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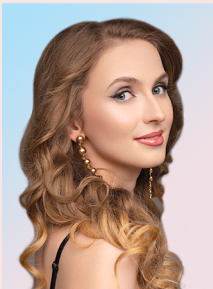
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Specifics of the Socio-Economic Development of a Northern Region: Strategies and Expectations (the Case of the Arkhangelsk Region)

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Abstract. Drawing on the case of the Arkhangelsk Region, this article uses methods of economic-statistical and sociological analysis to uncover various aspects of the contemporary socio-economic development of a typical northern region. The findings indicate that the situation in the Arkhangelsk Region continues to deteriorate: the region's share of the country's gross regional product is declining, as are the size of its population and the number of its enterprises. Drawing on expert interviews conducted by the authors in 2025, three groups of investment projects of the greatest strategic importance for the region were identified: 1) "transport and logistics"; 2) "utilization of the resource base"; 3) "the military-industrial complex and shipbuilding". Examples of projects within each group, as set out in the territory's long-term development

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plans, are examined. However, given the time lag between investment and economic return, and given that most of the projects are still in their early stages of implementation, no substantial improvement in the socio-economic indicators of the Arkhangelsk Region can be expected in the medium term. The article also presents the findings of a representative mass survey of the region's residents. The aim of the survey was to obtain subjective assessments of the current socio-economic situation in the country and the region and to identify the public's vision of the key directions for the territory's development. The majority of respondents consider the current economic situation in the Russian Federation, and in the region in particular, to be satisfactory. At the same time, those surveyed perceive the current economic position of the Arkhangelsk Region in a more negative light than that of Russia as a whole. The study reveals a mismatch between the population's social expectations and the vision of the region's "image of the future" that is being put forward by the authorities. The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility that its results might be used by the authorities as an information base for adjusting the goals and objectives of regional economic policy.

Key words: Arkhangelsk Region, North, Arctic, regional economy, socio-economic development, project management, expert assessments, sociological survey.

Acknowledgment

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Introduction

At present, issues of the socio-economic development of Russia's northern regions are the focus of attention among both scholars and practitioners. In the works of V.N. Lazhentsev, for example, special attention is devoted to the specific characteristics of production and population settlement under the harsh natural and climatic conditions of the North (Lazhentsev, 2024; Lazhentsev, 2025). Studies by V.G. Loginov, M.A. Lebedeva, E.A. Korchak, V.V. Fauzer, A.V. Smirnov, and many other researchers analyze and assess the natural resource and human potential of Russia's northern and Arctic territories (Lebedeva, 2020; Korchak, 2022; Loginov, 2024; Fauzer, Smirnov, 2025).

A prominent example of Russia's northern regions is the Arkhangelsk Region, which constitutes a unique natural and socio-economic entity with diverse natural conditions and

considerable resource potential. The region's coastline is washed by the White, Barents, and Kara seas, which determine the territory's climatic features and its strategic significance, including in the context of the ongoing Arctic policy. The region borders the Republic of Komi, the Republic of Karelia, the Kirov Region, and the Vologda Region¹.

Contemporary socio-economic aspects of the Arkhangelsk Region's development have been examined in studies devoted to the region's sectoral specificities (Onyakova, 2020; Myakshin et al., 2024; Muraev, Sushko, 2025), the strategic plans for the territory and its urban agglomerations (Nosyrev et al., 2022; Sekushina, Kryukov, 2025), and problems of demography and the labor market, the shortage of investment resources,

¹ Passport of Arkhangelsk Region. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Available at: <https://www.mid.ru/upload/medialibrary/317/.pdf> (accessed: 07.03.2026).

and insufficient investment activity on the part of business (Ushakova et al., 2025; Samarina, Skufina, 2025; Yakhyaev, Zharinova, 2025).

That said, the majority of existing studies rely solely on an analysis of statistical data, which in turn suffer from a number of shortcomings — a substantial time lag, a lack of consistency in data for the same indicator across different sources of statistical information, and so forth — as described in greater detail in a number of works (Volkova, 2014; Marshova, 2017). Yet, despite all the attendant nuances, socio-economic research cannot, of course, dispense with statistics.

At the same time, the studies addressing the socio-economic development of the Arkhangelsk Region are predominantly statistical-analytical in nature and draw on official data and strategic planning documents. Thus, sectoral studies are based on an analysis of export and production statistics for the forestry complex (Muraev, Sushko, 2025) and for diamond mining (Onyakova, 2020); investment priorities are identified by calculating intersectoral interactions within the structure of the economy (Myakshin et al., 2024); the problems of wages and the labor market are revealed through the dynamics of statistical indicators for 2017–2023 (Samarina, Skufina, 2025); and the condition of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship is assessed through quantitative indicators of the sector (Yakhyaev, Zharinova, 2025). Strategic studies, for their part, focus on a content analysis of the legal-regulatory and planning documents of agglomerations (Nosyrev et al., 2022; Sekushina, Kryukov, 2025). Such an approach yields an objective but “external” picture: it captures the resulting indicators, yet leaves outside the framework of analysis the subjective perceptions that the population holds about the ongoing changes — its migration plans and its expectations regarding the “vision of the future” for the region in which it lives. In combination with the statistical limitations

noted above, this creates a certain research gap: the question remains unresolved of how well the strategic orientations promulgated by the authorities align with the population’s actual social expectations. It is precisely the impossibility of closing this gap through statistical analysis alone that makes it necessary to supplement the latter with a sociological component.

In view of this, the present work adopts an integrated approach that combines methods of economic-statistical and sociological analysis, making it possible to address the following tasks:

- 1) to provide a brief characterization of the key indicators of socio-economic development of the Arkhangelsk Region as a northern region of Russia over a twenty-year retrospective;
- 2) to examine the strategic orientations and the possibilities for project-based governance of the territory under the current conditions of external challenges, drawing on expert-analytical techniques;
- 3) to assess, on the basis of a sociological survey, the social expectations of the population of the Arkhangelsk Region regarding the prospects for the region’s and the country’s socio-economic development.

The study is built on the following scientific hypothesis: under the conditions of external challenges, demographic decline, and investment constraints, objective indicators of the socio-economic development of the Arkhangelsk Region (above all, statistical indicators) do not provide a complete picture of the territory’s development prospects, since they fail to account for the subjective social expectations of the region’s residents. At the same time, it is assumed that these expectations are characterized by a cautious optimism concerning the prospects for the region’s and the country’s development, and that incorporating them alongside statistical data and expert assessments enhances the robustness of strategic decisions aimed at managing

a northern region's development. This hypothesis is tested by juxtaposing statistical-analytical data against the findings of expert interviews and a mass sociological survey of the population.

Research methods

The information base of the study comprised scholarly works addressing the socio-economic development of northern territories in general and of the Arkhangelsk Region in particular, the role of strategic planning and project-based governance in the regional economy, and official data from Rosstat. A systems approach was employed, incorporating the methods of logical, conceptual, economic-statistical, and sociological analysis.

The authors conducted in-depth semi-structured expert interviews with representatives of government, business, science, education, and non-profit organizations, and carried out a mass survey of Arkhangelsk Region population in order to construct a picture of how different age groups perceive the new economic reality and to capture their social expectations. Verbal assessments were obtained from the population regarding their migration attitudes and the motivations behind them, the development prospects of the Arkhangelsk Region, the demand for investment projects, and the transformation of the economic situation in the region and in the country as a whole.

The expert-analytical procedures involved eight individuals: two representatives of government bodies, two representatives of the academic community, two heads of large and midsize enterprises of the region, and two leaders of civic associations. It should be noted that, according to numerical experiments, the optimal number of experts ranges from seven to 11 persons (Tutygin et al., 2024). The following criteria were observed when selecting the experts: 15 or more years of professional experience, an active civic stance, and systematic participation in various events devoted to the socio-economic development of the region.

To obtain candid responses and objective assessments, the experts were guaranteed anonymity.

