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Small business as the factor increasing the employment rate and incomes of the population*

Small and medium business is the most important source of increasing employment and incomes of the population. The statistics show that at present the potential of this sphere is not used to the fullest extent in Russia. In order to overcome the existing difficulties, involve the population in business, it is necessary to implement a set of measures aimed at the improvement of the business climate and the disclosure of the population's entrepreneurial potential. Furthermore, an important step is the development and adoption of the concept of the long-term development programme of small and middle business in the region.

Small and medium business, region's economy, entrepreneurial abilities of the population.



**Svetlana V.
TEREBOVA**

Ph.D. in Economics, Head of ISEDT RAS Department of Innovation Economics
svetlana-ter@mail.ru

The priority goal of Russia's socio-economic development is to improve the quality and standards of living of the population. In order to reach the goal it is necessary to overcome the most acute problems of low living standards of the population, unemployment, high level of social differentiation. Thus, according to Rosstat, in 2011 about 13% of the population (18.1 million people) had incomes below the subsistence level [14], in the Vologda Oblast – 17.8% (213.6 thousand people [15]).

In compliance with the results of ISEDT RAS sociological surveys, the percentage of the poor is even higher: 38% of the region's residents consider themselves to be poor, 53%

have money only for buying essentials¹. Thus, living standards of the majority of citizens are quite low.

The development of small business is one of the factors allowing the income of the population to be increased. It is small business that forms the basis for the formation of middle class, therefore, it facilitates the weakening of the trend to social differentiation that is inherent in the market economy.

As follows from the official data, the country's unemployment amounted to 6.5% in 2012, meaning that about 5 million of the Russians, 45% of who are women, had no job [17]. The average age of the unemployed made up 35 years old. According to the author's research,

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¹ According to the 2011 ISEDT RAS survey.

that is the age, when the population has the highest entrepreneurial potential.

Nevertheless, business income accounts for only 8.9% (in 2011) in the structure of the money income of the Russian population, that is by 7.5% lower than in 1995 (*tab. 1*) indicating that small business potential is not used to the fullest extent. In the Vologda Oblast this indicator slightly increased – up to 10.6% in the period under review. It should be noted that this is the highest indicator among the indicators of the regions of the Northwestern Federal District and Russian Federation in 2011, exceeding the average for the district and the country by 5.5% and 1.7% respectively.

As is known, small business performs the important function of “means of social mobility”. A man of enterprise, using his/her abilities, can set up business and raise his/her social status and quality of living without anyone’s assistance. The policy of stimulating small business will make it possible to reduce the unemployment rate, to increase the citizens’ incomes. The role of small and medium business is rather important in some countries, when addressing these issues, and the wellbeing of a considerable part (or even the majority) of the population depends on the stable development of this economic sector (*tab. 2*).

Table 1. Share of business income in the structure of the money income of population (as a percentage of the total money income)

Territory	Year					Absolute deviation in 2011 – 1995
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2011	
Vologda Oblast	10	10.1	10.1	11.7	10.6	0.6
Arkhangelsk Oblast	17.5	14.8	10.5	10	9.5	-8
Pskov Oblast	18.3	14	13.8	9.3	8.3	-10
Novgorod Oblast	13.2	18.2	13.7	8.9	7.6	-5.6
Leningrad Oblast	15.7	8.6	9.7	6.4	7.6	-8.1
Komi Republic	8.2	17	10.5	7	6.3	-1.9
Republic of Karelia	13.6	13.9	13.6	5.3	6.0	-7.6
Kaliningrad Oblast	14.9	10.7	5.5	5.3	6.0	-8.9
Murmansk Oblast	13.7	17.3	13.7	7.3	5.4	-8.3
Saint Petersburg	18.4	11.2	4	2.2	2.0	-16.4
RF	16.4	15.4	11.4	9.3	8.9	-7.5
NWFD	15.4	13	7.7	5.4	5.1	-10.3

Source: Official website of the Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: <http://www.gks.ru>

