

Theory and Practice of Assessing the Efficiency of Urban Agglomeration Administration Abroad and in Russia (a Case Study of Chelyabinsk Oblast)

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Abstract—The efficiency of urban agglomeration administration has so far not been an object of close attention for researchers. The article proposes to evaluate it with respect to the contractual administration model based on three components, i.e., evaluate the overall efficiency of administering the development of the agglomeration as the degree of achievement of the goals of agglomeration interaction, the political efficiency of making and implementing decisions, and the managerial efficiency of implementing agglomeration projects. The approach is theoretically substantiated, and the results of a study of the efficiency of agglomeration administration are presented with a case study of the agglomerations of Chelyabinsk oblast. Summarizing the results of the study based on the above three components, the authors conclude the following. First, in a broad sense, the goal of development of an agglomeration (and its administration) is to strengthen the competitiveness of the agglomeration in global, national, or at least large interregional markets and to increase its contribution to development of the economy and society. Second, efficiency (making and implementing decisions) under conditions of the contractual model of agglomeration administration implies a key role of the coordinating body, which consists in finding and achieving a balance of interests of the participants, preparing and agreeing on draft decisions, and monitoring and controlling their implementation. In fact, the efficiency of agglomeration administration is closely related to the efficiency of the coordinating body. Third, the efficiency (more precisely, success) of agglomeration administration by assessing the implementation of agglomeration projects, in turn, depends on the chosen mechanisms and forms for carrying out such projects. Analysis of the Russian practice of urban agglomeration administration, with a case study of Chelyabinsk oblast (the Chelyabinsk agglomeration and Gorny Ural agglomeration), made it possible to test these theoretical conclusions.

Keywords: administration of agglomerations, urban agglomerations, administration efficiency, agglomeration interaction, development of agglomerations

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INTRODUCTION AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

The special importance of urban agglomerations for the spatial and socioeconomic development of society seems obvious. It has been considered in great detail in numerous scientific studies (Lappo, 1978, 2007, 2011; Lappo et al., 2022; Loibl et al, 2022; Markwart and Shvetsov, 2017, pp. 160–165; Shvetsov, 2018, 2019).¹ The role of urban agglomerations as

engines of development and sources of innovation, arising from their most important competitive advantage, the agglomeration effect (Giuliano et al, 2019; Kiseleva et al., 2021), determines, among other things, the desires of various actors, primarily public authorities, and ensures proper (preferably efficient) administration of them. Analysis of the complexity of urban agglomerations as objects of administration, as well as a description of the administration models themselves, are also presented in the scientific literature (Glazychev et al., 2008; Markwart, 2021, pp. 188–201; Shvetsov, 2018). With regard to this topic, perhaps the urban agglomeration phenomenon itself is the most completely studied to date, which primarily owing to

¹ See also: The impacts of metropolitan regions on their surrounding areas. Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget, 2019. <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/Metropolitan-regions.pdf>.

geographers (Antonov, 2020; Antonov et al., 2021; Lappo, 2007; Popov and Puzanov, 2021; Raisikh, 2020). Agglomeration effects (economy of scale, advantages of cooperation and coordination, outstripping growth in labor productivity, innovation, etc.) have also been studied in depth, the result of efforts by economists. At the same time, the administration of urban agglomerations, in the authors' opinion, has so far been studied and described rather fragmentarily in the scientific literature: the greatest attention has been paid to studying administration models themselves, their advantages and disadvantages, and forms and possible options for their application for various configurations of agglomerations and different types of projects.

Issues on the efficiency of agglomeration administration have not yet found noticeable reflection in the scientific literature. To us, the study of this key aspect seems not only necessary and significant, but also, taking into account the accumulated experience in administering agglomerations, possible. The efficiency of administration, in particular, public administration, is an important criterion for assessing any administration activity (administration system), its viability, and success (Abramova, 2016; Knorr, 2005; Leksin, 2013; Mukhaev and Sestrukhnina, 2011); from this viewpoint, in turn, is subject to evaluation (measurement) using various approaches and indicators. In addition, the complexity of the object of administration, the presence, as a rule, of many subjects of administration, and the multilevel nature of the tasks to be solved suggest that the efficiency of administering urban agglomerations can hardly be reduced solely to the efficiency of state and/or municipal government or to the efficiency of project administration. Finally, this topic is also of practical importance: the obtained assessments of the efficiency of agglomeration administration make it possible to compare different experiences, demonstrate and promote positive (in terms of well-formed and consistent approaches to assessing efficiency) practices, and form reasonable proposals for optimizing administration where necessary.

The assumption about the possibility of studying this aspect of administration is based primarily on the existence of a fairly large empirical base of agglomeration interaction (primarily abroad). This experience allows us to analyze the factors that are important for identifying approaches to assessing administration efficiency. The Russian experience in administering urban agglomerations is not yet so significant and diverse as to make it possible to form sufficiently substantiated conclusions. Nevertheless, the study of a few examples of relatively sustainable agglomeration interaction in Russia (Kuznetsov, 2018; Puzanov and Popov, 2018) is important for understanding what role administration efficiency plays here, how it is determined (if determined) and to what extent it affects the attractiveness of the model.

We deliberately focused on only one (in the authors' opinion, the least studied) aspect of urban agglomeration administration—its efficiency. The desire for practical orientation and the applied nature of the study make us wonder why efficient practices for administering urban agglomerations have not been developed in Russia to date. Accordingly, the objective of the study is to contribute to the improvement of the administration of urban agglomerations (and hence spatial development in general). To a certain extent, an accompanying goal can be the promotion of the so-called contractual model of agglomeration administration, which, based on existing experience (primarily foreign), can be considered a more successful administration model. At the same time, due to a certain complexity (Markwart and Petukhov, 2016), the contractual model often raises doubts among practitioners (especially in modern Russian conditions, when preference is often given to the simplest, at least at first glance, administration models).

To achieve this objective, the study identified and analyzed theoretical approaches to assessing the efficiency of administering urban agglomerations, studied and generalized foreign (German) and Russian practical experience in administering agglomerations in terms of evaluating their efficiency, and formulated conclusions and suggestions on possible directions for its improvement. In addition to studying analytical and theoretical sources and collecting and analyzing available information on the experience of administering various agglomerations in Russia and abroad, the sociological research method was used to ensure the depth and proper quality of the study. We conducted a series of detailed interviews with practitioners who participated or are participating in the administration of two agglomerations of Chelyabinsk oblast (Chelyabinsk and Gorny Ural); the results are used to analyze and assess the Russian experience in administering urban agglomerations, including efficiency.

