

New forms of Fraud under the guise of publicly significant projects: Mechanisms of involvement, legal risks, and ways to exit destructive groups.

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Purpose of the Document

This document provides a systemic description of modern, complex fraud schemes that disguise themselves as publicly significant and strategic projects. It analyzes the mechanisms by which citizens and entrepreneurs are drawn into such projects. Special attention is paid to legal risks, the psychological aspects of involvement, the obstacles to subsequent legal protection, and practical recommendations for exiting destructive groups and minimizing damage. The work is intended to enhance legal literacy, develop skills for the critical verification of investment proposals, and strengthen trust in genuine creative endeavors in industry, the economy, and the social sphere.

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Summary

The article examines new forms of fraud disguised as participation in publicly significant, often allegedly technological or defense-related, projects. These schemes exploit trust in the ideas of industrial development, government contracts, and patriotic initiatives. Involvement occurs through carefully constructed psychological and legal pressure, which creates in victims a sense of the project's legitimacy and importance, while hindering a critical assessment of what is happening.

The key threats consist in the artificial creation of a collective environment, the diffusion of responsibility, and the use of a formal participant-of-business status instead of victim status, which significantly complicates legal protection and allows disputes to be protracted.

The document identifies typical signs of fictitious projects, reveals the mechanisms of manipulation of feelings and pressure within the group, and also addresses new types of fraudulent schemes: fake funds, pseudo-legal consultations, and fictitious industrial and agricultural initiatives.

In conclusion, concrete steps for exiting such schemes are formulated: ceasing payments, restoring independent judgment, legally formalizing claims, gathering evidence, joining forces with other victims, turning to independent specialists and law enforcement authorities, and psychological work to overcome shame and regain control of the situation.

The article underscores the acute public danger of the phenomena discussed and insists on the necessity of systematic prevention involving the state, the legal and business community, and every individual citizen.

In the modern era, fraud increasingly extends beyond simple deception based on promises of quick profit. It takes the form of a complex socio-psychological operation that exploits the state agenda, patriotic rhetoric, public anxiety, the desire of citizens and entrepreneurs to participate in significant industrial initiatives, and trust in narratives concerning closed orders, special permits, and government programs. Particularly dangerous are schemes involving fictitious construction of enterprises for the production of unmanned aerial vehicles, ammunition, microchips, robotic systems, communications equipment, industrial components, and other products of defense, technological, or strategic significance.

The key danger of such schemes lies in the fact that the victim often formally appears not as a deceived investor, but as a participant in a business entity, an acquirer of a share, a holder of stocks, or a person who voluntarily contributed funds to a commercial project. It is precisely this outward legality that subsequently hinders the proving of criminal intent, allows fraudsters to prolong court proceedings, and shifts the dispute from the criminal-legal plane to the civil-legal one. As a result, people lose money, time, business reputation, and sometimes their decision-making freedom, having become drawn into stable destructive groups where pressure, fear, false collective belief, and suppression of critical thinking prevail.

This article examines new types of fraud, their psychological foundation, legal shields, signs of fictitious production projects, methods of involving citizens and entrepreneurs, and possible ways to exit such groups while minimizing damage.

Introduction

Contemporary fraud has changed its outward appearance. Whereas previously it often relied upon primitive promises of instant enrichment, now it increasingly disguises itself under high objectives: the development of domestic industry, technological independence, participation in government programs, ensuring security, building factories, creating jobs, restoring production chains, and supporting scientific developments. The deceiver no longer invariably looks like a random swindler. He may appear in the image of a public figure, an industrialist, a representative of business circles, an advisor, a former official, a participant in closed negotiations, or an intermediary between the authorities and entrepreneurs.

The main moral rupture of such schemes lies in the fact that the fraudster appropriates not only money, but also high purposes. He takes words about the Motherland, security, industrial development, technological breakthrough, and the labor of engineers and workers – and turns them into bait. Where an honest person experiences a sense of responsibility, the criminal harbors calculation. Where society expects factories, jobs, and real production, the fraudulent group

creates only the appearance of movement: folders with documents, drawn plans, fictitious contracts, staged meetings, rented premises, photographs of land plots, and endless talk of an imminent launch.