Table 2. Contribution of small and medium enterprises (SME) to the economy of some countries of the world

Indicator	Japan	Thailand	UN	USA	China	Russia
SME share in the total number of organizations %	99.7	99.8	99.8	99.7	99.8	33.3
Share of SME employees in the total number of the employees of all enterprises, %	70.0	75.4	69.7	50.3	82.0	20.9

Sources: Conditions for small-business development using the example of Russia and China. Available at: <http://www.rppe.ru/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/radchenko-mv-sokolova-gv.pdf>; Small business in China. Available at: <http://www.kapitalpress.ru/kapitalist/archive/2007/19/635/>; Business in the region: current state, perspectives: monograph. Terebova S.V., Podolyakin O.V., Egorikhina S.Yu. Vologda: ISED T RAS, 2011.

Much attention has been paid to the development of small business in our country. Thus, rather extensive system of state and public support for this economic sector was formed at the regional level in the years of reforms. Institutional infrastructure aimed at securing favourable environment for the formation and development of small enterprises, providing them with the services they are unable to purchase in the market, or the services that the market does not offer due to their key points, has been taking shape [10]. For this purpose, 124.5 billion rubles were allocated from the federal budget to the country's regions in the last three years; it is planned to allocate another 67.8 billion rubles in 2013–2015.

In the Vologda Oblast the infrastructure support for the subjects of entrepreneurial activities was provided within the framework of the long-term target programme “Development of small and medium businesses in the Vologda Oblast for 2009–2012” with the total amount of funding of 284.6 million rubles [3].

Since 2013 the state programme “Support and development of the Vologda Oblast small and medium businesses for 2013–2016” came into force [2]. In accordance with the programme it is planned to allocate 686 million rubles to the business sector.

Due to the targeted state support the number of small enterprises in the region increased almost twice in the 2000–2012 period (*tab. 3*). Most of them (75%) are concentrated in large cities: Vologda (43%) and Cherepovets (32%).

Official data [17] show that the coefficient of the launching of small enterprises has been steadily decreasing in the 2005–2011 period². The balance between the given coefficient and the shutdown coefficient remains positive, though demonstrating the dynamics of decrease. If such trends remain further, no measures appropriate for their elimination are adopted, small business will be likely to reach the critical moment, when more enterprises will be closed down than opened, which will negatively affect the employment in this economic sector.

Table 3. Number of small enterprises (units per 100 thousand people)

Territory	2000	2005	2008	2010	2011	2012*	2012 as compared to 2000, %
Saint Petersburg	2309.5	2494.4	2767.4	2381.6	3401.8	3296.9	142.8
Kaliningrad Oblast	793.2	955.0	2324.6	2963.7	2046.8	2027.4	255.6
Republic of Karelia	546.3	656.9	686.9	2209.3	1416.4	1421.8	260.3
Komi Republic	380.8	454.2	861.3	2416.6	1276.7	1303.3	342.3
Novgorod Oblast	419.9	373.3	686.7	2396.7	1142.1	1142.8	272.2
Arkhangelsk Oblast	347.9	369.8	701.6	1934.3	1029.4	1038.7	298.6
Pskov Oblast	355.5	520.1	445.4	2281.8	926.0	929.5	261.5
Leningrad Oblast	712.8	709.8	864.8	1603.2	880.1	841.9	118.1
Vologda Oblast	453.2	388.7	522.6	831.1	825.3	834.7	184.2
Murmansk Oblast	311.2	347.2	663.1	2061.7	748.2	774.1	248.7
NWFD	1100.8	1198.3	1515.6	1131.6	1868.2	1902.6	172.8
RF	601.0	686.0	949.7	868.0	1276.1	1283.6	213.6

* Data for January–September of 2012.

Sources: Official website of the Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: <http://www.gks.ru>; Unified interagency information and statistical system. Available at: <http://fedstat.ru>; Small and medium business in Russia. 2009: statistical digest. Rosstat. Moscow, 2009.

