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**COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS:  
THE LEGAL SPECIFICS OF STATE PROGRAMS**

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**Abstract**

The article considers the legal aspects of forming and implementing state programs as a legal mechanism for ensuring the comprehensive development of rural areas. Having powerful economic, demographic, natural and cultural potential, rural areas lag behind urban areas. The study aims at analyzing the possibility of using state programs for the purposes of the comprehensive development of agricultural territories. The authors of the article dwell on the historical formation of state programs for the development of rural areas in the Russian Federation. In practice, the implementation of such programs is hindered by such factors as underdeveloped infrastructure, hidden unemployment and low living standards of the rural population. The authors study the international experience of states in the development and support of rural areas and highlight its specifics in different countries. They suggest adopting some positive examples when developing new programs and improving the existing ones in the Russian Federation.

**Keywords**

Sustainable development – Legal regulation – State policy – Employment

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## Introduction

Ensuring the food security of a constituent entity and a whole country, the reproduction of labor resources and the preservation of folk traditions are the main functions of rural areas, which is extremely important both in economic and social aspects. According to the Federal State Statistics Service<sup>1</sup>, more than 25% of the Russian population lives in such territories (25.5% as of 2018). In 2018, the Russian rural economy produced almost 3.5% of the gross domestic product. However, the existing potential is not fully used. This fact reveals acute socio-economic problems in the development of rural areas that have not been resolved for a long time<sup>2</sup>.

A specific feature of rural areas in the Russian Federation is their uneven socio-economic development due to the influence of natural and climatic factors, the state of regional economy and the possibilities of financial support. Many Russian rural settlements face serious socio-economic problems, namely: the low living standards of the rural population, poverty and hidden unemployment, underdeveloped infrastructure, etc<sup>3</sup>. The fact that agriculture, which is the main sector of the economy in rural areas, can perform not only the function of food supply (food production), but also several socially significant functions. For example, it ensures appropriate living standards and employment of the rural population, preserves their cultural and historical heritage, prevents land degradation, etc. If villages perform their functions, it will solve several general economic issues, which is especially important in the current economic situation (to ensure the country's food security and economic growth, as well as produce public goods).

In this regard, the development of rural areas is among the main goals of modern state policy. To attain this end, a set of legal instruments has been formed in recent years. Many scholars<sup>4</sup> suggest improving the current legislation governing the comprehensive development of rural areas. We should pay more attention to the ideas expressed by D.P. Timchenko<sup>5</sup>, A.G. Annin<sup>6</sup>, I.S. Maltseva<sup>7</sup> and R.V. Zharikov<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Federalnaya sluzhba gosudarstvennoi statistiki. Retrieved from: [http://old.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_main/rosstat/ru/statistics](http://old.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics)

<sup>2</sup> T. V. Uskova y N. V. Voroshilov, "Kompleksnoe razvitie selskikh territorii – zadacha gosudarstvennoi vazhnosti", *Problemy razvitiya territorii* Vol: 6 num 104 (2019): 7-20.

<sup>3</sup> O. V. Shimuk, "Gosudarstvennoe regulirovanie selskogo razvitiya: evolyutsiya upravlencheskikh reshenii i sovershenstvovanie instrumentov programmogo regulirovaniya", *Ars Administrandi (Iskusstvo upravleniya)* Vol: 12 num 1 (2020): 44-60.

<sup>4</sup> T. M. Polushkina; Y. A. Akimova; T. P. Koroleva; S. A. Kochetkova y L. I. Zinina, "Development of Organic Agriculture in the European Union Member States: The Role of Public-Private Partnership", *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism* Vol: 11 num 5 (2020): 1081-1094 y A. G. Germanovich; O. N. Vasilieva; M. E. Ordynskaya; L. M. Allanina y A. E. Gorokhova, "Impact of Tourism on Sustainable Development of Rural Areas: International Experience", *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism* Vol: 11 num 4 (2020): 965-972.

<sup>5</sup> D. P. Temchenko, "Pravovoe regulirovanie ustoychivogo razvitiya selskikh territorii na primere gosudarstvennykh program", *Molodoi uchenyi* Vol: 7 num 297 (2020): 141-144.

<sup>6</sup> A. G. Annin, "Sotsialno-ekonomicheskie aspekty pravovogo regulirovaniya razvitiya selskikh territorii", *Agrarnoe i zemelnoe parvo* Vol: 9 num 177 (2019): 55-57.