A particular public danger lies in the fact that such schemes may involve not a single victim, but entire groups of people. They draw in entrepreneurs, former military personnel, engineers, managers, local public figures, land owners, contractors, intermediaries, and citizens wishing to invest savings in an ostensibly reliable venture. Meanwhile, each participant sees only part of the picture, while the overall picture is carefully concealed by the organizers. One person is shown authorization papers, another a contract for equipment, a third a letter of support, and a fourth the layout of the future enterprise. Each is given precisely the fragment that should convince him of the authenticity of the process.

Essence of the New Fraud Techniques

New forms of fraud differ from traditional ones not only in technical techniques but also in a deeper penetration into public expectations. Criminals study which topics evoke trust, anxiety, pride, or a sense of urgency. If the importance of the defense industry is high in society, fictitious projects emerge for factories producing unmanned aerial vehicles, ammunition, armor protection, communications equipment, surveillance devices, microchips, and other items. If attention to food security intensifies, imaginary agro-industrial complexes, greenhouse farms, and processing plants appear. If import substitution is discussed, promises surface to create the manufacture of machine tools, electronic components, medical devices, and chemical raw materials.

At the core of such schemes lies not random lies, but a managed system of trust. Fraudsters create the appearance not of an isolated proposal, but of a large-scale process. The victim is told that the project has allegedly already been supported, the land plot almost obtained, the government program agreed upon, the equipment ordered, the enterprise included in a priority list, negotiations with officials conducted, and that only an urgent injection of funds is required to finalize the paperwork. Any doubt is then branded as harmful, ill-timed, or even treacherous toward the "common cause."

In contrast to crude everyday scams, a lengthy chain of events is employed here. The victim is not always asked to transfer money immediately. First, he is introduced to the "team," shown materials, made to feel chosen, and the confidential nature of the proposal is emphasized. Then he is gradually tied to the project: invited to meetings, asked to give preliminary consent, offered participation in a company, sign a non-disclosure agreement, a letter of intent, and contribute a small sum for the preparation of documents. After the first payment, a psychological mechanism kicks in: it is difficult for the person to

admit a mistake, and he becomes increasingly willing to contribute more money in order to "rescue what has already been invested."

In such schemes, fraud often merges with signs of destructive group influence. The person is persuaded that he has found himself in a circle of initiates, that the rest of society does not understand the scale of the task, that information must not be disclosed, that verifying documents could ruin the venture, and that excessive caution equates to weakness. Thus, a closed environment arises where critical questions are deemed a manifestation of distrust, and distrust a threat to collective success.

Fictitious Construction of Strategic Industries as a Particularly Dangerous Form of Deception

One of the most sophisticated and destructive schemes is the simulation of building factories to produce goods of defense, technological, or industrial significance. Outwardly, such a scheme can appear almost flawless. A business entity is created, shares or stocks are issued, a charter is prepared, accounts are opened, business correspondence is drafted, images of the future plant are produced, preliminary estimates are drawn up, and contracts are concluded with alleged equipment suppliers. Documents are shown to the victim that resemble genuine ones in form, but in substance do not confirm the actual progress of the project.

The main trick consists in substituting private expenditures by public support. For example, the land plot may be provided by government authorities free of charge or on preferential terms within the framework of territorial development programs. Preparation of such a plot for construction may in some cases also be partially ensured by the public side: clearing the territory, installing access roads, providing utility connections, holding public discussions in nearby settlements, and initial coordination of urban development issues. However, the victim is shown this work as if all expenses have already been borne by a private executor, who now needs compensation or funds for further progress.

The second common substitution relates to equipment documents. Fraudsters demonstrate contracts for the manufacture of machine tools, production lines, measuring instruments, assembly areas, and robotic systems. A dramatic pretext then appears: the manufacturer has allegedly suspended fulfillment of the order, an urgent prepayment is required, it is necessary to lock in the price, delivery must be paid for, customs escort is needed, or a place in the production queue must be retained. The victim is persuaded that delay will cause the loss of the entire project. At this moment, reason is displaced by fear: the person already sees himself as a participant in a great venture and fears being found guilty of its collapse.

The third element of the scheme is the artificial creation of a group of participants. Fraudsters endeavor to involve several people so that each sees that he is not alone. The presence of other participants becomes false proof of reliability. If an entrepreneur from another city has contributed money, that supposedly means the project has been verified. If a person with a military background takes part in the discussion, then the topic is apparently of special significance. If an engineer is present at a meeting, the technical part seems plausible. Thus, a collective illusion is created where everyone reinforces the trust of the others, without possessing full information.