² In the course of its implementation entrepreneurs received support in the following areas: financial sphere (grants on starting up one's own business, implementation of innovation projects; subsidies for paying interest on loans, leasing payments; the Guarantee Fund and the Fund for Resource Support of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship were established); support of foreign economic activity (the Euro Info Correspondence Centre was established; grants for export-oriented enterprises are allocated); provision of office premises (on the basis of the “Business Incubator”); information and advisory services, training.

Table 4. Average number of employees of small enterprises (excluding micro-enterprises), thousand people

Territory	2000	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*	2012 as compared to 2000, %
Saint Petersburg	628	633	698.2	630.7	522	630	350.7	55.8
Vologda Oblast	65	62	82.4	66.9	55.2	51.3	67.9	104.5
Leningrad Oblast	117	139	135.8	120.7	89	118	59.5	50.8
Arkhangelsk Oblast	31	32	70.3	58.1	81	74	57.2	184.5
Kaliningrad Oblast	52	105	120.7	103.5	91	68	54.4	104.6
Komi Republic	29	50	77.1	69.3	68	52	41.7	143.8
Pskov Oblast	25	35	45.4	42.2	55	44	41.4	165.6
Republic of Karelia	28	32	38.0	43.3	52	49	38.7	138.2
Novgorod Oblast	29	38	50.3	41.9	49	46	37.5	129.3
Murmansk Oblast	25	31	40.1	38.3	57	39	32.2	128.8
NWFD	1028	1155	1367.6	1214.8	1162	1197	785.4	76.4
RF	6597	8045	11412	10247.5	11097	9692	6758.2	102.4

* Data for January–September of 2012.
Sources: Official website of the Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: <http://www.gks.ru>; Unified interagency information and statistical system. Available at: <http://fedstat.ru>; Small and medium business in Russia. 2009: statistical digest. Rosstat. Moscow, 2009.

The number of employees of small enterprises increased in the 2000–2008 period (*tab. 4*). However, in 2009–2011 it reduced by 23%, i.e. more than 15 thousand people. One of the reasons for such dynamics is the financial and economic crisis that began in September of 2008 and led to increased tariffs, while at the same time reducing the demand for products/services of enterprises. The policy of the tax authorities with regard to the subjects of small business has not changed at that. Moreover, in compliance with the Federal Law “On the development of small and medium enterprises in the Russian Federation” [1], since 2008 micro-enterprises (with the personnel of 15 people) were singled out of small enterprises (with number of employees from 16 to 100 people), that also facilitated the reduction in the number of employees in the “small enterprises” group.

The largest number of the employed in small business is concentrated in the sphere of trade (25.4%), real estate operations (18.1%), manufacturing industry (17.5%). Such distribution of employees corresponds to the structure of small business, which is characterized by low level of diversification: basic share of trade and real estate operations, totally amounting to

over 50% [17]. Low costs and high turnover of capital above all accounts for the attractiveness of this sector of activity.

In the period under review the following changes occurred in the distribution of the number of employees of small enterprises by types of economic activities (*tab. 5*). The number of the employed increased by 8% at the enterprises engaged in operations with real estate, lease and rendering of services, but on the contrary decreased in construction and agriculture by 8% and 6%, respectively. These transformations are the consequence of changes in the structure of small business.

Thus, the number of enterprises engaged in operations with real estate, lease and rendering of services increased by 7% in 2012, as compared to 2005, which is probably related to the state policy of reforming housing and utility sector. Due to the new Housing Code enacted in 2005, the approaches to managing the housing and utility complex have been radically changed. Self-management (Homeowners Association) was declared inefficient and was replaced by professional management represented by private management companies [13] that promoted the emergence of small business in housing and utility sector.

