INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON ACCOUNTING, ISCA 2026
April 3-4, 2026, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, Collection of Scientific Articles

CZU: [657.6:005.591.6]:[004.7+004.8](470+571)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.53486/isca2026.36

INNOVATIVE DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT FOR AUDIT-RELATED SERVICES

BYCHKOVA Svetlana
Gatchina State University, Gatchina, Russia
E-mail: smbychkova@mail.ru
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7684-9025

SHVETS Oksana
Gatchina State University, Gatchina, Russia
E-mail: o.v.shvets@mail.ru
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2564-6882

Abstract: The article is dedicated to the significance of innovative development in the market of audit-related services, focusing on the implementation of digital technologies and new types of services. The author emphasizes that digitalization is becoming a key factor contributing to increased efficiency of audit processes and improved client service quality. Examples of successful technology integration are examined, as well as potential benefits for audit firms, including cost reduction and enhanced analytics. In conclusion, the article highlights the necessity of adapting to new conditions to maintain competitiveness in the modern market.

Keywords: audit-related services, digital technologies, transactions, risk.

JEL Classification: M49

Introduction

In the current environment, significant attention is paid to the development of the market for audit-related services, as this market's growth is influenced by numerous factors. Taking these factors into account will allow audit firms to consider established trends and adjust their tactical and strategic development policies. The transformation of digital resources has a considerable impact in this regard, changing the tools used for their provision. At the same time, the use of these resources leaves its mark on the specifics of providing audit-related services, which also needs to be considered during their delivery (for example, the drawbacks and limitations associated with the use of these technologies should be taken into account). Furthermore, the emergence of new types of related services that meet the needs of audit service users can be identified as an independent direction of transformation in the market for audit-related services.

Basic Content of the Paper

Accompanying audit services, in accordance with Order of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation of March 9, 2017 No 33n include:

1.Services providing reasonable assurance (performance of engagements providing reasonable assurance: on financial information not relating to prior periods; on non-financial information, etc.). According to the International Framework for Assurance Engagements, when performing these services, the auditor obtains sufficient appropriate evidence to form a conclusion that enhances the degree of confidence of intended users in the outcome of the evaluation, and evaluates the subject matter of the engagement using specified criteria. The results of the evaluation of the subject matter can include: financial statements, a report on the effectiveness of the internal control system, performance indicators of a specific organization, or a report on compliance with legal requirements. These services are provided within the framework of several International Standards on Assurance Engagements.

2. Services providing limited assurance – review engagements:

- of accounting (financial) statements, including consolidated financial statements (in whole or in part);
- of reports containing financial information (or parts of such reports);
- of other financial information of prior periods. These services are provided within the framework of the International Standard on Review Engagements (ISRE).

3.Services not providing assurance (examination of the subject matter of the client's engagement by performing procedures agreed upon with the client and/or another party; compilation (collection, classification, summarization) of information). The provision of these services is regulated by the International Standards on Related Services [3, pp. 77-80].

Consulting as a professional activity originated in Russia in the mid-1920s, but the active period of development of this industry occurred in the 1970s, associated with the creation of specialized consulting organizations and an increased demand for their services due to changes in the economic environment and the emergence of needs for these services from economic entities. In a market economy, organizations required highly qualified consultations to achieve competitive advantages, optimize business processes, and implement innovations. This led to an increased demand for consulting services, which became an integral part of the activities of audit firms.

Overall, the analysis of the number of clients of audit firms that received related services in 2023-2024 indicates a slight decrease in this number (3467 in 2023 and 3116 in 2024) (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of Clients of Audit Firms Receiving Audit Services for the Period 2023-2024

Client Category	Russia – всего		Moscow				Other regions	
			Total		Of which without largest JSCs			
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
1. Clients whose financial statements were audited	66 120	67 513	28 719	28 933	26 095	26 376	37 401	38 580
2. Clients provided with audit-related services	3 467	3 116	1 968	1 957	1 492	1 440	1 499	1 159
3. Clients that are publicly significant organizations	3 634	3 716	1 963	1 870	1 618	1 530	1 671	1 846

Source: [5].

