The concept of smart cities is based on the idea that the city actively uses modern technologies to improve the quality of life in the urban space, both by improving environmental conditions and by providing better services to its citizens.

Citizen participation in the development and adoption of such decisions can be an important factor in ensuring their effectiveness and efficiency, since the experience of residents can help develop better plans, solutions and services, and some citizens are experts in certain areas and could use their competencies for making socially significant decisions.

In this regard, many cities are introducing various tools of public participation through electronic platforms. In Russia, one of the first and most widely known platforms for such participation is the Active Citizen of the Moscow Government. The Active Citizen project was created as a platform for conducting electronic voting among various groups of Muscovites on urban development issues. The project currently has 6,319,741 members. Over the eight years of its operation, 5,657 votes have been held, more than 3,400 decisions have been implemented.

Having emerged as a voting site for city residents, over time it has turned into an ecosystem that allows you to conduct public discussions in electronic form, discuss common house issues and inform neighbors about an important agenda, conduct verified voting, including on renovation issues, and much more.

The theoretical significance of the study lies in the assessment of electronic forms of civic participation from the standpoint of the development of public participation in general and its influence on the content of decision-making. The theoretical question can be formulated as follows: “Does the use of the Active Citizen online platform lead to the transformation of public participation”?

The practical significance is to identify ways to improve the effectiveness of using this tool at the local level. We formulate the practical question as follows: “If citizen participation allows you to make more informed and necessary decisions, how can municipalities improve their decisions through citizen participation?”

Research tasks:

- to determine the theoretical basis for the study of electronic forms of public participation;

- substantiate the advantages and limitations of electronic forms of public participation based on the results of foreign studies;

- identify the features of public participation in the implementation of the Active Citizen project as an electronic service of public participation;

- identify ways to improve the efficiency of electronic public participation services.

A neo-institutional approach was used as a methodological basis for the study, which made it possible to consider the implementation of the functions of the Moscow Government Project "Active Citizen" as a mechanism for public participation. The methodological prerequisite for this approach is individualism and the associated desire of a person to maximize utility, so we evaluate the effects that the project gives for the Moscow Government (organizational and managerial effect), business (for companies participating in the project) and citizens (the local community as a whole and individual individuals).

To assess the organizational and managerial effect of the Active Citizen project, the methodology for measuring the level of user involvement in the definition and development of digital government, proposed by the NET-EUCEN Academic Network, was applied, which allows assessing the completeness of user involvement and the quality of electronic service.

To assess the economic effect for the budget and business, the results of journalistic investigations and materials from open sources were used.

To assess the social effect, the methods of content analysis and questionnaire survey were used, as well as the results of a sociological study by VTsIOM. In the process of content analysis, 153 publications in the media dedicated to the Active Citizen project for the period from 05/22/2014 - 11/20/2022 were analyzed, 100 latest publications in the official VKontakte group "Active Citizen" were studied (total number - 900 comments) and conducted a population survey.

As a result, the following conclusions were obtained:

Advantages of the Active Citizen project:

- creation of the institution of public voting (one of the first fully implemented in Russia);

- many platforms do not live more than 1-3 years, Active Citizen has considerable experience in implementation;

- the project can be adapted to the goals and objectives of public authorities;

- ensuring the visibility of the work of the Moscow Government, the formation of an information agenda;

- legitimization of decisions of the Moscow Government, including those lying outside the legal field;

- creating space for controlled political participation;

- promotions and PR campaigns are used to promote the project.

The disadvantages of the implementation of the Active Citizen project include:

The disadvantages of the implementation of the Active Citizen project include:

- the operation of such platforms requires staff and budget, and as experience shows significant;

- there are threats of information security vulnerabilities and data leaks;

- replacement of civil participation by participation for bonuses and gifts;

- exclusion of a number of social groups from the project (the elderly, who do not have a smartphone, computer);

- a large number of "cases" of discrediting the decisions of the "Active Citizen" in the media;

- "cases" of manipulation of public opinion in order to legitimize illegal decisions;

- lack of "advanced" forms of civil participation internalized into the project, such as civil expertise, partnership, delegation;

- the technocratic approach "from below" - "up" is largely preserved.

The development of the project requires a system of measures aimed at overcoming the "rut effect", including:

- development of the project based on a combination of online and offline forms of civic participation. It is necessary to provide mechanisms such as focus groups, discussions with citizens, meetings, meetings, incorporating them for various types of issues put to the vote;

- reduction of resistance from public authorities of various levels through training, professional development, leadership;

- striving for a solution based on consensus (cooperation), especially in the event of conflict situations. Rejection of the binary principle of decision-making in the event of conflict situations;

- expanding the practice of substantiating the problem and the way to solve it. Why the problem is important and why one or another option would be preferable needs to be covered and explained. One of the most pressing issues is not the tile-laying itself, but the relevance of putting this issue on the agenda;

- to develop other forms of public participation based on the platform, primarily in terms of the examination of draft decisions and public control over the implementation of already adopted decisions;

- development of educational projects aimed at developing the skills of making joint decisions.