Table 5. Distribution of the number of employees of small enterprises by types of economic activities, %

Types of economic activities	Year				Absolute deviation in 2012 – 2005
	2005	2008	2011	2012*	
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of vehicles, motorcycles, household goods and personal appliances	22.6	21.9	26.7	25.4	2.8
Operations with real estate, lease and rendering of services	10.5	10.5	14.9	18.1	7.6
Manufacturing	19.4	17.3	18.4	17.5	-1.9
Building	20.8	23.7	12.4	13.1	-7.7
Agriculture, hunting	14.8	13.3	11.6	9	-5.8
Transport and communication	6.4	5.4	5.4	6	-0.4
Hotels and restaurants	1.1	2.8	4.4	5	3.9
Production and distribution of electricity, gas and water	0.6	1.1	2.93	3.1	2.5
Healthcare and social services	0.8	0.5	0.9	1.2	0.4
Provision of other housing, social and personal services	2.1	2.6	1.32	1	-1.1
Financial activities	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.22	-0.08
Mining	0.0	0.2	0.32	0.2	0.2
Education	0.1	0.1	0.12	0.1	0
Fishing, fish breeding	0.5	0.3	0.11	0.08	-0.42
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	

* Data for January–September of 2012.
Sources: Small business of the oblast: statistical digest. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2008; Small business of the oblast: statistical digest. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2009; Small business of the Vologda Oblast in January–September of 2012.

Moreover, the growing number of enterprises in this sphere is connected with the development of real estate market (including realtor services).

The number of small enterprises in the sphere of construction and agriculture decreased by 3% and 3.5% respectively. The percentage of shutdown enterprises is lower than the percentage of the employed at these enterprises. This may indicate forced dismissals, pursued by enterprises in order to optimize activities.

Active engagement of employees under the terms of secondary employment is typical of small business. Thus, in 2012 along with workers on payroll, about four thousand of external part-time workers and employees providing work under civil law contracts were engaged at enterprises, accounting for 6% of the total number of employees of small enterprises.

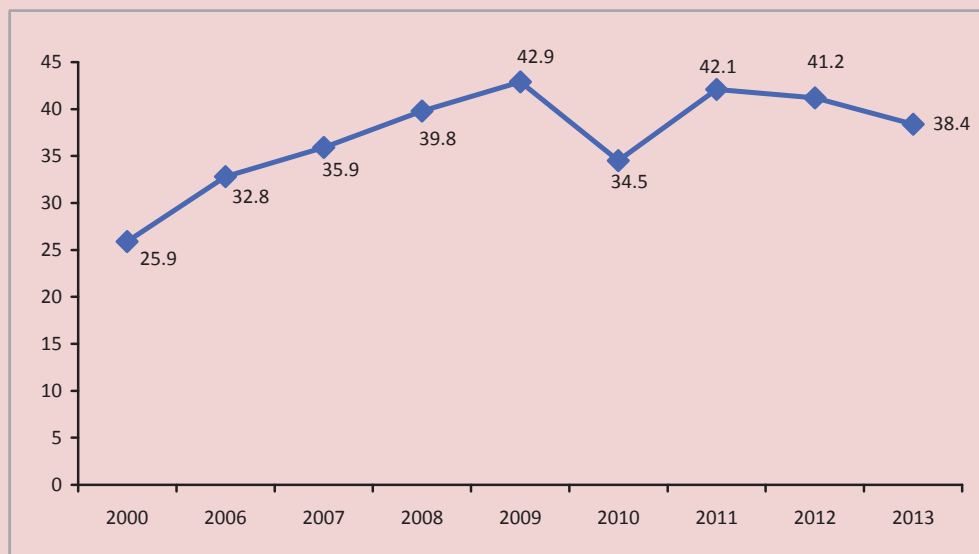
Private entrepreneurs create jobs as well. The number of private entrepreneurs was observed to increase by 66% in the Vologda Oblast for the 2000–2009 period: 17 thousand people set up their own business (*fig. 1*).

Since 2009, the region has been implementing a programme to reduce labour market tensions, providing arrangements for self-employment of the unemployed citizens.