The decline in demand for audit-related services in 2023-2024 was driven by a number of factors, including economic changes, regulatory measures, and internal industry challenges. In 2023, there was a general downturn in business investment plans. This led to the suspension or cancellation of projects, which in turn reduced the demand for supporting services, including those related to audits. Organizations cut spending on external consulting and audits, focusing on maintaining current operations. At the same time, there was an intensification of state oversight of audit activities. Regulators (the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, the Bank of Russia, the Federal Treasury) increased inspections of audit quality, compliance with standards, and specialist qualification requirements. This created additional barriers to operation and increased risks for audit firms, which could have reduced their willingness to take on new projects.

The high key interest rate of the Bank of Russia and general economic uncertainty reduced business activity. This affected the demand for services related to mergers and acquisitions, financing, and other projects that were often accompanied by audit and consulting services. An additional factor contributing to the slowdown in demand for audit-related services was that some large organizations began to establish and develop internal departments (in-house departments) that took over the functions of external consultants, thereby reducing the demand for external audit and related services [1, p.110], [2, pp. 97-104].

The sufficient potential for innovative approaches to conducting review engagements lies in the development of the following areas:

1. The growing popularity of digital technologies in the provision of audit-related services.

2. The emergence of new services whose popularity is driven by the dynamically developing external and internal environment.

Overall, the proactive utilization of digital technologies in the execution of review engagements is intended to elevate efficiency, expedite the process, and augment the precision of analytical procedures, alongside a considerable expansion of oversight functions. Table 2 presents a compilation of digital technologies utilized in review engagements when performed as complementary audit services.

Table 2. Application of Digital Technologies in Conducting Audits

No.	Technology Name	Usage Capabilities	Advantages
1	Artificial Intelligence	Analysis of large data volumes, identification of atypical operations	Detection of unusual transactions, discrepancies in documents, or deviations from standard processes
2	Robotic Process Automation	Automation of routine tasks	Reduction in time for standard operations and decrease in error risk
3	Cloud Technologies	Data storage with simultaneous access for multiple users	Ensures coordination of the entire team's work and remote access to information
4	Blockchain	Transaction verification	Reduction in the risk of errors
5	Analytical Platforms and BI Tools	Data visualization, creation of interactive dashboards	Real-time analysis of key metrics and simplification of result interpretation
6	Electronic Document Management Systems and Electronic Signatures	Acceleration of document processing	Ensuring the authenticity and legal validity of documents

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Thus, the opportunities presented by digital technologies are difficult to overestimate, as their main advantage is driven by speed, efficiency, reduced likelihood of errors, and resource savings. To confirm the promising nature of using these technologies, one should turn to the experience of major audit firms that are actively implementing these digital solutions:

1. PwC uses the GL.ai platform for processing large volumes of records and predictive analytics.
2. KPMG employs the Contract Intelligence system for contract analysis.
3. EY has developed the Blockchain Analyzer tool for auditing cryptocurrency and smart contract transactions.

When compiling information as a supplementary audit service, the following technologies are used:

1. Artificial intelligence and machine learning for identifying discrepancies in legal documents and processing unstructured data.
2. Robotic process automation for collecting data from various sources, cleaning it, verifying it, removing duplicates, and reconciling data with predefined rules.
3. Blockchain for accounting for transactions between counterparties and automating verification procedures using smart contracts.
4. Cloud technologies for secure storage of audit-related documents, collaborative work on documents and reports, and analysis of large data volumes.
5. Big data analytics and predictive analytics for identifying risk areas, assessing risk levels, and forecasting potential problems and inconsistencies.
6. Natural language processing for interacting with data in a language close to natural language, simplifying the analysis of text documents.

During the performance of agreed-upon procedures, the following digital technologies have found application:

1. Business process robotics, as robotic systems are aimed at performing routine tasks, which reduces the labor intensity of data collection and processing.
2. Blockchain can be used to verify transactions and ensure the reliability of financial reporting.

3. Interactive dashboards, as real-time data visualization facilitates decision-making, monitoring of key performance indicators, and control over the audit process.
4. Computer vision is applied for document analysis, identifying errors and inconsistencies within them, which speeds up the processing of paper-based documents [4, pp. 195-198].