<sup>7</sup> I. S. Maltseva, "Mekhanizmy pravovogo regulirovaniya razvitiya selskikh territorii v zarubezhnykh stranakh", *Izvestiya Komi nauchnogo tsentra UrO RAN* Vol: 4 num 40 (2019): 101-109.

<sup>8</sup> R. V. Zharikov; V. V. Bezpalov; S. A. Lochan; M. V. Barashkin y A. R. Zharikov, "Economic Security of Regions as A Criterion for Formation and Development of Agricultural Clusters by Means of Innovative Technologies", *Scientific papers-series management economic engineering in agriculture and rural development* Vol: 8 num 4 (2018): 431 - 439

However, scholars have not determined the concept of the integrated development of rural areas<sup>9</sup> and its directions, the range of problems that should be resolved in the process of this development and legal means that can solve these problems<sup>10</sup>. The research hypothesis is that the effectiveness of state programs for the development of rural areas depends on their legal support which regulates the criteria for implementing a particular program and its certain aspects.

## Methods

To analyze the legal specifics of state programs for developing rural areas and scientific approaches to identifying their regulatory functions, we used the dialectical method of cognition. We applied the systemic method and studied the cause-and-effect relations to determine both opportunities and problems of legal registration. The historical and statistical methods revealed the origin of the existing problems, their scale and the need for their rapid resolution. While seeking ways to improve the current legislation and increase the efficiency of state programs for developing rural areas, we used the methods of analysis and synthesis. The possibility of utilizing positive international experience to improve the conceptual and legal foundations was assessed through the comparative-legal method. Conceptual and regulatory documents for the development of rural areas, scientific articles and monographs and statistical data taken from official sources, including official websites of state bodies, served as the information base for proving the above-mentioned research hypothesis.

## Results

One of the main legal mechanisms used for rural development is target-oriented programs that regulate the courses, forms and degrees of state support aimed at improving the economy and social sphere of rural areas. In addition to clearly defining goals and objectives, deadlines and resources available for regional development projects, these state programs presuppose constant monitoring of their implementation<sup>11</sup>. In Russia, the development of agricultural and food economic policy began in the 1990s. In the 2000s, the policy aimed at the development of rural areas gained a social focus. In 2006, Federal Law of December 29, 2006 No. 264-FZ "On the development of agriculture" was adopted<sup>12</sup>. Article 5 of this Federal Law presents the concept of sustainable development of rural areas which means stable socio-economic development, growing agricultural production, an increase in the efficiency of agriculture, full employment of the rural population, better standards of living and rational use of land. In the previous decade, the Government of the

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<sup>9</sup> Z. O. Tokhayeva; B. Z. Almukhambetova; B. Keneshbayev y K. Akhmetova, "Innovative processes' management in agriculture and food security: development opportunities", *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues* Vol: 7 num 3 (2020): 1565-1579; A. M. Kazambayeva; G. A. Aiesheva y S. M. Yesengaliyeva, "Sustainable Development of Agricultural Production Based on the Use of the Resource Potential of the Region", *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism* Vol: 10 num 7 (2020): 1478-1485 y G. Osadchaya; I. Leskova y T. Yudina, *Labor Mobility of Migrants from The Eurasian Economic Union Member Countries on The Russian Market of Labor: Status, Problems, Scenarios of Development. Economic and Social Development* (2018).

<sup>10</sup> E. L. Minina, "Pravovoe regulirovanie ustoichivogo razvitiya selskikh territorii. Zhurnal rossiiskogo prava", *Yuridicheskoe izdatelstvo "Norma"* (2019): 31-38.

<sup>11</sup> V. Z. Petrosyants y L. G. Ninalalova, "Programmno-tselevye metody v sisteme regulirovaniya razvitiya problemnykh regionov", *Zhurnal Regionalnye problemy preobrazovaniya ekonomiki* (2016): 63-70.

<sup>12</sup> Federal Law No. 264-FZ "On developing agriculture". December 29, 2016. Retrieved from: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/24837>