In 2012 the trend was toward the reduction in the number of private entrepreneurs – over three thousand of unincorporated businesses were shut down in the period from December 2012 to January 2013 alone [4] (for comparison: about 4 thousand over the first half of 2012)³. It is most likely related to the fact that social tax burden on small businesses and private entrepreneurs has increased since 2011. Total payroll tax rate made up 34% as against previous 14% from employee wages as social taxes for enterprises, using simplified tax system, and 26%

³ In the Vologda Oblast the number of new enterprises per 1 thousand of the existing ones decreased by 10% in 2011 as compared to the previous year. The number of officially shut down small enterprises per 1 thousand of the existing ones increased by 63% as compared to 2010, and 2-fold in comparison with the 2008 crisis. It may indicate that small business steps into the shadows, and also that the terms of business operations, in spite of active government support, have worsened since 2008.

Figure 1. Number of actually working private entrepreneurs in the Vologda Oblast, thousand people



Sources: Small business of the Vologda Oblast in 1996–2001: trends and priority directions for further development: research and information note. VSCC CEMI RAS. Vologda, 2002. Available at: <http://www.booksite.ru/fulltext/bui/sne/sss/mall/2.htm>; Small and medium business in the Vologda Oblast. 2010: statistical digest. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2010; Small business of the Vologda Oblast in January-September of 2012: statistical digest. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2012.

for enterprises, using general taxation system [6]. In addition, the limiting value base for the assessment of insurance payments increased by more than 11% in 2011, and by 11% in 2012 as compared to the previous year.

If the situation is not changed, the process of curtailing activities, small enterprises and unincorporated businesses will be likely to expand, negatively affecting the municipal budget replenishment (55% of private entrepreneurs falls at the districts of the Oblast). Besides, it can lead to the fall in the wages of employees of small enterprises, the living standards of the region's population, aggravation of social tension.

In the 2005–2008 period the average monthly wages of employees of small enterprises increased by 41% up to 17 thousand rubles (fig. 2). In 2009 it decreased by almost 20% as compared to 2008, due to financial and economic crisis, which resulted in the decline in the companies' turnover.

The highest income is paid to the employees of enterprises, engaged in financial activities, mining operations, although the share of such workers in the total number of employees hardly exceeds 2% (fig. 3). Wages in the sphere of financial activity are two times higher than in agriculture and forestry.

In the wholesale and retail trade, repair of vehicles, motorcycles, household goods and personal appliances, accounting for the highest percentage of employees, the fund of accrued wages is observed to be low – about 12 thousand rubles monthly per one employee.

Throughout the period under review the wage level of employees at small enterprises remains low – only 60% of the average for the region. In the author's opinion, this can be explained by hidden wages, as well as small turnover of small enterprises as compared to big and medium business. In the 2008–2011 period, the turnover per one organization decreased by 13%, capital investments declined 6-fold (tab. 6).

Figure 2. Average monthly wages of an employee at a small enterprise of the Vologda Oblast (in comparable prices for 2012), thousand rubles



* Including microenterprises.

** January–September.

Sources: Official website of Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: <http://www.gks.ru>; Unified interagency information and statistical system. Available at: <http://fedstat.ru>

The share of profitable organizations remained the same, however, the profitability of sold goods, being at a low level anyway, fell by more 1.2%. This may indicate an increase in the prime cost of produced products/services rendered, caused by rising energy prices, fuel and lubricants, equipment, as well as due to the use of obsolete equipment and technologies.

Small enterprises operating in the region, are characterized by high degree of fixed capital depreciation, particularly in mining (59%), transport and communication (44%), construction (43%), agriculture (40%), manufacturing (37%). The decline in investments in small business development, low profitability of enterprises induces the shortage of financial resources for modernization and asset replacement. At the same time, it is problematic to produce competitive products using worn-out equipment. Russia's accession to WTO makes this problem particularly acute since enterprises, in fact, actually end

