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State Financial Support for NPOs as a Driver of Sustainable Development of the Arctic Regions of Russia

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Abstract. Interest in the Arctic zone has increased significantly in recent years. Russia, due to its geography and history, is an active, interested and direct subject involved in all the socio-economic processes taking place here. However, despite the significant efforts of the state, there are still certain difficulties in solving a number of social problems, which may hinder the development of the Arctic regions. In many respects, the successful solution of such problems depends on the cooperation of state institutions and the non-profit sector. The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of state financial support for socially oriented non-profit organizations (NPOs) on the sustainable development of the Russian Arctic. The main objective of the study is to analyze the impact of financial support for SONPOs in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation on the sustainable development of the Arctic regions. The researchers put forward a hypothesis that financial support for the non-profit sector is an important driver of sustainable development of the Arctic regions of Russia. The main results of the study are the analysis of state financial support for NPOs in the Arctic region, as well as the author's classification of the goals of NPOs and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The study presents the results of the all-Russian survey on the activities of SONPOs.

Keywords: *non-profit organizations, financial support, sustainable development, regional policy, the Arctic*

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Introduction

The Arctic is a unique region spanning the boundaries of Eurasia and North America. Its significant role in shaping the global climate and its rich natural resources make this region attractive, although this is only part of its economic potential. The importance of the Arctic for the Rus-

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sian Federation is confirmed by the adoption of two strategic documents on the development of the Russian Arctic in 2020 (Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 26.10.2020 No. 645 “On the Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone and Ensuring National Security until 2035” and Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 05.03.2020 No. 164 “On the Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period until 2035”), which made it possible to determine the priorities for the consistent implementation of certain areas of state policy aimed at addressing the economic and social indicators recorded in the program documents. “The main emphasis in their implementation is placed on government structures and business, but the solution of part of the strategic long-term tasks (or subtasks) could be taken on by the third sector — non-profit organizations” [1, Volkov O.V., pp. 84-91]. At the same time, the Arctic regions traditionally face many problems: harsh climatic conditions, underdeveloped infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel, etc. The non-profit sector, which has always been a reliable partner of the state in the implementation of socially significant initiatives and projects, could play a significant role in solving some of them.

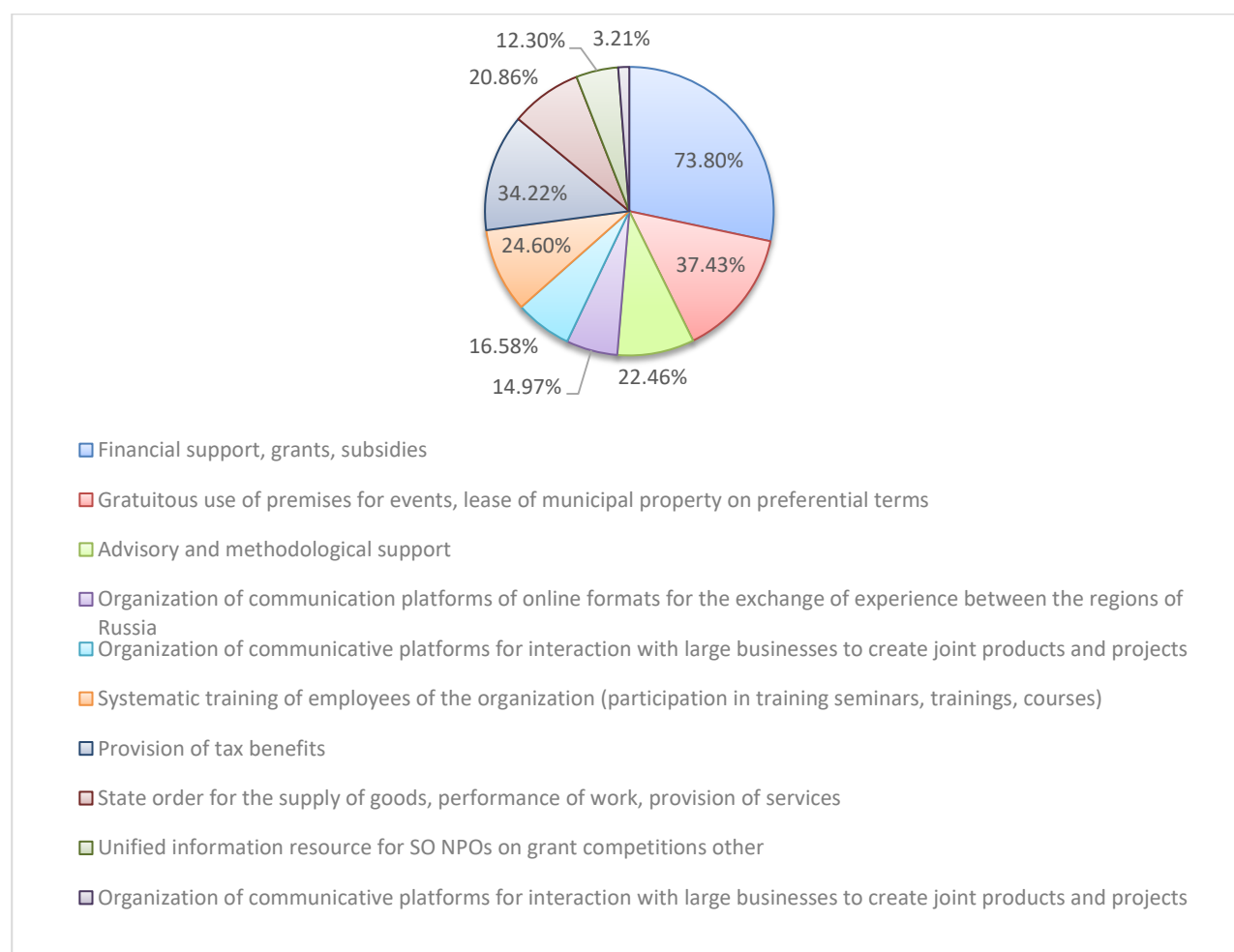


Fig. 1. Dynamics of the number of SONPOs ¹.

However, the activities of non-profit organizations are largely determined by the position of the state, supported and stimulated by it. As shown by the results of the all-Russian survey con-

¹ Compiled by the authors on the basis of the results of the sociological survey conducted.

ducted in November–December 2023 by a team of authors from the State University of Management, the most popular support measures from non-profit organizations are: financial, property, information, advisory and methodological (Fig. 1) [2, Polyakov M.B.].