The mass survey of the population was conducted online using Yandex Forms. The sample comprised 400 persons², with a spontaneous, quota-based sampling design. Quotas were set by geographic criterion (residence in the Arkhangelsk Region – urban or rural population), gender, and age. The confidence interval is 95%, and the statistical margin of error does not exceed 5%.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the approach proposed by the authors, which combines a perspective on the specific features of a northern region's socio-economic development through the lens of project management principles and strategic orientations, together with the data from an original sociological study based on a mass survey of the population and expert interviews.

Research findings

A brief characterization of the socio-economic situation of the Arkhangelsk Region as a northern region of Russia

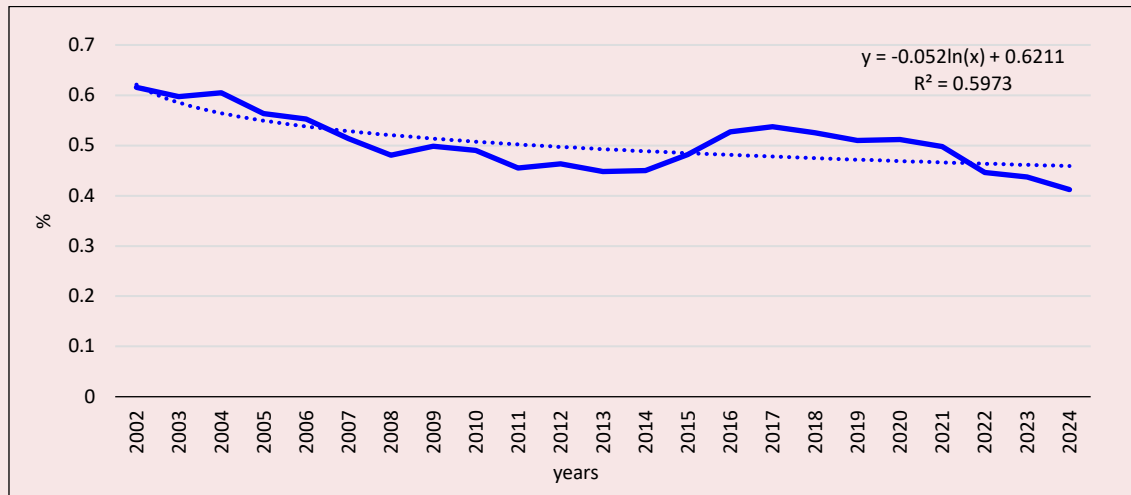
The Arkhangelsk Region is located in the northwest of European Russia and ranks among the largest constituent entities of the Russian Federation by territory (the region's area is roughly 413,000 sq. km)³. Yet, despite its considerable size, the region's share of gross regional product (GRP) in the country's economy is relatively small – for the past 20 years it has not exceeded 0.5–0.6% (Fig. 1).

The share of the Arkhangelsk Region's GRP in Russia's gross domestic product (GDP) exhibits a persistent downward trend, which is also characteristic of the demographic situation (Fig. 2).

² In determining the size of the sample, V.I. Paniotto's formula was used, according to which the minimum sufficient number of respondents is 384 persons.

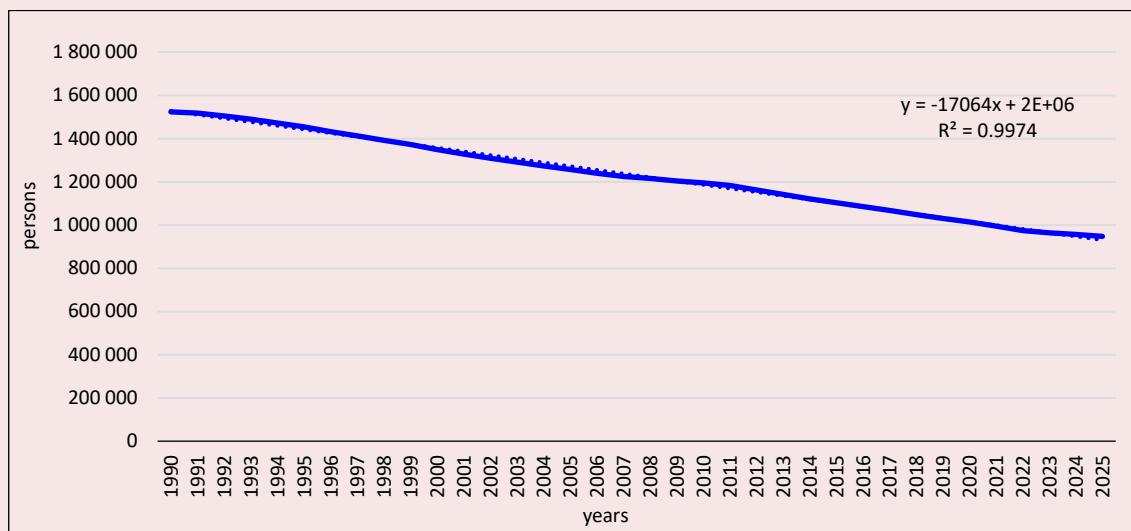
³ Regions of Russia. Socio-Economic Indicators. 2025: Statistical Compendium. Rosstat. Moscow, 2025. 1035 p. Available at: https://www.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Region_Pokaz_2025.pdf (accessed: 07.03.2026).

Figure 1. Share of the Arkhangelsk Region's GRP in the economy of the Russian Federation, %



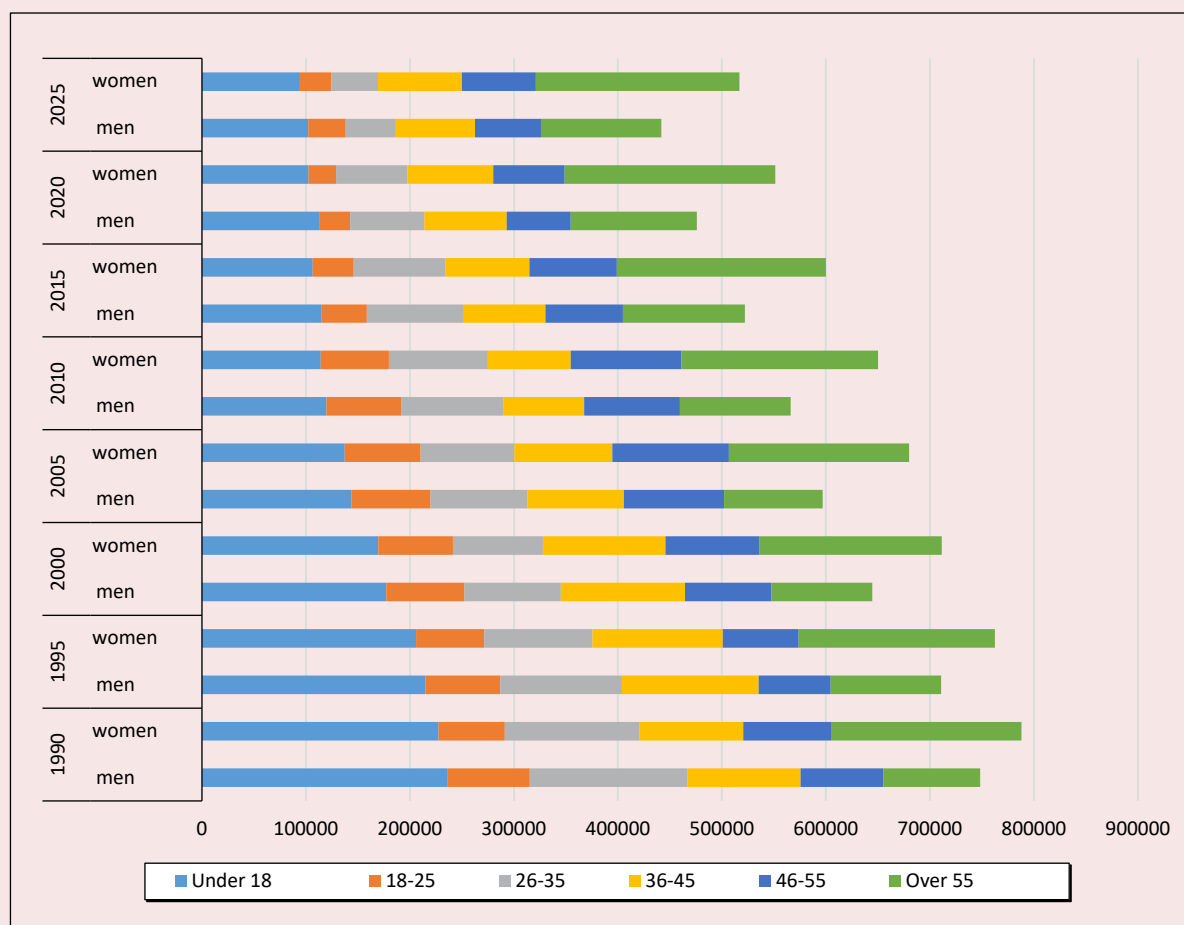
Compiled from: National Accounts. Rosstat. Available at: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/statistics/accounts> (accessed: 07.03.2026); Over the past five years, GRP in the Arkhangelsk Region has increased by 50 percent and by the end of 2024 amounted to 834 billion rubles. United Russia. Available at: <https://arkhangelsk.er.ru/activity/news/za-poslednie-pyat-let-obem-vrp-v-arkhangelskoj-oblasti-uvelichilsya-na-50-procentov-i-po-itogam-2024-sostavil-834-milliarda-rublej> (accessed: 07.03.2026).