THEORETICAL ASPECTS AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ASSESSING THE EFFICIENCY OF AGGLOMERATION ADMINISTRATION

In the authors' opinion, the complexity of the research topic is governed by a number of factors. First, it is related to the complexity and multidimensionality of the object of administration itself: we are not talking about a narrowly specific object (e.g., real estate), but at the same time not about a huge space with a high degree of abstractness, but about a combination of concrete and abstract. In addition, the urban agglomeration, being in itself an independent object of administration, at the same time represents a set of other, also quite independent objects of administration (as a rule, from municipalities). Finally, this object is quite "mobile", its configuration (composition, boundaries) can be changeable. Secondly, the

complexity of the issue under study is determined by the characteristics of the subject of administration, which, in the context of the implementation of the contractual model of administration, is a set of independent decision-making subjects that form a coordinating body as a separate actor (perhaps another subject) of administration. Thirdly, the complexity of the administration process itself leaves a noticeable imprint on the study of the issue of administration efficiency.

As noted above, in science and theory, the issues of administration efficiency in the broad sense (administration as administration) have been studied deeply and diversified. In its most simplified form, efficiency is defined as a relative characteristic of the performance of a particular administration system—the achievement of administration goals, correlated with the costs of achieving them. From this viewpoint, the efficiency of administration (primarily in business), as a rule, comes down to economic efficiency and is measured by its indicators. And although economic theory rightly singles out social efficiency along with economic efficiency, the significance of the latter in general administration is relatively small. Issues of efficiency of public administration (state and municipal administration) have become a subject of special attention in connection with the development of new concepts of public administration and approaches to their implementation, in particular, the principles and models of New Public Administration, Good Governance, and others close to them. However, the understanding of efficiency in different models has some differences. In principle, with respect to public administration, social efficiency should be of greater importance (compared to administration in business), which is due to the goals and objectives of public authorities and public administration. At the same time, it is obvious that economic efficiency is also important here, at least in the sense that the finiteness of public resources, combined with the multitude tasks of public administration, does not allow achieving the result of administration “at any cost.” Criteria, indicators and procedures for assessing economic efficiency for various levels of public administration have also been the subject of numerous studies (Akhremenko and Yureskul, 2013; Kaminsky, 2019; Leksin, 2006; Wollmann, 2008), including in the context of New Public Administration. One cannot but agree with V.N. Leksin’s opinion (2012, pp. 5–6) that “the efficiency of activities of executive bodies should be determined based on the quantitative ratio of the resources spent for the purpose (financial, labor, information, etc.) and administration results or by comparing the economic parameters of implementation specific powers with normative or the best among the parameters of the same name” in other territories.

The emphasis in determining efficient governance in the Good Governance model proposed 25 years ago by the UN are somewhat different (Bratchenko, 2021;

Vasilyeva et al., 2017).² Particular attention is paid here to the compliance of public administration with its key values: the rule of law, equality, nondiscrimination, the participation of residents in governance, efficiency, and ensuring consensus, transparency, accountability. A separate group of key values are managerialism, namely, effectiveness and efficiency. To a certain extent, it can be argued that this model distinguishes between efficient administration (actually good governance) and effectiveness, which is defined as results that meet the expectations of society, subjected to the most rational use of the resources at the disposal of the authorities and reproduction of resources. Accordingly, efficient administration with this model is impossible without efficiency in the managerial view (effectiveness), but at the same time it is not identical (not limited) to it.

Undoubtedly, approaches to efficiency in administration and public administration in general play an important role for discussions about the efficiency of administering urban agglomerations. As noted above, the topic of efficient administration of spatial objects in general and urban agglomerations, in particular, has not attracted much attention of researchers so far. An attempt to rely on studies on the administration of regional development in most cases is not very productive, since regional development (especially in studies by Russian authors) is usually associated with socioeconomic development. In addition, in Russian studies, regions are traditionally understood as federal subjects, which in the vast majority of cases cannot be considered as a unified space, or the so-called macroregions. Reflection of such an approach in state policy has been recorded by A.N. Shvetsov (2021, pp. 134–141), who describes spatial structures as objects of state influence.

From the viewpoint of the research topic, studies directly devoted to the administration of urban agglomerations are of particular interest (Glazychev et al., 2008; Gritsenko, 2014; Knieling and Blatter, 2009; Pavlov and Khmeleva, 2021; Pavlov et al., 2019). As noted above, in most, the emphasis is on analyzing the administration models themselves, agglomeration effects, and the main directions of agglomeration interaction. Perhaps even more research is devoted to the very phenomenon of urban agglomerations, their typology, delimitation of boundaries and other aspects that are not managerial in the narrow sense of the word.

It seems appropriate to consider the efficiency and effectiveness (in common terminology, success) of the administration of urban agglomerations depending on the administration objectives. With this approach, it

² See: The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project. <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home>; 12 Principles of Good Governance. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/12-principles>.

becomes obvious that the goals of administration are to a large extent related to the previously mentioned object, subject, and administration process itself. As for the object of administration, it is possible to assume that all participants have a single goal (while the goals of administering the development of each participant in the agglomeration cannot be considered the goals of the agglomeration). From the viewpoint of the subjects of administration, although this assumption is possible, it is much more difficult: it can be assumed that the goals of the subject of administration of the entire agglomeration (e.g., the coordinating council of the agglomeration) and the subjects of administration of its individual participants (e.g., local governments) do not always coincide. Recognizing the unity of the purpose of administration, we, in fact, must set priorities, build a hierarchy of goals, where the goals of the subject of administration of the entire agglomeration will prevail over the goals of its individual participants. Of particular practical interest, however, is the correlation of goals with the administration process. On an enlarged basis, within the framework of the contractual administration model, we single out two main elements of the administration process: the so-called “political” coordination and the implementation of agglomeration projects. “Political” coordination, involving the search for and finding a balance of interests of agglomeration participants, the formation of goals, directions and priorities of agglomeration interaction, the identification of agglomeration projects and forms of their implementation, as a rule, is carried out by a single coordinating body, in which all agglomeration participants are represented. The practical implementation of agglomeration interaction, in turn, takes place within the framework of the so-called agglomeration projects. For the implementation of agglomeration projects, specialized organizations (legal persons) can be created: several (depending on specific projects) or one (diversified, designed to manage all agglomeration projects). The charters establish the goals and subject of the activities of organizations, depending on which project administration goals are defined. Some projects can be implemented without the creation of legal persons, and in such cases, it is possible to fix the goals of projects in inter-municipal agreements and individual legal acts.

