Special-purpose programs to strengthen national food system in regions of the Russian Federation

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Abstract. The national food system is currently a priority in the economic and social security of the regions in the Russian Federation and the state as a whole. The article specifies the concept of national security as a strategic direction for the development of a modern state, as well as tasks and role of special-purpose programs to ensure the security. The special-purpose programs applied to develop regional food security, its legislative support, and institutional component have been analyzed. Special-purpose programs implemented in the regions of Russia in frameworks of investment projects for strengthening the food security have been demonstrated. The article also reveals a number of relevant problems limiting the regional food security using special-purpose programs; and the ways for its optimization have been proposed.

1. Introduction

The relevance of the regional development administration in Russia is determined by the heterogeneity of spatial socio-economics, industry, and infrastructure, as well as institutional changes in society and vectors of effective implementation of strategic interests searched for by government bodies and business structures. A special-purpose program (SPP) allows concentrating limited resources, resolving certain fundamental issues of economic development, providing a direct link between strategic and budget planning, and optimal combining of directive and indicative types of regulation in the public administration system [1]. In this context, the SPP is an instrument for the active policy of a modern state, is focused on eliminating or reducing complex problems of the societal life and creating prerequisites for further sustainable development of regional and municipal entities of Russia.

The importance of this approach is emphasized in the federal law “On Strategic Planning in the Russian Federation” that details the content and requirements for the fundamental documents that provide for developing territories at the federal level (Strategy of spatial development of the Russian Federation; Socio-economic development strategy of macro-regions; and territorial planning schemes) and at the regional level (Long- and medium-term forecasts of socio-economic development for RF entities; Socio-economic development strategy of a constituent entity and municipal structure; state programs of an RF constituent entity; and municipal programs).
The SPP functions specified in the regulatory document noted above are focused not only on the development and phased implementation of activities of the executive authorities to achieve the priorities of socio-economic development, but also on minimizing risks and ensuring national security.

2. Management by objectives of national food security
The most important strategic planning documents that govern addressing the national security challenges in Russia are considered:

- The National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation approved by Decree of the RF President of December 31, 2015. No. 683;
- The Economic Security Strategy of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030 approved by Decree of the RF President of May 13, 2017. No. 208; and
- Presidential Decree “On the national goals and strategic objectives of the development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2024” dated May 7, 2018 No. 204 that establishes and approves national projects of Russia.

The national security is a strategy subject of a modern state and means the SPP effectiveness and counteraction of the self-organizing mechanisms of the national economy to challenges and threats of the external and internal environment both at the level of the national economy as a whole and at the level of regions, spheres, industries, and business entities [2, 3]. In terms of the types of national security and importance of the political and socio-economic stability of each sovereign state, the role and priorities of the food security are urged that is designed to fulfill two important tasks, i.e.,

- social task that includes ensuring physical and economic accessibility of food products that meet the requirements of the legislation of the Russian Federation, in volumes not less than rational consumption standards, necessary for an active and healthy lifestyle; improving the quality and ensuring the safety of agricultural products; and maintaining the multifunctionality of agriculture [4]; and
- production and economic task that involves increasing the competitiveness and investment attractiveness of agriculture, i.e., stable supply of processing enterprises with raw materials; minimizing dependence on food imports by supporting and protecting the interests of domestic producers; creating and functioning of diversified agro-industrial enterprises and rural cooperation in the region; optimization of the sectoral structure of production in peasant farms; and solving problems of “smart land management” [5].

In this regard, the food security of Russia is a dominant feature of its modern integrated state agrarian policy based on the development strategy of the agrarian sector of the economy and is focused on the expanded reproduction of the national food system. This is confirmed by

- Doctrines of the food safety of the Russian Federation approved by the Decree of the RF President of January 21, 2020. No. 20;
- national projects ("International Cooperation and Export" and “Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Support of Individual Entrepreneurship Initiatives”);
- federal programs (State Program on Agribusiness Development and Regulation of Farm Produce, Raw Materials and Foodstuffs Markets for 2013-2020, “Integrated Rural Development,” “Development of the Fisheries Complex,” and “Forest Development”);
- federal programs focused on the integrated development of individual constituent entities of the Russian Federation; and
departmental special-purpose programs (“Scientific and technical support for the development of agricultural sectors,” “Ensuring general conditions for functioning of the agricultural sectors,” and “Development of Land Reclamation of Agricultural Land for Russia”).

