

BUSINESS PROGRAMME

For The Sochi International Investment Forum 2016

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Plenary Session

A New Political Cycle: the Economic Development Agenda

Address by Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev

Sustainable Economic Development

Panel Session

Implementing the Agenda for Economic Development: Modern Management Tools as a Growth Factor

Leaders of countries and regions are paying very close attention to the definition and promotion of economic development priorities. Of great importance is the ability of government at all levels to set and achieve specific aims and effectively implement specific projects, through which an overall economic growth strategy will emerge. How can strategic interventions be 'converted' into targeted, everyday work carried out by federal and regional authorities? Will it be possible to encourage an innovative approach to this work? How can the potential of business and civil society be mobilized?

Sustainable Economic Development

Roundtable

The National Enterprise Initiative: Continuing Progress

Four years ago, the Agency for Strategic Initiatives launched the National Enterprise Initiative (NEI), which aims to radically improve conditions for doing business in Russia. For the first time in Russia's history, entrepreneurs began to work with state bodies and the expert community to develop road maps (action plans for improving the business climate in Russia). Thanks largely to the implementation of these road maps, Russia soared from 120th to 51st place in the World Bank's ease of doing business index. How much simpler is it to do business now? Have the adopted laws been implemented effectively? What types of monitoring tools should be employed to assess project performance? What recent progress has been made with the project, and what still remains to be done?

Sustainable Economic Development

Panel Session

The Cost of Economic Restrictions: Successes and Future Prospects of an 'About-Face'

The upgrade of key industrial assets and devaluation of the national currency have created favourable conditions for developing domestic production. In the current circumstances, the prospect that sanctions could be alleviated or even fully removed demands a search for new approaches to Russia's economic development. The potential increase of Western investors in the Russian market could well place an additional burden on local manufacturers. How can the Russian economy remain competitive if protectionist measures are removed? How can potential new realities be reconciled with the current benchmarks of the Russian economy? How likely is an increase in investment from Europe and Northern America in the event of an end to external disputes?

Tools for Regional Growth

Panel Session

Genius Loci: Effective Local Management and the Balance of Federal, Regional, and Municipal Administration

The region is the basic unit of economic growth. The municipality is the key area which determines quality of life. What adjustments would enable the federal centre, the regions, and the municipalities to work together to solve urgent socioeconomic challenges? How can we ensure that the voices of those living in these areas are heard? How can we best distribute resources and responsibilities? What kind of flexible state and municipal administration models are available?

Tools for Regional Growth

Panel Session

Between Scylla and Charybdis: State Supervision and Oversight Reform – Balancing Business Freedom and Civic Prosperity

A region's investment climate and business prosperity depend to a large degree on the quality of its licensing, supervisory, and oversight activities. Is it possible to create an ideal system of state supervision? What progressive trends have been seen in state supervision in the twenty-first century? Can a balance be found between government supervision and civic oversight? To what extent are the monitoring and oversight reforms being introduced in different countries universal? What lessons can and should be scaled, and what practices should be treated with caution?

Tools for Regional Growth

Check-up

Regional Anti-Crisis Plans: Best Practice

In 2015, alongside an action plan adopted at the federal level to ensure economic development, many of Russia's regions have drawn up their own plans. In addition, specific priority measures and strategies for their implementation differ between the regions. What has already been achieved, and what remains to be done? How effectively have the regions responded to the economic situation? What goals can be set given that budgets are falling?

Tools for Regional Growth

Panel Discussion

Investment Projects in Regional and Local Infrastructure: a Market Under the Radar or a Non-Entity?

Can regional business make money on infrastructure investments? How can regional authorities develop infrastructure for local residents, while at the same time promoting the development of regional companies, thereby creating jobs and increasing regional tax revenues? How can regional business earn profits from infrastructure investment projects: are we mistaken in assuming this to be the domain of major federal players? Is the market open for new regional leaders to emerge? What concrete steps should regional business take to participate in projects to develop regional and local infrastructure? Which kinds of infrastructure are most attractive where state expenditure has to be minimized (or excluded)? How exactly can these projects be initiated: what is required of the regional authorities, and what of local business? Which investment models can be best applied for which kinds of regional infrastructure: where do we need concessions and where public-private partnerships?

Tools for Regional Growth

Roundtable

Russia's Regions and the EAEU Common Market: the Value Chain

Global practice demonstrates that a country's economic development is in many ways tied to its immersion in a value chain. Those involved in the Eurasian integration process are currently facing important issues not only in terms of preserving their traditional production chains but also in generating momentum for the creation of new ones. The common market of the five EAEU member states offers significant advantages to production chains, allowing them to function across the various regions of the different countries as if they were one unified economic space. How could the advantages of the EAEU be used to stimulate the economic development of its member states and regions? What opportunities does this entail for the Russian business community as a whole?

Tools for Regional Growth

Panel Discussion

Resetting Russia's Special Economic Zones

Thirty-four special economic zones (SEZs) have been established in Russia to attract Russian and foreign direct investment to Russia's regions in the high-tech sectors, including in production as part of the import substitution effort, shipbuilding, and tourism. Are SEZs deserving of the state resources which have been spent? How many investors have invested in SEZs? What should be done to increase this figure? How can the system be made to work to its fullest potential?

Tools for Regional Growth

Panel Session

Russia as a Tourist Destination: What is Lacking?

The tourism industry has the potential to attract a lot of investment. A constructive dialogue involving federal and regional authorities, the investment community, and the tourism industry is therefore required to exploit the existing growth potential and create optimum conditions for investment in tourism while maintaining a balance between the interests of the state, business, consumers of tourism services, and the local residents of tourist destinations. How can a competitive industry be created in the current climate? What prevents the vast potential of inbound tourism from being unlocked? How will the development of the health and wellbeing tourism industry affect the overall healthcare system and the health of the population?