The fourth element is the legal structuring of victims' participation in such a way as to subsequently hinder their recognition as victims. They are offered to purchase shares, an interest in the company, conclude a loan agreement, sign a work financing agreement, arrange a contribution to the charter capital, or transfer money for the right to enter the project. Formally, this looks like entrepreneurial risk. But in substance, if the organizers never intended to build a factory, acquire equipment, or fulfill obligations, society is confronted with a criminal fraud artfully concealed under the shell of economic activity.

It is particularly dangerous that fraudsters reckon in advance on the protracted nature of judicial defense. They understand that a civil dispute may drag on for years, that the appointment of expert examinations, requests for documents, changes of representatives, filing of complaints, adjournments of hearings, and formal objections can exhaust the victims. For the perpetrator, time becomes a weapon. While one citizen spends years trying to recover the invested funds, the scheme's organizer may reside outside the country, use alternative documents, change his place of residence, transfer property to trusted persons, and launch new projects under a different name.

Psychological Mechanism of Involvement

In such schemes, the deception is sustained not only by forged papers. It rests on precise manipulation of human emotions. First and foremost, the thirst for profit is exploited. The victim is promised not just income, but participation in a venture where profit is supposedly guaranteed by a government contract, a closed agreement, a long-term demand, and a limited number of participants. Such income is presented as almost inevitable, since the matter ostensibly concerns products urgently needed by the country, industry, or security agencies.

Yet the thirst for profit is only the first layer. A sense of involvement exerts a much stronger effect. The person is told: you are not merely investing money, you are participating in a matter of state importance; you are not an ordinary entrepreneur, you are a person entrusted with entry into a confidential opportunity; you are not buying a share, you are becoming a participant in a

grand historical process. In this way, fraud turns vanity, patriotism, anxiety, and hope into a controlled instrument for the extraction of money.

Pressure of urgency is then applied. The victim is informed that there is almost no time: documents must be paid for by the end of the week, funds must be deposited before the queue closes, participation must be confirmed before the meeting of a commission, the deadline must be met before conditions change, the land plot must not be lost, and the equipment delivery must not be disrupted. Urgency deprives the person of the opportunity to calmly verify information, consult an independent lawyer, request original documents, or study financial reports.

Another technique is the creation of confidentiality. Fraudsters claim that the information cannot be disclosed because the project is linked to a special production, state interests, commercial secrecy, or closed negotiations. This confidentiality is convenient for the criminal: it prevents the victim from seeking advice, conducting a check, sending an official inquiry, or speaking with the alleged project participants. Under the pretext of secrecy, an informational cell is created.

Finally, a sense of guilt is employed. If a person begins to doubt, he is told that he is hindering the common cause, undermining trust, failing to grasp the scale of the task, and behaving like a casual outsider. Individuals may appear in the group who support the organizer, condemn the doubter, and demand not to "rock the boat." Thus, the person finds himself not only deceived but also morally suppressed.

Legal Shields and Difficulties of Subsequent Defense

Fraudulent groups increasingly use legal forms not for conducting lawful activity, but for concealing criminal intent. Establishing a business entity, issuing shares, formalizing equity interests, concluding contracts, opening settlement accounts, and maintaining correspondence – none of this, in itself, constitutes proof of honesty. On the contrary, in a criminal scheme such actions may serve as an outer shell designed for the subsequent assertion: "This was an ordinary entrepreneurial risk, the project did not materialize, the money was spent, there is no *corpus delicti*."

The victim's most vulnerable position arises when he signs documents without having obtained reliable confirmation of the project's real status. If he has signed a funding agreement, become a participant in the company, accepted the risks, failed to demand accountability, failed to verify the powers of the persons involved, failed to investigate the origin of the land plot, and failed to confirm the existence of equipment, it becomes easier for fraudsters to claim that everything occurred voluntarily.

A particular complexity lies in proving the original intent. To hold the perpetrators criminally liable, it is essential to establish that from the very beginning they did not intend to fulfill their promises and used the project solely as a means of theft. This may be corroborated by the absence of genuine negotiations with government bodies, fictitious contracts, forged invoices, the absence of payments to suppliers, the withdrawal of money to controlled accounts, the expenditure of funds on personal needs, the repeated replication of analogous schemes, the existence of other victims, and the discrepancy between declared expenses and actual actions.