Russian Federation adopted a few conceptual acts aimed at the development of rural areas, including the State Program for developing agriculture and regulating the market of agricultural products, raw materials and supplies between 2013 and 2020<sup>13</sup> and its subprogram for the sustainable development of rural areas in 2014-2017 and until 2020 (it was transformed into a departmental target-oriented program in 2019)<sup>14</sup>; the Concept of sustainable development of rural areas in the Russian Federation in 2020<sup>15</sup>; the Strategy for sustainable development of rural areas of the Russian Federation until 2030<sup>16</sup>, etc. The existing system of legal acts governing the agricultural sector of the economy and the life of rural areas gradually shifts away from solving branch-related issues to an integrated approach, which lays the basis for interrelated economic, social, organizational, managerial and legal solutions. In pursuance of Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 204 "On national goals and strategic tasks of developing the Russian Federation until 2024"<sup>17</sup>, the State Program of the Russian Federation "On the comprehensive development of rural areas" was developed and approved by Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 696 of May 31, 2019<sup>18</sup>. This state program contains measures to curb rural depopulation by changing the concentration of finances, jobs and people in mega-cities. Constituent entities took an active part in its development. The program was adopted to maintain at least 25.3% of the rural population in the total Russian population, ensure 80% of the average monthly disposable resources of rural and urban households and increase the total area of comfortable residential premises in rural settlements up to 50%. The above-mentioned state program is built over the project approach, developed within the concept of initiative budgeting and includes five directions (subprograms): "The analytical, regulatory and methodological support for the integrated development of rural areas"; "Creating conditions for providing affordable and comfortable housing for the rural population"; "The development of the labor market (human resources) in rural areas"; "The formation and development of rural infrastructure"; "Ensuring the implementation of the state program of the Russian Federation 'On the comprehensive development of rural areas'". The state program is conditionally divided into project and process components. The project component comprises five departmental projects: "The development of rural housing and improving the quality of rural households", "Promoting the employment of the rural population", "Developing engineering infrastructure in rural areas", "Developing transport infrastructure in rural areas" and "Equipping rural areas with modern conveniences". The process component includes three departmental target programs: "The state monitoring of

<sup>13</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 717 "On the State program for developing agriculture and regulating the market of agricultural products, raw materials and supplies between 2013 and 2020". July 14, 2012. Retrieved from: <https://rg.ru/2012/08/07/selo-site-dok.html>

<sup>14</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 717 "On the State program for developing agriculture and regulating the market of agricultural products, raw materials and supplies between 2013 and 2020". July 14, 2012. Retrieved from: <https://rg.ru/2012/08/07/selo-site-dok.html>

<sup>15</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 2136-r "On adopting the Concept of sustainable development of rural areas in the Russian Federation in 2020". November 30, 2010. Retrieved from: <https://rg.ru/2010/12/14/sx-territorii-site-dok.html>

<sup>16</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 151-r "On adopting the Strategy for sustainable development of rural areas in the Russian Federation in 2030". February 2, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://rg.ru/2015/02/04/selo-site-dok.html>

<sup>17</sup> Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 204. "On national goals and strategic tasks of developing the Russian Federation until 2024". May 7, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 696 (as amended on October 17, 2019) "On adopting the state program of the Russian Federation "Comprehensive development of rural areas" and amending some acts issued by the Government of the Russian Federation". of May 31, 2019.

rural areas", "The analytical and information support for the integrated development of rural areas" and "The modern image of rural areas".

The program addresses the following socio-economic issues of rural development: accommodating rural families and improving their living conditions by developing construction and providing preferential mortgage loans; improving the quality of rural households; increasing the availability of rural medical points; attracting young specialists to rural areas; building public hard-surface highways connecting the network of public highways and socially significant objects located in rural areas, production and processing facilities; equipping rural areas with modern conveniences; supporting the internetization of rural settlements; involving rural citizens in the implementation of initiative projects aimed at solving priority problems of rural development; forming a positive attitude towards the countryside and rural lifestyle, etc<sup>19</sup>. Considering all the advantages of this program, the current legal mechanisms determining priority areas for rural development and providing institutional and economic means regulation needs additional elaboration and legislative consolidation.

## Discussion

It is important to study the experience accumulated by developed economies and adopt it to optimize the Russian policy in the field of rural development.

Until the end of the 1980s, the EU had pursued the so-called "old rural policy" using the sectoral (branch-related) approach, in which rural development is part of overall agricultural development and land management. This approach consisted in the provision of sectoral subsidies to adjust income levels<sup>20</sup>. Companies, communities and individuals were eligible for specific subsidies by virtue of their occupation. The policy was mainly aimed at farmers. Between the 1980s and the 1990s, structural transformations of the rural economy were caused by the reduction of employment in agriculture, which required a change in the relevant policies. This process gave rise to a new rural paradigm that defines the territorial approach to rural development based on the fact that rural areas have different economic structures, in which agriculture is often marginalized<sup>21</sup>. Its first legal tools were as follows: the reform of the European Structural Funds (1988) and the LEADER approach (1990). From the perspective of rural development, both of these instruments used the cross-sectoral approach, with priority given to spatial development and partnerships between local and regional authorities. The new paradigm of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) focused on places rather than sectors, and investments rather than subsidies<sup>22</sup>. The new CAP paradigm includes the following elements: a transition from the approach subsidizing weak economic sectors to the approach based on strategic investments in the development of the most productive and promising types of activity in a particular region; emphasis on local specifics as a means of creating new competitive advantages (local