In this regard, the purpose of the study is to assess the impact of financial support for socially oriented non-profit organizations (hereinafter referred to as SONPO) from the state on the sustainable development of the Arctic. The main objective of the study is to directly analyze the impact of financial support for SONPO in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation on the sustainable development of the Arctic regions.

The researchers put forward a hypothesis that financial support for the non-profit sector is an important driver of sustainable development in the Arctic regions of Russia. The object of the study is the non-profit sector of the regions of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.

The degree of development of the scientific problem under consideration is determined by the fact that more and more works by Russian and foreign authors are devoted to the study of non-profit organizations, the specifics of their activities, the role and directions in the development of the third sector of the economy. Among domestic researchers, the following authors can be distinguished: Volkova G.G., Dvoryadkina E.B., Krasnopol'skaya I.I., Kulkova V.Yu., Polyakov M.B., Salyakhova E.M., Taradanov A.A., Chernyshov A.N. and others. The problems of sustainable development of the Arctic were studied by such Russian authors as Pilyasov A.N. and Kotov A.V., who devoted their research to forecasting the development of the Arctic territories of Russia at the zonal, regional and municipal levels on the basis of the concept of technical and economic dynamics [3, pp. 369–394], Zamyatina N.Yu. and Pilyasov A.N., who developed a system of basic projects aimed at solving the main modern problems of socio-economic development of the Arctic at the “grassroots level” — problems of life support of remote settlements, energy and food security, everyday life of people in the Arctic [4], Pitukhina M.A. and Belykh A.D., who conducted a comprehensive analysis of 18 Arctic single-industry towns and villages of Russia [5, pp. 189–200], Kazanin A.G., who noted in his work that the main factor of sustainable development of the Arctic is human capital and the efficiency of its use [6, pp. 44–57], Zvorykina Yu.V., pointing out that it is necessary to focus specifically on environmental projects and measures to preserve the climate of this region [7, pp. 133–146], as well as a team of authors consisting of Romasheva N.V., Babenko M.A. and Nikolaychuk L.A., who conducted a study on the sustainable development of the Arctic as a factor in the introduction of innovations into the production process, reducing the risks of ecosystem disruption [8, pp. 78–87].

A significant number of scientific studies abroad are devoted to the NPO activities as a subject of sustainable development of individual territories. Among the most significant, the authors identified the following. Harinder Rai Singh and Sarina Abdul Rahman studied the approaches of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to environmental education in the field of biodiversity conservation [9, pp. 144–152]. Hwangbo Park, Hanbyul Lee, and Hye Seung Cho studied the experience of NPO implementation of educational projects and their participation in the development

of education [10, pp. 31–41]. In their article, Yi Lu, Yuhan Wang, and Liu Yue Zhang emphasize the contribution of NPOs to providing assistance after natural disasters in China [11, p. 89]. Eun Sung Park and D.K. Yoon examined the role of NPOs in the fight against natural disasters and in public administration in South Korea and Japan [12, p. 69]. Julia Morgan conducted a study on the impact of NPO services on youth in sub-Saharan Africa [13, pp. 175–182]. Kazuhiro Harada, Muhammad Habib, Yumi Sakata, and Ahmad Maryudi noted in their studies the specifics of sustainable maintenance of traditional forests in indigenous communities in Indonesia [14, p. 72]. Chen Jia-nan assessed the contribution of environmental NPOs to environmental education in the People's Republic of China [15, pp. 901–906]. Ghassan Elkahoul, Sansom Milton, Taha Yaseen, and Elham Raweh conducted a study on the high impact of NPOs in providing humanitarian aid to residents of Yemen during periods of armed conflict [16, p. 75]. French scholars Benita Pursch, Alexandra Tate, Helena Legido-Quigley, and Natasha Howard conducted a qualitative study of NGO support for migrants affected by structural violence in northern France [17, p. 248]. Divya Gupta, Sharachchandra Lele, and Gitanjoy Sahu emphasized the significant contribution of non-profit organizations to decentralized forest management in India [18, p. 111]. K. Foo studied the role of non-governmental organizations in urban environmental management [19, pp. 67–72]. Daniel Jordan Smith conducted a study of the impact of non-profit organizations on the fight against corruption and AIDS in Nigeria [20, pp. 475–480]. Gerhardt Kornatowski analyzed the impact of NPOs in Hong Kong on ensuring the well-being of the homeless [21, pp. 155–164].

The scientific novelty of the research includes the author's classification of the compliance of the sustainable development goals established by the United Nations, as well as the provisions of Russian legislation on the types of activities of socially oriented non-profit organizations and grant areas of competitions of federal and regional state funds aimed at financial support of the activities of SONPOs.

Materials and methods

The research is interdisciplinary in nature, including general scientific methods (data analysis and systematization of information, methods of statistical analysis), as well as quantitative methods of processing expert data and the results of sociological surveys (questionnaires). The information basis of the study is data from the Ministry of Justice of Russia, the Ministry of Economic Development, Rosstat, regional executive authorities and statistical indicators of funds providing financial support to the non-profit sector within the framework of competitive programs in the Arctic regions. In addition, for the purposes of the study, within the framework of a scientific grant for young scientists to carry out research work "State policy in the field of support and development of socially oriented non-profit organizations", sociological surveys were conducted on the issues of the activities of the non-profit sector and its state support (an all-Russian survey of 1,600 respondents, as well as a survey of 187 respondents — managers and employees of socially oriented non-profit organizations) [2, Polyakov M.B.]. The results of the conducted study can

serve as a basis for the formation of a methodological framework for supporting the implementation of state policy in the field of support and development of the non-profit sector to achieve the goals of sustainable development of the Arctic territories of the Russian Federation.

Research results and discussion

In order to assess the impact of the non-profit sector on the socio-economic development of individual territories, it is necessary to consider the general static indicators of a given region.

The dynamics of the number of the non-profit sector in Russia, as well as the number of socially oriented non-profit organizations in the Arctic regions, presented in Fig. 2, allows identifying the heterogeneity in the development of the third sector in different regions of the Arctic zone of Russia. The Krasnoyarsk Krai, the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug and the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug are the most active in terms of the number of registrations of new SONPOs in the Arctic. In the period from 2015 to 2022, these regions demonstrated positive dynamics, increasing the number of non-profit organizations by 29%, 329% and 184%, respectively. Negative growth rates of the number of SONPOs in the specified period were recorded in the Arkhangelsk Oblast (-15.8%), the Murmansk Oblast (-33%), the Republic of Karelia (-16%) and the Komi Republic (-20%).

