GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP: SEARCH FOR A STRATEGIC PROSPECT

Marina V. Bikeeva

Abstract: The research is important due to insufficient elaboration of theoretical aspects in the field of cooperation of the governmental agencies of various layers and the business organizations assuring the balanced economic, social and environmental development of the society. In view of this, this article is aimed at setting forth and substantiating a scientific idea about mutually-advantageous partnership of the interested groups with account taken of qualitatively new regularities of the phenomenon researched. The article is aimed at substantiating the necessity of a mechanism of the government and business cooperation on the basis of a strategic partnership assuring the development and strengthening of the long-term relations with the interested parties, the focus on the corporate social responsibility and on the society problems. The leading approach to researching this problem is a systemic approach oriented toward formation and maintenance of the long-term relations of the government agencies and the business organizations. The offered transformations outcome is a modern mechanism of social relations between the government and the business, which is designed to efficiently solve issues of the national (including regional) social and economic growth. The article materials are of practical value to develop the regional management strategy that is oriented toward the long-term sustainable development with account taken of the global tendencies assuring the balanced economic, social and environmental development of the society.

Keywords: a mechanism of the government and business cooperation, strategic partnership, corporate social responsibility, systemic approach.

1. Introduction

The all-Russian public opinion poll brought to light an enumeration of key tasks that are to be solved urgently and as soon as possible. They include the growth in the population well-being, availability and
quality of services in the field of public health, education, housing problem solution and many other things. What is indisputable is the government’s efforts to implement the said tasks included in the goal sets and the national projects, and the critical strategic documents. However, insufficient budgetary resources for the full-fledged socio-economic development do not make it possible to speak about a systemic approach to solving the problems of the socio-economic development, in view of which, one has to state that the government performs its obligations to assure the national interests inefficiently.

In view of this, the government and business strategic partnership is getting especially important in improving the socio-economic situation in modern Russia. They are getting more and more conscious that it is necessary to have a constructive dialogue between the government, the business and the society and to select the most acceptable forms and methods of this cooperation, specific technologies of their implementation.

The research is aimed at analyzing the existing approaches to the government and business cooperation and at assessing the strategic partnership importance as a promising approach of their interests reconciliation.

This goal necessitates the solution to the following tasks:

- to substantiate a scientific hypothesis that it is reasonable to use the strategic partnership as a mechanism of the government and business cooperation in the regional development processes;
- to develop a scientific concept of mutual partnership of the interested groups with account taken of qualitatively new regularities of the phenomenon researched.

At present a topic of the mechanism of the government and business cooperation is discussed more and more intensely by Russia’s businessmen and scientists. An idea of social contribution to the society’s sustainable development as a distinguishing feature of the civilized business conduct and a necessary component of the corporate culture is supported actively by the business community and the government agencies.

The partnership mechanisms use is enshrined in the Concept of socio-economic development of the Russian Federation to 2020, where the public-private partnership and the corporate social responsibility are considered as promising tools of the territories development [11].

The necessity to have a constructive dialogue between the business, the state and the society is covered in the papers by Sh.M. Valitov [4], M. Delyagin [7], I. Ziralov [10],
D.S. Lvov [17], F. Kotler [13], J.-J Lambin [16], A. Mayer [18], M. Meskon [21], S.A. Plisko [22], E.D. Razgulina [23], A. Yarovoy [33] and others. The study of issues of the businessmen’s participation in development of the local community in covered in many papers by the Russian and foreign authors. Their research subject are motives and aspects of the businessmen’s charitable activities (Belyaeva I.Yu., Eskindarov M.A. [12], Zelenova E.A. [9], Tulchinsky G.L. [28]), the corporate social responsibility (K. Devis [36], P. Drucker [37], A. Carroll [38], M. Kramer [41], Th. Levitt [40], J. Post, L. Preston [42], M. Porter [41], M. Friedman [39], Blagov Yu.E. [2], Gainutdinov R.I. [5], Galiev G.T. [6], Krichevsky N.A. [14], Kuzevanova A.L. [15], Litovchenko S.E. [24], Malgin V.A. [19], Markova E.V. [20], Friedman M., Bowen H., Wood D., Davis K., Owen R., Walton K.), the companies’ influence upon the regional development (Bratyuschenko S.V. [3], Uskova G.V. [31], Turkin S. [29]).