The assumption of the presence (admissibility) of different goals for different administration subjects (actors) within various administration processes (stages) makes it possible, in the authors' opinion, to differentiate three approaches to understanding the efficiency of agglomeration administration.

(1) Overall efficiency (effectiveness) of urban agglomeration administration. In a broad sense, the effectiveness (success) of administering an agglomeration can be considered achieved if the administration ensures implementation of the development goals of

the latter. In this case, agglomeration administration can be considered generally efficient³ if the agglomeration itself develops “in the right direction”; i.e., positive agglomeration effects are enhanced, negative ones are minimized, and at the same time, the costs of achieving development goals in the framework of administering the agglomeration as a single object are lower than the sum of the potential costs of all actors to achieve comparable goals. Among the goals of development of the agglomeration may be, e.g., outstripping growth in labor productivity, increasing the economic contribution of the agglomeration to GDP, increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the agglomeration on a national or international scale, strengthening the function of innovation, etc.

An example is the so-called European metropolitan regions of Germany (the term “European” is used not to indicate a geographic reference, but to emphasize their special significance, at the level of the common European space).

The goals of such regional associations can be fixed either in the laws of federal lands, or directly in the documents of federal subjects (charters)—often by a list of approximate tasks (areas of activity).

Thus, the charter of the Cologne–Bonn regional union fixes as the goal of activity “the promotion of intraregional cooperation at the political, economic, and administrative levels, strengthening the competitive advantages of the region by implementing appropriate measures and promoting the potential of the region” (Knieling and Blatter, 2009). It also identifies key areas of activity: promoting the region’s competitiveness, marketing, formulating regional development strategies and promoting regional cooperation (including on issues of integrated spatial development, promoting economic development, energy and climate, labor market policies, culture, tourism and recreation), support for the implementation of municipal and regional projects at the level of the federal state, the federation and the European Union, cooperation with the institutions of structural support programs, constant exchange at the political, economic and administrative levels.⁴

Hessian Law on The Frankfurt–Rhine–Main Metropolitan Region establishes the following tasks for the region: (1) creation, operation, and maintenance of facilities for physical culture, sports, leisure and recreation, with a value that goes beyond the boundaries of an individual population center; (2) the creation, operation, and maintenance of cultural site

³ For this approach, it is more correct to speak about the effectiveness (or success) of agglomeration administration, not about efficiency in the exact sense of the word. See below for more details.

⁴ See: *Satzung des Region Köln/Bonn e.V. vom 05. September 2018, § 2.* https://www.region-koeln-bonn.de/uploads/media/180905_RegioKoelnBonn_Satzung.pdf (translated from the German by E. Markwart).

that have a value that goes beyond the boundaries of an individual population center; (3) location marketing and promotion of economic development; (4) planning, creation, and operation of Rhine–Main Regional Park; (5) planning and administration of the regional transport system; (6) development of housing construction in accordance with demand and mobilization of land plots necessary for these purposes; (7) resource-saving water supply; (8) development and updating of the regional concept of energy supply and climate protection; (9) development and implementation of joint digitalization strategies.⁵ The law allows the formation of various associations of municipalities within the agglomeration to solve certain problems from among the designated ones. As well, the boundaries of individual associations may not coincide with the boundaries of the Frankfurt–Rhine–Main agglomeration.

The law of North Rhine–Westphalia on the regional association of the Ruhr (a polycentric agglomeration consisting of 11 large cities and 4 districts) defines the purpose of the association very broadly (“serving the public good of the Ruhr metropolitan region,” § 2), concretizing it through two groups of tasks: mandatory tasks (first paragraph of § 4): development and updating of master plans; establishment and development of the Emscher Landscape Park and the network of industrial cultural heritage sites; preservation and development of green landscapes not subject to development, water and forest facilities that have a value that goes beyond the boundaries of individual population centers for the leisure and recreation of residents, and preservation of the natural balance of the region; promotion of the regional economy and regional marketing, including the creation, development and promotion of business areas of regional importance; promoting the development of tourism in the region and working with the public in the interests of the region; analysis and evaluation of data on the spatial development of the region) and optional (second paragraph of § 4).⁶

In the authors' opinion, assessing the efficiency of agglomeration administration in terms of its development (and achievement of development goals) is the most difficult, but at the same time, the most significant problem. In a sense, the goals of developing the agglomeration as a whole, strengthening its competitiveness and building up positive agglomeration effects can be considered “top-tier” with respect to all other goals and objectives. The complexity of assessing the efficiency of agglomeration administration from the viewpoint of its development is due not only to

the diversity and streamlined formulation of goals, but also to the need to correlate the real costs (not only economic ones) associated with achieving these goals with the hypothetical (potential) costs that could arise in the event of attempts to achieve similar goals by each of the participants in the agglomeration interaction.⁷ Actually, the authors' study suggests that such attempts have not yet been made either at the theoretical or at the practical level. At least this applies to the second component, the costs of achieving goals. In this context, with respect to achieving the goals of the development of the agglomeration, it is more correct to speak not about efficiency in the exact sense of this term, but about the efficiency or success of administration.

Another possible approach is to use benchmarking, which makes it possible to compare the administration of different agglomerations. Benchmarking, however, implies the need to form a fairly universal set of criteria and indicators for evaluation and comparison, and this, in the authors' opinion, is possible only if we assume that the goals of administering various agglomerations are the same (or at least similar). In this sense, the approach used in some European countries, in particular in Germany mentioned above, is interesting. With a certain degree of conditionality, we can say that the development goals of the European metropolitan regions are rethought here in the context of the functions they perform (are called upon to perform). Researchers and practitioners at the first stage identified three “classic” functions of metropolises:

- The decision-making and control, which is governed by a high concentration of bodies that exert political (authorities, judicial and other law enforcement institutions, international and central organizations and unions) and economic (location of the administration of large firms, concerns) influence through key decision-making and control.

