ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Political Sciences

"A Situational Model of Political and Administrative Decision-Making in the Design and Implementation of National Projects in Contemporary Russia (the Case of VEB.RF)"

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Relevance. According to the Ministry of Finance of Russia, national projects reached 99.6 % budget execution in 2024, the highest level in six years of implementation. In the same year Presidential Decree No. 309 of 7 May 2024 launched a largely redesigned architecture of national projects up to 2030 and with an outlook to 2036. The gap between record formal indicators and the need to rebuild the system itself reveals the limits of the linear programme-and-target model of governance.

National projects involve many stakeholders whose demands often compete, and the administrative system combines formal hierarchies with informal networks of influence. The topic is further sharpened by the platform transformation of development institutions after the 2020 reform, the development of the Far East and the Arctic, and the national goal of digital transformation of public administration.

Research gap. The study builds on theories of decision-making and public administration (H. Simon, C. Lindblom, P. Lawrence and J. Lorsch, M. Moore, J. Kingdon, A. Wildavsky, G. Allison), Russian research on political-administrative relations (A.I. Solovyov, L.V. Smorgunov, O.V. Gaman-Golutvina) and G.P. Shchedrovitsky's system-thought-activity (STA) methodology. Russian political science still lacks a concept linking STA methodology with adaptive governance, a system of genuinely political criteria for assessing national projects, and an account of the platform approach as an institutional form of a situational model.

Object: political and administrative decision-making in the design and implementation of national projects in contemporary Russia.

Subject: models of political and administrative decision-making in national projects based on a synthesis of the situational and platform approaches.

Aim: to develop the conceptual foundations and operational tools of a situational decision-making model for Russia's national projects and, drawing on the activities of VEB.RF, to substantiate the platform approach as its institutional form. Nine research tasks were addressed, from the theoretical foundations of the situational approach to the S-M1-A-M2 model, political performance criteria, a comparison of five national projects and practical recommendations.

Theory and methods. The core theoretical framework is Shchedrovitsky's STA methodology, complemented by Simon's bounded rationality, Lawrence and Lorsch's contingency theory, Moore's public value, Freeman's stakeholder theory, two-sided market and platform ecosystem theory, Wildavsky's politics of the budgetary process and Allison's bureaucratic politics. Methods include systems modelling, comparative analysis, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), case studies, legal analysis and participant observation limited to public strategy sessions.

Empirical base: Russian legislation (Federal Law No. 172-FZ of 28 June 2014; Presidential Decrees No. 204 of 7 May 2018 and No. 309 of 7 May 2024; Government Resolution No. 786 of 26 May 2021), Rosstat data, reports of the Accounts Chamber for 2020–2023 and of the Ministry of Finance on national project spending, national project passports, OECD materials, the UN E-Government Survey 2024 and the VEB.RF Development Strategy to 2030.

Scientific novelty and main propositions. 1. An integrated situational model of political and administrative decision-making (S-M1-A-M2) is developed, combining Shchedrovitsky's STA methodology with the adaptive governance theories of Simon, Lawrence and Lorsch, and Moore. It comprises analysis of the political situation and stakeholder mapping (S), a critical review of the current model (M1), scenario development of alternatives (A) and phased introduction of a new model (M2). Unlike the programme-and-target approach, it allows several scenarios and regular adjustment.

2. Formal indicators — budget execution and compliance with deadlines — are reinterpreted as indirect political indicators of the legitimacy of resource provision and of bureaucratic controllability. On this basis a system of four political criteria and an integral adaptivity index are proposed (IAI = 0.35·PGA + 0.25·BE + 0.20·CQ + 0.20·DC); deviations are treated as symptoms of political processes.

3. An analytical typology of six functional domains of the VEB.RF Group platform (urban environment; industry and technological sovereignty; exports and SMEs; infrastructure; ecology and climate; social development) is formulated, each domain being linked to the national goals of Decree No. 309.

4. The institutional function of the platform approach as a form of implementing the situational model is substantiated: the domain architecture addresses fragmentation of development institutions, the gap between national goals and regional projects, and weak feedback.

5. A comparison of five national projects for 2018–2024 (Healthcare, Demography, Digital Economy, Safe and High-Quality Roads, Science and Universities) using data of the Ministry of Finance, the Accounts Chamber and the Government reveals a gap between formal budget performance and substantive political effectiveness. Applying the model to the Far East and the Arctic and to digital transformation shows that existing tools are constrained mainly by weak institutional mechanisms of coordination and feedback.

Theoretical significance: the study develops the methodology of political and administrative decision-making, introduces the categories of "situational frame", "managerial alternative" and "platform ecosystem" into the theory of public decisions, and offers a political rather than purely technological interpretation of the platform approach.

Practical significance. The model, the political stakeholder matrix and the typology of political risks are designed for federal and regional project offices. The adaptivity index can serve as an additional measure of governance quality within the state programme monitoring system under Government Resolution No. 786 without

amending the regulatory framework. The results can be used in teaching public administration and policy analysis.

Approbation. The results were presented at the international conference "Science for Public Administration in Russia" (RANEPA, 2025), the all-Russian conference on the strategic development of the Tambov Region (2025) and the RANEPA IPACS conference session (2024). Five works have been published, including four articles in journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission (VAK).

Structure. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters (nine sections), a conclusion, a list of abbreviations, a bibliography of 118 sources and Appendix A on the method of calculating the integral adaptivity index.

Keywords: *situational model; political and administrative decisions; national projects; public project design; system-thought-activity methodology; political performance criteria; integral adaptivity index; platform approach; development institutions; VEB.RF.*

