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PROCESS APPROACH TO REGIONAL LABOR MARKET FORMATION IN POST-WAR RECOVERY

Purpose. To substantiate the applicability of the process approach to the formation and development of the regional labor market under conditions of post-war recovery.

Methodology. The research is based on the principles of the process approach and applies methods of theoretical generalization, structural and functional analysis, comparative analysis, and process modeling. An adapted process maturity model developed in accordance with CMM/CMMI logic is used to assess the development level of regional labor market processes. The empirical basis consists of official statistical and analytical data on regional labor market performance in 2025.

Findings. The study substantiates the interpretation of the regional labor market as a system of interconnected processes characterized by defined inputs, outputs, participants, and performance indicators. A process maturity model tailored to regional labor markets is proposed and its levels are specified. Based on a pilot assessment, the labor market of Dnipropetrovsk region in 2025 is preliminarily classified at Level 2, with certain elements of Level 3

Originality. The scientific contribution lies in adapting the concept of process maturity to the regional labor market level, developing a framework for assessing process maturity within a socio-economic system, and conceptualizing post-war recovery as a sequence of transitions between maturity levels.

Practical value. The proposed approach may be applied by public authorities and regional policymakers to diagnose labor market conditions, identify development priorities, and design evidence-based management decisions during the post-war transformation period.

Keywords: *process approach, labor market, process maturity, post-war recovery, regional development*

Introduction. In the context of the prevailing economic conditions in Ukraine, the labor market is developing primarily at the regional level. Each region possesses distinctive characteristics shaped by the specific features of its territory, while remaining integrated into the national labor market. The regional labor market is a significant indicator of a region's socio-economic development, given the diversity and complexity of processes that take place within it.

The key processes include the formation of labor demand and supply through social partnership among the main market actors (the state, employers, and employees); the implementation of state and regional regulation through legislative and regulatory acts governing labor relations; the systematization and interaction of internal and external labor markets that determine regional features of labor market segmentation; the development of educational services aimed at improving workforce competencies and the quality of labor supply; the implementation of regional programs for economic sector development to ensure high-quality labor demand; as well as state and non-state labor mediation mechanisms.

The full-scale war in Ukraine has significantly complicated the functioning of regional labor markets, causing large-scale population displacement, a decline in employment, structural changes in labor demand, and the deepening of regional disparities.

Under such conditions, the application of the process approach becomes particularly relevant, as it enables a comprehensive assessment of disruptions in the interaction of key labor market processes and provides a methodological basis for labor market recovery in the post-war period.

Consequently, establishing an effective labor market becomes a priority for regional authorities and requires the application of new approaches to its governance.

Since the regional labor market is a complex socio-economic system whose effectiveness depends on the continuous improvement of interconnected and dynamic processes that generate final outcomes (balancing labor demand and supply, creating goods and services, and ensuring production potential), the use of effective management approaches is essential. One such approach is the process approach, which serves as an effective tool for structuring processes and creating sustainable competitive advantages in the labor market.

Therefore, it is crucial to develop and scientifically substantiate an approach to identifying, classifying, and optimizing business processes within the regional labor market. When implemented, this approach can serve as an important instrument for forming and developing a competitive labor market at all levels of its functioning.

Literature review. Numerous publications by foreign and domestic scholars are devoted to the study of various aspects of the process approach.

Cherchata A. O. considers the process approach as an alternative to other classical approaches, namely functional and project approaches [1].

Pererva I. M. offers a more detailed classification of management approaches based on the generalization of existing research and highlights the process approach as the most effective [2].

Tkachova S. S. examines the evolutionary stages of the development of the process approach and their features in the context of operational and managerial activities of enterprises [3].

Kozenkov D. E., Alyoshina T. V., and Gaiduk I. V. provide a generalized definition of the process approach to management [4].

In her work, Sokolova L. V. describes the mechanisms for applying the process approach in management and highlights their specific features under changing market conditions [5].

Kostina O. M. and Kopteva G. M. have produced fundamental studies on diagnosing the state and level of development of business processes. Kostina's research [6] focuses on business process diagnostics, while Kopteva G. M. [7] examines processes from the perspective of process maturity.