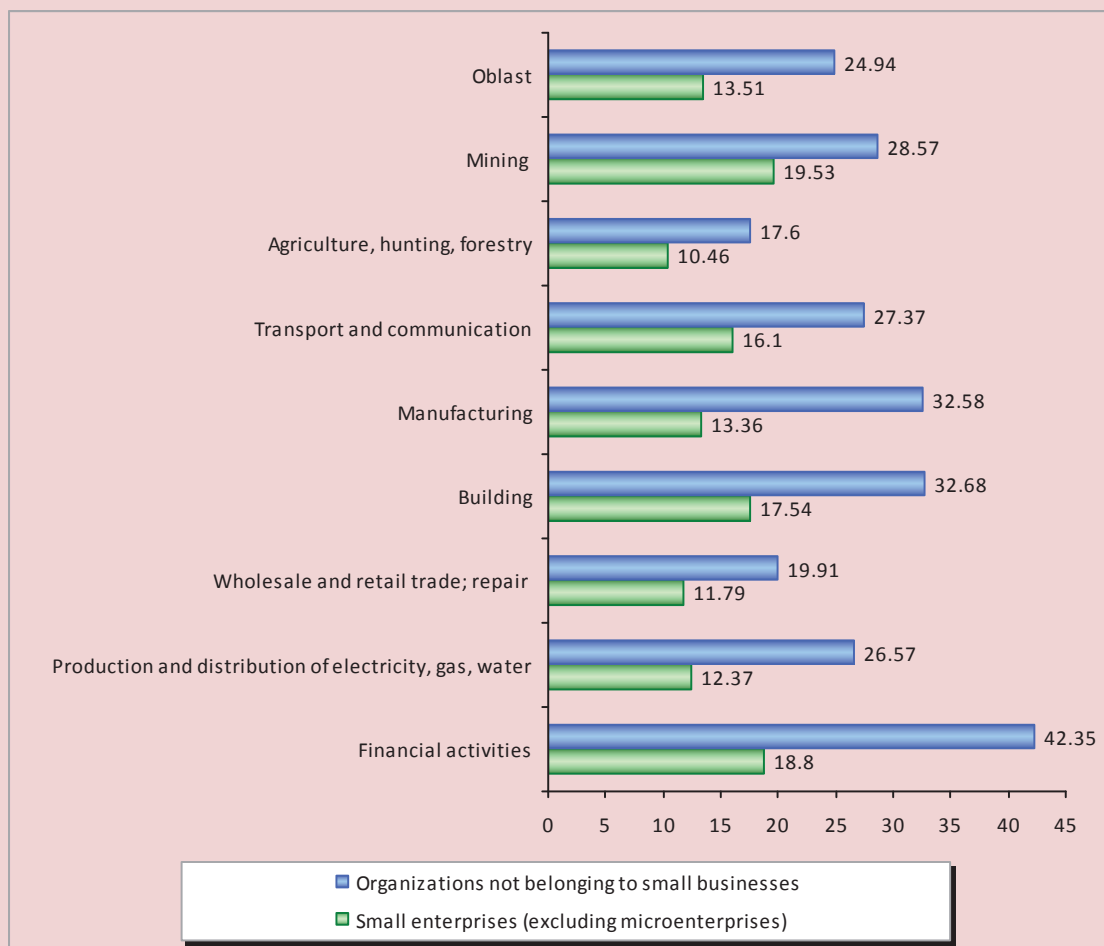
up in the open markets. According to the survey, only 16% of enterprises have high level of competitiveness in the international market⁴ [5]. The respondents noted high export duties (37.1%), high cost and duration of customs clearance (35.5%), lack of funds for advertising (30.6%) among the barriers hindering active promotion of domestic product in the international markets.

The revealed tendencies allow concluding that the increase in the number of the region's enterprises is quantitative, not qualitative. The situation in this sphere can be described as crisis one. The absence of favourable business environment seems to be among the main reasons behind it⁵.

⁴ According to 2012 ISED T RAS survey, 100 small and medium business entities were examined.

