The territories of the Russian Federation 2012
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This directory covers the politics and economy of the regions of the Russian Federation. It contains four sections: introduction including an expert article about the rise and fall of regionalism in Russia, chronology of main events and a statistical overview; territorial surveys of each of the 83 federal units; a bibliography; and indexes of the territories, economic areas and a gazetteer of alternative and historic names. A map of all the territories and maps orientating the reader within each region are also included. The entries for each region includes the historical and political context, an economic survey covering transport, main industries and level of economic activity and contact details for government officials.

The value of the directory is that it contains information that is both hard to find and up to date. Information has been sourced from the Russian Federal Service of State Statistics and other Russian agencies. Unlike other "doing business" in Russia books which focus primarily on Moscow and perhaps St Petersburg, this guide opens up the whole country and exposes the huge variations within it. Official statistics used often date from October 2010 and the chronology goes up to January 2012, with reference to legislation coming into effect in the future.

However the strength of the book, the regional focus, is also its downside in terms of usability. The index of place names only includes regions but not important cities which do not have the same name as a region. Nor does the initial map of all regions include any cities. This means that to find Kazan or Vladivostok, for example, the user needs to first identify the region, (Republic of Tatarstan and Maritime (Primorskii) Krai respectively) and only then is the information forthcoming. Nor is there an index of industries, requiring leafing through the whole book to find which regions are important for what. There are no ways to readily identify the special economic zones, those regions which have established western industries and those which primarily operate
only within the CIS, information contained within each entry but not indexed. Online access, if available, would overcome these problems.

A second usability issue, further exacerbating the problem of approaching the content in any other way than by region, is the dense narrative structure of the entries. Much of the data - km of paved roads and railway lines, percentage of population economically active and employed in different industries, contribution of different industries to the regional economy, trade within and beyond the CIS - would be better presented in tabular form. The chronological approach, as used in the introductory section for all of Russia, would also make the account of the key historical and political events for each region easier to assimilate.

Overall the book repays the effort required to use it. For the non-Russian speaker especially it would otherwise be very difficult to find this level of detail about what makes up Russia today.

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