As a rule, fraudsters seek to disperse responsibility. One person conducts the negotiations, another signs the documents, a third receives the money, a fourth acts as the nominal head of the company, a fifth impersonates a technical specialist, and a sixth confirms connections. Such fragmentation complicates the investigation, but does not eliminate the criminal nature of the actions if coordination of conduct is proven.

Signs of a Fictitious Production Project

Despite their outward complexity, such schemes exhibit repetitive indicators. First and foremost, alarm should be raised by the promise of access to closed government orders without a clear indication of the legal basis. Government procurement, defense orders, the provision of land plots, construction permits, connection to utility networks, the licensing of certain types of activities, and admission to the production of special-purpose goods all have an established procedure. If instead of concrete documents a person is shown conversations, photographs, verbal assurances, and hints of connections, this is not a sign of the project's strength, but an indicator of danger.

The second sign is the demand for money for "entry into the program." Legitimate government support is not sold through private intermediaries in the form of unofficial entry fees. If a person is asked to pay for access to some closed list, for the acceleration of approval, for reserving a place, or for the opportunity to participate in a future contract, the transfer of funds must be immediately halted until a full verification has been conducted.

The third sign is the blending of personal and project expenses. The victim may be shown invoices for travel, meetings, escorts, the preparation of presentation materials, allegedly conducted negotiations, rent of premises, and legal services. But expenses must be confirmed by primary documents, contracts, acceptance certificates, payment orders, tax reporting, and a link to real activity. A mere folder of receipts does not prove that the work has been carried out.

The fourth sign is the absence of an independent technical audit. A plant cannot be built on promises alone. What is required is a feasibility study, the legal regime

of the land plot, urban development documentation, engineering conditions, calculation of requirements for electricity, water, gas, access roads, information on sanitary zones, specialist conclusions, confirmed contracts with equipment suppliers, a financing schedule, a cost estimate, a staffing model, and permit documentation. If none of this exists and money is already being demanded, what confronts the person is most likely not production, but a theatrical performance.

The fifth sign is a prohibition on independent verification. If the organizer becomes irritated at the request to show originals, obstructs recourse to state authorities, forbids the sending of inquiries, does not allow communication with suppliers, refuses to disclose the flow of funds, or invokes secrecy without a legal basis, this is one of the most serious signals.

In a legitimate project, verification strengthens trust. In a fraudulent project, verification destroys the myth.

New Associated Types of Fraud

Fictitious factories are only one form of a broader phenomenon. Recently, other schemes built on the same logic have been spreading: a socially significant topic, a false sense of urgency, a promise of high returns or moral participation, a legal shell, and group pressure.

Such schemes include sham relief funds that collect money under the guise of supporting combatants, families of the deceased, hospitals, children's institutions, and reconstruction work. Outwardly, they may use correct language, patriotic slogans, photographs, reports, and letters of gratitude. But the funds do not go toward aid; instead, they flow to the accounts of intermediaries or controlled organizations. The particular vileness of such actions lies in the fact that the criminal robs not only the donor but also those for whom the assistance was genuinely intended.

Another type is bogus fundraising for equipment, protective gear, communications, transport, and medical treatment. The victim is shown an urgent request, a specific sum is indicated, their conscience is pressured, and they are urged to transfer money immediately. Real photographs taken from open sources, real surnames used without the persons' consent, forged letters, and fake seals are often employed. Verification in such cases must be mandatory: it is necessary to contact official recipients, check the bank details, demand reports, and obtain confirmation of the transfer of property.

Schemes involving sham concessional loans, subsidies, grants, debt write-offs, and inclusion in support programs are also spreading. Citizens and entrepreneurs are promised substantial funds subject to an advance payment for "escort services," "insurance payment," "processing fee," or "guarantee contribution." In

reality, state support measures have official rules, open sources of information, and do not require the transfer of money to unknown intermediaries for the mere fact of admission.

A separate danger is posed by pseudo-legal groups promising “complete discharge of debts,” “cancellation of all obligations,” “exit from the legal framework,” and “protection from banks and courts” through dubious statements and templates. Such groups not only extract money but also push people into actions that worsen their situation: failure to appear in court, renunciation of lawful defense, filing of pointless documents, and breach of obligations. The outcome is enforcement proceedings, fines, loss of property, and the ultimate destruction of trust in the law.