- Innovation: a high (above average) innovative potential concentrated in the region allows it to be the engine of economic and social development (innovation generation).

- Hub, the most important node of cross-country/global flows of knowledge, information, services, people, goods, capital (assumes a high degree of spatial connectivity and accessibility of the region) (Schulze and Blotevogel, 2009).

A set of indicators was developed to measure the value of these functions; function indices and a composite index were formed (Table 1).⁸

⁷ Assuming that such goals would generally be set by individual participants in the absence of agglomeration interaction.

⁸ An example of the rationale for the choice of indicators, sources of their receipt and approach to calculation can be found in the study of the Initiative Group “European Metropolises in Germany” within the “Models of Spatial Organization” project (2007), initiated by the corresponding federal ministry (<https://www.region-stuttgart.org/mdex.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=815&token=f9ecf55ad6bfd5824bee799ac099514996da931>, p. 10).

⁵ See: Gesetz über die Metropolregion Frankfurt/Rhein-Main (MetropolG) vom 8. März 2011, § 1. <https://www.rv.hessenrecht.hessen.de/bshe/document/jlr-MetrRegFrankfGHEframe>.

⁶ See: Gesetz über den Regionalverband Ruhr (RVRG) vom 3. Februar 2004. https://recht.nrw.de/lmi/owa/br_bes_text?sg=0&menu=1&bes_id=5244&aufgehoben=N&anw_nr=2 (translation from German and compilation by E. Markwart).

Table 1. Main components of index of 11 German metropolitan regions

Metropolitan region	Decision-making and control function	Function of center for innovation and competition	Hub function	General index
Rhine–Ruhr	22.40	12.29	12.97	14.80
Munich	14.38	13.16	10.15	12.46
Berlin–Brandenburg	8.06	12.03	11.57	11.80
Frankfurt–Rhine–Main	8.74	8.50	11.32	10.00
Stuttgart	5.76	8.69	2.45	5.71
Hamburg	4.59	5.05	5.66	5.43
Hannover–Braunschweig–Göttingen	4.71	5.99	4.52	5.26
Halle–Leipzig	2.80	4.72	2.92	3.77
Nuremberg	0.98	2.99	1.85	2.17
Rhine Neckar	0.98	3.51	1.18	2.11
Bremen–Oldenburg	1.75	2.36	1.16	1.84

Source. <https://docplayer.org/61876228-Regionalmonitoring-der-europaeischen-metropolregionen-in-deutschland.html> (translated from German by A. Alтынbaeva).

Somewhat later, the fourth function of the metropolitan regions was identified, symbol, reflecting the high creative potential of the region, its outstanding (going beyond the region and the country) role in culture (Danirlzyk and Blotevogel, 2009, pp. 22–29].

The formation of the index by analyzing the main components proceeds from the idea that the replacement of several variables (indicators) by a single “hypervariable” makes it possible to better reflect the essence of the phenomenon than any of the individual initial variables; since the indicators reflect similar aspects of the phenomenon, they correlate between yourself (Schulze and Blotevogel, 2009). Existing problematic aspects of quantitative measurement of agglomeration functions, such as the validity and reliability of the indicators, the difference between the variability of configurations recognized by the scientific and expert community (Schulze and Blotevogel, 2009, pp. 32–38), but are not grounds for refusing to use and develop this tool. It is important to note that a similar approach to assessing the level of development of agglomerations (which can also be used to assess the success/effectiveness of agglomeration administration) was formed in the regular interaction between the scientific and expert communities and practitioners within the platform of the Initiative Group “European Metropolitan Regions in Germany” (<https://deutsche-metropolregionen.org/>) and various projects initiated in different years by the corresponding federal and regional ministries and departments. The contribution of the Federal Institute for Research in the field of construction, urban affairs, and spatial development (BBSR)⁹ is significant, which, among other

things, monitors metropolitan regions in Europe. Taking into account the noticeable difference in the information base in different European countries, a slightly different set of criteria and indicators is used here to calculate the index of metropolitan functions. In Russia, in this context, the most interesting, in the authors' opinion, are the reflections of colleagues from the Institute for Urban Economics Foundation on approaches to assessing the degree of development of urban agglomerations. And although A.S. Puzanov and R.A. Popov do not pose the problem of assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of administration, individual approaches and indicators of the development of agglomerations, in the authors' opinion, can be used for such an assessment.¹⁰

Summarizing this part of the discussion, we emphasize that an overall assessment of the efficiency of agglomeration administration can be determined depending on the degree of achievement of the goals of agglomeration interaction. In a broad sense, the goal of agglomeration development (and its administration) is to strengthen the agglomeration's competitiveness in global, national, or at least large interregional markets, increase its contribution to the development of the economy and society, to innovation, etc. Specific goals, in turn, can be set individually (by agreements or other legal acts institutionalizing the agglomeration as an object of administration) or uniformly for all or part of the agglomerations (if they agree to this). The second approach (benchmarking) makes it possible to create a unified set of criteria and indicators for assessing the efficiency of administration, as well as

⁹ See: Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung. https://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/startseite/_node.html.

¹⁰ See: Assessing the development of urban agglomerations. https://www.urbanecomics.ru/sites/default/files/07.12_ocenka_razvitosti_gorodskih_aglomeraciy.pdf.

facilitate a comparative analysis of various agglomerations in order to increase efficiency.

(2) Another important aspect of assessing the success of agglomeration administration is the process of agglomeration interaction itself, more precisely, making and implementing decisions.

Since the contractual model of agglomeration administration involves the participation of many stakeholders in the administration process, the efficiency of interaction between them (achieving the desired result in the form of consensus, reconciling interests with the least time and administrative costs) is very important for the implementation of administration and development goals. We can say that the efficiency of agglomeration interaction in the narrow sense is determined primarily by the efficiency of the decision-making process. The contractual model assumes the key role of the coordinating body, which consists in finding and achieving a balance of interests of the participants, preparing and agreeing on draft decisions (which should be further adopted by individual participants in the agglomeration), monitoring and controlling the implementation of the decisions taken, methodological and organizational support for agglomeration projects, etc. d. From this viewpoint, the efficiency of agglomeration administration is closely related to the efficiency of the coordinating body.