Aloshyna T. V., Sidorov O. A., and Miroshnichenko M. V. summarize theoretical studies on the process approach and propose a unified model for its implementation in management, which allows its application across various sectors of the economy [8].

The process-based interpretation of the labor market was initially developed by Kolot A. M., Grishnova O. A., and Gerasymenko O. O., who argue that the labor market should be viewed as a process or a dynamic model of interconnected processes [9].

Petrova I. L. considers the labor market as a process flow model that includes inputs and outputs and a core process that determines the specific characteristics of market functioning [10].

In her work, Aloshyna T. V. provides a process-based definition of the labor market, which substantiates the feasibility of applying the process approach to labor market formation [9].

Unsolved aspects of the problem. Despite the growing body of research on the process approach and its application in enterprise management, public administration, and sectoral systems, its use in the labor market remains insufficiently explored. Most existing studies focus on micro- and meso-level process modeling, while the labor market is predominantly examined from institutional, structural, or macroeconomic perspectives. As a result, there is a lack of a comprehensive process-based framework that systematically identifies, formalizes, and integrates key labor market processes, including labor demand and supply formation, matching mechanisms, regulatory support, and development processes.

Moreover, limited attention has been paid to the assessment of labor market process maturity, particularly at the regional level and under conditions of structural shocks and post-war recovery. Although maturity models are widely used in corporate and project management, their adaptation to labor market systems remains fragmentary and methodologically inconsistent. Existing approaches do not adequately address the process logic of post-war recovery, including its stages, sequencing, and internal coherence, which leads to predominantly reactive and fragmented labor market regulation. These gaps substantiate the need for further research

aimed at developing a process-oriented model of labor market formation and management that integrates process identification, maturity assessment, and long-term recovery objectives.

Purpose. The aim of the research is to theoretically justify and empirically substantiate the applicability of the process approach to the formation and development of the regional labor market, including the identification of its key processes, the assessment of their maturity, and the development of a framework for their effective management and optimization.

Methodology. The methodological framework of the study is based on the principles of the process approach, which conceptualizes the labor market as a system of interconnected processes aimed at transforming inputs into socio-economic outcomes. The research employs general scientific methods, including theoretical generalization, abstraction, and logical analysis, to identify process attributes of the labor market such as inputs, outputs, participants, resources, and performance indicators. Structural and functional analysis is applied to classify labor market processes into core, supporting, management, and development processes and to construct a generalized process architecture at the regional level.

To assess the state and development level of labor market processes, the study applies an adapted process maturity assessment framework based on widely recognized maturity models (CMM, CMMI). Comparative analysis is used to examine differences between pre-war, wartime, and post-war labor market conditions and to substantiate the need for a process-oriented approach to recovery. Graphical and modeling methods are employed to visualize the stages of post-war labor market recovery and the logic of process development, ensuring consistency between methodological tools and the empirical results of the study.

Results. The full-scale Russian invasion in 2022 fundamentally transformed Ukraine's labor market, interrupting its trajectory of gradual development and plunging the employment system into a state of deep structural crisis. Whereas in the pre-war period (2019–2021) the employment rate of the population aged 15–70 consistently exceeded 56–58 %, and total employment amounted to approximately 16.5–16.7 million persons, in 2022 this indicator declined to below 50 %, reflecting a sharp contraction of the economic base of employment. According to estimates by public authorities and international organizations, approximately 4.3 million jobs were lost during the first months of the war, which accounted for nearly 28 % of pre-war employment. At the same time, the scale of forced migration led to substantial distortions in the regional structure of the labor market. By comparison, in the pre-crisis period employment losses were predominantly cyclical in nature and did not exceed 1.5–2 % annually, which underscores the unprecedented character of the wartime shock to the national labor market.

As of early 2024, more than 3.7 million individuals were registered as internally displaced persons, while over 6 million Ukrainian citizens were residing abroad. This simultaneously reduced the labor supply and intensified imbalances between labor demand and supply across specific regions. Prior to 2022, migration processes were predominantly labor-related and pendular

in nature, and the balance of internal migration between regions did not create critical distortions in workforce availability. During the wartime period, however, labor supply in western and central regions at peak moments exceeded pre-war levels by two to three times, whereas in frontline and temporarily occupied territories it virtually disappeared, thereby destroying the relative equilibrium of local labor markets.