Figure 2. Population of the Arkhangelsk Region, persons



Compiled from: Resident population – women by age as of January 1. EMISS. Available at: <https://fedstat.ru/indicator/33459> (accessed: 07.03.2026); Resident population – men by age as of January 1. EMISS. Available at: <https://fedstat.ru/indicator/31548> (accessed: 07.03.2026).

Figure 3. Gender-age structure of the population of the Arkhangelsk Region, 1990–2025, persons



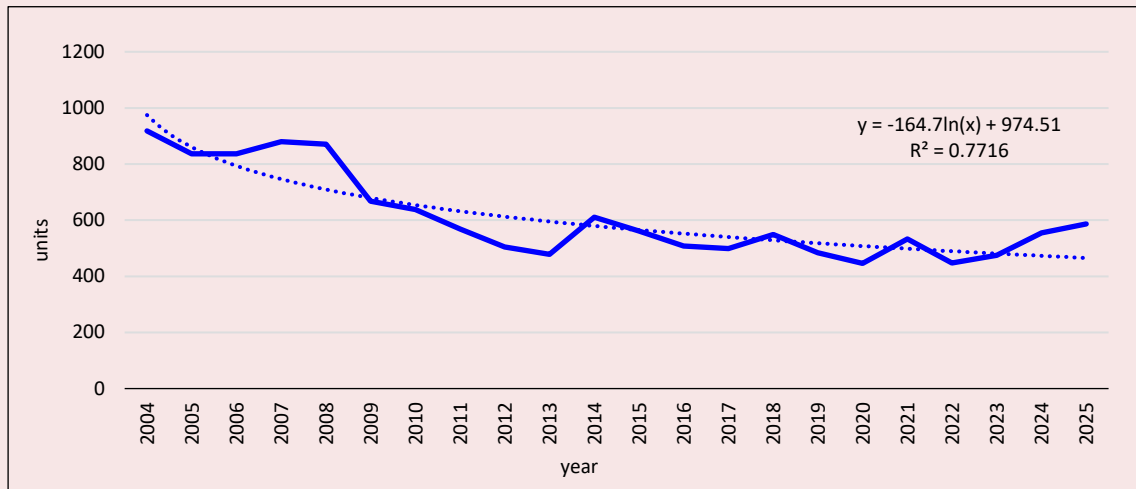
Compiled from: Resident population – women by age as of January 1. EMISS. Available at: <https://fedstat.ru/indicator/33459> (accessed: 04.03.2026); Resident population – men by age as of January 1. EMISS. Available at: <https://fedstat.ru/indicator/31548> (accessed: 07.03.2026).

From 1990 to 2025, the population declined by nearly one-third. It should be noted that the coefficient of determination for this indicator is 0.997, attesting to the stability of this process and the urgent need to adopt measures aimed at retaining residents within the region. The most pronounced outflow of population from the Arkhangelsk Region is observed in rural areas, which is linked to a low standard of living and unfavorable conditions for livestock farming and crop cultivation (Kuznetsova, Vasilyeva, 2023).

Figure 3 depicts the gender-age structure of the population of Arkhangelsk Region.

Since 1990, the age structure of those residing in the region has undergone significant changes: as the population ages, a clear skewing toward the female gender becomes apparent. It is noteworthy that, among women, the cohort “55 years and older” has predominated in the age categories under consideration since 2000; for men, this trend becomes observable with a slight lag (since 2015). Another adverse factor in the dynamics of the region’s gender-age structure is the declining size of the “under 18” and “18–25” age groups. Notably, since 2015, the “18–25” and “26–35” age groups have accounted for the smallest shares of

Figure 4. Number of enterprises and organizations, units*



*Excluding small and midsize enterprises, budgetary organizations, banks, insurance companies, and other financial and credit organizations.

Compiled from: Enterprises and organizations. Arkhstat. Available at: <https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/organizations11001> (accessed: 02.03.2026); Number of enterprises and organizations in the Arkhangelsk Region. EMISS. Available at: <https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31148> (accessed: 07.03.2026).

the region's population – a phenomenon that can be readily explained both by demographic troughs (Fauzer, Smirnov, 2025) and by the migration attitudes of young people (Podoplekin, 2024).

One reason for net out-migration in the region (according to the mass survey conducted by the authors in 2025) is the low level of wages. Moreover, young people point to a lack of career advancement prospects, a perception that is borne out by official statistics. *Figure 4* examines the dynamics of the number of enterprises and organizations in the Arkhangelsk Region.

Since the number of enterprises and organizations exhibits a downward trend, this, in turn, leads to a reduction in the number of jobs (*Fig. 5*). It should be noted that the average number of employees in the region is relatively stable as a share of the population (amounting to roughly 33–34% of the latter). At the same time, both indicators have declined markedly.

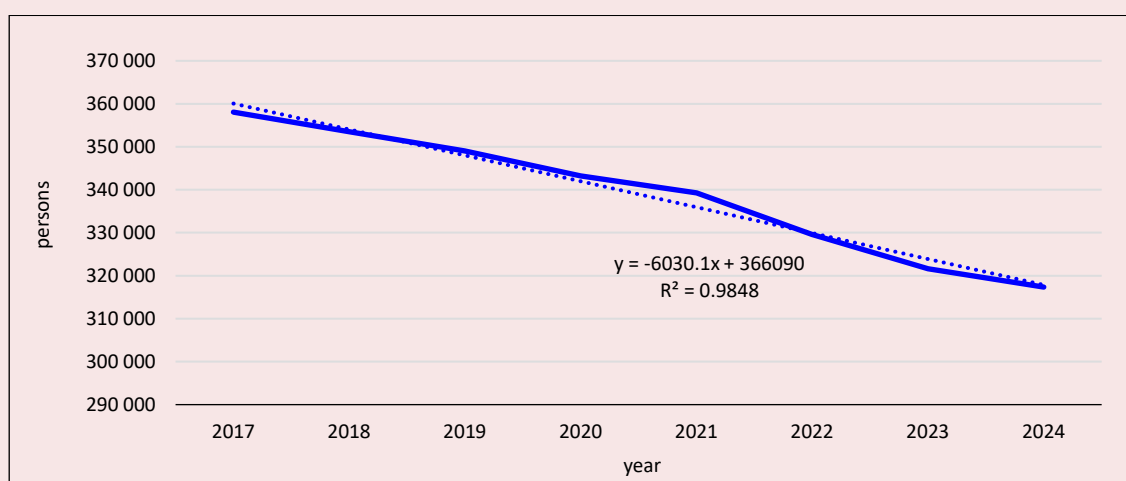
Given the above, it must be acknowledged that the socio-economic situation of the Arkhangelsk Region exhibits a persistent trend of deterioration across key indicators, which demands serious, well-founded, and effective managerial efforts on the part of authorities at both the regional and federal levels.

Strategic orientations and the potential of project-based governance

Naturally, as in every constituent entity of the Russian Federation, a number of strategic documents are in effect in the Arkhangelsk Region that define the vector of the region's socio-economic development and contain a set of target (planned) indicators. *Table 1* presents the results of a comparative analysis of the planned development indicators for the region and their actual values according to official statistics for 2023.