The practical developments in the field of the Russian business’ corporate social responsibility include the long-term research results presented in the reports about social investments in Russia – 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2014.[8], “Big Russian business: a social role and social responsibility (the population’s position and the experts’ assessments)” “Big business in Russia’s regions: territorial development strategies and social interests”, “Analytical report”, “From Russia with love”, “National contribution to the global context of the corporate social responsibility” and others. They note importance and currency of using the mechanism of the social partnership of the government and the business within cooperation with the local communities and implementing the regions’ social policy.

For all that, in spite of the whole scientific importance of the contribution made by the above-mentioned scientists, it is impossible to say that these problems are researched in full. Theoretical and methodological fundamentals of efficient cooperation of the government agencies of various layers and the business organizations in Russia are in the making.

Importance of the problem considered, its insufficient theoretical, methodological and practical development determined a choice of this research topic.

2. Materials and Methods

In modern conditions, the state’s socio-economic policy must build a sphere of social relations on the basis of creating the structural conditions to translate the national economy into the innovation development. The human capital is one of the main
elements of the modern system of social relations along with its other constituent parts: a partner state; socially-responsible business; innovation economy.

In the interrelation with participants in the social relations the state plays a dominant role. The government agencies create conditions for developing the economy and the private entrepreneurship, set the parameters of the business organizations’ influence upon the socio-economic situation in the region.

The business is the most important subject in the social partnership system, since, as a matter of fact, the human activities are protected and assured economically. A level and quality of the population’s life are determined directly by a level and quality of the national economy. So, the social relations system includes the whole set of interests of the state, the business and the society.

It is recognized that goals of the government agencies and the business organizations are quite different (Table 1). The government agencies’ goal is the socio-economic development of territories, while the business organizations’ goal is the increase in profits and the capital accumulation. If the interests of a sector are prevailing over the interests of other sectors, this is an inefficient type of the social structure.

Table 1

Goals, interests and expected results of participants in the social relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOVERNMENT</th>
<th>BUSINESS</th>
<th>SOCIETY</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The main goals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-economic development of a territory</td>
<td>Creation of comfortable conditions for the business</td>
<td>Sustainable development</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>The basic interests</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Receiving of means of control over the social situation in the region.</td>
<td>- Improvement of the enterprise’s image.</td>
<td>- Creation of new jobs.</td>
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<td>- Facilitation of verification of compliance by the region’s employers with the labor laws.</td>
<td>- Enlargement of demand for the manufactured products.</td>
<td>- Construction of social facilities (kindergartens, schools, hospitals, sports buildings).</td>
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<td>- Education maintenance.</td>
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<td>GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>BUSINESS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The main goals</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Stimulation of solution to the social problems by the employers.&lt;br&gt;- Making of the region more attractive in the labor market; enthrinement of the able-bodied population in the region.&lt;br&gt;- Receiving of a positive assessment of the administration’s activities by the voters.</td>
<td><strong>- Enhancement of attractiveness in the labor market.</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Improvement of the labor conditions, making the employees more interested in their work.&lt;br&gt;- Management of the risks appearing in the social sphere.&lt;br&gt;- Obtaining of “the social license” for doing the business.&lt;br&gt;- Establishment of good relations with the government.&lt;br&gt;- Enhancement of investment attractiveness.</td>
<td><strong>- Maintenance and holding of cultural and sports events.</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Relieving of social tensions.&lt;br&gt;- Beautification of populated areas.&lt;br&gt;- Reduction of harmful effects upon the environment.&lt;br&gt;- Economical use of the nonrenewable resources.&lt;br&gt;- Infrastructure creation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>SOCIO-ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TERRITORY</th>
<th>STABLE PROFIT, CAPITALIZATION GROWTH</th>
<th>WELL-BEING</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The expected results</strong>&lt;br&gt;Of course, the business’ social policy differs fundamentally from the state’s social policy. The social protection measures taken by the state are oriented towards the “stability” and “equality” goals. The main social security systems follow, in the first place, the equivalence principle that is supplemented and, sometimes, overlapped by the solidarity principle. The citizens’ social security is based, above all, on the fact that the social security system, which is guaranteed by the existing laws, will remain in force, the citizens’ rights for the social</td>
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</table>
protection will be reserved, and its level will remain unchanged.