No less destructive are pseudo-production associations that offer citizens the opportunity to become participants in the purchase of equipment, extraction of raw materials, waste processing, construction of warehouses, or output of agricultural products. The same techniques are used there: attractive calculations, promises of quick payback, narratives of government support, display of third-party facilities, fictitious contracts, and demands for urgent payments.

The Destructive Group as an Environment for Retaining the Victim

A distinctive feature of the new fraudulent schemes is that they often create a closed environment around the victim. This environment does not always look like a classic sect or a criminal community. It may call itself a business circle, a participants’ council, a production association, a closed club, an initiative group, or a project headquarters. But in its internal arrangement, it bears the signs of destructive influence.

In such a group, there exists a figure of unconditional authority. This person allegedly possesses connections, knowledge, access, and special information. His words are not meant to be verified. Any question directed at him is perceived as a breach of internal discipline. A close circle forms around him, confirming his rightness and exerting pressure on those who doubt. Participants are instilled with the belief that no one outside the group will understand them, that external lawyers and specialists can cause harm, that law enforcement agencies should not be involved because that would derail the project.

The destructive group deprives a person of the principal means of protection— independent judgment. It replaces verification with trust, facts with faith, law with internal promises, and responsibility with subordination to the leader. Increasingly, a person makes decisions not because they are convinced of their correctness, but because they fear being expelled, accused, or ridiculed.

Retention within the group rests on several mechanisms. First is the money already invested. It is difficult for a person to leave because they have already paid. They feel that exiting means admitting defeat. Second is the hope of imminent compensation. They are told that just a little more and the money will be returned many times over. Third is shame. The victim is afraid to admit to relatives, business partners, and colleagues that they have been deceived. Fourth is fear of consequences. The organizers may allude to liability for disclosure, to certain signed obligations, to the loss of a share, to legal claims.

These mechanisms make fraud protracted. The victim may continue to believe in the project for months and years, even when objective signs of deception are obvious. Therefore, exiting such a group requires not only legal actions but also psychological restoration of the capacity for independent assessment.

Paths to Exit a Destructive Group and Minimize Damage

Exiting a fraudulent or destructive group must begin with the cessation of further payments. This is the first and fundamental rule. One must not “pay extra in order to recover what was previously contributed.” One must not contribute money for new approvals, urgent payments, preservation of a share, payment for supposedly frozen equipment, services of intermediaries, or the “final stage.” In a fraudulent scheme, the last payment is almost never truly the last. It only proves to the criminal that the victim is still manageable.

The second step is restoring informational autonomy. It is necessary to exit the closed circle of communication, stop discussing one’s actions only with group members, and turn to independent specialists: a lawyer, a specialist in commercial disputes, a tax consultant, an engineer of the relevant profile, an appraiser, a specialist in land and urban planning matters. It is essential that these individuals have not been recommended by the project organizers, do not receive compensation from them, and are not linked to them by business relations.

The third step is preservation of evidence. One must collect contracts, correspondence, payment documents, receipts, invoices, acts, records of negotiations in compliance with the law, photographs, presentation materials, information about meetings, data on the persons who participated in the negotiations, and information on the accounts to which money was transferred. Messages should not be deleted, group chats should not be exited without saving the materials, and documents should not be destroyed out of shame or weariness. A document that seems insignificant today may become key evidence tomorrow.

The fourth step is official verification of the claimed circumstances. It is necessary to send inquiries or obtain information about the land plot, rights to it, the site development plan, the building permit, technical conditions, the

existence of contracts with equipment suppliers, the real state of the company, its managers, accounting reports, court disputes, enforcement proceedings, and tax indicia of bad faith. One should verify whether the state programs to which the organizers referred actually existed, whether the company was a participant, whether bids were filed, and whether contracts were concluded.

The fifth step is the legal formalization of claims. An official demand should be sent requesting a report on the expenditure of funds, copies of source documents, contracts, payment orders, work completion acts, statements of cash flows, minutes of participants' meetings, and resolutions of the company's management bodies. If the organizers evade, provide general answers, threaten, accuse the victim, or suggest "not washing dirty linen in public," this further confirms the necessity of applying to the competent authorities.