With regard for this aspect, it is also probably more appropriate (at least for now) to talk about the success or effectiveness of administration, rather than efficiency in the exact meaning of this term. Indeed, assessing efficiency would imply the need to identify and calculate the costs associated with the implementation of the corresponding functions by the coordinating body, and correlate them with the potential costs of coordinating the work of participants in the hypothetical absence of such a body, which seems not only difficult, but also not very practical. When evaluating the efficiency (success) of coordinating activities, one can use, in particular, such criteria as the number of decisions made, the timing of the development and adoption of decisions, the proportion of council decisions executed by the participants, the satisfaction of participants with the activities of the council, the degree of influence on regional policy, etc. A number of experts propose such a rather interesting criterion as the degree (level) of recognition (acceptance) of the coordinating body by various stakeholders (in particular, in the region) (Albert and Theobald, 2012).

In this study, with respect to Russian agglomerations, this aspect of administration efficiency was primarily studied. Indeed, economic efficiency becomes much more important with respect to the third aspect of agglomeration administration.

(3) The practical essence of agglomeration interaction is agglomeration projects, so the effectiveness

(more precisely, success) of agglomeration administration cannot be assessed without assessing the efficiency of agglomeration projects. This, in turn, depends on the chosen mechanisms (identification and implementation of specific agglomeration projects) and forms (conclusion and implementation of intermunicipal agreements and agreements of agglomerations with individuals, creation and activities of organizations/legal persons) for the implementation of such projects. Here it seems appropriate for us to talk about the adaptation of approaches and criteria for evaluating the efficiency of project administration (project administration) (Abramov et al., 2017; Tzipes, 2009), and in some cases, administration of organizations (companies) for agglomeration interaction.

The results of one of the most famous (albeit relatively old) studies of intermunicipal cooperation in Germany, conducted by Kienbaum for the German Union of Cities and Communities, revealed three leading goals of such cooperation: cost-efficiency (cited by 40.8% of respondents representing more than 350 municipalities), ensuring (guaranteeing) the provision of services (33.1%), quality and proximity to residents/consumers (18%).¹¹ At the same time, respondents saw the greatest potential for increasing economic efficiency in joint procurement, information and communication technologies and personnel. In those federal states of Germany where the state encourages intermunicipal cooperation, state support for specific projects is directly linked to the so-called increase in efficiency. Thus, in accordance with paragraph 4.2 of the directive of the corresponding ministry of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia on subsidizing the federal state of intermunicipal cooperation, “within the framework of cooperation, savings in personnel and material costs of at least 15% per year (increase in efficiency, Effizienzgewinn).”¹² At the same time, the state promotes intermunicipal cooperation projects even without taking into account this requirement, if the cooperation allows to provide “another significant added value” (value) in the form of a significant improvement in the supply of public services or ensuring the solution of municipal problems that could not be “equivalently” decided by the municipalities themselves.

Based on the goals and specific objectives, it is possible to formulate key project performance parameters

¹¹See: Interkommunale Zusammenarbeit Studie der Kienbaum Management Consultants GmbH in Kooperation mit dem Deutschen Städte- und Gemeindebund. Düsseldorf, Juni 2004. <https://docplayer.org/191835644-Interkommunale-cooperation-study-of-kienbaum-management-consultants-gmbh-in-cooperation-with-the-german-towns-and-community-day.html>.

¹²See: Richtlinie für Zuwendungen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen zur Förderung der interkommunalen Zusammenarbeit. Runderlass des Ministeriums für Heimat, Kommunales, Bau und Gleichstellung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen - 301 - 43.02.05/04 vom 31. August 2021. https://recht.nrw.de/lmi/owa/br_bes_text?anw_nr=1&gld_nr=2&ugl_nr=202&bes_id=46868&val=46868&ver=7&sg=0&aufgehoben=N&menu=1.

related to the planned and achieved results and the resources used/costs incurred. If the project is implemented through a specific intermunicipal agreement or agreement (e.g., on the joint holding of an event or on joint procurement), then, in the authors' opinion, the agreement (appendices to it) can (and even should) establish such parameters and approaches to evaluating efficiency. In order to assess it, it is necessary to have a "scale for comparison." Comparison can be done both using the previously mentioned benchmarking mechanism, and, theoretically, correlation with the potential results and costs of the independent implementation of the project by each of the parties to the agreement. When forming criteria, indicators, the procedure for evaluating the efficiency of projects, one can also rely on existing methods, standards of project activities.¹³

If legal persons (organizations) are created for the implementation of agglomeration projects, the goals, objectives, subject, as well as the criteria for the efficiency of the activities of such organizations should be determined by their founders—municipalities (Markwart et al., 2015, pp. 215–228). As well, the efficiency criteria (at least a significant part of them) should be correlated with the achievement of goals (solving problems), for the sake of which the intermunicipal organization was created. Thus, among the performance criteria of an intermunicipal transport company operating in the field of public transportation, there should be not only internal performance indicators, but also indicators reflecting the physical and economic accessibility of public transport: expanding the route network, increasing the frequency (periodicity) of vehicle traffic, clear observance of the schedule of public transport, improving the connection of various modes of transport, limiting the growth (or reduction) of tariffs, etc. Depending on the goals, other criteria can be determined (e.g., an increase in the share of environmentally friendly transport, etc.).

The founders have the right to (and perhaps should) establish the procedure for evaluating the efficiency of the organization. There may be situations when an existing intermunicipal organization at some stage starts to implement an agglomeration project that was not the subject of the organization's activities at the time of its creation.

For example, in the public transport example above, a project to convert all public transport within the boundaries of the agglomeration to sustainable fuels. In the authors' opinion, if we are talking about large and significant projects from the viewpoint of the

overall goals of administering the agglomeration, then the criteria and procedure for evaluating their efficiency should be determined by the municipalities that are the founders of the organization, regardless of who is the initiator of such projects (the municipality or the organization itself). The criteria and procedure for evaluating the efficiency of small projects that have no significant impact on achieving the goals of the agglomeration as a whole can be determined by the intermunicipal organizations themselves as part of their operational activities.