The business follows different principles – the profitability, the competitiveness, the survival rate. The social protection measures, which the business offers, are determined, on the one hand, by the state (the laws), and on the other hand – by a strategy of the business itself, its policy in the existing conditions. In this case, the social security is assured by confidence of the parties to social relations in the fact that the business’ financial position and policy will change for the worse neither in the short term nor in the longer term.

An approach of the state and business participation in the society development is of interest. The approach is offered by Russia’s Managers Association in the “Business and State” program, and the approach makes it its goal to develop a broad mutually-advantageous strategic partnership between the business and the state (Figure 1) [1].

<table>
<thead>
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<th>max</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business irresponsibility</strong></td>
<td>Balanced participation of each party</td>
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<tr>
<td>The state’s participation in the society development</td>
<td>“Wet market”</td>
<td>State irresponsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Wet market”</td>
<td><strong>State irresponsibility</strong></td>
<td>Business participation in the society development</td>
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<td>min</td>
<td>max</td>
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Figure 1 – Matrix of content of the state and business relations in the society development

As is seen from the above-mentioned matrix, in order to approach to the right top quadrant, it is necessary to build an efficient mechanism of the government and business cooperation. One should remember that it is possible to do the socially responsible business only in a socially responsible state.

Thus, the modern business fits into a system of relations, to which the businessmen must react in their everyday activities. This behavior provides for a systemic approach
considering the business from the perspective of the relations with the government and other interested groups and with account taken of a range of their interests.

The system implies a lot of cooperating elements, which are related to and connected with each other, which form a compound. It follows from the definition that the system is characterized by the following significant features:

- availability of many elements;
- availability of ties between them;
- integrity of this compound.

3. Results

It should be noted that at present there is no a single worldwide definition of the corporate social responsibility. Even now this issue is very controversial. The corporate social programs are often taken as an obligatory rather than as voluntary participation of companies in the territories development. Just as the government agencies’ expectations run high, the businessmen say that it is impossible to replace the state with themselves, to indemnify for a low quality of the state and municipal administration, inefficiency of the budget funds expenditure.

The Managers Association enquiries, which were held within the international inquiry project “Corporate social responsibility: public expectations”, during which more than 1500 respondents were polled, who included the representatives of the big and medium business, experts, members of the mass media from the entities of Russia and the Central and Eastern Europe countries, showed:

- 78% of the respondents believe that the groups entitled to benefits and disadvantaged groups must be served by the state, the other groups must be able to choose from alternative (private) social policy subjects on the market conditions;
- 52.9% of the respondents among major and medium companies hail a model, in which the state and the business jointly set the social policy priorities and the areas, where the business can carry a social load with maximum account taken of its interests;
- 17.6% of the pollees believe that the business must assume the main part of functions in implementing the social programs” [1].

In other words, in spite of a contradictory nature of the considered problems, the overwhelming majority of businessmen believe that the state and the business, as the country’s most powerful institutions, are equally responsible for their actions to the society.
The research results showed that the American economist H. Bowen laid the groundwork for the modern approach to the corporate social responsibility (1953) [34]. He proceeded from a conviction that several hundreds of the largest companies were the vital centers of power and adoption of decisions, and that these companies’ actions deal with the citizens’ lives and a great deal of relations.