Despite the observed excess of the actual GRP figure over the plan, it would be unwarranted to speak of any genuine economic growth in the

Figure 5. Average number of employees (excluding external part-time workers) across the full range of organizations for the reporting period, persons



Compiled from: Average number of employees (excluding external part-time workers) across the full range of organizations for the reporting period in the Arkhangelsk Region. EMISS. Available at: <https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/57848> (accessed: 07.03.2026)

Table 1. Analysis of socio-economic development indicators of the Arkhangelsk Region for 2023

Indicator	2023 plan	2023 actual	Deviation from planned values
Resident population, annual average, thousand persons	1059.64	960.1	-99.54
Net migration, persons	-672	-1383	-711.00
Natural population increase, persons	-4899	-6351	-1452.00
GRP at current basic prices, billion rubles	703.74	761.59	+57.85
Average annual number of employed persons in the economy, thousand persons	499.96	460.50	-39.46
Unemployment rate (ILO methodology), %	6.32	5.60	-0.72

Compiled from: Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of the Arkhangelsk Region to 2035 (approved by Arkhangelsk Region Law 57-5-OZ of February 18, 2019). Available at: <https://portal.dvinaland.ru/upload/iblock/f91/Стратегия%20развития%20Архангельской%20области%20до%202035%20года.pdf> (accessed: 07.03.2026); Regions of Russia. Socio-Economic Indicators. 2025. 1,035 p. Available at: https://www.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Region_Pokaz_2025.pdf (accessed: 07.03.2026); Statistical Yearbook of the Arkhangelsk Region. Arkhangelsk, 2025. 169 p. Available at: <https://29.rosstat.gov.ru> (accessed: 07.03.2026).

region, since a substantial portion of the GRP increase was driven by rising prices (inflation) rather than by an expansion in the output of goods and services. This is confirmed by a comparison of the nominal and real dynamics of the indicator: whereas GRP at current basic prices grew from 700.29 billion rubles in 2022 to 761.6 billion rubles

in 2023 (an increase of roughly 8.8%), the physical volume index of GRP at constant prices over the same period was close to 100%⁴, and, according to an official estimate by the Arkhangelsk Region Government, real GRP growth in comparable prices amounted to only about 1% in 2023⁵.

⁴ Statistical Yearbook of the Arkhangelsk Region, Excluding the Nenets Autonomous Area: Statistical Compendium. Arkhangelsk, 2025. 162 p. Available at: <https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/> (accessed: 07.03.2026).

⁵ The head of Pomorye reported that industrial output would grow by 2.5% thanks to the timber industry complex and machine building. Available at: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/20874541> (accessed: 07.04.2026).

The demographic situation in the region is unfolding worse than projected: the resident population fell short of the plan by 99.54 thousand persons, while the natural population decrease deepened and net migration outflow increased. The labor market was characterized by a decline in the average annual number of employed persons in the economy, accompanied by a concurrent decrease in the unemployment rate, which may point to the existence of systemic problems, hidden unemployment, and the spread of informal forms of employment.

As is well known, an effective means of enhancing a region's economic performance is to increase the investment attractiveness of the territory and to implement a portfolio of investment projects (Myakshin et al., 2024). In this connection, expert interviews conducted by the authors in 2025 served as the basis for identifying three groups of investment projects of the greatest strategic importance for the Arkhangelsk Region as a whole and for the Arkhangelsk agglomeration in particular.

1. "Transport and logistics projects" envision a development scenario for the region that is contingent on the implementation of major projects in transport infrastructure and transport logistics (the Northern Sea Route, the deep-water port of Arkhangelsk, bridges, and the like).

The Northern Sea Route (NSR) holds a special place among the transport projects not only of the Arkhangelsk Region but of the entire Arctic macroregion. Moreover, it is the shortest route connecting the regions of the Russian Far East with the European part of the country, and it passes close to both already developed and potentially exploitable mineral deposits. Given the exhaustibility of natural resources, the NSR provides an additional impetus for the development of the territories adjacent to its route (Muraev, Sushko, 2025).

The deep-water port of Arkhangelsk will be located on a 239-hectare site near the Kuysky Lighthouse, north of the Mud'yug Island, five

kilometers from the village of Kuya. Its berthing front will be about 2.5 kilometers long, designed for the simultaneous handling of up to nine vessels with a maximum draft of 14.5 meters, a deadweight of 75,000 tons, and a container capacity of 5,000 TEU. The port is slated to have five terminals with a combined capacity of 31.4 million tons: a container terminal with a capacity of 14.9 million tons; a general cargo terminal at 3.9 million tons; a fertilizer terminal at 5.5 million tons; a bulk terminal at 4.7 million tons; and a bunkering terminal at 2.4 million tons. A motor road from Arkhangelsk and railway approaches are planned to be built to the new port. Between 2028 and 2035, 79.5 billion rubles are expected to be invested in the construction of the first stage of the general and container cargo transshipment terminal and the overall on-site port infrastructure, which will result in the creation of 500 new jobs⁶.

2. "Resource base utilization projects" rely mainly on timber processing, diamond mining, the extraction of other minerals and bioresources, and the use of recreational areas for the development of the tourism industry.

At present, against the backdrop of external challenges and threats, a decline in demand for Arkhangelsk timber and forest products from the Collective West is being observed, generating an oversupply on the Russian market and leading to falling prices. These changes are having a negative impact on the financial health of enterprises in the Arkhangelsk Region, whose economy depends on the forestry complex (Muraev, Sushko, 2025). Diamond mining also plays a significant role in the economy of the Arkhangelsk Region, and the further development of this sector depends not only on geological exploration but also on the geopolitical situation (Onyakova, 2020; Voronina,

⁶ The Arkhangelsk deep-water port project attracts business. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20250619/tsybulskiy-2024039599.html>; A deep-water port is planned to be built near Arkhangelsk. Available at: <https://29.ru/text/economics/2025/12/04/76153691/> (accessed: 12.03.2026).

Table 2. Key investment projects of the Arkhangelsk Region

Transport and logistics projects	Resource base utilization projects	MIC and shipbuilding projects
1. Construction of the deep-water area of the seaport of Arkhangelsk (including construction of the first stage of the terminal for handling general and container cargoes and the common on-site port facilities) 2. Construction of a plant for the production of reinforced concrete caissons and other reinforced concrete products	1. Technical upgrading of a paper-making machine with increased capacity for the production of lightweight paper products at the board mill 2. Establishment of a sawmilling and pellet production facility 3. Reconstruction of key production facilities, including the modernization and expansion of production at the Arkhangelsk Pulp and Paper Mill. 4. Creation of a private industrial park specializing in import substitution in the pulp-and-paper industry and the timber industry complex 5. Construction of a forest selection-and-seed-breeding center 6. Establishment of a facility for harvesting biological raw materials (wild berries) and their deep processing for the production of food and pharmaceutical products	1. Construction of a ship-repair (shipbuilding) yard consisting of four workshops (assembly, painting, slipway, and turning shops), a warehouse, and a berthing line, enabling a full range of ship repair and new vessel construction works 2. Construction of four ice-strengthened passenger vessels (Project REGK.126) 3. Construction of a crab fishing vessel of Project KSP01 "Kildin" for the exploitation of aquatic biological resources in the Northern Basin
Source: On the Approval of Long-Term Plans for the Comprehensive Socio-Economic Development of a Number of Agglomerations for the Period up to 2035: RF Government Resolution 3014-r of October 27, 2025. Available at: http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202510270034?index=80# (accessed: 12.03.2026).		

Varfolomeev, 2025). According to the experts, one of the important directions for the region's economic development is the tourism industry. At present, the tourism potential of the Arkhangelsk Region is largely untapped and insufficiently developed. The region's tourism sector requires comprehensive efforts on the part of the authorities and business to improve the infrastructural environment, to develop natural and cultural initiatives (including the territories of national parks and nature reserves), and to create conditions for enhancing the efficiency of small businesses and for boosting tourist flows (Myakshin et al., 2021).