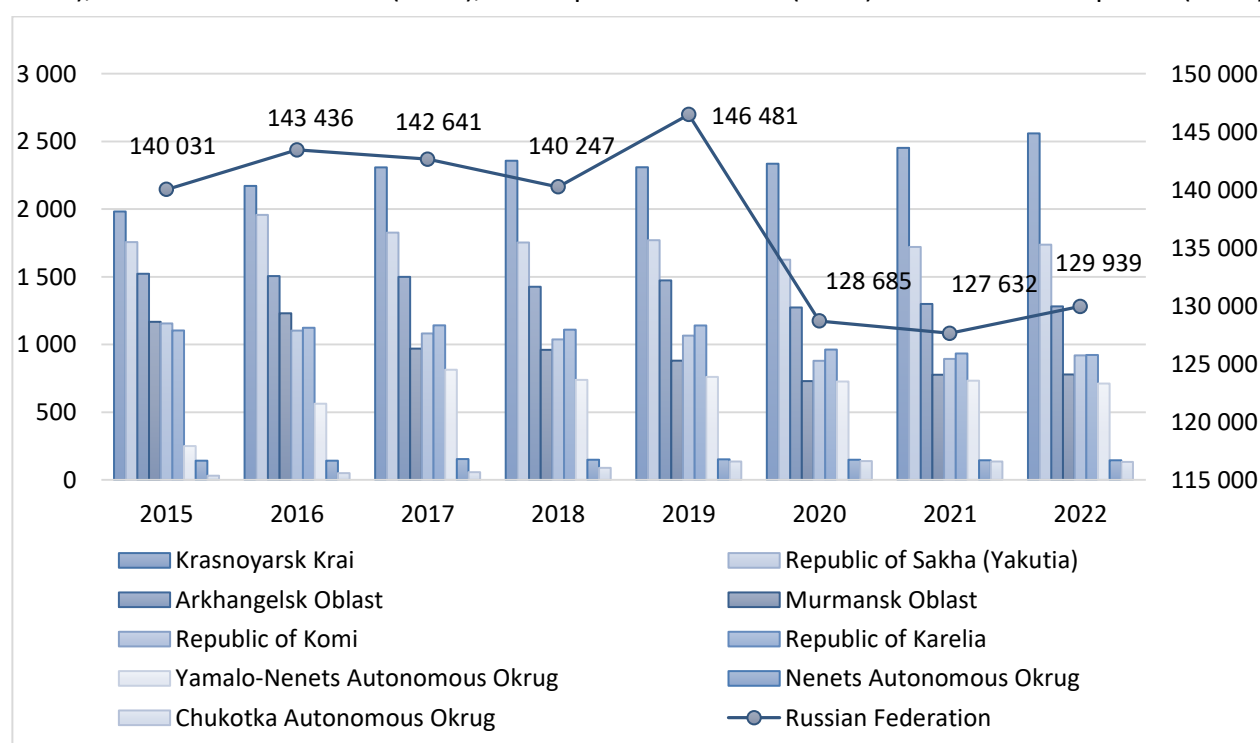


Fig. 2. Dynamics of the number of SONPOs².

It should be especially emphasized that the dynamics of changes in the number of SONPOs in individual regions can only serve as an indirect indicator of the development of the non-profit sector in a particular territory, since the Ministry of Justice of Russia and Rosstat record only the fact of state registration of a legal entity, and not the real socially significant activities of NPOs.

² Compiled by the authors on the basis of Rosstat data: Total number of socially oriented non-profit organizations by constituent entities of the Russian Federation in 2012–2022 URL: <https://clck.ru/38sV68> (accessed 12 February 2024).

One of the more indicative criteria for the activity of non-profit organizations is their participation in grant competitions held by federal and regional funds to support SONPOs. Fig. 3 presents an analysis of the most popular thematic areas of grant competitions of the Presidential Grants Fund according to applications submitted in 2023 from NPOs-residents of the Arctic regions. The presented data allow drawing conclusions about the areas in which the majority of non-profit organizations apply for grant competitions in each individual territory.

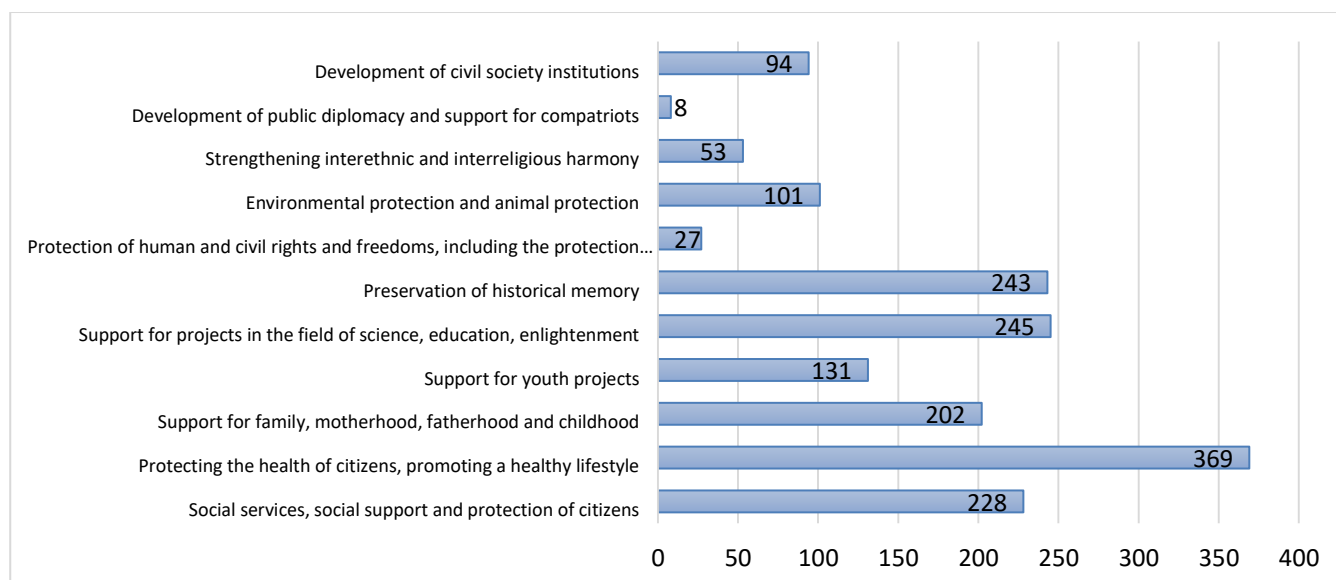


Fig. 3. Number of applications submitted for financial support for SONPOs, 2023 ³.

