

FROM THE EDITOR

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NEW APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING REGIONAL ISSUES

The development of any territory is shaped not only by internal factors but also depends to a significant extent on geopolitical and other transformations unfolding across the global economy. Investigating the development challenges of territorial systems at various hierarchical levels requires an understanding of these trends. In keeping with the journal's new concept, whose key tenets were outlined in the previous issue, the "Monitoring of Changes" section has been expanded to include information on global economic developments. In our view, this addition provides a more objective lens through which to examine domestic problems.

Russian scholars are actively seeking approaches to address some of these challenges for practical application by regional and municipal authorities. The current issue features articles whose authors focus on a range of topics: the development of small and medium-sized towns, financial instruments for regional development, growth prospects for the chemical industry's impact on territories, ensuring the economic security of oil- and gas-producing regions, spatial heterogeneity in the educational component of human capital, and the socio-economic determinants of regional demographic potential.

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Specifically, *M.A. Lebedeva* examines Russia's small and medium-sized towns where the extractive sector dominates the local economy. The author identifies the most common problems afflicting this category of towns – extremely weak economic diversification, a shortage of investment, population decline, and others – and formulates practical recommendations for transforming these towns into regional growth poles.

R.V. Badylevich and *M.V. Ulchenko* propose social bonds as an instrument for financing projects within a region's social sectors. Their study establishes that this instrument holds considerable promise for addressing such tasks at the regional level. They also identify the positive effects that can be realized through its practical implementation, as well as the obstacles that currently constrain its use.

M.K. Malyshev, *E.V. Borisov*, and *D.S. Goncharuk* present an analysis of chemical manufacturing. They reveal the industry's growing role in generating regional tax revenues, assess its impact on the host territory, and outline its future development prospects.

The imposition of sanctions on Russia by Western nations has led to a decline in export deliveries and restricted access to global technologies and financial resources, adversely affecting the economic security of both the country and its regions. Accordingly, *I.L. Beilin* sets out to identify approaches for strengthening the economic security of an oil- and gas-producing region. One potential solution to the problem of economic vulnerability, the author argues, lies in fostering greater interregional cooperation by leveraging the advantages of each region's industrial specialization and

pursuing the rational spatial integration of scientific and innovative potential. The paper presents a model of hierarchical cluster-based interregional integration for the oil- and gas-producing regions of the Volga Federal District, aimed at enhancing the economic security of the territories under study.

D.D. Vavilova and *E.V. Barkhatova* investigate the differentiation of Russian regions in terms of the educational component of human capital. Using clustering methods, the authors develop a typology of regions based on this dimension of human capital and provide a forecast of educational development for the Udmurt Republic – a typical representative of one of the identified clusters.

The work of *A.G. Sukiasyan* is devoted to the study of regional demographic potential. Employing modern statistical and mathematical tools, the author identifies the socio-economic factors that exert the greatest influence on changes in the demographic potential of Russia's regions. Based on the resulting model, a scenario analysis is carried out, confirming the high sensitivity of demographic potential to shifts in socio-economic conditions.

In the section "Monitoring of Changes: Key Trends," *M.A. Sidorov* and *E.V. Lukin* elucidate the economic trends observed in Northwest Russia in 2025, chief among them being a deceleration of economic growth and a pivot toward domestic demand. *M.V. Morev* and *E.E. Leonidova* present the trends in the social well-being of the Vologda Region's population as of February 2026.

It is our hope that the findings generated by these scholars will find practical application in the management of territorial development at both the regional and municipal levels.

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