number and volume of forest fires in the current changing climate conditions.

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