Wartime conditions also triggered a sharp restructuring of the sectoral and regional employment structure, manifested in job losses in traditional economic sectors alongside a simultaneous increase in labor demand in areas related to defense, security, and social support. Whereas before the war the largest share of employment was concentrated in industry, trade, and services, during 2022–2024 industrial employment contracted significantly, while the role of the public sector, logistics, volunteer-based, and quasi-public forms of employment increased.

Mass internal population displacement intensified competition for jobs and exceeded the absorptive capacity of local labor markets by three to five times depending on the region, thereby deepening territorial employment disparities. In contrast, in the pre-war period interregional imbalances were largely offset by labor mobility and the functioning of mechanisms for interregional redistribution of labor demand and supply.

At the same time, the model of labor relations underwent significant transformation, particularly through the expansion of remote and flexible employment and the accelerated digitalization of job-matching processes. Prior to 2022, digital employment mechanisms were fragmented and largely limited to the IT sector and selected segments of the service industry; during the wartime period, however, they became one of the key instruments enabling labor market adaptation to extreme conditions. Taken together, these trends undermined the effectiveness of traditional employment regulation mechanisms and highlighted the need for the introduction of new analytical and managerial approaches to labor market functioning under conditions of wartime and post-war development. Consequently, state regulation of the labor market has become predominantly reactive, which objectively necessitates a transition toward a process-oriented approach to the formation and transformation of Ukraine's labor market.

The use of the process approach in the development of the labor market has been examined in the works by Kolot A. M., Petrova I. L., and Aloshyna T. V. Despite the substantial contribution of these studies to understanding the essence and mechanisms of implementing the process approach, as well as the tools for modeling and improving business processes proposed by modern domestic and foreign scholars, the application of this approach to the formation and functioning of the regional labor market remains insufficiently explored and requires further research.

The process approach is based on the identification and management of a system of interrelated processes limited in time and space. Management grounded in the principles of the process approach makes it possible to determine the interactions between system elements, optimize interrelated functions, and construct an integrated management process model. The emergence of

the process approach is traditionally associated with the founder of the school of administrative management, A. Fayol. Its development was influenced by functional, systemic, and situational approaches, among which the functional approach – treating management as a continuous sequence of interrelated functions – played a particularly significant role. Each management function, in turn, can be interpreted as a process consisting of a set of interrelated actions.

The philosophical foundations of process management are rooted in the concepts of “process” and “process approach” introduced by the English philosopher and mathematician A. Whitehead (1861–1947) in his seminal work *Process and Reality* [3].

In a broad sense, the process approach treats activity as a coherent system of business processes coordinated with the mission, goals, and strategic priorities of the entity under management [4]. Within this framework, the categories of “process” and “business process” occupy a central place. At the same time, the latter concept is narrower in meaning and more analytically relevant for process-oriented management.

A business process may be defined as a set of interconnected and sequential managerial actions that transform resources by converting inputs into outputs that create value for the consumer. Accordingly, the main objective of a business process is to transform input resources into a result or process product. The essential attributes of a business process include inputs (resources), outputs (products or results), performance indicators (qualitative and quantitative), and process participants (owner, executor, and consumer).

The definition and essence of the process approach imply the existence of a system of processes operating at different levels and serving different purposes. The scientific literature proposes various classifications of processes, among which the most common is the division into core, auxiliary, supporting (servicing), and management processes. This classification is based on the functional purpose of each business process within the overall system.

It should be noted that the process approach is one of the most effective management approaches, as it integrates elements of functional, systemic, and situational approaches while offering additional advantages. These advantages arise from the possibility of applying a wide range of tools for implementing, modeling, diagnosing, and improving process systems across different fields of activity.

The feasibility of applying the process approach to the formation of the regional labor market is confirmed by studies of the essence and structure of the labor market, as well as the interactions between its subjects and objects, which indicate the presence of interconnected processes forming an integrated process model. The first attempts to describe the labor market from a process-based perspective were made by Kolot A. M., Grishnova O. A., and Gerasymenko O. O., who argued that the labor market should be viewed as a dynamic process model consisting of inputs, transformation processes, and outputs [9].