ASSESSING THE ADMINISTRATION EFFICIENCY OF RUSSIAN URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS IN A CASE STUDY OF AGGLOMERATIONS IN CHELYABINSK OBLAST

When evaluating the efficiency of administration of agglomerations in Chelyabinsk oblast, the approach described above was used: assessing the overall efficiency of agglomeration administration, the efficiency of the process of making and implementing decisions, and the efficiency of agglomeration projects. Corresponding documents and publications in the media were used as sources of information, as well as data obtained during expert interviews with representatives of local governments of municipalities—participants in the agglomerations of Chelyabinsk oblast, regional government bodies responsible for the development of agglomerations, executive authorities of agglomerations (the current executive body of the Gorny Ural agglomeration and the now abolished executive body of the Chelyabinsk agglomeration).

Gorny Ural Agglomeration

The choice of the Gorny Ural agglomeration for this study was due to the fact that it is an example of a polycentric agglomeration, which in its structure is conducive to the use of a contractual administration model. As an object of administration, the agglomeration was formalized in 2016 by a special agreement on intermunicipal cooperation of the Miass, Zlatoust, Chebarkul, Trekhgorny, and Karabash urban okrugs, as well as Satka and Kusinsky municipal districts. Due to the lack of a definition of the term "agglomeration" in Russian federal legislation, the agreement gave its own definition of an agglomeration as "a compact spatial association of population centers with industrial, transport, trade, cultural, social and domestic ties."¹⁴ The objective of the agreement is formulated as "the implementation by municipalities of a coordi-

¹³See: *GOST R 54870-2011: Project Management. Requirements for Project Portfolio Management.* <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/1200089605>; *GOST R 54869-2011: Project Management. Project Management Requirements.* <http://gostrf.com/normadata/1/4293797/4293797785.pdf>; *GOST R 54871-2011: Project Management. Program Management Requirements.* <http://gostrf.com/normadata/1/4293797/4293797787.pdf>; *GOST R ISO 21500-2014: Project Management Guide.* <http://meg-anorm.ru/Data2/1/4293765/4293765998.pdf>.

¹⁴Agreement on the creation of the Gorny Ural agglomeration. <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http://www.karsob.ru/upload/iblock/22a/%D0%A1%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%B%D0%B0%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5%20%D0%93%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%B9%20%D0%A3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BB.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>.

nated economic, social, financial and urban planning policy, compliance with the sequence of implementation of measures for territorial planning, the formation of a unified planning structure, the development of transport, engineering infrastructure, the settlement of organizational issues related to the implementation of investment projects in the territories of the above-mentioned municipal entities, improving the quality of life of the population of municipalities".¹⁵ The agreement and other documents of the Gorny Ural agglomeration lack specific measurable and verifiable indicators of achieving the stated goal of intermunicipal agglomeration cooperation, and the goal itself is defined very broadly. This significantly complicates the assessment of the efficiency and efficiency of its achievement (the overall efficiency of agglomeration administration).

Within the Agreement on the Creation of the Gorny Ural agglomeration, the parties agreed to develop a unified concept for the socioeconomic development of the agglomeration, which, however, still does not exist. Such a long absence of a conceptual, strategic document that determines the direction of development of the agglomeration may indicate a certain crisis in goal-setting in the administration system of the Gorny Ural agglomeration. From the interviews conducted during the study, it can be seen that at the beginning of 2022, the intermunicipal council of the agglomeration reiterated the need to develop a strategy for the socioeconomic development of the agglomeration. In the municipalities that are part of the agglomeration, it is planned to hold strategic sessions aimed at formulating the requirements of key stakeholders for the terms of reference for the development of this strategy. Obviously, the strategy for the Gorny Ural agglomeration planned for development should be synchronized with the Strategy for the Socioeconomic Development of Chelyabinsk oblast for the period up to 2035, in which the Gorny Ural agglomeration is fixed as a key economic center of the second level.¹⁶

The municipalities that ratified the agreement agreed on the draft territorial planning scheme for the Gorny Ural agglomeration for the period up to 2040, which was developed at the initiative of the government of the Chelyabinsk oblast and approved by it in August 2020. When approving the draft territorial

planning scheme for the Gorny Ural agglomeration its tasks were defined: the creation of a stable, favorable and comfortable climate for the life of the population in modern socioeconomic conditions; increasing the competitiveness of the economy of the territories of the agglomeration Gorny Ural and ensuring a stable flow of resources to the region; formation of an efficient ecological frame of the territory of the agglomeration Gorny Ural; creation of an efficient system of transport accessibility of the territory of the agglomeration Gorny Ural; regulation of internal migration from large, small and medium-sized cities to the regional center; improving the efficiency of administration of the territory of the agglomeration Gorny Ural; controlling the development of core cities, preventing demographic oversaturation of their individual parts and excessive pressure on their infrastructure; determination of potential opportunities for the implementation of commodity, financial, technological, cultural, and other relations of the territory of the Gorny Ural agglomeration with foreign investors.¹⁷

Evaluation of the overall efficiency of agglomeration administration based on the presented list of tasks requires the development of appropriate approaches and tools (currently not available). As a possible approach to assessment, we can focus on the above example of the formation of the index of European metropolitan regions in Germany.

Turning to the issue of evaluating the efficiency of decision-making, note that in the agglomeration agreement the parties agreed to establish an intermunicipal council consisting of representatives of municipalities (heads and chairmen of meetings of deputies of five urban districts and two districts; representatives of the settlements of these municipal districts are not part of the intermunicipal council). One of the key goals of the council is political coordination of the activities of the agglomeration's stakeholders in making and implementing decisions. The council actually functions as part of the administration system of the association of municipalities of Gorny Ural of Chelyabinsk oblast, created in 1994 and uniting 12 municipalities, including all participants in the eponymous agglomeration. Due to the lack of an executive body of the intermunicipal council of the Gorny Ural agglomeration, its functions in practice, without legal grounds, are carried out by the executive directorate of the association. As key criteria for the efficiency of agglomeration interaction, respondents in the course of interviews identified a consensus approach to decision-making (understood as unanimity) and transparency of administration and the activities of bodies and

¹⁵Agreement on the creation of the Gorny Ural agglomeration. <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.karsob.ru%2Fupload%2Fiblock%2F22a%2F%25D0%25A1%25D0%25BE%25D0%25B3%25D0%25BB%25D0%25B0%25D1%2588%25D0%25B5%25D0%25BD%25D0%25B8%25D0%25B5%2520%25D0%2593%25D0%25BE%25D1%2580%25D0%25BD%25D1%258B%25D0%25B9%2520%25D0%25A3%25D1%2580%25D0%25B0%25D0%25BB.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>.