The sixth step is recourse to law enforcement agencies when there are indicia of embezzlement. The statement must not be limited to the phrase "I was deceived," but should describe in detail who, when, under what circumstances, made which promises, showed which documents, which information turned out to be false, where the money was transferred, what actions were taken after receipt of the funds, and how the organizers evaded meeting their obligations. It is important to indicate that the money was handed over under the influence of specific false information, and not simply within the framework of ordinary entrepreneurial risk.

The seventh step is uniting the victims. If the scheme has affected several persons, their disunity works to the fraudsters' advantage. It is necessary to identify other participants, exchange documents, compare promises, identify repeated formulations, identical pretexts for collecting money, common accounts, and common intermediaries. The collective picture often makes it possible to discern criminal intent where a single episode looks like a failed transaction.

The eighth step is protection against pressure. After an attempt to exit, the organizers may resort to threats, promises, accusations, requests to wait, proposals to sign new documents, and attempts to shift responsibility onto the victim themselves. No additional agreements, waivers of claims, receipts of information, confirmations of absence of claims, or non-disclosure agreements should be signed without an independent legal assessment. Particularly dangerous are documents by which the victim retroactively confirms awareness of the risks or acknowledges that money was handed over without specific obligations.

The ninth step is psychological recovery. It is important for the victim to understand that recognizing the deceit is not weakness. The weakness is continuing to take part in a destructive scheme out of fear of admitting a mistake.

The situation must be discussed with loved ones, external connections restored, support obtained, and the secrecy on which the group's power rests ended. The fraudster is strong as long as the victim remains silent. When a document, a witness, independent verification, and a statement appear, the power of the deception begins to crumble.

Prevention: How to Avoid Becoming a Participant in a Fictitious Project

The principal preventive measure is **the demand for verifiability**. Any offer involving investment in plant construction, participation in a state order, acquisition of land or production of special-purpose goods must be verified not by words, but by documents and independent sources. It is necessary to establish: **who owns or uses the land plot, whether permit documentation exists, who heads the company and what their powers are, whether genuine contracts exist, whether there are confirmed payments, who the equipment supplier is and whether that supplier has genuine production capacity.**

One must not rely on photographs, oral accounts, the presence of “respected people”, impressive calculations, patriotic slogans or references to secrecy. **The higher the declared public significance of a project, the stricter the scrutiny must be.** Where products of a defence or special nature are concerned, the legal basis for engaging in such activity must be clear, together with the procedure for interacting with state customers, the existence of the necessary permits and the actual production base.

Before transferring money, an independent opinion must be obtained covering the legal, financial and technical aspects. A lawyer must check the contracts, the rights and obligations of the parties, the mechanism for returning funds, the liability of managers and the possibility of controlling expenditure. A financial specialist must assess the budget, the sources of funds, the flow of money and any signs of inflated costs. A technical specialist must evaluate the feasibility of the timelines, the equipment, the production premises and the engineering conditions.

No honest project should fear independent verification. If the organisers say that verification offends trust, that a lawyer will ruin everything, that requests are impermissible, that there is no time or that the information is too secret, then what stands before a person is not a business proposal but **a zone of heightened danger.**

Particular attention should be paid to the terms of ownership of a share or shares. The mere fact of acquiring a share does not guarantee control over money. A company participant may have no real influence on management, receive no reporting, exercise no control over bank accounts and have no access to decision-making. Therefore, before entering a company, it is necessary to define **the rights to receive information, the procedure for approving major**

transactions, a prohibition on the withdrawal of funds without the participants' consent, the liability of the manager, the procedure for withdrawing from the company and recovering the investment.

The Public and State Significance of Counteraction

Fraud masquerading as the construction of strategic production facilities harms not only individual citizens. It destroys trust in genuine industrial initiatives, undermines the authority of state programmes, and discredits honest entrepreneurs, engineers, managers and public figures. After encountering deception, people begin to suspect every project, every proposal, every initiative. **In this way, a criminal steal not only money but also public energy.**

Particularly grave harm is caused when criminals use patriotic vocabulary. Patriotism in their mouths ceases to be service and becomes a mask. They shelter behind words about the state but act against society; they speak of production but build nothing; they promise jobs but create only litigation; they talk about technological development but develop only their own methods of embezzlement. **Such deception must be regarded not as a private misfortune of the gullible, but as a socially dangerous phenomenon requiring systemic counteraction.**