3. "Military-industrial complex (MIC) and shipbuilding projects" are primarily linked to the defense industry (spaceport, shipbuilding, ship repair, etc.) and to civilian shipbuilding. It should be noted that shipbuilding and ship repair development projects in the Arkhangelsk Region hold considerable growth potential within the framework of bringing the deep-water port of Arkhangelsk into operation and the transport logistics of the Northern Sea Route.

For each of these groups, identified through expert-analytical techniques, we present examples of key investment projects that have already been approved at the federal level (*Tab. 2*).

Beyond those listed in Table 2, the Arkhangelsk Region authorities are now pinning their hopes on a new project – the world-class university campus "Arctic Star". To quote the region's governor, A.V. Tsybulsky: "...Another project that ranks among our top priorities in planning the region's socio-economic development is the construction of the world-class inter-university campus 'Arctic Star.' By 2027, we should have a modern campus that will become both a scientific hub, incorporating some 40 new laboratories, and a part of a contemporary urban environment offering living accommodations for students and faculty alike..."⁷

⁷ Tsybulsky: solving the problem of uneven development within the concept of developing anchor settlements. Available at: <https://www.echosevera.ru/2025/12/10/6939135c6b128174380a3ffa.html> (accessed: 13.03.2026).

Thus, the regional authorities have crafted a fairly thorough and complete “vision of the future” for the Arkhangelsk Region, one that takes into account the investment projects that can be implemented. At the same time, given the time lag in economic returns inherent to investments and the fact that a number of projects are either at the pre-investment stage or in the initial phases of implementation, there is little reason to expect a significant improvement in the socio-economic indicators of the Arkhangelsk Region in the medium term.

Social expectations: findings from the sociological survey of the population

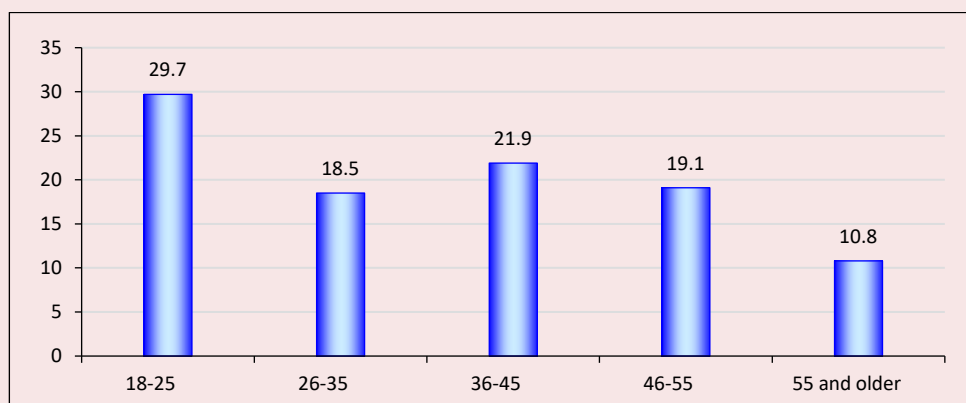
In 2025, the authors conducted a mass survey of residents of the Arkhangelsk Region, the aim of which was to capture subjective assessments of the current socio-economic situation in the country and the region and to identify the popular vision of the key directions for the territory’s socio-economic development. The sample comprised 400 persons, with a spontaneous, quota-based sampling design (urban or rural population of the Arkhangelsk Region, gender-age composition of respondents).

The ratio of urban (78%) to rural (22%) population in the sample roughly mirrors that found in the population of the Arkhangelsk Region – the sample reliably represents both territorial groups of the region’s residents. Owing to the specific features of the data collection technique (an online survey), the distribution by gender is skewed toward women (women account for 62%, men for 38%), while the age distribution is centered around the working-age population of middle age, with a slight asymmetry favoring the under-25 age cohort and a smaller share of the 55+ age group in the sample compared to the general population (*Fig. 6*). The latter is related to the relatively weak digitalization of daily life among the older age group of respondents.

Let us turn to the migration attitudes of the population in *Figure 7*.

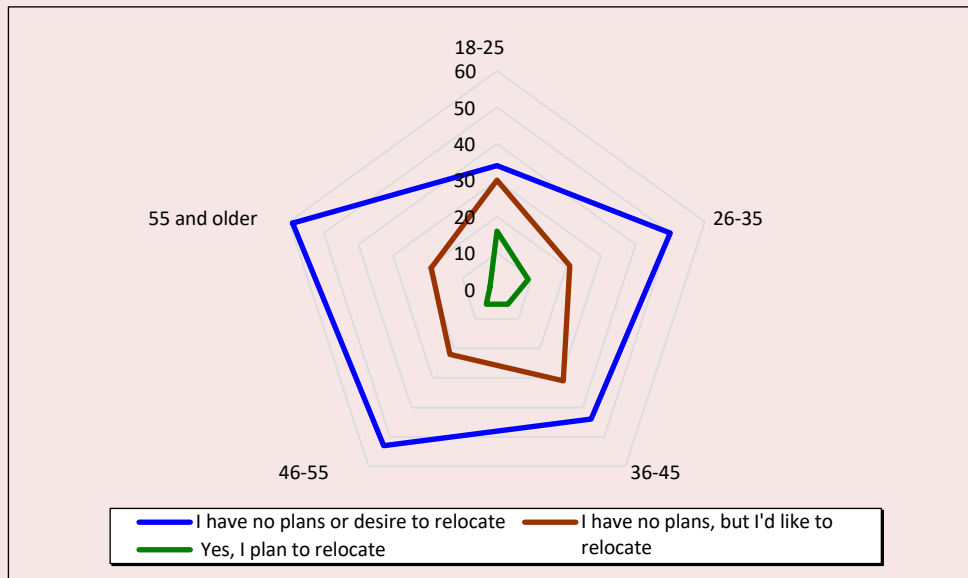
The majority of respondents across all age groups have no plans or desire to relocate. The weakest negative migration attitudes are observed among the older generation. Plans to relocate become more concrete and exhibit a growing tendency toward implementation only in the younger age categories. *Figure 8* examines the reasons behind the desire to move to another region.

Figure 6. Distribution of respondents by age cohort, %



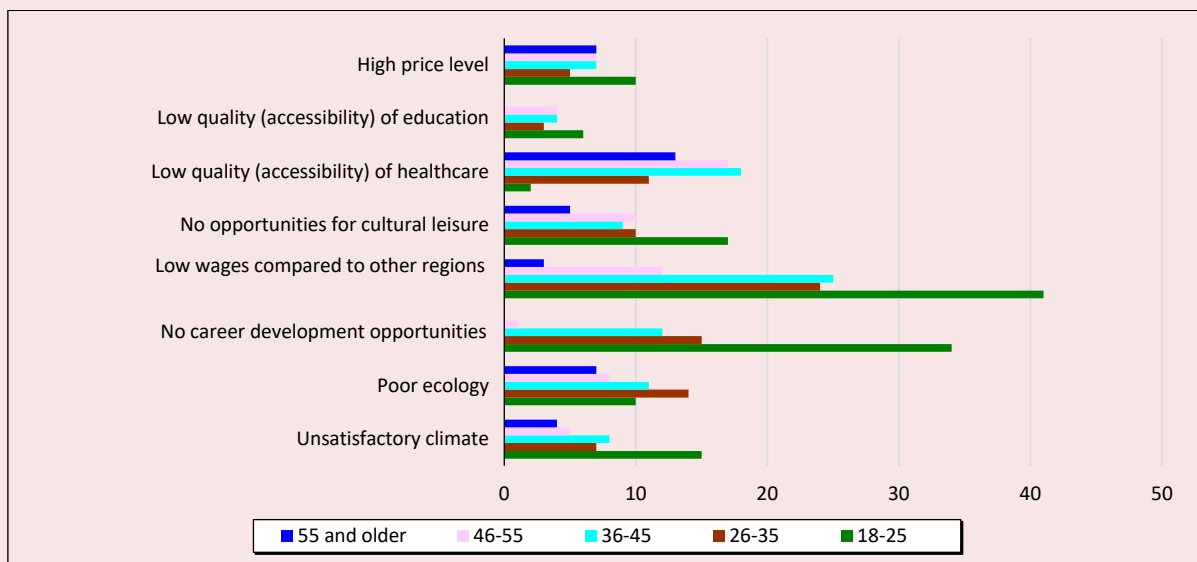
Compiled from: results of the sociological survey.

