Essence and criteria for sustainable development of rural territories

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Abstract. At the present stage of Russia's development, the solution of several national problems is of strategic importance: increasing the demographic potential of Russia, developing agricultural production to diversify the economy, and effectively implementing the country's agricultural potential to strengthen food security. The solution of these problems is impossible without ensuring sustainable development of Russian rural territories. The actuality and practical significance of solving this problem determined the need to set and solve the following research tasks: determining the features and criteria for sustainable development of rural territories based on the concept analysis of "development", "sustainability", "rural territories", and "sustainable development of rural territories". The study made it possible to clarify the essence of the category "sustainable development of rural territories" and to highlight its features. The results of determining the features of sustainable development of rural territories allowed us to identify the composition of regulatory territories and criteria for sustainable development of rural territories. The study laid the foundation for a special system of indicators for sustainable development of rural territories.

1. Introduction
Currently, it’s necessary for strategic importance of the country to preserve the creative nature of the rural living standards, the reproductive properties of natural resources for agricultural purposes, improve the demographic situation, environmental culture of the population, and improve the level and quality of rural residents’ life. Therefore, the problem of sustainable development of rural territories is of particular importance for strengthening the national security of the state. A large number of foreign and Russian works [1-3; 5-8] by researchers and scientists of the agricultural sector in the economy are devoted to the study in the formation and preservation problem of sustainable development of rural territories. Most researchers do not accurately show the essence of the category "sustainable development of rural territories" from a philosophical and socio-ecological and economic point of view, this category characterizes the ability to counteract the negative impact of external and internal factors on the balance, proportionality and efficiency of the processes in social and ecological and economic development of rural territories. In this regard, the purpose of the study was to determine the key spheres and criteria for sustainable development of rural territories. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set: defining and revealing the essence of the category "sustainable development of rural territories"; determining the key features and criteria for sustainable development of rural territories.
2. The essence of sustainable development of rural territories.

In accordance with the research algorithm, at the first stage, the definitions of the concept "rural territories" were analyzed in the interpretation of various sources. The solution of this problem is aimed at determining the features of the research object that should be considered when identifying factors for sustainable development of rural territories, the corresponding elements of its regulation mechanism [9].

Summarizing the results of the definitions analysis, the key features for the concept of "rural territories" were highlighted:

- low population concentration and dispersion;
- rural character of the territories (predominance of the natural landscape);
- specific forms and nature of employment (crop, livestock activities, cyclical nature of labor);
- specific forms of socio-domestic, socio-cultural, and communication relationships (rural living conditions).

At the next stage of the research, based on the study of definitions in the interpretation of various sources, the key features of sustainable development of rural territories were identified. The content and features of the main definitions for the "sustainable development of rural territories" concept and their corresponding features are shown in table 1.

| Source | Content of the definition | Features of sustainable development |
|--------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Strategy for sustainable development of rural territories in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 [4] | Stable socio-economic development of rural territories, increasing the volume of agricultural production, increasing the agriculture efficiency, achieving full employment of the rural population and improving their living standards, rational use of land | - developmental stability; - increasing the volume and efficiency of production; - raising the living standard; - rational use of land |
| Sustainable development of rural territories of the Altai territory: socio-economic and spatial aspects [5] | Not immutability (stability) or unjustified growth of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the rural community and its living conditions, but maintaining them (characteristics) at a level that allows solving key problems of internal development of the rural territory, as well as ensuring the most complete implementation of its main functions and, consequently, the competitiveness of the territory in a changing external environment | - full implementation of their functions by territories; - compliance of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the rural community with development requirements |

Considering the definitions and features of sustainable development in relation to rural territories in the interpretation of various sources, presented in table 2, it should be noted that most authors do not address the essential features of such a complex category as "sustainable development of rural territories". Only certain forms of changes and conditions in rural territories are considered. Based on the results of the author's research on the essence of the concept "development", “sustainability” [4] and considering the essential features of rural territories, we will try to clarify the essence of the concept "sustainable development of rural territories".

Sustainable development of rural territories is such qualitative changes in patterns, forms and relationships that restore (preserve) the balance, proportionality and efficiency of economic, socio-domestic, socio-cultural, and demographic processes in the functioning of rural territories. An integral
feature for the effectiveness of changing patterns, forms and relationships of rural territories is to improve the quality of forms, living conditions and indicators of the rural socio-territorial community (rural population).

3. **Criteria for sustainable development of rural territories**

Justification of spheres and elements composition in the mechanism for regulating sustainable development of rural territories requires the identification, systematization and consideration of sustainable development factors. Factors for sustainable development of rural territories were identified on the basis of previously achieved results of the authors' research [6]. The classification of factors made it possible to justify the territories of regulation and the corresponding criteria for sustainable development of rural territories, presented in table 2.

**Table 2. Criteria for sustainable development of rural territories.**

| Regulatory spheres                        | Criteria for sustainable development                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Natural and climatic, ecological conditions| Preservation of natural fertility in land resources.                                                  |
| Social factors                            | Preservation of reproduction properties in the ecological environment.                              |
|                                           | Preservation of natural and mechanical growth of the rural population.                               |
|                                           | Progressive nature of communication forms, customs and traditions of the rural population.          |
| Socio-economic factors                    | Balance and efficiency of elements for socio-domestic infrastructure.                               |
|                                           | Balance and efficiency of elements for socio-cultural infrastructure.                               |
|                                           | Balance and efficiency of recreational infrastructure elements.                                     |
|                                           | Education quality and proportionality and skill level of the population.                             |
|                                           | Proportionality of the population income.                                                           |
| Production and economic factors           | Transport accessibility of the territory, efficiency of transport processes.                          |
|                                           | Quality and cost of agricultural products produced [11].                                             |
|                                           | The level of energy intensity, material and performance technologies.                                |
| Organizational and economic factors       | Balance and effectiveness of program measures for rural development                                  |
| Institutional factors and conditions      | Availability of marketing infrastructure elements for agricultural producers.                      |
|                                           | Balance and efficiency of cooperation and competition in agricultural markets [12].                 |
|                                           | Efficiency of the judicial and legal system.                                                         |
|                                           | Balance and efficiency of forms and methods in business activity.                                   |
| Regional and municipal finance            | Proportionality and efficiency of budget expenditures.                                              |
|                                           | Proportionality and effectiveness of credit development financing.                                 |

The selected criteria for sustainable development allow us to create a theoretical basis for justifying the composition of indicators for sustainable development of rural territories.

4. **Conclusion**

Realization of the potential for diversification of the national economy based on the development of the agro-industrial complex is impossible without sustainable development of rural territories of Russian regions [10]. The proposed criteria for sustainable development make it possible to create a monitoring
base for management bodies. The list of proposed criteria is based on the existing official system of statistical indicators for municipality state. It is extremely important in theoretical and methodological terms to determine the essence of the category “sustainable development of rural territories”, to solve the problems of substantiating the composition of monitoring indicators and developing a methodology for their assessment on a scientific basis. The authors see the solution of these problems as further directions of research.

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