The statistical data in Fig. 3 show the most popular areas of social initiatives of NPOs, primarily the protection of public health and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle (a total of 369 projects or 21.7% of the total number of applications). Projects in the field of science, education and enlightenment (245 projects or 14.4%) and the preservation of historical memory (243 projects or 14.3%) are the second and third most popular areas for financial support for NPOs. These three categories account for 50.4% of the total number of applications for grant competitions.

The analysis of the number of applications submitted by individual regions can be considered as reference information for making management decisions on supporting SONPOs in individual territories, and not as analytical information aimed at comparing the activity of the non-profit sector in different subjects of Russia. This conclusion is based on the thesis about the heterogeneity of the socio-economic development of the Arctic regions. For example, the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug are the least active in terms of the number of applications submitted by NPOs compared to other subjects of Russia, which is explained by the small number of NPOs operating in these territories. In addition, it should be noted that, for example, the indicators of Krasnoyarsk Krai, one of the largest Russian regions, do not reflect the picture of the activity of the non-profit sector, since the region is only partially included in the Arctic

³ Compiled by the authors on the basis of the analysis of applications of the Presidential Grants Fund competition: Official Internet portal of the Presidential Grants Fund competition for socially oriented non-profit organizations. URL: <https://президентскиегранты.рф/> (accessed 12 February 2024).

zone due to its length. If we visually divide this region into the northern (Arctic) and southern parts, we can see disproportions: the southern part is the most densely populated, so most SONPOs are based there, which makes it difficult to determine the range of activities in the northern part.

However, despite some difficulties in statistical accounting, we can conclude that the non-profit sector of the regions included in the Arctic zone takes a fairly active part in the state support programs being implemented. Given certain state priorities in the development of the Arctic, it can be assumed that interest in social projects will increase in the future. This factor should be taken into account when determining quotas for the allocated amounts of funds to support SONPOs, not only on the basis of the quality of applications for funding of socially significant initiatives, but also to control financial quotas for those areas that are most in demand in a particular territory. In addition, it is necessary to introduce zonal assignment of the territory for the implementation of socially significant SONPO initiatives for a more substantive analysis of the financial support of individual NPOs. Such an innovation will make it possible to analyze the real volumes of financial support for SONPO projects implemented in the Arctic.

It is worth noting that the state annually increases the pace and amount of funds allocated to support SONPOs. This is proven by reports from federal and regional government bodies, as well as the volumes of funding allocated by state funds. To analyze the financial support for the non-profit sector in the Arctic regions, we used data from state funds that provide grants on the basis of competitive programs [2, Polyakov M.B.]. At the federal level (Fig. 4), we reviewed the data on financial support for NPOs from the following organizations: the Presidential Grants Fund, the Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives, and the Russian Culture Fund.

Analyzing the data obtained, we can conclude that the amount of funds allocated to support SONPOs is growing, the positive difference between the initial and final years of the study period (2017–2023) was 166%. However, it should be noted that the growth of these indicators is estimated only in nominal amounts and does not take into account inflation indicators in the reporting period, as well as significant changes in individual price indicators for a number of goods and services necessary for the implementation of socially significant NPO projects, which occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020–2021) and the international sanctions regime (2022–2023). In addition, it should be mentioned that the nominal indicators of grant funds allocated to support the non-profit sector of the Arctic region also do not currently take into account the difference in the levels of development and availability of infrastructure in individual territories, the heterogeneity of supply chains and special tax regimes.

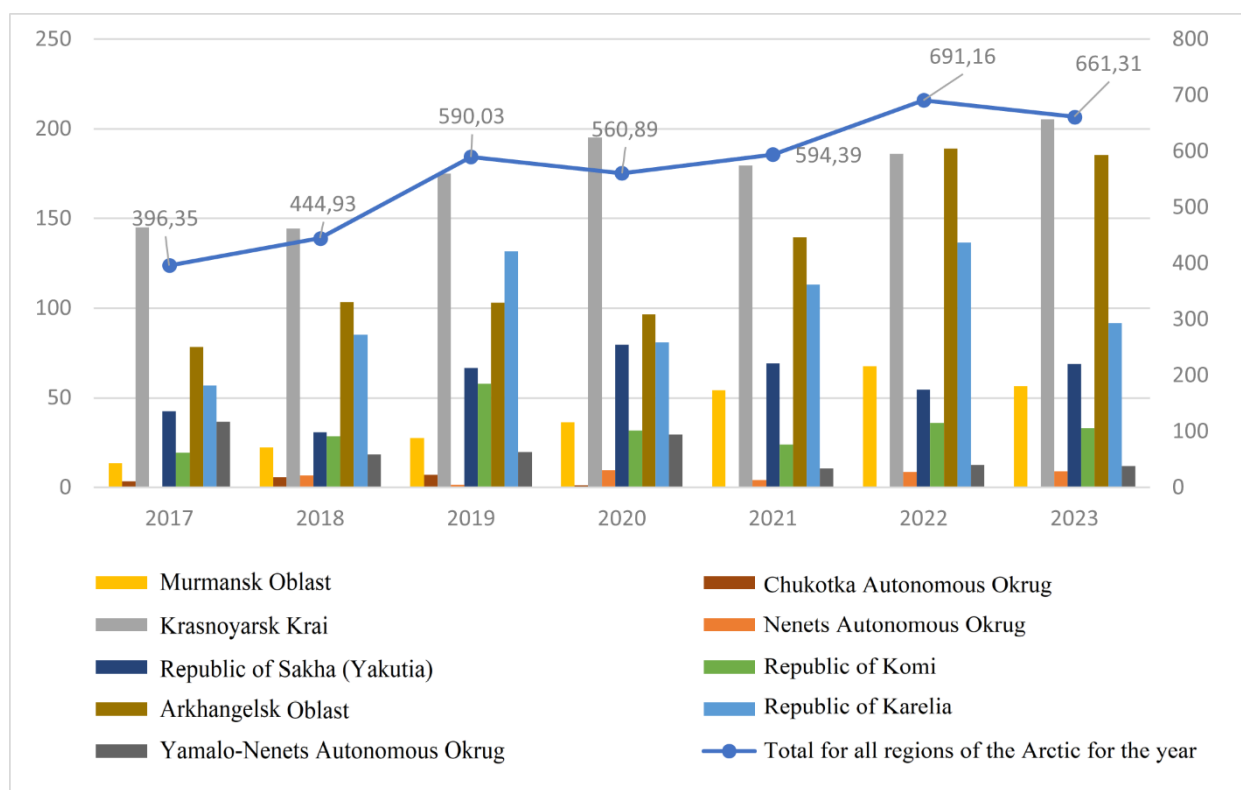


Fig. 4. Amount of funds allocated to SONPOs within the framework of federal competitive programs in the period 2017–2023, million rubles^{4, 5, 6}.