<sup>19</sup> V. I. Kashin, Materialy zasedaniya Pravitelstvennoi komissii po voprosam agropromyshlennogo kompleksa i ustoychivogo razvitiya selskikh territorii o proekte gosudarstvennoi programmy po kompleksnomu razvitiyu selskikh territorii do 2025 goda. Retrieved from: <https://kprf.ru/dep/gosduma/activities/185478>

<sup>20</sup> I. S. Maltseva, "Mekhanizmy pravovogo regulirovaniya..."

<sup>21</sup> New Rural Policy: LINKING UP FOR GROWTH. BACKGROUND DOCUMENT. National Prosperity. Through Modern Rural Policy: Conference. OECD. 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.oecd.org/rural/rural-development-conference/documents/New-Rural-Policy.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Rural Policy Reviews. The New Rural Paradigm: Policies and Governance. OECD. 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.ircwash.org/sites/default/files/OECD-2006-New.pdf>

products, environmental or cultural services); framework contracts to develop local businesses; moving from the sectoral approach to the territorial one, including attempts to integrate different sectoral strategies at regional and local levels and to coordinate sectoral policies at the government level; decentralized policy management and policy development at local levels; more partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors in the development and implementation of local and regional policies<sup>23</sup>. All the EU countries work on national rural development programs based on defined measures and realize them through four main subprograms. The first subprogram "On increasing the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry" aims at making agriculture and forestry more competitive, as well as developing the food industry through investments in innovative solutions. The second subprogram "On improving environment and rural areas" combines two different activities: improving environment and developing landscape. The main objectives of the third subprogram "On the quality of rural life and the diversification of rural economy" are to support the level of employment and promote the attractiveness of rural life. The main funds are directed to basic services for the economy and the rural population through developing a network of cultural institutions, increasing access to communication technologies, creating service centers and opportunities for the integrated use of nature. Other measures of this subprogram should support business and employment in general, while improving housing conditions (especially in islands and peripheral territories). This document emphasizes the role of farmers and the diversification of their activities, as well as the development of tourism<sup>24</sup>. Most initiatives of this subprogram are implemented through the LEADER approach. The last subprogram aims at developing the LEADER approach, elaborating and implementing local development strategies in order to increase employment in the countryside, create favorable living conditions and improve the rural environment. This document provides the creation of local initiative groups, including participants important for rural development from different spheres (local government, business and public organizations). Local initiative groups should develop and implement the selected strategies to achieve the above-mentioned goals with the help of the population. They cooperate with regional actors within the framework of local plans. It is necessary to adjust plans and strategies at different levels to achieve such tasks<sup>25</sup>. Three main goals of rural development policy are as follows: to increase the competitiveness of agriculture; to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and climate-related actions; to balance the territorial development of rural economies and communities, including the creation and maintenance of jobs.

The above-mentioned objectives can be embodied in the following six priorities: to promote the transfer of knowledge in agriculture, forestry and rural areas; to increase the competitiveness of agriculture and its viability; to organize food chains and perform risk management in agriculture; to restore, preserve and strengthen ecosystems that depend on agriculture and forestry; to improve resource efficiency and support the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food processing and forestry; to ensure social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> I. S. Maltseva, "Mekhanizmy pravovogo regulirovaniya..."

<sup>24</sup> A. M. Nikulin; I. V. Trotsuk y I. V. Kopoteva, Severnye territorii Rossiiskoi Federatsii, ctran Evropy i Ameriki: komparativistskii analiz perspektiv selskogo razvitiya (Moscow: Izd-vo RANKh i GS pri Prezidente RF, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> European Commission. The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD). LEADER/CLLD. Retrieved from: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leaderclld\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leaderclld_en)

<sup>26</sup> Fact Sheets on the EU – 2019. Second Pillar of the CAP: Rural Development Policy. Retrieved from: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU\\_3.2.6.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_3.2.6.pdf)