Another American theorist D. Brennan (1979) wrote what, in the changing world, is of great importance to obtaining good economic results of the corporations’ activities, so that they positively “perceived various types of social and political responsibility and reacted to them. This behavior serves as an indispensable condition of “survival of the free competition system” and, therefore, of the business itself” [35].

As positive sides of the corporate social responsibility concept, some critics sorted out the violations of a principle of the profit maximization and the cost increase in consequence of the use of a part of the business resources for social needs, and the business competitiveness deterioration on the whole [21]. Such a nature of the considered problems makes it possible to sort out several aspects that were the most widely used in the international practice, within which the social responsibility of business is interpreted in different ways (Figure 2):

![The concepts of corporate social responsibility](image)

Figure 2 – The existing concepts of social responsibility of business

According to the theory of “corporate egoism”, the only business responsibility is the profits increase for its shareholders. This point of view was formulated by the Noble-
prize winner M. Friedman in 1971. In his book “Capitalism and Freedom” he writes: “In a free economy there is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud”. [39]. Thus, M. Friedman tries to confirm the business ethics or, at least, its part, which he calls “social responsibility of business”, only on a motive of profits. He believes that the corporations’ managers must not be distracted to study, assessment and solution to any social problems of the society, but they must mind only their direct business – to organize the production of goods and the rendering of services. As regards the social problems, they must be solved by the interested persons themselves, the state and the community [30].

M. Friedman is not alone in his opinion. Another scientist Th. Levitt (1958), when opposing the social responsibility of business, said that “The function of business is to produce sustained high-level profit. The essence of free enterprise is to go after profit in any way that is consistent with its survival as an economic system. The well-being and the society are not business of a corporation. Its business is to make money, and not soft music” [40].

One can’t but agree that an economic goal – profit earning is the basis for establishing any enterprise. This approach really implies performance by an enterprise of the economic function of manufacturing the products (rendering the services) that are necessary for the society. The approach also assures control over the enterprise’s financial and economic activities, thus increasing its assets. Special functions of such an enterprise are restricted by assurance of employment for the citizens, making a maximum profit and a fee for the shareholders. However, in new conditions of the economic management, keeping of the business’ social responsibility to this minimum is quite incorrect. M. Friedman’s opinion does not give the main aspect of the modern thinking on the social responsibility’s issues.

The second approach is that the theory of “corporate altruism” is exactly the opposite of M. Friedman’s theory. The theory appeared simultaneously with publication of Friedman’s sensational article and it belonged to the Economic Development Committee. The main idea is that the business must care about the profit growth and, apart from that, the business must make as accessible as possible a contribution to the
social problems solution, improvement of the quality of life of the citizens and the society, and to the environment preservation. The Committee’s recommendations emphasized that “corporations are obliged to make a major contribution to improving the quality of the American life”. The companies cannot keep themselves aloof from the social problems, since they are open systems, while taking an active part in lobbying the laws and other state decisions, sponsoring various parties and other non-governmental associations [12].

The author believes that the third position – the theory of “rational egoism” is of interest and is the most scientifically substantiated. The theory proceeds from that it is necessary for the business to restrict its current profits, when creating prerequisites for successful long-term development, for the favorable social environment of its employees and territories of its activities. The business’ expenses for pursuing the socially responsible policy are long-term investments that are aimed at improving the business conditions.

Apart from the sorted out varieties of the concept of the socially responsible business, in the 1990s an integrated approach to the social responsibility started to be formed, within which the companies’ social activity was more and more focused around a certain sphere, which was directly connected with the man aspect of the organization’s activities. Such an approach to understanding the sense of the social responsibility of business was called the socially important aspects of activities. Its main advantage is that this approach mollifies the contradictions between interests of the business and the society, using for that the whole set of tools available to the business, and the social programs are not considered as sources of inefficient expenses.