Having considered the dynamics of the allocated funding within the framework of federal competitive programs, the authors analyzed regional programs to support the non-profit sector (Fig. 5). Regional competitive programs and the amount of funding allocated to them can also serve as an indicator of the interest of regional authorities in the development of the non-profit sector and the level of possibility of such support (if funds are available in the regional or local budgets).

⁴ Compiled by the authors on the basis of the analysis of applications of the winners of the competitions: “Presidential Grants Fund”: Official Internet portal of the competition of the Presidential Grants Fund for socially oriented non-profit organizations. URL: <https://президентскиегранты.рф/> (accessed 12 February 2024).

⁵ Compiled by the authors on the basis of the analysis of the applications of the winners of the competitions: “Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives”: Official Internet portal of the competition of the Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives for socially oriented non-profit organizations. URL: <https://фондкультурныхинициатив.рф/> (accessed 12 February 2024).

⁶ Compiled by the authors on the basis of the analysis of the applications of the winners of the competitions: “Russian Culture Fund”: The Official Internet Portal of the Russian Culture Fund competition for socially oriented non-profit organizations. URL: <https://konkurs.rcfoundation.ru/> (accessed 12 February 2024).

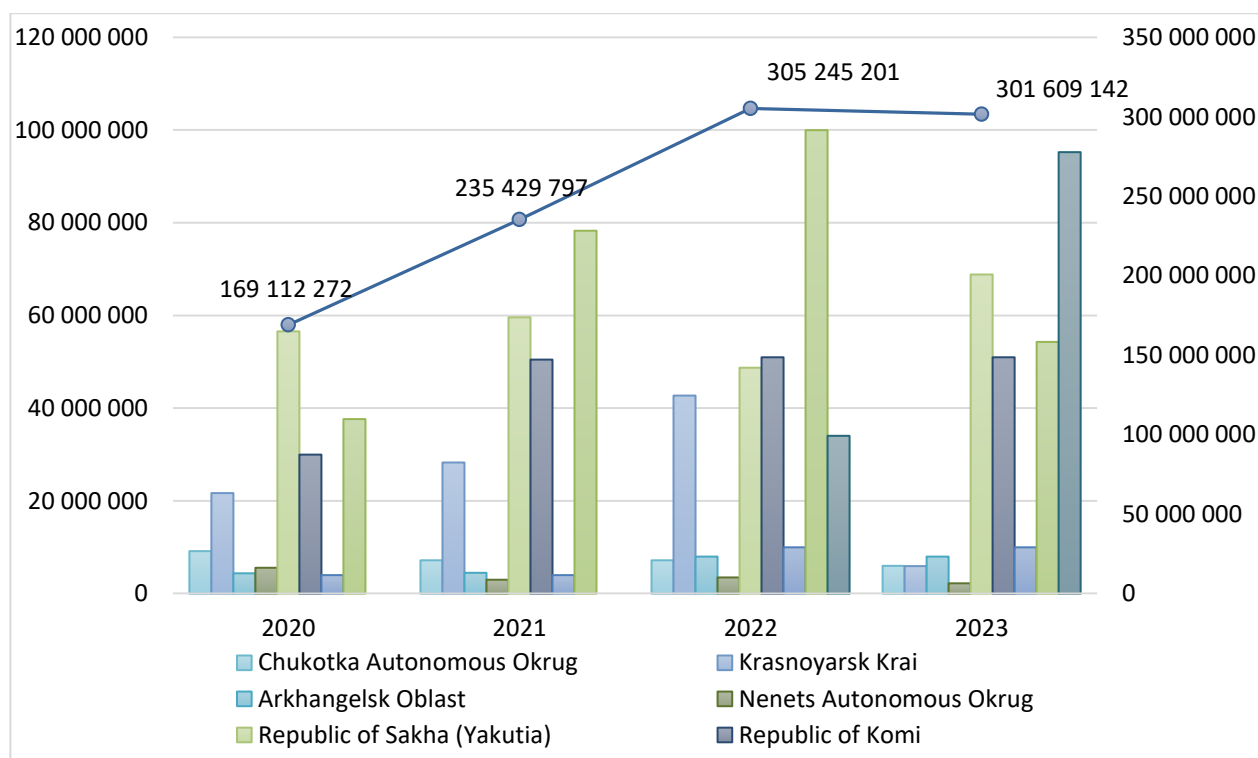


Fig. 5. Amount of funds allocated for the needs of SONPOs within the framework of regional competitive programs in the period 2020–2023, rubles ⁷

The data presented in Fig. 5 allow drawing the following conclusions. The Republic of Karelia turned out to be the leader in terms of financial support, having allocated a total of 280 million rubles with a budget of 75 billion rubles. It is followed by the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the Komi Republic (233.8 and 182.5 million rubles, respectively). These indicators demonstrate the high interest of regional governments in supporting SONPOs with financial resources. The most dynamically developing region in this direction is the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, which has significantly changed its support indicators over the past two years, providing SONPOs with a total of 129 million rubles (it should be noted that the support amount in 2023 was almost 4 times higher than in 2022). The lowest indicators of financial support for the non-profit sector were demonstrated by the Arkhangelsk Oblast with a budget of 150 billion rubles, and the Krasnoyarsk Krai (budget of 344 billion rubles). The Nenets Autonomous Okrug demonstrates a clear downward trend in the amount of funds provided to finance socially significant projects, despite the stable number of active SONPOs in the region. Such dynamics can be explained, among other things, by a decrease in the number of applications submitted for grant competitions from NPOs themselves.