Panel Discussion

Development Institutes: in Search of an Effective Regional Model

Providing support for enterprise and stimulating investment are the two chief areas of work for regional development institutes. On the one hand, the challenges are well understood, but on the other, by no means all regions are responding to them with equal success. How is the work of development institutes organized at the regional level? How transparent are their activities and what are the main indicators of their effectiveness? Who evaluates the work of these organizations and how? What motivates their leaders and to what extent are these leaders personally accountable? How feasible is it to introduce uniform performance standards to the work of regional development institutes?

Tools for Regional Growth

Panel Discussion

The Export Potential of the Regions: from Discovery to Reality

The regions of the Russian Federation lack uniform standards and a universal package of tools with which to support exporters. At the same time, there are success stories that demonstrate the effectiveness of a pro-export approach to regional development. What is the export potential of the various Russian regions? What goods are currently being exported by regional companies? What financial and non-financial support tools are available to regional export-oriented companies? What role do the administrations of Russia's regions play in supporting Russian exporters?

Tools for Regional Growth

Check-up

Small Business and Russia's Regions: the Tools are in Place – what are the Results?

The Russian Federation is creating a plethora of support tools at various levels for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Each region has its own methods for increasing its share of SMEs. What do these tools look like from a business perspective? Are they having a positive effect? How does business rate this support? Are new institutions really necessary, or should we rather stick to a 'do not disturb' policy? What role does small enterprise play in a region's economic growth? What is the potential for duplication and 'blind' adoption of regional and municipal best practice?

Tools for Regional Growth

Panel Discussion

Integrated Regional Development: Boosting Cities and Business

As well as increasing the availability of housing, a strategically important task for the state is to provide a comfortable, high-quality living environment. As the potential for infill development is almost exhausted, priorities should shift towards the development of built-up and unused sites (including industrial zones), working with inefficiently used land plots that are owned by the Russian Federation. Do market-based mechanisms for integrated regional development share any common criteria? Should a set of standards be created for the provision of municipal services in each region? Is existing urban planning legislation effective? Do industrial zones (for example in Moscow) have a future? What are the best global practices in integrated regional development?

Tools for Regional Growth

Panel Discussion

Best Practice and Initiatives in Socioeconomic Development

The first Saltykov-Shchedrin All-Russian Regional Best Practices and Initiatives in Socioeconomic Development Award, organized by the Agency for Strategic Initiatives, was presented in 2016. What were the prerequisites for holding this competition? What are the attributes of best practices (using the winners as examples)? Does the activity of regional authorities have a statistical effect on socioeconomic development, the business environment, and living conditions? Can the winners' practices be scaled and applied across all regions of the Russian Federation? What role do Russian federal authorities and public organizations have in identifying and scaling-up best practices?

Competence Development

Business Lunch

A Fork in the Road to Economic Growth: which Path to Take?

Against a backdrop of economic crisis and the need to respond to external shocks and develop innovative solutions in economic policy, the question of which route Russia's economy should take is once again a pressing one. What are the current views on economic development? What is the most effective course of economic development for Russia today? Which growth points should provide a focus for long-term economic growth strategy?

Competence Development

Roundtable

Supporting Industry: New Tools

The special investment contract tool, as set out in the Federal Law 'On Industrial Policy in the Russian Federation', has become one of the latest mechanisms for boosting industry, showing a new level of cooperation between government and business. The distinguishing feature of this contract is the stable business conditions it offers to investors, who take on certain obligations to create and modernize industry. Effectively, this is a fundamentally new investment regime aimed at industrial investors from around the world and designed to rectify the 'investment lapse' in the non-financial sector. Will this mechanism be effective in developing industry? What have the initial results of its implementation been?

Competence Development

Foresight Session

The National Technology Initiative: a Model for Regional Participation

The National Technology Initiative (NTI) is a programme of measures for developing completely new markets and creating the conditions for Russia's global leadership in technology by 2035. Regional participation is considered an important aspect of the NTI. What are the potential models for regional participation in the technology initiative? Will a nationwide programme be equally effective in all of Russia's regions? What measures are necessary for breakthrough technologies to emerge in the regions?

Competence Development

Master Class

Sharing Best International Management Practice

This event will see leading global experts share their management experience and the practical results of their work in key aspects of state regulation. Experience of individual solutions may offer a guide to improving the business climate in Russia.

Competence Development

Panel Session

Social Services: Changing Perspectives – a Focus on the Client?

One of the state's most important functions is to fulfil its social obligations. Despite the fact that social expenditure accounts for a substantial portion of regional budgets, the quality and accessibility of social services remain at unsatisfactory levels. How can the quality and accessibility of social services be significantly improved without increasing expenditure? Should we aim to provide social services to all citizens, or focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable populations? What must be done to increase the participation of the non-state sector and boost competition in this area?

Competence Development

Panel Session

Russia–Germany: New Forms of Cooperation in a Crisis

Germany remains Russia's most important trading partner, having consistently figured in the top three countries in terms of trade with Russia, despite the decline in trade turnover between the two countries to USD 45.8 billion in 2015. Overcoming external differences is key to developing the bilateral relationship. A number of institutional initiatives are under way, aimed at strengthening dialogue and stabilizing the rules of the game. These include special investment contracts and the Agency for Technology Transfer. The business community has kick-started business platforms designed to overcome existing economic issues and barriers. The revival of the Russian–German strategic working group was an important milestone. What new forms of mutually beneficial cooperation could be useful in restoring trade to its former level? How can the potential and efficiency of existing tools be unlocked? How can trade and economic ties be maintained without losing trust?