Despite the obvious advantages of applying these technologies, there are also certain drawbacks associated with their implementation. The table 3 outlines the barriers to the implementation of digital technologies and the ways to overcome them.

Table 3. Barriers to Digital Technology Adoption and Solutions

No.	Barriers	Solutions
1	Data fragmentation and low quality	Data standardization (eliminating duplicates, outdated references, resolving discrepancies between systems)
2	Algorithm performance quality dependency on training data	Training the model on relevant and up-to-date information
3	Responsibility for algorithm errors	Clear delineation of responsibility zones for all stakeholders
4	Risk of model bias	Preventing model training on data containing discriminatory factors
5	Insufficient legal framework for AI use in regulated areas	Improving the regulatory framework for AI application in AI implementation
6	Lack of specialists with required competencies	Organizing training programs in this area
7	Cyber threats	Discontinuing the use of unsecured communication channels and eliminating algorithm errors
8	Technology integration challenges	Ensuring compatibility of various technological solutions

Source: compiled by the authors.

Thus, the range of potential problems is quite extensive, but on the other hand, in modern conditions, further solutions have been identified that will allow their negative impact to be mitigated.

Among the services whose popularity is growing, the following can be highlighted:

1. Services related to non-financial information, including reports on greenhouse gas emissions, environmental pollution reporting, and sustainability reporting. The growing interest in such services is driven by increased user engagement in environmental and social issues.
2. Services related to the digitalization of business processes. The implementation of digital tools for automating accounting, risk analysis, and project management expands the capabilities of audit-related services and enhances their quality.
3. Services in the field of ESG consulting, which include analyzing the impact of an organization's activities on the environment and social sphere, as well as assessing the organization's compliance with international sustainable development standards.
4. Support for startups and investment projects, which involves conducting comprehensive due diligence of a business before a transaction (merger, acquisition, attracting investment) to provide investors with an objective picture of the organization's condition and an assessment of emerging risks.

Conclusion

Overall, prerequisites can be noted for the further integration of artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cloud technologies into audit practice. Hybrid systems, where digital tools operate under expert control, possess the greatest potential, which will help reduce regulatory risks. In this regard, demand is predicted for specialists with the appropriate competencies for working with data and digital tools. Thus, digital technologies are transforming the market for related services, making the process of providing these services more streamlined and efficient, but at the same time, they require a comprehensive approach for their more active implementation, including staff training and addressing regulatory issues. Furthermore, the further development of audit-related services is linked to the expansion of the areas they cover and a shift in focus towards non-financial reporting and cyber threat analysis, which indicates that the market for audit-related services is dynamically responding to changing conditions and taking into account the needs of interested users.

References

1. Abadi, M.T.I. The Market of Audit Services in Russia: Structural Changes, Economic Trends, and Competitiveness Factors // *Bulletin of Chelyabinsk State University*. – 2025. – No. 3 (497). – pp. 109-120.
2. Aganina, R.N. The Current State of the Audit Services Market / R.N. Aganina // *Bulletin of O.E. Kutafin University (MSAL)*. – 2023. – No. 8(108). – pp. 96-104. – DOI 10.17803/2311-5998.2023.108.8.096-104. – EDN OVWESY.
3. Kozlov, V.V. Economic Essence, Specifics, and Comparative Characteristics of Services Accompanying Audit / V.V. Kozlov // *Accounting and Auditing: Past, Present and Future*: *Collection of Scientific Articles Based on Materials of the International Scientific and Practical Conference*, Novosibirsk, November 28–29, 2023. – Novosibirsk: Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management «NINH», 2024. – pp. 77-81. – EDN HQIDXF.
4. Strelkova, E.B. The Public-Law Nature of Services Accompanying Audit as an Integral Part of Auditing Activity / E.B. Strelkova // *International Law Journal*. – 2025. – Vol. 8, No. 5. – pp. 195-202. – EDN UOBWIM.
5. *Key Indicators of the Audit Services Market in the Russian Federation in 2024.* [online] Available at: https://minfin.gov.ru/ru/perfomance/audit/audit_stat/mainindex?id_57=312681-osnovnye_pokazateli_rynka_auditorskikh_uslug_v_rossiiskoi_federatsii_v_2024_