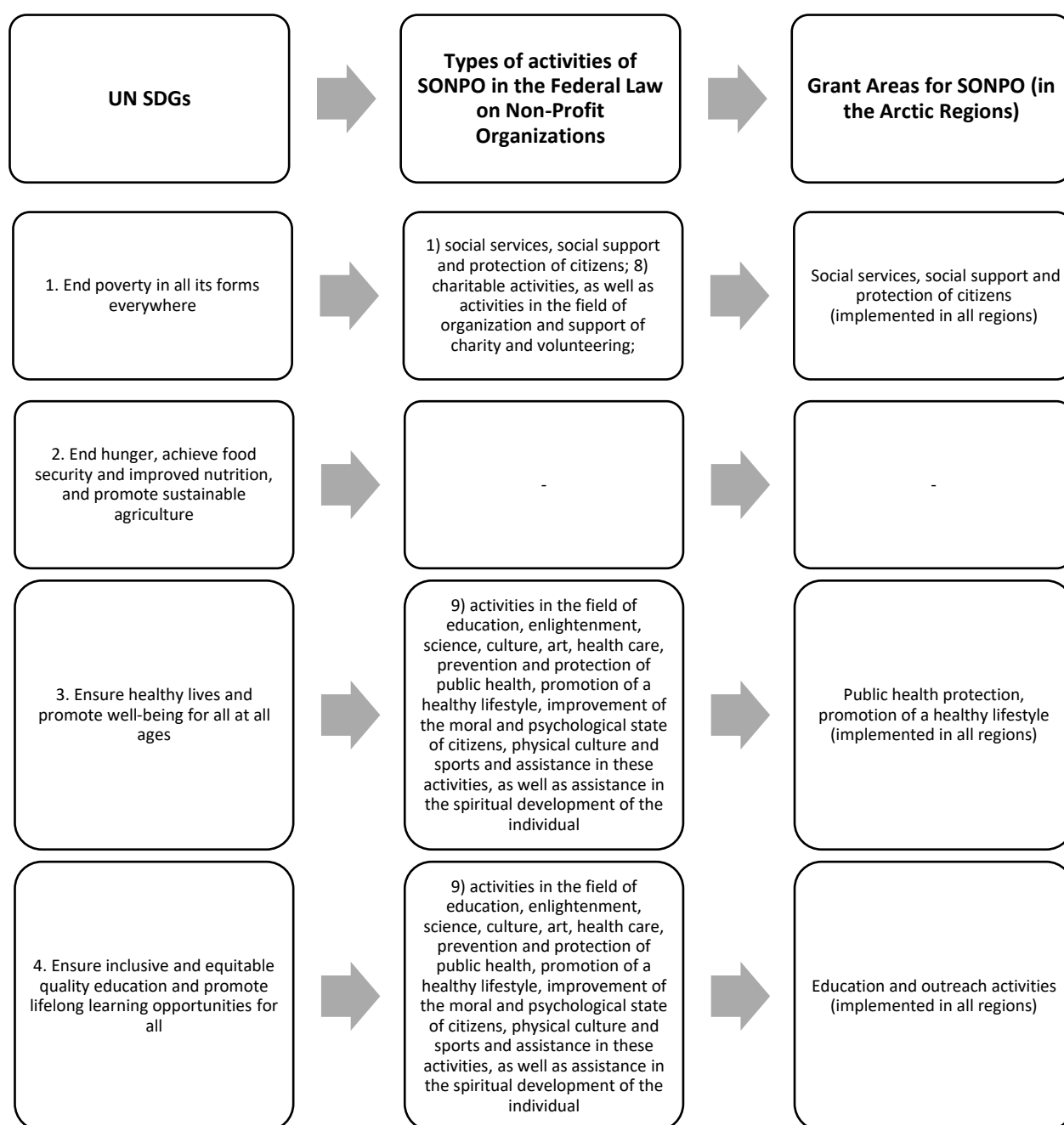
Analyzing the data presented, it should be noted that financial support for the non-profit sector is present at both the federal and regional levels in all regions of the Arctic. However, despite the positive dynamics of financing the activities of socially significant NPO initiatives, regional

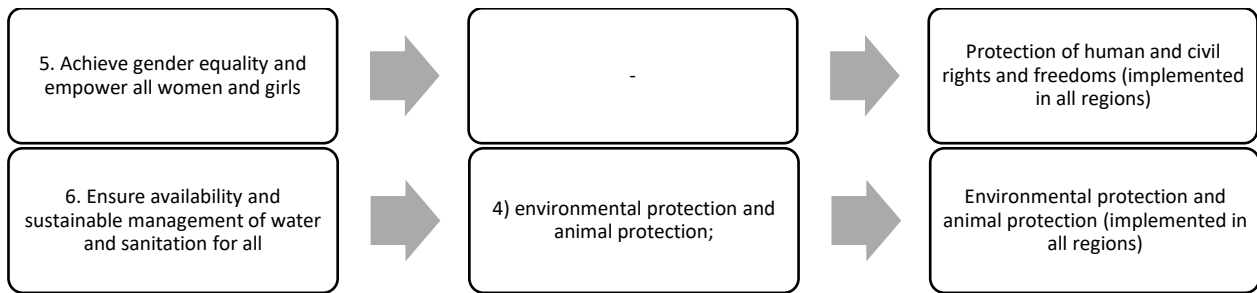
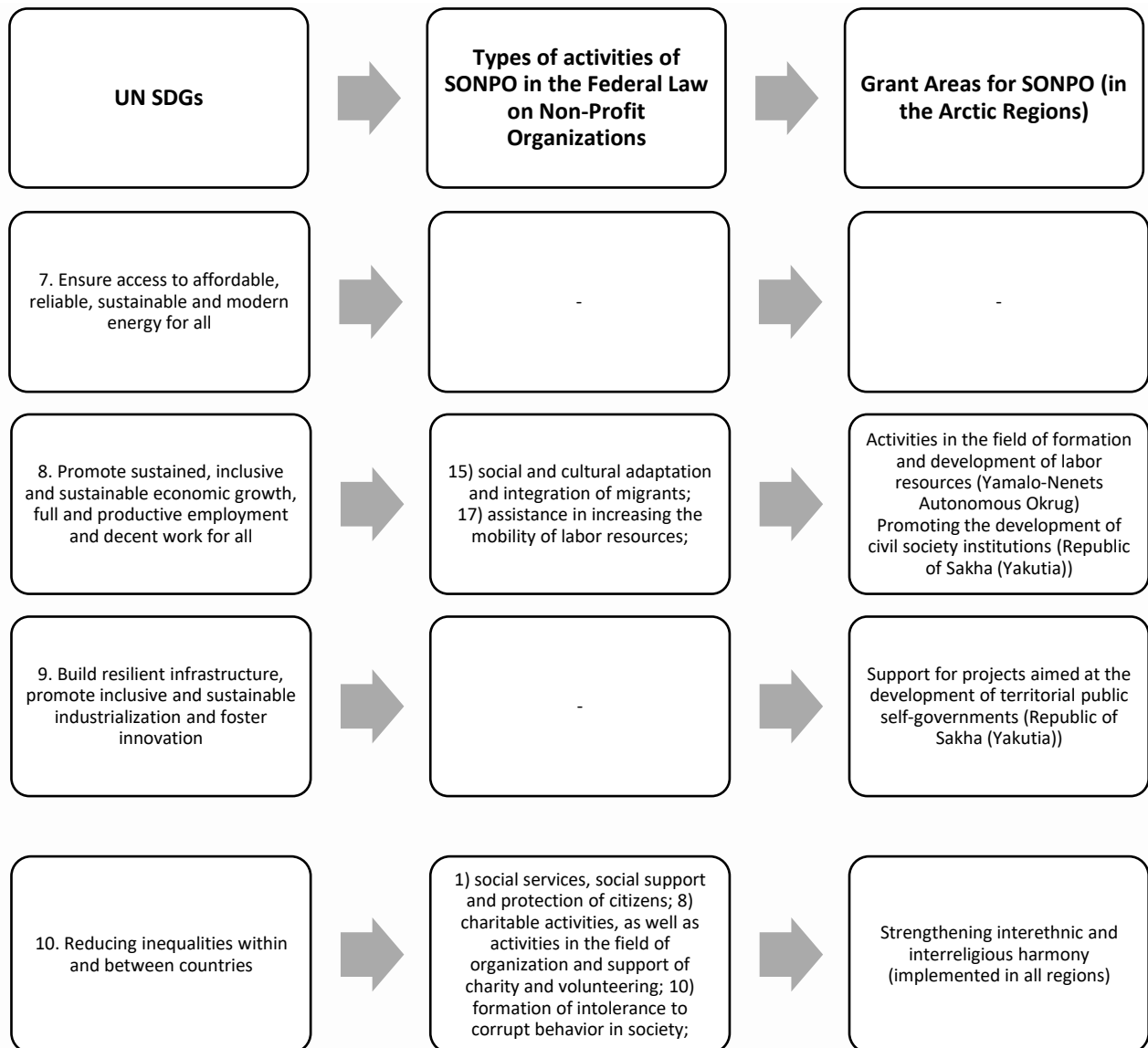
⁷ Compiled by the authors on the basis of regional competition programs of the Arkhangelsk Oblast, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Murmansk Oblast, Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Republic of Karelia, Komi Republic, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug.