Figure 7. Migration attitudes of the population, number of responses*



* Respondents were asked to choose one answer.
Compiled from: results of the sociological survey.

Figure 8. Age-specific breakdown of reasons for the migration attitudes of the region's residents, number of responses*



* Respondents were asked to choose no more than three answers.
Compiled from: results of the sociological survey.

For young people, low wages and the lack of career advancement opportunities carry the greatest weight as migration factors. For the older generation, the quality and accessibility of medical care are of great importance. It is noteworthy that the harsh climate does not play a substantial role on the list of reasons, which may suggest that socio-economic factors predominate over natural-ecological ones in shaping migration attitudes. In turn, economic reasons (factors) carry greater weight than social ones. Next, let us examine the grounds on which people choose to remain in the region of residence (*Fig. 9*).

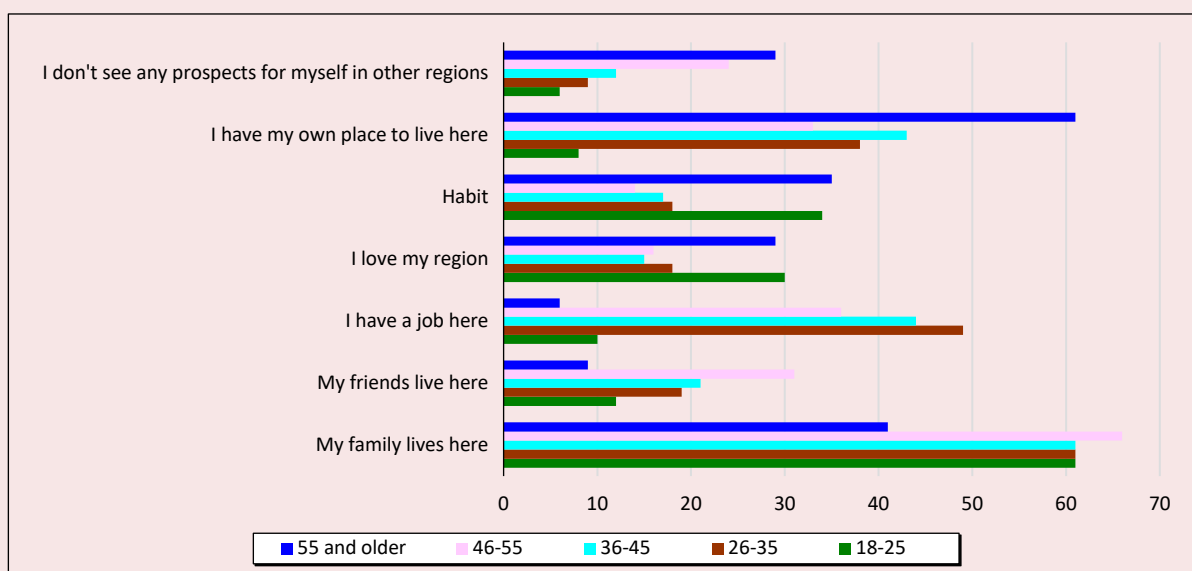
For the majority of respondents, the principal motive for remaining in the region of residence is the presence of family. This is entirely natural and understandable, since, as studies show, family constitutes the greatest value for all age groups of the population (Tsalko, 2024).

The second most popular response explaining the intention to reside permanently is the fact that the respondents own their own housing. In third

place on the list of reasons, working-age residents of the region placed “having a job”. A noteworthy finding is the pronounced tendency for the choice of the answer “I see no prospects for myself in other regions” to rise with the age of the respondents. It is worth noting that nearly 30% of young people cited love for their place of residence as one of the reasons for staying in the region, a finding that is quite consistent with the results presented in (Podoplekin, 2024).

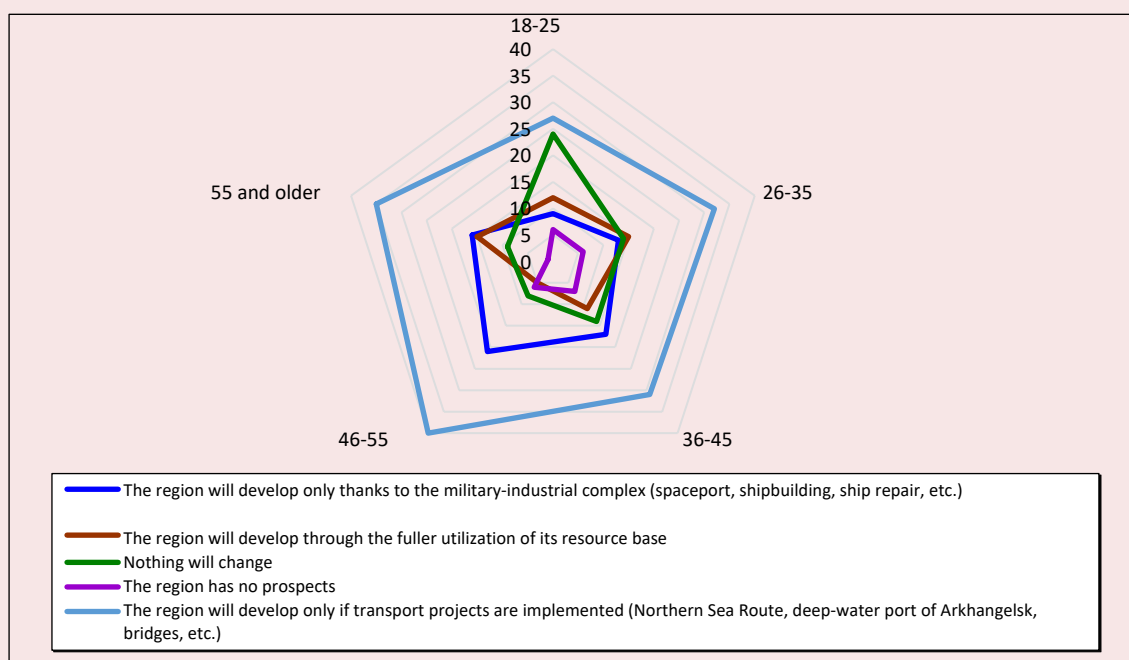
Let us compare our findings with the conclusions of researchers from Petrozavodsk. According to their study, roughly 36% of young people in the Arkhangelsk Region wish to stay (Simakova et al., 2024); according to our data, that figure exceeds 40%. One reason for youth out-migration in most of Russia’s northern and Arctic regions is the lack of opportunities to obtain higher education in one’s hometown. In the case of the Arkhangelsk Region, this is not entirely accurate, since several higher education institutions offering a wide range of specialties operate in the regional

Figure 9. Age-specific breakdown of the reasons underlying the population’s intentions to reside permanently in the region, number of responses*