An equally important tool to ensure the food security in regions and solve asymmetry problems in the structure of the agricultural economy and a mechanism for strategizing integrated development of rural territories are regional balanced planning programs that combine agrobiological, social, and economic components of agricultural production [6].

3. The SPP in the context of regional food security
The evidence for the implemented SPP chain “national project – federal program – federal project – regional program – regional project” is a project management system in the entities of the North-Caucasian Federal District. On the territory of the district, the national projects “Small and medium-sized enterprises and support for individual entrepreneurship initiatives” and “International cooperation and export”; federal programs “On agribusiness development and regulation of farm produce, raw materials and foodstuffs markets for 2013-2020” and “Development of the North Caucasus Federal District for the period until 2025”; federal projects “Export of agricultural products” and “Creating a system to support farmers and develop rural cooperation”; and regional projects in the agricultural sector to support regional security “Export of agricultural products” and “Creating a system to support farmers and develop rural cooperation” were implemented.

The tasks of the regional projects in the North-Caucasian Federal District are aimed at strengthening growth points, overcoming a number of problems (complex logistics, inaccessibility of production, storage and transportation in mountainous regions, and a small volume of the domestic sales) and depend on creation of:

- new commercial agricultural products (including those with high added value) due to technological re-equipment of the industry;
- a system for promoting and positioning agricultural products, including export-oriented infrastructure; and
- a system of support for farmers and development of rural cooperation, including the expansion of grant support forms for peasant farms for starting up farms and their developing and the provision of subsidies for reimbursement of outlays and co-financing costs.

To ensure the regional security, of great importance are specially created institutional structures, i.e., federal executive institutions represented by the RF Ministry for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic; government-initiated development institutions—the Far East Investment Promotion and Export Support Agency, the North Caucasus Development Corporation, the Far East Development Corporation, and the Far East Development Fund that provide “targeted” support for regional investment projects on a competitive and repayable basis through development subprograms of the RF entities that are part of the North Caucasus Federal District or Far Eastern Federal District. In 2019, in the framework of the Development of the North Caucasus Federal District program, 45 regional investment projects were supported (3,109.6 million RUB from the federal budget), including 29 projects in the agro-industrial complex. In 2019, selected 19 regional projects began to be implemented, including 13 projects in agribusiness [7, 8].

It should be noted that since January 1, 2017, there have been identified special mandatory sections for the socio-economic development of the Far East, including real measures to support agriculture, in 27 federal programs. The need to improve the food security in the Far East is conditioned by high dependence of the territories on the volume of exported goods, freight traffic with China, price risks, remoteness of territories, and insufficient supply. Moreover, the agricultural potential and, therefore, the food security of the Far East are adversely affected by a number of permanent endogenous factors, namely:
• labor shortage (only 0.3% of 6.5 million people are employed in agriculture);
• unfavorable climatic conditions (unstable monsoon climate, resulting in periodic crop failures);
• small amount of cultivated areas, their low capacity, waterlogging, inconvenient location, high cost of land reclamation, and selection in plant growing; and
• the need to build premises for livestock, creation of large stocks of feed, and high technologies used in the feed production [9].

With respect to the specifics of the advanced development zones (ADZ) of the Far Eastern Federal District, the SPP should be focused on serious state support of investment projects in socially significant agro-industrial sectors related to the essential food production; special investment programs for agricultural production that provide “comparative advantage” of the region (fisheries, fish processing, and feed production based on marine biological raw materials); and creation of the infrastructure, necessary for the implementation of the projects. One of the tasks of the federal program “Socio-Economic Development of the Far East” is to attract investment and labor resources and facilitate the investment projects implemented in the Far East. So, 9 of 11 entities of the Far Eastern Federal District introduced the regional investment standard [10].