Petrova I. L. further developed this approach by conceptualizing the labor market as a flow model characterized by process inputs and outputs, where the core pro-

cess is the interaction between labor market participants during which labor services are created, exchanged, and social and labor relations are formed and developed [10].

In her work on methodological approaches to defining the essence of the labor market, Alyoshina T. V. proposed a process-based definition according to which the labor market represents a system of interacting economic processes aimed at satisfying internal and external stakeholders, suppliers and consumers of labor and achieving balance in the labor market as a key objective of the state [9].

The analysis of methodological approaches presented in the above-mentioned studies confirms that the application of the process approach to labor market formation requires further elaboration. In particular, the existing research does not provide a sufficiently detailed explanation of process attributes, the interaction of interconnected processes, or the sequence of stages involved in the implementation of a process-oriented labor market management model.

For this reason, it is appropriate to examine the labor market from the perspective of implementing a process approach that involves the identification and allocation of business processes according to specific tasks and follows a defined algorithm. Although numerous methods for developing, optimizing, and improving business processes have been documented in the scientific literature, most of them are focused on enterprise-level or industry-level process models rather than on the labor market as a socio-economic system.

From this perspective, the further consideration of the labor market within the framework of the process approach requires the use of process maturity assessment. Business process maturity models are aimed at identifying the current condition of processes and determining the potential directions of their further development and improvement. In a general sense, maturity reflects the extent to which a system has advanced through successive stages of development, from an initial state to the achievement of defined objectives [11]. Each maturity level is associated with a specific set of requirements that supports the stable functioning of business processes at the corresponding stage.

At the present stage of development of the process management concept, several well-known models for assessing process maturity exist, including the Capability Maturity Model (CMM), the Project Management Maturity Model (PMMM), the Project Management Process Maturity Model, the Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3), the SPICE model, and the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI). These models share common methodological principles and rely on the logic of the process approach to define maturity levels and assess process development.

Taking into account the basic principles of process maturity models, it is reasonable to distinguish a set of maturity levels applicable to labor market formation. Their conceptual representation at the regional level is shown in Fig. 1.