4. Discussion

Thus, the balance of economic reasonability and social justice consists in serving the interests of all the parties (Figure 3).
Figure 3 – The main areas of cooperation of the participants in social relations

Each participant in social relations, having reasonable and closely interweaving interests, must make its contribution to the social responsibility development.

It is possible to achieve the said balance only upon condition of the mutual tripartite partnership in obtaining the final outcome, which is oriented towards the person, to creating real conditions that are sufficient for his or her all-round development.

A long way of the business genesis as a special form of organization and implementation of the human activities is connected, above all, with principles of the free exchange and the free competition based on the private ownership. A history of the business formation and evolution indicates the permanent change of the structural-functional principles of the business’ organization as well as its value-motivational characteristics.

While using a constructive abstractness of various interpretations of the business, it is possible to propose the following main primary features.

Firstly, the business is a kind of activities, which is utterly rationalized, which chooses the means of achieving a goal purposefully and consistently, with a priority of motivation of the success achievement.

Secondly, the business is an autonomous institution, which is built on independent individualist decisions, which maximizes a function of usefulness, a task of achieving its own blessing, whose rational inward-looking egoism makes it possible to go beyond the scope of a
habitual social field, to position itself beyond the traditional social relations.

Thirdly, the business is a subject of the social and political process, which is the most predictable in its economic preferences and reactions to changes in the macro-microenvironment, which has the greatest competence, knowledge and information about functioning of institutional environment of the demand and supply, which is able to formulate and to exactly calculate its demands, its profit as well as to initatively construct ways of their meeting and achievement.

Fourthly, the business is an object, which is the most susceptible in terms of the political management, influence upon which can be minimized by means of expansion or restriction of the resource possibilities, and the power influence can fall beyond the scope of usual and culture-approved methods, acquire a latent social and political form [32].

In view of the foregoing, a search for models of efficient cooperation between the government and the business is a quite complicated issue. Forms and methods, which are used by the government and the business on further optimization of their cooperation, can be quite different (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms and methods of cooperation</th>
<th>Results of cooperation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular business participation in the working events of the government agencies (branch ministries and agencies)</td>
<td>Concerted actions on multifaceted assistance to the business development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holding of a procedure of the social examination of the draft regulations</td>
<td>Equitable business participation in the legislation, compliance with rights and legal interests of businessmen in adopting the decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation of businessmen in the work of regional business organizations</td>
<td>Practical cooperation of the government agencies and the business organizations; interests consolidation for working out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms and methods of cooperation</td>
<td>Results of cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>commissions, councils, working groups</td>
<td>proposals on the main aspects of work; participation in implementing the region’s economic policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint work on performing the agreements between the region administration and trade unions</td>
<td>Compliance by the employers with standards of the labor laws, the labor protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entering into agreements between the branch ministries and the non-governmental associations of businessmen</td>
<td>Joining of the forces and coordination of the actions aimed at developing all the spheres of the economy and the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodical holding of the meetings with businessmen, the forums, the conferences, departures to the municipal units</td>
<td>Joint discussion of the problems and finding of ways to solve them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding of professional and rating competitions</td>
<td>Development of the business initiative, making of the business activities more socially important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding of the exhibition-fair events</td>
<td>Popularization and promotion of the goods made by local manufacturers, increase in the sales and the sales market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint work on developing the inter-regional and international cooperation</td>
<td>Expansion of sales markets of the products made by the local manufacturers, development of the foreign economic ties, experience exchange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The world experience shows that the most efficient mechanism of the government and business cooperation is a strategic partnership, in which preference is given to cooperation with working out common interests connected with the region development and the investments attraction [26; 27].
A driving force of such cooperation is interests of the partnership subjects, while the cooperation goal is implementation of these interests in the long term. The partnership is also aimed at enhancing the synergistic effect from joining the forces in achieving the common goals. This partnership is a modern mechanism of social relations, which is designed to efficiently solve issues of the national socio-economic growth. Today this vector is forming the main demand in the world market, when guaranteeing the innovation national economy the competitiveness and the high standards of protection and assurance of the human activities in the country.