The ADZs are intrinsically created for specific large investors who have concluded preliminary agreements with the state institute. The agreements determine the type of planned economic activity, amount of investments, and number of jobs to be created. They also provide for notification of preferential tax conditions and simplified administrative procedures, in contrast to special economic zones [11, 12]. In accordance with the Federal Law “On the Territories of Advanced Social and Economic Development in the Russian Federation,” 21 advanced development zones were created in the macro-region, i.e., “Mikhailovskiy” (Primorsky Territory); “Belogorsk” (Amur region); “Kamchatka” (Kamchatka Territory); “Industrial Park Kangalassi” (Republic of Sakha-Yakutia); “Beringovskiy” (Chukotka Autonomous Region); “Nikolaevs” (Khabarovsk Territory); “Khabarovsk” (Khabarovsky Territory); and “Yuzhnaya” (Sakhalin Region). They are focused on projects in the agro-industrial and fishery complexes [13].

The investment support measures for agribusiness entities in the region include:

• granting subsidies to investors for creating and (or) reconstructing infrastructure facilities and utility connection to electric and gas distribution networks at the expense of the federal budget;
• special investment contracts;
• allocating investment commitments quotas (from the total allowable catch) for construction of fishing fleet vessels in Russian shipyards or creation of fish processing facilities on the Russian coast; and
• creating early training centers, industrial standards of staffing in order to maximize the number of personnel initially sought after in the market, and implementation of the Far Eastern Hectare program.

The largest projects supported and implemented due to the Far East and Arctic Development Fund, whose main shareholder is VEB.RF Group, are aimed at:

• creation of a greenhouse complex using Japanese technologies in Yakutsk as part of the Development Strategy of the Russian Agro-Industrial Complex until 2020;
• construction of a plant for the soybean deep processing, Stage 2, ADZ “Belogorsk”. The project has a synergy effect on animal husbandry, contributes to the supply of Far Eastern Federal District with quality feed, and thereby to import substitution; and
• construction of a pig-breeding complex that is being implemented in ADZ “Mikhailovsky,” the Primorsky Territory, where a powerful agricultural cluster is being developed with large enterprises and centers for deep processing and logistics for agricultural products [14].
Thus, at the moment, it is the North Caucasus Federal District and the Far Eastern Federal District that should be considered as model territories of exceptional intensive socio-economic development; in their frameworks, more than 3.000 investment projects are being implemented, including strengthening of food security.

4. Problems and proposals
The integrated administrative and territorial structure of Russia, significant differentiation of regions in terms of the level of economic development, heterogeneity of natural and climatic conditions, historically established system of specialization and division of labor, different demographic situations, and different remoteness of regions from the center of Russia and its state borders cause a number of issues of state policy to ensure regional food security using special-purpose programs in management, i.e.,

1. A significant gap in financing of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation; the gap enhances the differentiation of regions and agricultural enterprises within the country and federal districts;
2. Infrastructure in many regions is not ready to implement projects that aim to strengthen the food potential, on the one hand, but require creation of auxiliary infrastructure facilities for being implemented, on the other hand; considerable deformation of inter-branch economic relations;
3. Imbalanced public and private interests of participants in investment projects; and
4. System-wide problems of SPP, namely, high planned indices not initially tied to real growth resources; “dispersion” of financial resources on many development objects; underfunding of regional program activities; unperceived risks of non-implementation of programs, etc. [15].

The study on the identified issues allowed establishing the following promising federal regional policy areas related to the mechanisms of special-purpose management:
1. The import substitution vision implemented in each entity of the Russian Federation;
2. The Strategy for the balanced development of the regions, along with the current spatial development strategy of Russia;
3. Strengthening the safety control over agricultural products through an effective system for monitoring the quality of agricultural products;
4. Improving the state policy in the field of organic farming (approval of regional laws, normative acts, programs for the development of organic production that provide for integrated agro-ecological zoning);
5. Permanent forecasting and preventing negative consequences of agrarian inflation in regional food markets;
6. State support for the cluster approach in the agro-industrial complex with an emphasis on inter-sectoral cooperation, prioritizing recipients of state support, increasing the consistency and effectiveness of policies through comprehensive support programs from federal and regional authorities, and engaging development institutions;
7. Promotion of public-private partnership instruments in the agro-industrial complex for the development of value chains; joint agricultural research, innovation, and technology transfer; modernization of market infrastructure; and transfer of part of business development services to farmers and small enterprises;
8. The introduction of a result-oriented budgeting algorithm to achieve the goals of the priority areas of socio-economic development of the region, which allows setting the time limits for the goals, change the estimating tools, and determine the size of the necessary and spent budget resources [16].

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