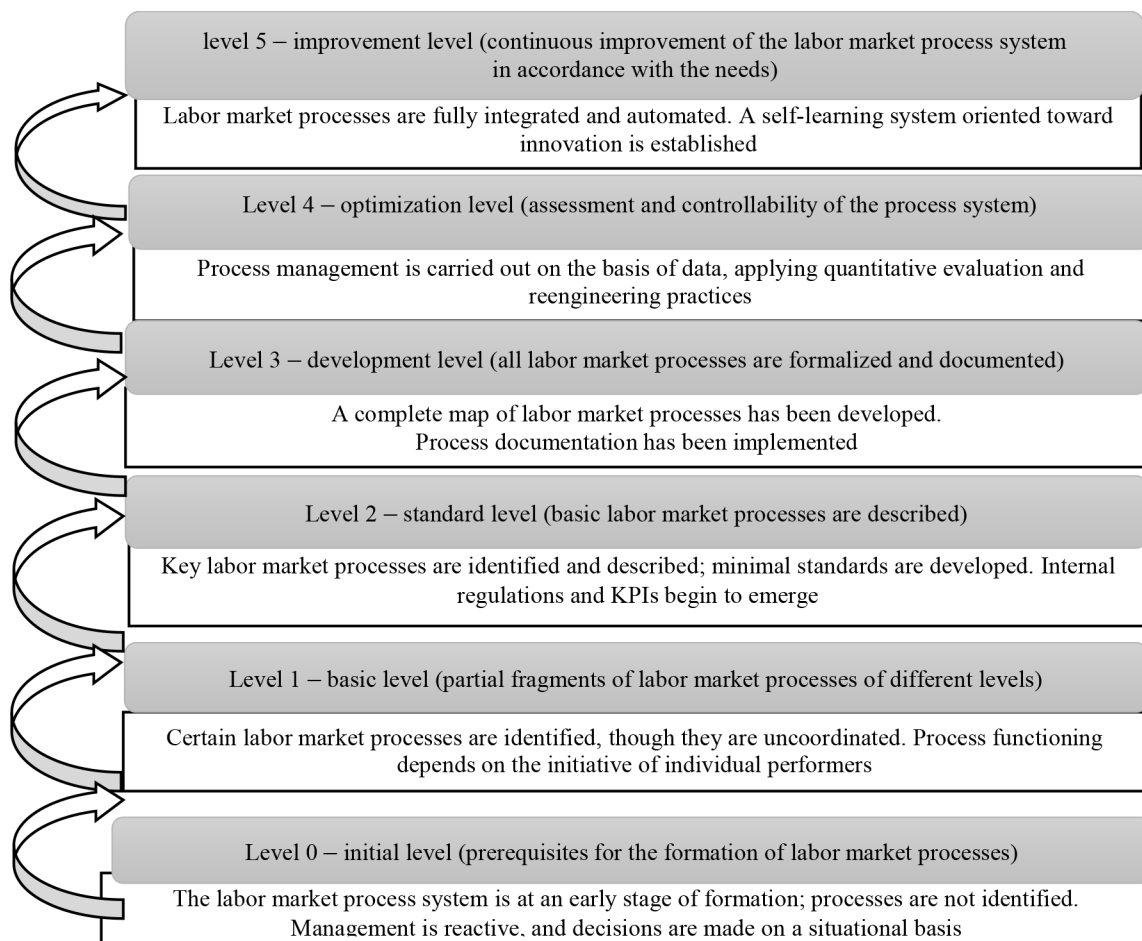


Fig. 1. Model of maturity of business processes in the regional labor market

At the initial maturity level, labor market business processes are not systematized and function in a fragmented and unstable manner. Management activities are performed on an ad hoc basis without a unified process framework, and most operations rely on manual execution. Regulatory and legal support for process management is either absent or incomplete, while formal process descriptions, defined roles, and standardized procedures are lacking. As a result, labor market regulation remains predominantly reactive and is based on partial labor market indicators rather than on a comprehensive understanding of interconnected processes.

The standardized maturity level is characterized by the emergence of formally defined and repeatable labor market processes. Core processes are identified and documented, and their execution follows established procedures and regulations. Management at this stage focuses primarily on compliance, procedural order, and institutional stability rather than on performance improvement. Automation and information systems are applied selectively to support key functions, while financing is directed mainly toward maintaining the functioning of core processes.

At the developmental maturity level, the labor market process system evolves from formal regulation toward active process management and coordination. Performance indicators are introduced and increasingly used to assess process effectiveness, while partial automation supports data collection and monitoring. Decision-making gradually shifts from rule-based control to performance-based management. The competencies of process owners and participants are sufficient to ensure stable execution, although cross-process coordination continues to develop.

The optimization maturity level reflects a fully controllable and measurable labor market process system. Processes are systematically monitored and evaluated using quantitative and qualitative indicators, and continuous efforts are undertaken to improve efficiency through optimization and reengineering. Regulatory compliance is ensured, financial and resource support is comprehensively managed, and investments are targeted at improving process quality and outcomes. At this stage, the process architecture supports evidence-based management and strategic decision-making.

The continuous improvement maturity level represents a highly adaptive and integrated labor market process system capable of responding effectively to environmental changes and long-term strategic objectives. Value creation across labor market processes is clearly understood at national, regional, and local levels, and international best practices and standards are systematically applied. Advanced digital tools support decision-making, while the competencies of process participants are continuously developed. Labor market processes are fully integrated, continuously improved, and aligned with broader socio-economic development goals.

Thus, the proposed maturity framework enables a comprehensive assessment of labor market processes and provides a methodological basis for diagnosing existing weaknesses and defining priority directions for process development in both wartime and post-war conditions.

In order to illustrate the practical applicability of the proposed maturity model, a pilot assessment of the re-

gional labor market of Dnipropetrovsk region was conducted based on official statistical and analytical data for 2025.