authorities should pay special attention to providing information and consulting support to non-profit organizations for wider awareness of federal and regional programs and competitions for financial support.

The study of issues of support for the non-profit sector is of great scientific and applied interest, as it is important to study the degree of its possible impact on the sustainable development of specific territories of the Arctic.

For this purpose, the authors conducted a comparative analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals declared by the United Nations (UN SDGs) and the grant areas of regional competitions and the Presidential Grants Fund. This made it possible to determine the degree of coincidence of the thematic areas of grant competitions for NPOs with the UN SDGs (Fig. 6, Fig. 7, Fig. 8).



Fig. 6. The ratio of the UN SDGs and thematic areas of grant competitions⁸.

⁸ The table was compiled by the authors on the basis of a comparative analysis between the sustainable development goals established by the United Nations and the provisions of Article 31.1 of the Federal Law of 12.01.1996 No. 7-FZ "On Non-Profit Organizations" and grant areas of competitive programs for socially oriented non-profit organizations within the framework of the conducted study (part 1).

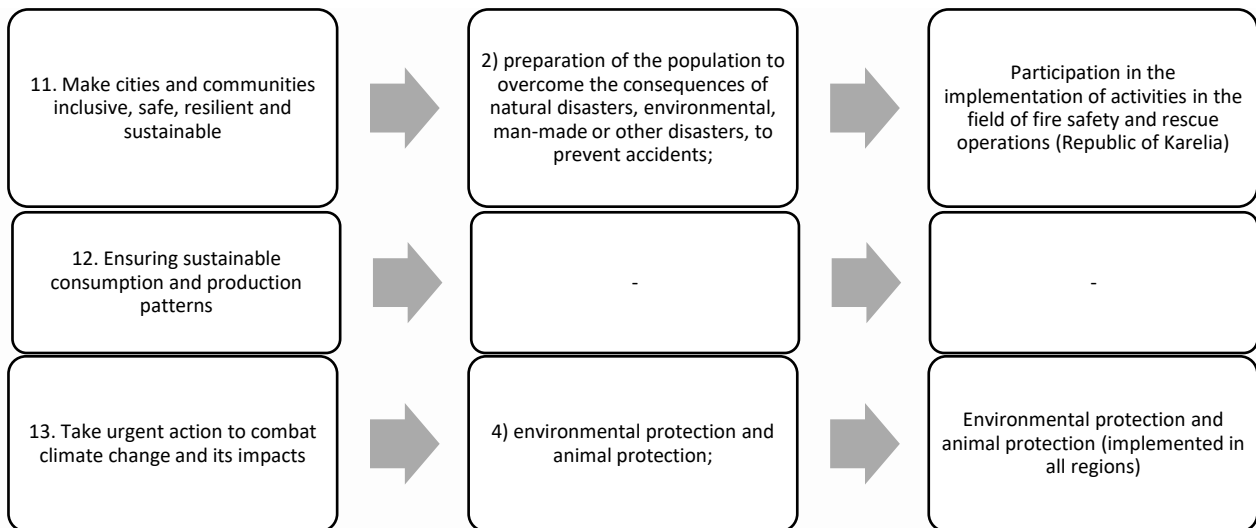


Fig. 7. The ratio of the UN SDGs and thematic areas of grant competitions (part 2).