¹⁶See: Strategy of Socioeconomic Development of Chelyabinsk oblast for the Period up to 2035. <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/553133071?ysclid=157x7p80lq421416409>.

¹⁷Decree of the Government of Chelyabinsk oblast no. 387-P of August 3, 2020, On Approval of the Territorial Planning Scheme for a Part of the Territory of Chelyabinsk oblast (Zlatoust, Mias, Karabash, and Chebarkul Urban Okrugs, Kusinsky and Satkinsky Municipal Districts (the Territory of the Gorny Ural Agglomeration). <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/570871608>.

organizations that manage. Formally, the efficiency of the decision-making process, understood as coordination of the interests of the participants in the agglomeration interaction with the least time and administrative costs to achieve a balance of interests within the coordinating body of the Gorny Ural agglomeration, seems quite high. However, the relativity of this conclusion is due to the fact that the intermunicipal council did not consider aspects of agglomeration interaction that require the participants to invest significant resources.

The third element—the efficiency of agglomeration projects—with respect to the administration of the Gorny Ural agglomeration was not assessed for the banal reason of the lack of agglomeration projects to date, identified, financed and implemented by the municipalities—participants in the agglomeration.

Summarizing the analysis of the efficiency (efficiency) of the administration of the Gorny Ural agglomeration, the following can be stated:

(1) In the agreement on creating the Gorny Ural agglomeration, the goals of agglomeration cooperation are defined very broadly, and specific tasks, measurable criteria, and indicators of achievement are not fixed. Due to the absence of joint agglomeration projects (and, accordingly, their possible impact on development of the agglomeration), it seems impossible to assess the efficiency of the administration of the agglomeration as a whole.

(2) The efficiency of the decision-making process of the intermunicipal council is formally quite high. However, due to the lack of solutions requiring investment of significant resources by the participating municipalities, this assessment is very conditional.

(3) The efficiency of the implementation of intermunicipal agglomeration projects cannot be assessed due to the lack of such projects.

Chelyabinsk Agglomeration

This agglomeration was one of the first in Russia that became not only the subject of close attention of specialists (Glazychev et al., 2008), but also a legally formalized example of agglomeration interaction. It was legally formalized in 2014 by signing the Agreement on Creation of the Chelyabinsk Agglomeration for seven municipalities: the Chelyabinsk and Kopeysk urban okrugs and the Sosnovsky, Etkulsky, Korkinsky, Krasnoarmeisky and Yemanzhelinsky municipal districts.¹⁸ In article 2 of the agreement, the goals of its creation were defined as “formation of a unified social, engineering and transport infrastructure, increase in housing construction, improvement of food supply for the population of municipalities

included in the Chelyabinsk agglomeration, at the expense of budgets of all levels and investments attracted.” To achieve these goals, it was planned to develop a concept for the socioeconomic development of the Chelyabinsk agglomeration. The concept was prepared as part of agglomeration interaction and approved by all participants in the agglomeration, but in the end it was not approved at the regional level (as a strategy of a part of a federal subject). In the Strategy for Socioeconomic Development of Chelyabinsk oblast for the period up to 2035, in turn, the Chelyabinsk agglomeration is considered a key economic center of the first level.

Analysis of the Agreement on Creation of the Chelyabinsk Agglomeration, strategic, and other documents of the agglomeration indicates the absence of specific measurable indicators for achieving the stated goals of intermunicipal agglomeration cooperation, which significantly complicates assessment of the efficiency and efficiency of their achievement (the overall efficiency of agglomeration administration). The scheme of territorial planning of the Chelyabinsk agglomeration for the period up to 2040, developed at the initiative of the government of Chelyabinsk oblast and approved by its Decree no. 172-P of April 2016 On the Scheme of Territorial Planning of Part of Chelyabinsk oblast as Applied to the Main Planning Node of the City of Chelyabinsk (Territory of the Chelyabinsk agglomeration),” proceeds from the need for territorial planning aimed at the formation and efficient development of a unified socioeconomic and investment space with a common system of social, transport and engineering services, a natural and environmental framework for:

- creating a stable, favorable, and comfortable climate for the life of the population in modern socioeconomic conditions;
- increasing the competitiveness of the economy of Chelyabinsk oblast and ensuring a stable flow of resources to the region;
- regulation of internal migration from small and medium-sized cities to the regional center;
- improving administration efficiency;
- controlling the development of the core city and preventing oversaturation and excessive pressure on infrastructure.¹⁹

Assessing the overall efficiency of agglomeration administration based on the list of goals presented in

¹⁹It should be noted that the boundaries of the Chelyabinsk agglomeration in the territorial planning scheme do not coincide with the boundaries of the agglomeration in the current Strategy for the Socioeconomic Development of Chelyabinsk oblast (in the regional strategy, they are much wider and include the territories of the Argayashsky and Kunashaksky municipal districts). This allows us to claim “mobility” of ideas about the boundaries of the agglomeration, depending on the considered control loop: intermunicipal cooperation, regional management in the field of urban planning or regional management in the field of long-term socioeconomic development.

¹⁸Decision of the Chelyabinsk City Duma no. 52/6 of June 24, 2014, On Approval of the Agreement on the Creation of the Chelyabinsk Agglomeration. <http://www.kapo-gor-bunov.ru/index.php?docid=234882>.

the agglomeration territorial planning scheme requires the development of appropriate tools not currently available. It is also necessary to specify individual goals (e.g., “regulation of internal migration” can hardly be considered a goal; perhaps the authors of the scheme had in mind a decrease in internal migration to the core city or an increase in migration from the core to suburbs, etc.). To create criteria and indicators for achieving individual goals, the approaches, criteria, and indicators contained in a number of national and federal programs and projects can be taken as a basis.

Turning to assessment of the efficiency of actual agglomeration interaction, we note that under the Agreement on the Creation of the Chelyabinsk Agglomeration, the parties agreed to form an intermunicipal (coordinating) council consisting of representatives of the municipalities included in the agglomeration (two city districts and five municipal districts) and structural divisions of the government of the Chelyabinsk oblast (Article 5 of the agreement). At the meeting of the founders of the association “Coordinating Council of Municipalities of the Chelyabinsk Agglomeration,” the association’s charter was approved and the supreme governing body was formed: a general meeting of members of the association, consisting of 14 participants (two representatives from each municipality: one from the representative body and one from the executive). The charter of the association established the minimum frequency of meetings—at least once every three months, but in fact, according to respondents, meetings were held much less frequently. Since the federal subject was not a cofounder of the association, representatives of the regional government were not included in the general meeting, but were included in sectoral working groups, as evidenced by the internal regulations on the working groups of the association and answers of the respondents.