For the pilot assessment of the process maturity of the labor market in Dnipropetrovsk region in 2025, it is appropriate to employ quantitative and structural indicators reflecting the functioning of key processes related to workforce engagement, support, and development. Such indicators include the coverage of employment services, employment placement effectiveness, the availability of vocational training instruments, and the adaptation of various population groups affected by the wartime crisis to new socio-economic conditions.

According to official data from the regional employment service, in 2025 a total of 68.3 thousand individuals used employment service programs, of whom 31.1 thousand were employed with the assistance of the service. Approximately 5.4 thousand unemployed persons underwent vocational training or skills upgrading, while 2.3 thousand individuals used educational vouchers. In addition, 32.8 thousand persons received career guidance services during the reporting period [12].

These trends indicate the existence of established and regularly implemented procedures for professional support within the regional labor market system.

Particular attention was paid to the employment of internally displaced persons (IDPs), who constitute a significant segment of the regional labor market. In 2025, 97.5 thousand IDPs applied to the state employment service, of whom 42.5 thousand were successfully employed. Nearly 7.9 thousand IDPs completed vocational training, 5.4 thousand used vouchers to acquire new qualifications, and additional instruments such as business development grants and participation in socially useful public works were also implemented [12].

It should be emphasized that the processes of registration, case management, and job placement through the employment service operate systematically, demonstrate measurable outcomes, and incorporate skill development instruments. However, fully integrated cross-cutting process management indicators remain insufficiently developed. In particular, there is no unified KPI framework covering all key processes, nor is there evidence of systematic maturity assessment and data-driven process reengineering.

Based on the conducted analysis, the labor market of Dnipropetrovsk region in 2025 may be preliminarily classified at Level 2 (standardized), with certain elements of Level 3 (development), within the proposed process maturity model. This assessment reflects the presence of formalized, repeatable, and measurable processes that generate tangible results, while simultaneously indicating the need for further development of integrated analytics, comprehensive KPI systems, and quantitative process management procedures in order to achieve higher maturity levels.

The assessment is preliminary and based on publicly available aggregate indicators, which may not fully reflect the internal process architecture of the regional labor market system.

The developed labor market business process maturity model offers a structured framework for evaluating process quality within regional labor markets and benchmarking their development across national and

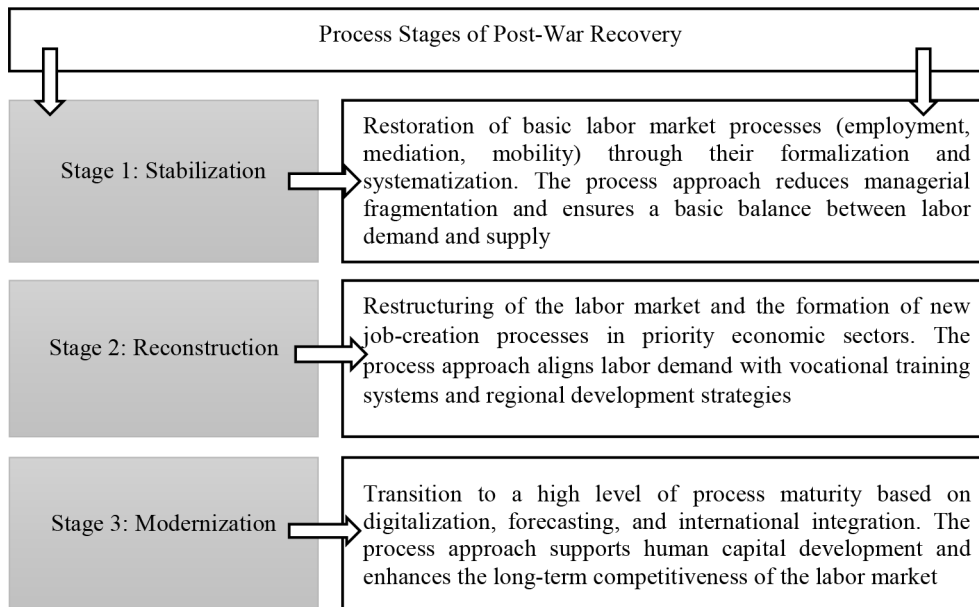


Fig. 2. Stages of post-war labor market recovery from a process perspective

local levels. The maturity of the system is determined by the coherence, integration, and performance of interconnected processes identified during the assessment. The current state of the process model serves as a basis for defining subsequent managerial actions and selecting appropriate tools for process identification, development, and implementation.