⁵ The quality of business environment is determined by two groups of factors: (a) macroeconomic (demand, savings rate, saturation level of local markets, presence of consumer demand for goods and services of enterprises, etc.); b) economic policy (tax regime, administrative barriers, control procedures, the availability of infrastructure, etc.).

Figure 3. Average monthly wages of employees at small enterprises (excluding microenterprises), organizations not belonging to small businesses by separate types of economic activities for 2012, thousand rubles



Source: Small business in the Vologda Oblast in 2012: statistical bulletin. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2013.

Table 6. Indicators for evaluating the financial and economic state of small enterprises of the Vologda Oblast

Indicator	Unit	Year			
		2008	2009	2011	Absolute deviation 2011–2008
Share of the enterprises in the total number of organizations	%	18.3	18.9	25.3	7.0
Turnover of enterprises per one organization	million rubles	14.9	12.1	12.9	-2.0
Investments in fixed capital per one organization	million rubles	0.54	0.17	0.09	-0.45
share of profitable organizations	%	74.7	70.1	74.2*	-0.5
profitability of sold goods, products	%	4.2	3.2	3.0*	-1.2

* 2010 information
Sources: Small business in the Vologda Oblast in 2011: statistical digest. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2012; Financial and property state of small business enterprises in the Vologda Oblast in 2008–2010: statistical digest. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2011.

Table 7. Ways to increase employment and income of the population through the development of small and medium business

Direction	Measures
To involve the population in doing business	Introduction to teaching basics of business activities starting from school, and not only at universities. Arrangement of schoolchildren and student meetings with entrepreneurs. Development and implementation of special programmes for certain categories of citizens (female entrepreneurs; the unemployed, support for young entrepreneurs) Training of potential entrepreneurs in business planning and business skills. Formation of the positive image of an entrepreneur, spread of positive experience in doing business, creation of small business traditions.
To support the establishment of new enterprises	Financing of small enterprises start-up capital*, the expediency of its provision on the terms of repayment. Exemption from property and equipment taxes at the initial stage of business development. Assistance in the registration of enterprises. Provision of office space, equipment on attractive terms.
To promote the development of the existing small businesses enterprises	Reduction in costs and terms of utility networks connection. Development of private-public partnership when allocating land plots for construction. Development of venture capital financing. Improvement of lease financing mechanisms for small business entities. Entrepreneur development of non-governmental organizations and associations. Increase in small business lending through expanding interest rates subsidies on state programmes.
* The programme to reduce tensions in the labour market, providing grants for the setup of one's own business (in the amount of 50 thousand rubles), has been implemented in the Vologda Oblast. However, the allocated amounts are not sufficient for starting business. According to ISED T RAS survey, the residents of the region consider the sum of about 1.3 million rubles is required for going into business.	

Comprehensive efforts to improve the quality of business environment, as well as the elaboration of measures to unlock and unleash the entrepreneurial potential of the population are required in order to increase employment and income of the population through the development of small and medium business. According to the author, it is necessary to distinguish the following principal directions of small business development (*tab. 7*).

It is reasonable to implement the reviewed measures in complex, consistently, in the framework of the long-term programme of small and medium business development in the region. The document should be aimed at creating the most comfortable conditions for managing and developing business, as well as for motivation system in order to increase public involvement in small business and to promote the development of the existing enterprises.

The programme should be built on the analysis of the current situation in business

sphere. Note that the data published in the official statistics, specifically the number of small enterprises, employees, and turnover and investment volumes are quantitative indicators, but do not allow giving qualitative business characteristic and evaluating the possibilities for its growth. For this purpose it is reasonable to conduct monitoring by such indicators as itemized expenses, the amount of dues and taxes transferred to the budget, etc.

The performance targets of entrepreneurship development, including industry indicators, and small business development plans in the context of municipalities are to be determined in the programme.

The activities in the given directions will contribute to improving the entrepreneurial climate. The better it is in the region, the higher is the number of potential and factual entrepreneurs. Small business development will allow increasing the living standards and social stability in the society, which in turn will promote sustainable economic growth.

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