The functions of the executive body of the association were transferred to the administering organization: the Agency for the Socioeconomic Development of Agglomerations, which was created to provide consulting and technological assistance to pilot projects of urban agglomerations with the support of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation and Union of Russian Cities.²⁰

Over the five years of the Agreement on the Creation of the Chelyabinsk Agglomeration, within the framework of agglomeration cooperation, in essence, only two projects have been implemented to some degree. One of them is the development and coordination of the above-mentioned concept of socioeconomic development of the Chelyabinsk agglomeration. Joint efforts were also carried out on an educa-

tional project: the so-called Modern City youth university for development of the agglomeration was operating. The goal of the project, which included a sociological survey, an educational event and a conference on agglomeration administration, was to form a group of young people who would be able to work efficiently in the Chelyabinsk agglomeration development project. The project was implemented in 2016; the planned activities, according to the participants, were begun, and the indicators (in particular, the number of participants and development projects) were achieved.²¹ However, taking into account the subsequent development of agglomeration administration, it is hardly possible to speak about the achievement of the project’s goal. Some respondents cited as examples of successful agglomeration projects (even in the absence of agglomeration governing bodies) the development of a territorial planning scheme for the Chelyabinsk agglomeration and development of public transport. Both projects, however, were implemented at the initiative and under the supervision of the regional government and can hardly be considered agglomeration cooperation projects. To implement the second of these projects, the federal subject also withdrew the authority for municipal transportation from three municipalities that are part of the agglomeration (Chelyabinsk, Kopeysk and Sosnovsky municipal district). In this context, it can be argued that the withdrawal of powers from municipalities and their implementation by the federal subject²² become an obstacle to successful implementation of the contractual model of agglomeration administration.

On December 17, 2020, the association “Coordinating Council of Municipalities of the Chelyabinsk Agglomeration” was dissolved.²³ During the interviews, the respondents interpreted the reasons for what happened in different ways. For some, the reason was the weak viability of the contractual model in the current Russian conditions and, accordingly, the preference for the administrative model of agglomeration administration, when key decisions are made at the regional level. Respondents named the change of “leader of the process” (the head of the city of Chelyabinsk) and subsequent focus on consolidating the city’s resources, as well as the constant risks of legal regulation (gaps, contradictions, ambiguities) and legal conservatism among the reasons for curtailment of the agglomeration’s governing bodies. In the authors’ opinion, one of the reasons for rejection of the created administration model could be the lack of

²⁰Created Coordinating Council of Municipalities of the Chelyabinsk Agglomeration, August 31, 2015. <http://www.deputat74.ru/content/sozdan-koordinatsionnyi-sovet-munitsipalnykh-obrazovaniy-chelyabinskoi-aglomeratsii>.

²¹Based on the report “Project ‘Modern City: The First Youth University for the Development of Agglomerations’” at the IV Forum of Best Municipal Practices of the Union of Russian Cities in Ufa (June 16–18, 2016).

²²For more detail on the so-called redistribution of authority between municipalities and the federal subject and consequences thereof, see (Markwart, 2016).

²³Service for verification and analysis of Russian legal entities and entrepreneurs. <https://www.rusprofile.ru/id/10161284>.

positive experience in the form of successfully implemented projects of intermunicipal cooperation.

Thus, due to the extremely insignificant practice and absence of projects related primarily to the organization of economic activity, it is almost impossible to assess the efficiency of agglomeration projects. Attempts to analyze the efficiency of the administration of the Chelyabinsk agglomeration in 2015–2020 encounter significant difficulties. Returning to the three parameters proposed earlier, the following should be acknowledged:

(1) To assess the overall success of the administration of the Chelyabinsk agglomeration, there exist not only developed criteria and indicators, but also causal relationships between the former and current states of the agglomeration;

(2) The actual agglomeration interaction for five years can only be assessed in the most general way as low-efficiency;

(3) From the viewpoint of the efficiency of agglomeration projects, in principle, it is possible to assess only one project: the youth university, but for its practical evaluation there is no information on some parameters of the project; failure to achieve the goal of the project (staffing of the contractual model of agglomeration administration), however, seems obvious.

CONCLUSIONS

In summarizing the results of the study of the theory and practice of assessing the efficiency of urban agglomeration administration, the following conclusions can be drawn.

(1) The overall assessment of the efficiency of agglomeration administration can be determined depending on the degree of achievement of the goals of agglomeration interaction. In a broad sense, the goal of agglomeration development (and its administration) is to strengthen the agglomeration's competitiveness in global, national, or at least large interregional markets, and increase its contribution to the development of the economy and society.

(2) Another important aspect of assessing the success of agglomeration administration is the very process of agglomeration interaction (making and implementing decisions). Since the contractual model of agglomeration administration involves the participation of many stakeholders in the administration process, the efficiency of interaction between them (achieving the desired result in the form of consensus, reconciling interests with the least time and administrative costs) is very important for the implementation of administration and development goals. The contractual model assumes the key role of the coordinating body, which consists in finding and achieving a balance of interests of the participants, preparing and agreeing on draft decisions, monitoring and controlling their implementation. From this viewpoint,

the efficiency of agglomeration administration is closely related to the efficiency of the activities of the coordinating body.

(3) The practical essence of agglomeration interaction is agglomeration projects, so the efficiency (more precisely, success) of agglomeration administration cannot be assessed without evaluating the efficiency of agglomeration projects. This, in turn, depends on the chosen mechanisms and forms of implementation of such projects. Here it seems to us appropriate to talk about the adaptation of approaches and criteria for evaluating the efficiency of project administration (project administration), and in some cases, administration of organizations (companies) for agglomeration interaction.

(4) Analysis of the Russian practice of administering urban agglomerations, carried out in a case study of Chelyabinsk oblast, shows that the goals of agglomeration cooperation are defined very broadly, and specific tasks, measurable criteria and indicators for their achievement are not documented. There are no joint agglomeration projects, and the work of the coordinating bodies for administering agglomeration interaction revolves mainly around organizational issues that do not require significant funding.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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