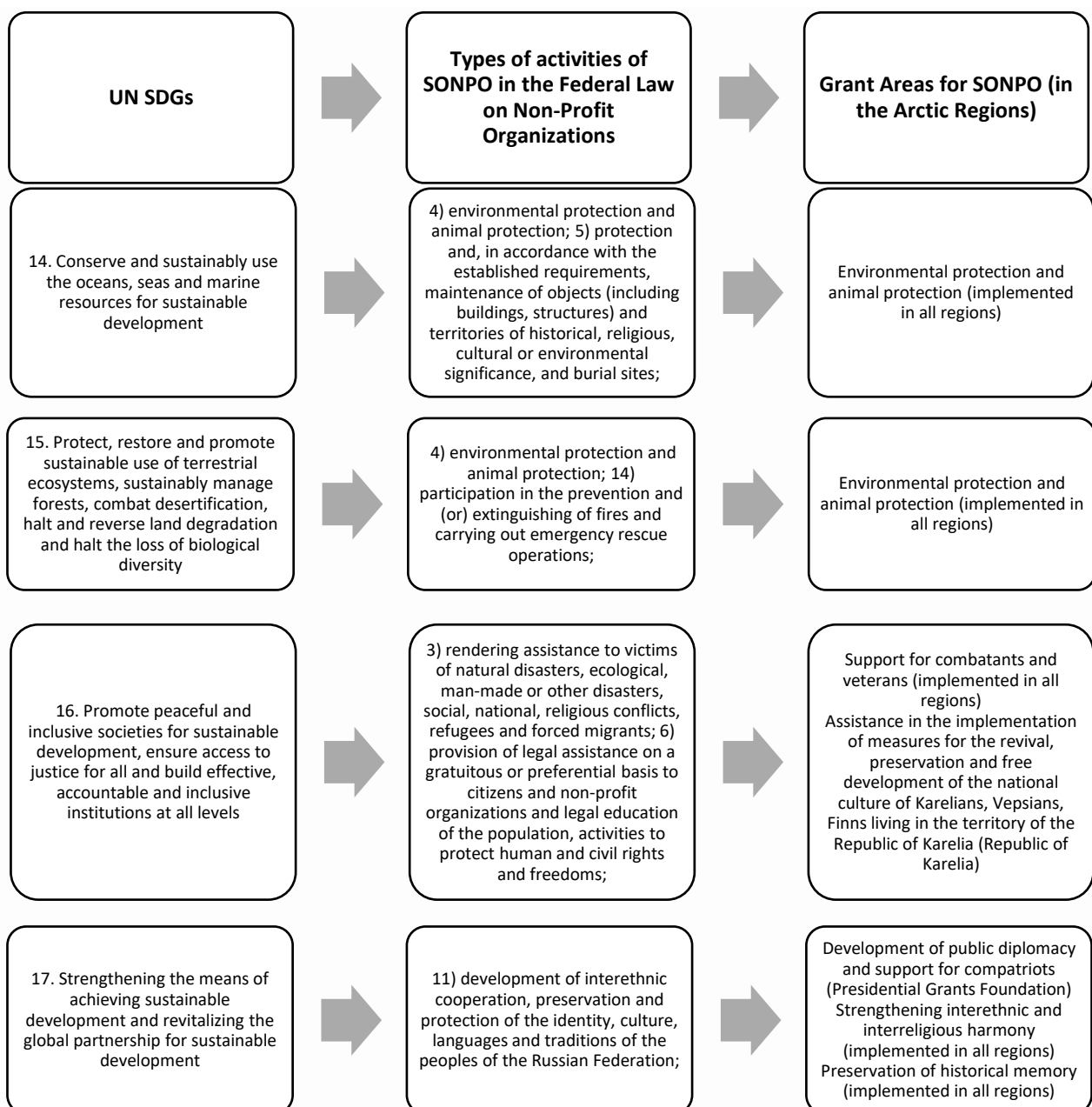


Fig. 8. The ratio of the UN SDGs and thematic areas of grant competitions (part 3).

According to the data presented in Fig. 6, 7, 8, most grant areas coincide with the UN SDGs, which confirms the hypothesis that financial support for the non-profit sector can be one of the essential conditions for supporting the sustainable development of the regions of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, and federal and regional government bodies, in turn, can influence the financing of socially significant NPO initiatives in accordance with the priority development areas of each specific territory. This once again emphasizes that at present the non-profit sector and public initiatives are an integral part of the sustainable development of both a separate region and the state as a whole, and financial support is a primary factor for the favorable work of SONPOs.

However, it should also be especially noted that it is necessary to develop and implement individual methodological approaches to assessing the results of SONPO activities in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation based on the results of implemented grant initiatives. The methodology for independent assessment of the quality of conditions for the provision of services by state and municipal institutions can be introduced as a basis for assessing the quality of services provided by SONPOs⁹. Such an assessment is carried out both by independent experts and directly by consumers of services.

Conclusions

Summarizing the results of the conducted research, the following main conclusions can be made.

1. The dynamics of changes in the number of SONPOs in individual regions can serve only as an indirect indicator of the development of the non-profit sector in a specific territory, since the Rosstat and the Ministry of Justice of Russia record only the fact of state registration of a legal entity, and not the real socially significant activities of NPOs.

2. The analysis of the number of applications submitted from individual regions can be considered only as reference information for making management decisions on supporting SONPOs in individual territories, and not as analytical information aimed at comparing the activity of the non-profit sector. This conclusion is based on the thesis about the heterogeneity of the socio-economic development of the Arctic regions.

3. Despite some difficulties in statistical accounting, we can generally conclude that the non-profit sector in the Arctic regions is quite active in the state support programs being implemented. Considering certain state priorities in the field of Arctic development, interest in social projects will increase. This factor should be taken into account when determining quotas for the volume of funds to support SONPOs, not only based on the quality of applications submitted for funding socially significant initiatives, but also by monitoring financial quotas for those areas that are most in demand in a particular territory.

⁹ Official website for posting information on state (municipal) institutions URL: <https://bus.gov.ru/> (accessed 05 August 2024)

4. It is necessary to introduce zonal assignment of the territory for the implementation of socially significant initiatives for a more substantive analysis of financial support for individual NPOs. Such an innovation will allow analyzing the actual volumes of financial support for SONPO projects implemented specifically in the Arctic.

5. Despite the positive dynamics of funding for the activities of socially significant SONPO initiatives, regional authorities should pay special attention to providing information and consulting support to non-profit organizations for broader awareness of federal and regional programs and competitions for financial support.

6. Most grant areas coincide with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which confirms the hypothesis that financial support for the non-profit sector is one of the necessary conditions for the sustainable development of the regions of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, and federal and regional government bodies can influence the financing of socially significant NPO initiatives in accordance with the priority development areas of each specific territory.

7. It is necessary to develop and implement separate methodological approaches to assessing the results of SONPO activities in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation based on the results of implemented grant initiatives. The methodology for independent assessment of the quality of conditions for the provision of services by state and municipal institutions can be introduced as a basis for assessing the quality of services provided by SONPOs.

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