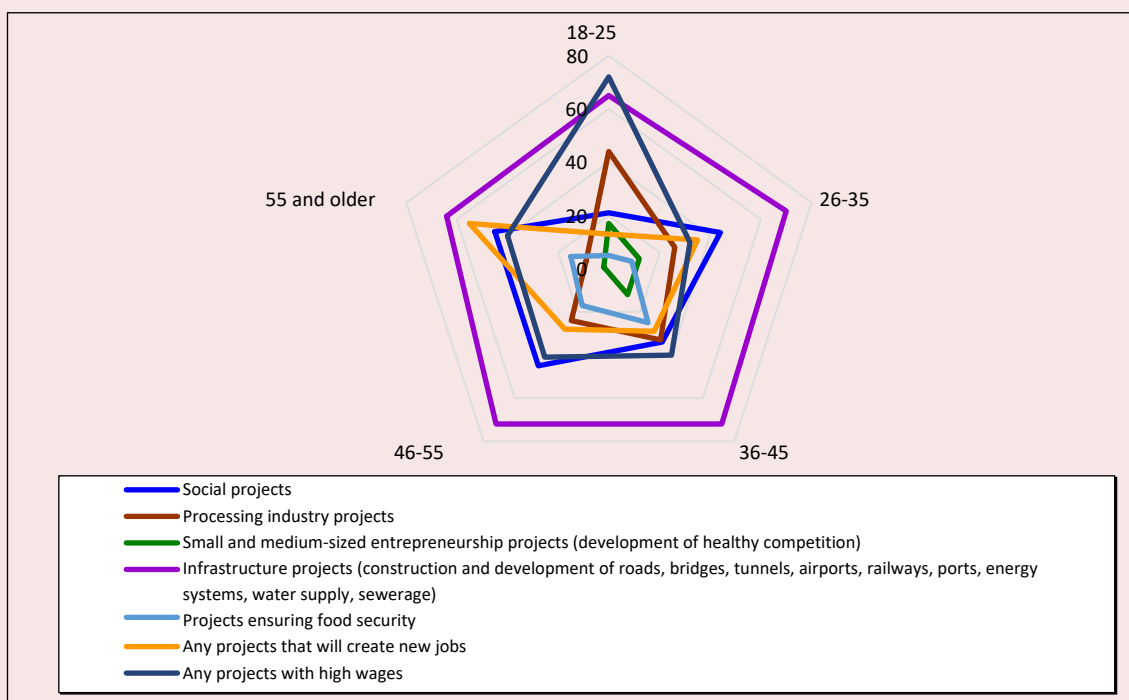
* Respondents were asked to choose no more than three answers.
Compiled from: results of the sociological survey.

Figure 10. Age profile of the population's assessments regarding the development prospects of the Arkhangelsk Region, number of responses*



* Respondents were asked to choose one answer.
Compiled from: results of the sociological survey.

Figure 11. Age profile of the population's assessments regarding the projects needed for the development of the Arkhangelsk Region, number of responses*



* Respondents were asked to choose no more than three answers.
Compiled from: results of the sociological survey.

center. According to our data, young people in Arkhangelsk who express a desire to move are less focused on actually relocating: only one in three is taking any steps to realize their migration plans. In the North and the Arctic as a whole, by contrast, this indicator for youth is far higher – two out of every three who wish to move are taking steps to do so (Simakova, 2024). An analysis of the survey findings shows that young people in the Arkhangelsk Region are more inclined to reside in their home region than are the youth of other northern and Arctic constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

It should be noted that researchers' interest in the younger generation is not accidental, for it is young people who form the basis of the region's future labor potential. At present, however, the labor potential of Russia's northern regions is characterized by a number of negative trends, the causes of which include adolescent morbidity linked to the specifics of single-industry settlements; unemployment among young qualified specialists; a low level of residential comfort; the low income of a large number of families with children; and the selective nature of measures in the sphere of social and labor partnership (Korchak, 2022).

One solution to reducing the migration attitudes of young people could be more targeted and in-depth informational work on the part of the authorities regarding opportunities for self-realization and the preferences available to residents of the North and the Arctic (Stepus, Rodion, 2025), as well as the preservation of existing higher and secondary educational institutions that contribute to the diversification of the regional labor market (Fauzer, Smirnov, 2024).

Next, the survey sought to determine how the residents of the Arkhangelsk Region perceive the current economic situation and how they assess the prospects for the region's socio-economic development (*Fig. 10, 11*).

The majority of the region's residents (41.25% of respondents), regardless of age, predominantly see transport (infrastructure) projects as the driver of the region's development. Among the population aged 36 and older, MIC projects rank second, while among those under 36, resource base utilization projects take second place. It is worth noting that 6.5% of those surveyed see no development prospects at all. Within the 18–25 age group, the opinion that nothing will change for the region in the future stands out sharply. To further detail the assessments of development prospects, the questionnaire included an additional question: "What projects does the Arkhangelsk Region need to ensure its socio-economic development?" (*Fig. 11*).

The majority of respondents (more than 60% in every age group) identified infrastructure projects as the most important for the region's development. Projects offering high wages and those in the processing industries are of particular interest to young people aged 18–25. At the same time, high-wage projects also carry considerable weight in the responses of other age groups. The greatest attention to projects that would create new jobs is shown by the "55 and older" age group; other respondents regard such projects with caution. Several individuals noted that the new jobs are quite likely to be filled by shift workers or migrants. For the success of such projects from the standpoint of the region's social development, programs aimed at attracting local youth are needed. In addition to the above, social projects are of great interest across all groups (with the exception of the 18–25 group). *Figure 11* does not show extractive projects that drew the attention of fewer than 5% of those surveyed.

Within the context of the importance of transport (infrastructure) projects that the region's residents particularly highlight, we offer several observations drawn from the work of Russian and international scholars. In examining transport

projects, the condition of the region's roads cannot be overlooked. In the Arkhangelsk Region, only 6% of local roads meet normative requirements, which points to the need not only for their construction and modernization but also for the possibility of alternative transport and multimodal shipping (Kozhevnikov, Patrakova, 2024). That is why implementing all the major projects of the Arkhangelsk Region – whether in extractive industries, manufacturing, tourism, or elsewhere – is impossible without preparing and adapting the region's transport and logistics infrastructure (Tutygin et al., 2024).

In connection with climate change (global warming) and the shifting of geopolitical vectors, the prospects for using northern ports within the framework of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) are increasing. International scholars forecast with an 80% probability that the Arctic Ocean will become ice-free in summer by the mid-2030s (Chen et al., 2025). Even now, foreign partners view the NSR as a third transport corridor alongside the Suez Canal and the Chinese railway (Zhou et al., 2024). With the implementation of the NSR project, freight delivery times between Northwest Europe and Northeast Asia during the summer-autumn season could be reduced by 30–40%. Yet today, the NSR undoubtedly finds it difficult to compete with the Suez Canal, not only because of the harsh climate but also owing to the remoteness (and, in part, the poor equipment) of the ports. This is largely due to the need to transship cargo from one vessel to another or to unload goods for onward delivery by land transport (Hermann et al., 2022). At the same time, international specialists note that, for goods with a high time value, the NSR could become a viable alternative to the overland route (Pruyn, Hassel, 2022). However, the implementation of the NSR project faces a number of difficulties, the most significant of which is the challenging ice conditions that hinder vessel transit without the assistance of icebreakers. At present, the most

active year-round shipping activity is observed at the ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk (Gunnarsson, 2021).

The port of Arkhangelsk plays a fairly substantial role in the implementation of the NSR project, since it supports not only the transport of cargo linked to Arctic projects but also the transport of locally produced goods – a prominent example being the forestry complex. In the context of the port of Arkhangelsk's expansion, a likely increase in cargo traffic should be taken into account, including the development of the Pavlovskoye deposit and the transshipment of cargo from the Republic of Karelia, the Republic of Komi, and the Vologda Region. Moreover, the port of Arkhangelsk is situated at a distance from the borders of other states, which makes it a promising alternative for cargo transshipment (Muraev, Sushko, 2025).

Despite the fact that Arkhangelsk has historically been associated with maritime transport, small aviation plays an equally important social role, since certain remote locations (including island territories) can only be reached by air. Today, there is an acute shortage of small aircraft, caused by the aging of the aircraft fleet and the need to replace a number of airplanes with new ones (Nosyrev, 2024).

Let us examine the opinion of the region's population regarding the current economic situation in Russia and the Arkhangelsk Region, as well as the changes that have taken place in the economy over the 2022–2025 period (*Fig. 12, 13*).