The application of the process approach to the formation and management of the labor market made it possible to structure post-war recovery as a sequence of interconnected stages, each characterized by its own objectives, processes, and management instruments. Unlike fragmented anti-crisis measures, the process-based model ensures the coordination of actions among labor market actors and integrates short-term stabilization decisions with long-term strategic objectives.

Within the framework of the process approach, it is appropriate to distinguish three basic stages of post-war labor market recovery: stabilization, reconstruction, and modernization, which correspond to different levels of process maturity and managerial complexity (Fig. 2).

Conclusions. The application of the process approach to the formation and management of the labor market will allow:

- building a multi-level system of processes that will give a clear picture of the stages of labor market formation;
- identifying and regulating business processes at all levels;
- defining “inputs”, “outputs”, and “results of processes” in order to identify shortcomings and improve results;
- redesigning labor market processes that have bottlenecks;
- regulating the processes of demand formation and labor supply;
- establishing algorithms for the interaction of supply and demand processes;
- ensuring rational distribution of labor resources by territories, sectors, professions, and forms of employment;
- regulating management and equilibrium processes in the labor market;

- intensifying labor market development processes by improving demand and supply formation;
- regulating labor market functioning within a process-based framework at the level of legislation and state regulation.

The proposed process-based framework and maturity model make it possible to assess the current state of labor market processes, identify their level of formalization and integration, and determine the boundaries and roles of key market participants.

The assessment results provide a basis for building a coherent process model of the regional labor market and identifying priority areas for process improvement, particularly in conditions of wartime disruption and post-war recovery.

The application of the process maturity model shifts labor market governance from a predominantly reactive mode to a systemic and strategic approach. By linking labor demand, labor supply, and regulatory processes into a unified architecture, the process approach enhances coordination between employers, employees, and public institutions, improves the manageability of labor market equilibrium, and supports evidence-based decision-making.

Further research should focus on the development of qualitative and quantitative indicators for assessing labor market process maturity. Qualitative analysis will enable the identification of problem areas, bottlenecks, redundant or missing process functions, and detailed process descriptions. Quantitative assessment, in turn, will provide measurable indicators of process performance and maturity dynamics, allowing the determination of labor market development trajectories and supporting scientifically grounded management decisions in the post-war period.

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Процесний підхід до формування ринку праці регіону у період повоєнного відновлення

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Мета. Обґрунтування доцільності застосування процесного підходу до формування й розвитку регіонального ринку праці в умовах повоєнного відновлення.

Методика. Дослідження базується на принципах процесного підходу й застосуванні методів теоретичного узагальнення, структурно-функціонального аналізу, порівняльного аналізу та процесного моделювання. Для оцінювання рівня розвитку процесів регіонального ринку праці використана адаптована модель процесної зрілості, сформована на основі логіки СММ/СММІ. Емпіричну основу становлять офіційні статистичні й аналітичні дані щодо функціонування регіонального ринку праці у 2025 році.

Результати. У дослідженні обґрунтована можливість інтерпретації регіонального ринку праці як системи взаємопов'язаних процесів із визначеними входами, виходами, учасниками й показниками результативності. Запропонована модель процесної зрілості регіонального ринку праці та визначені її рівні. На основі пілотної оцінки встановлено, що ринок праці Дніпропетровської області у 2025 році відповідає 2 рівню зрілості з окремими ознаками 3 рівня зрілості

Наукова новизна. Полягає в адаптації концепції процесної зрілості до рівня регіонального ринку праці, розробленні моделі оцінювання процесної зрілості соціально-економічної системи та структуризації повоєнного відновлення як послідовності переходів між рівнями зрілості.

Практична значимість. Запропонований підхід може бути використаний органами державного й регіонального управління для діагностики стану ринку праці, визначення пріоритетів його розвитку, формування системи показників процесної результативності та прийняття управлінських рішень у період повоєнної трансформації.

Ключові слова: процесний підхід, ринок праці, процесна зрілість, повоєнне відновлення, регіональний розвиток

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