Among the variety of existing approaches to defining the “strategic partnership” notion in the research the following approach is the most reasonable: “Strategic partnership is a union between the parties representing the government, the business, the civil society, which strategically unifies the resources and the abilities of each party in order to respond to the key time challenges. This is a tool favoring the sustainable development, which is based on principles of sharing the risks, expenses and the common benefit [25]. Thus, strategic partnership is the most important organizational resource, which is based on sharing of the risks and the responsibility, implementation of which makes it possible to achieve common strategic goals, to meet the needs of the parties interested, to increase the competitiveness and to assure the sustainable development.

Thus, in the market conditions of economic management, which are characterized by the availability of severe socio-economic problems and the lack of budget funds, the economy management implies the strategic partnership of the government agencies and the business organizations, which is based on principles of the social responsibility of economic entities. This tool of implementing the joint socially important programs will make it possible to enhance a role of the business in the territorial development, to keep the costs down in implementing the infrastructure projects, to assure the accessibility of the socio-economic infrastructure, the capital, the labor force, to make the budget sector more efficient and to improve the population life quality.
One of the reasons for the week use of this tool in the region economy management consists in insufficient knowledge of the experience, which is accumulated in the world, new aspects and forms of organization, in difference and contradiction of the interests of the government agencies and the business organizations. It is also possible to sort out other problems of the government and business cooperation during the region economy management:

– a low level of confidence between the main cooperation subjects;

– the business organizations’ desire for individual cooperation with the government, which automatically leads to a refusal from the interests consolidation with the business community on the whole;

– absence of a clearly worded and presented government strategy in the process of building the relations with the business;

– imperfection of the legal framework regulating the joint partner activities of the government and the business (the tender laws, the concessional laws), and total absence of the legal regulation of the lobbyism, which favors the shadow expansion;

– availability of mechanisms of the resources redistribution, which determine the administrative market essence, which are preserved from the Soviet economy, which complicate the process of building transparent, organic relations between the government and the business [23].

In order to streamline and to promote an idea of enhancing a role of the business in the territorial development, in the first place, it is necessary to improve the economic policy in terms of the organizational-institutional tools that open the main aspects of forming the responsibility of enterprises and that are designed to step up their participation in social-economic development of the territories.

5. Conclusion

Negative socio-economic tendencies indicating the state inefficient administration make important the task of searching for the ways and new sources of the regional economic growth, assuring the high quality of the population life and they confirm a conclusion that it is necessary to attract private resources to the socially important regional projects.
In this situation, one of the most important conditions of solving the set tasks is consolidation of the restricted resources on the basis of development of active cooperation between the government and the business. The established world practice shows that an efficient model of the government and business cooperation is the strategic partnership, since the strategic partnership makes it possible to use the competitive advantages of the parties (government and private sectors) to the fullest extent possible, to make them more interested in successful achievement of the joint activities results, to attract the significant extrabudgetary funds, the innovation technologies to the state competence sphere.

The partner cooperation is characterized by availability of coordination and a balance of interests of the government agencies and the business organizations, regulation of their rights, obligations, cross sharing of the risks and joint and several responsibility. The economic nature of partnership implies the close cooperation of the participants to achieve the set goals and the fulfillment of all the commitments that they entered into. Only in this case it is possible to use the synergistic effect reached as a result of such cooperation through the fact that each party has certain resources, an access to which can be of use to the partner.

It is possible to form the socially responsible behavior in the business environment only with purposeful support from the state and its active participation in solving the social problems. Thus, the business’ social responsibility can become a platform for the effective business and government cooperation, and it must do that.

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