What is needed is **broader legal education for entrepreneurs and citizens**, open explanations of the procedure for participating in state programmes, accessible means of project verification, interaction between public authorities and the business community, and the public refutation of bogus intermediary schemes. **The more transparent the lawful procedure for obtaining support, land, permits and orders, the less room remains for those who traffic in fictitious access.**

Conclusion

New types of fraud become dangerous precisely because they no longer look like crude deception. They come dressed as a business proposal, of national importance, industrial development and a collective mission. They speak the language of shares, stocks, permits, programmes, contracts, supplies, land plots and production lines. Yet behind that shell often hides an old essence: **to take possession of other people's money, to siphon off funds, to protract a dispute, to disappear and to repeat the scheme under a new name.**

The main conclusion is the following: **the public significance of a project does not eliminate the need for verification – on the contrary, it makes it mandatory.** The louder the promises, the higher the stated goal, the greater the pressure of urgency, **the stricter the scrutiny must be.** A real factory is built on land, equipment, permits, calculations, specialists and responsibility. A fictitious factory is built on words, fear, haste and gullibility.

Leaving a destructive group is possible but requires resolve: stop making payments, preserve evidence, consult independent specialists, request documents formally, unite with other victims, file complaints where signs of a crime are present, and restore the capacity for independent judgement. A fraudster must not be allowed to turn the victim's shame into his own shelter. A criminal group must not be given the right to dispose of a person's future, property or will.

A society that wishes to build real factories, develop technology and strengthen the state must ruthlessly separate genuine creation from parasitic deception. Because where a fraudster appropriates the language of service, he destroys not only the wallet of an individual citizen but also the people's trust in a great cause. **And trust, once stolen, is harder to restore than money.**

Sources

Normative legal acts and official interpretations

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Key significance: contains provisions enabling the distinction between ordinary business risk and the theft of another’s property by deception or abuse of trust.
2. Federal Law No. 115-FZ of 07.08.2001 “On Counteracting the Legalisation (Laundering) of Criminally Obtained Incomes and the Financing of Terrorism”.
Key significance: defines the obligations of organisations to record and report suspicious transactions, thereby helping to identify the siphoning-off of funds in fraudulent schemes.
3. The Civil Code of the Russian Federation (provisions on contracts, companies and the invalidity of transactions).
Key significance: regulates the legal shell (shares, stocks, loans) that fraudsters often use to mask criminal intent.
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Key significance: provide criteria for distinguishing theft from non-performance of contractual obligations.

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5. Cialdini R. *Influence: Science and Practice*.
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Key significance: provides tools for identifying control over victims in a pseudo-business environment.

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10. Overviews and recommendations of the Bank of Russia (e.g., “Methodological Recommendations on Identifying and Preventing Financial Fraud”).
Key significance: document standard schemes of “investment” fraud that imitate genuine business, allowing a comparison of the indicators with those described in the article.
11. Information letters of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia and the General Prosecutor’s Office of the Russian Federation on new methods of theft under the guise of participation in state programmes and defence orders.
Key significance: contain statistics and concrete examples of fictitious production of UAVs, ammunition and microelectronics, confirming the trends set out in the article.

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12. Monographs and articles in specialised journals (e.g., *Voprosy Bezopasnosti, Obshchestvo i Pravo*) on the problems of combating fraud in the sphere of public-private partnership and the military-industrial complex.
Key significance: provide legal and economic expert analysis of schemes based on the closed nature of information and document forgery.
13. Open publications of the Federal Tax Service and Rosfinmonitoring on the indicators of shell companies and transit operations characteristic of the laundering of stolen funds.
Key significance: help recognise the absence of genuine economic activity in a “factory” demanding urgent payments.

Practical guides for entrepreneurs

14. Booklets and instructions issued by chambers of commerce and industry and business associations (e.g., “How to avoid becoming a victim of pseudo-investment projects”).
Key significance: bring together concrete steps for verifying counterparties, land plots, permits and “state support”, echoing the preventive measures proposed in the article.
15. Materials from independent legal consultations and judicial practice (archived decisions of commercial courts in disputes concerning the recovery of investments in failed projects).
Key significance: illustrate how fraudsters use multi-stage agreements and the protraction of timelines to evade liability.