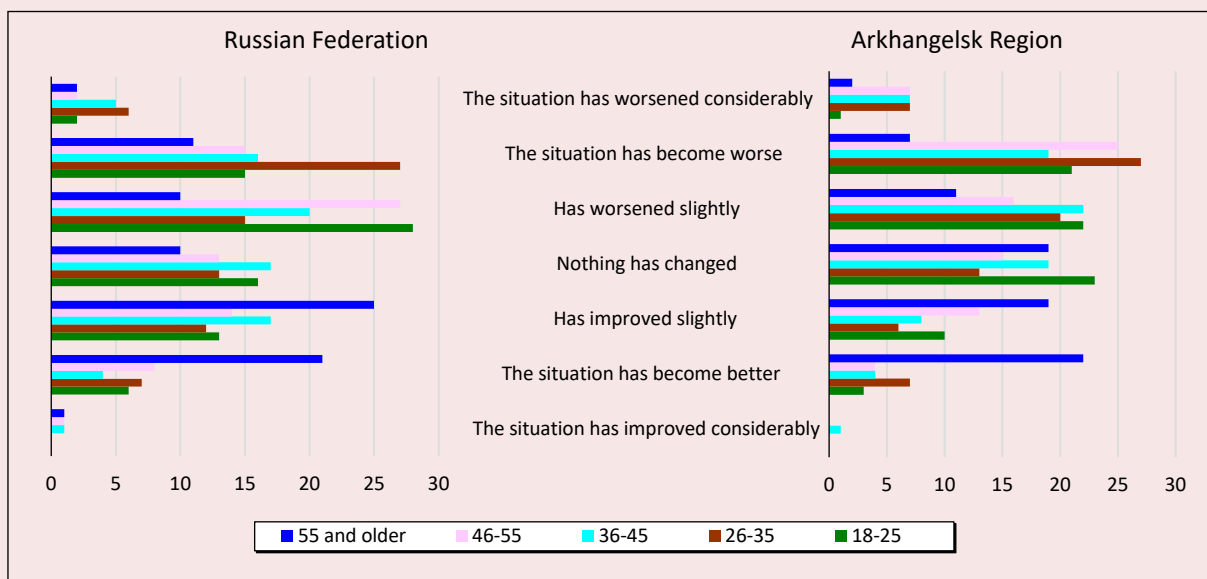
The majority of respondents believe that, at present, Russia as a whole (about 50% of responses) and the region in particular (about 40% of responses) are characterized by an average or satisfactory economic situation. At the same time, those surveyed (especially the population aged 45–55) perceive the current state of the Arkhangelsk Region in a more negative light compared with Russia as a whole. On this issue, respondents older than 55 stand out sharply for their positive outlook among

Figure 12. Age profile of the population's assessments of the current economic situation, number of responses*



* Respondents were asked to choose one answer.
Compiled from: results of the sociological survey.

Figure 13. Age profile of the population's assessments of the changes in the economic situation in the region and the country over the 2022–2025 period, number of responses*

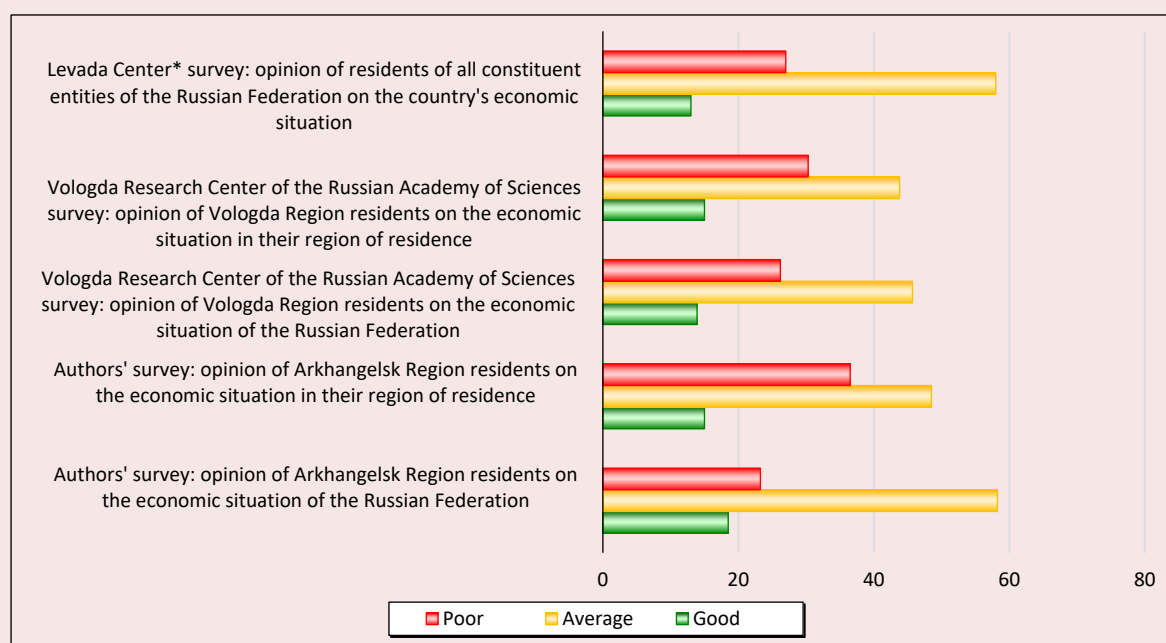


* Respondents were asked to choose one answer.
Compiled from: results of the sociological survey.

the other age groups (negative sentiments are present in fewer than 10% of those surveyed in this category). It should be noted that the assessments obtained are quite similar to the responses of experts in the fields of science, state and municipal governance, and business, as presented in (Khadyko, 2024).

In terms of dynamics, the majority of those surveyed observe that the situation in the Arkhangelsk Region has deteriorated to a greater extent over the past three years than it has across the country as a whole. Young people and those of middle age hold more pessimistic assessments than the older generation. Our results are fully

Figure 14. Respondents' opinions on the current economic situation in the Russian Federation and in the region of residence, %



Compiled from: Assessments of the economic and political situation in Russia in January 2026. Levada-Center*. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/2026/02/19/otsenki-ekonomicheskogo-i-politicheskogo-polozheniya-rossii-v-yanvare-2026-goda/print/> (accessed: 03/14/2026); (Morev, Leonidova, 2025); results of the sociological survey.

* Levada-Center has been included in the register of foreign agents.

comparable with the findings of a number of international researchers. For instance, American scholars have found that older people are more satisfied with life, experience stress and anxiety less often, view the world more positively, and react more calmly to negative life situations⁸.

Despite the fact that the main value for all generations is family, other value orientations vary considerably across age groups (Sergeev, 2023). Young people tend to gravitate toward the values of independence of thought, whereas the older generation leans toward traditionality (Fedotova,

2017). Russia's older generation lived through the collapse of the USSR; it is the least demanding of life and the most susceptible to the influence of mass media.

Similar questions about Russia's economic situation were asked in the course of mass surveys conducted by researchers in Vologda (Morev, Leonidova, 2025) and by Moscow-based specialists (Fig. 14).

The regional cross-section of residents' opinions (Vologda and Arkhangelsk regions) about the economic situation in their place of residence shows a clear predominance of poor assessments over good ones. The majority of those surveyed give an average rating to the current economic situation. At the same time, respondents in both the Arkhangelsk Region and the Vologda Region assess the economic situation of the Russian Federation more positively than that of their own regions. The Arkhangelsk

⁸ Psychologists have found that older people view life more positively than young people. Available at: <https://www.mk.ru/science/2016/03/01/psikhologi-vyyasnili-chto-pozhilye-lyudi-smotryat-na-zhizn-pozitivnee-molodezhi.html> (accessed: 18.03.2026); It has been scientifically proven that old age is a joy. Available at: <https://www.mk.ru/science/2016/08/30/nauchno-dokazano-chto-starost-radost.html> (accessed: 18.03.2026).

Region and the Vologda Region differ substantially in socio-economic terms (for example, in the 2024 Russian socio-economic development ranking of the 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, the Vologda Region held 32nd place, while the Arkhangelsk Region held 59th), yet the residents of these regions display similar evaluative opinions⁹. At the same time, this similarity should be treated as preliminary: the two regions' economies differ significantly in their sectoral structure (ferrous metallurgy, chemical production, and agriculture dominate in the Vologda Region, whereas the forestry complex, shipbuilding, and machine building are dominant in the Arkhangelsk Region), in their levels of fiscal capacity, and in their positions in the socio-economic development ranking. The closeness of the population's subjective assessments should therefore be interpreted with caution – rather, as a reflection of general macroeconomic and other factors. A proper explanation of this phenomenon, one that accounts for the structural differences between the economies, could well become a subject for further academic research.

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⁹ Rating of Russian regions by socio-economic position. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20250623/rejting-2023127995.html> (accessed: 15.04.2026).

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