At the same time, experts note that the EU Common Agricultural Policy does not ensure the sustainable development of the rural economy despite all its achievements<sup>27</sup>. The US economic policy plays a vital role in developing agriculture<sup>28</sup>. First of all, it aims at creating favorable market conditions for agricultural intensification, the development of production and the improvement of social infrastructure in the countryside. Investments in agriculture and other sectors of the agro-industrial complex are regulated by state programs to maintain prices for agricultural goods and incomes, organize state inspection and form a system of national standards. The state participates both in generating demand for food and raw materials within the country and in stimulating the export of agricultural products<sup>29</sup>. The Farm Bill of 2014 is the main document governing agricultural policy in relation to commodities, crop insurance, agricultural land conservation, internal food assistance, agricultural trade facilitation and international food assistance, agricultural credit, rural development, agricultural research, private forestry, horticulture and organic (ecological) agriculture, bioenergy, etc<sup>30</sup>. As part of the Farm Bill funding, 79% of budget expenditures are allocated for domestic food assistance programs, primarily for supplemental nutrition assistance programs developed for the US residents who have no income or low income. Agricultural programs account for about 20% of budget expenditures. The main payments are attributed to crop insurance, farm commodity programs and land conservation. The crop insurance program offers options to cover crop and income losses. Traditional crop insurance provides subsidies to farmers who buy a certificate to protect themselves against crop loss, crop income or total income. In addition, the extra coverage option offers producers zonal coverage in combination with traditional crop insurance. Other agricultural programs provide direct and guaranteed loans, including microloans for the purchase of agricultural land, and operational (for specific purposes) loans to help farmers struggling to obtain bank credits, startupper, war veterans and socially vulnerable groups of people. In addition to federal initiatives, there are many state, county and local programs implemented through agricultural departments or departments of economic development. For example, there are programs for special rural conditions that support communications, utilities and waste management. These programs are generally available for remote and rural areas. The other programs promote local food production, value-added processing and farmland conservation. Although the US has many such programs, the US economists claim that large-scale rural development is not a priority for the US Department of Agriculture and its impact on rural areas is mainly a side effect of sectoral aid<sup>31</sup>. It is worth mentioning that a comprehensive rural development policy has not been introduced in the US and the US Department of Agriculture ceased working on rural development as an independent initiative, which is deemed as a more effective approach to ensuring the comprehensive development of rural areas<sup>32</sup>. Instead, core programs in health, education, house construction, environment and other spheres should be adopted to satisfy the needs of rural

<sup>27</sup> I. S. Maltseva, "Mekhanizmy pravovogo regulirovaniya..."

<sup>28</sup> B. A. Chernyakov, "Agrarnaya politika i innovatsionnaya deyatelnost v SShA", *Tekhnika i oborudovanie dlya sela* num 11 (2009): 39-43.

<sup>29</sup> A. G. Paptsov y S. V. Kozlova, "Strategicheskii plan podderzhki selskogo khozyaistva SShA", *Ekonomika selskokhozyaistvennykh i pererabatyvayushchikh predpriyatii* num 6 (2009): 75-77.

<sup>30</sup> The 2014 Farm Bill (P.L. 113-79): Summary and Side-by-Side. Congressional Research Service. February 12, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/R43076.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> M. D. Partridge y M. R. Olfert, "Towards a Rural Development Policy: Lessons from the US and Canada", *Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy* Vol: 39 num 2 (2009).

<sup>32</sup> B. W. Honadle, "Rural development policy in the US: A critical analysis and lessons from the "still birth" of the rural collaborative investment program", *Community Development* Vol: 42 num 1 (2011): 56-69.

communities. While criticizing the US agricultural policy, Timothy A. Wise notes that US subsidies "oversaturate" world markets with American goods, dumping and damaging the Third World countries<sup>33</sup>. At the same time, large farms and wealthy farmers receive much support. O.M. Varchenko highlights that the US agricultural policy promotes the production of unhealthy food; commodity support programs remain ineffective; landowners benefit from subsidies more than farmers<sup>34</sup>.

Despite different aid levels and approaches to supporting producers, the current EU and US agri-food policies are not sustainable in the following three areas: economic, social and environmental. Large firms receive the lion's share of government support and millions of small farms bankrupt, which weakens rural structures and alters landscapes. The Russian agricultural policy faces problems that are similar to those experienced by the EU and the US. Therefore, it is important to adopt the experience of developed economies and improve the Russian agricultural policy.

## Conclusion

This study proves that state programs are effective mechanisms for regulating the integrated development of rural areas. A critical deterrent to implementing this mechanism is no sufficient regulation of certain state programs and their realization. To improve the existing regulatory acts in conformity with the objectives of such programs, it is necessary to develop new legal acts addressing the following issues: terms that establish clearer criteria for defining rural territories, coordinating the work of departments, improving interaction with representatives of the local community, etc. The set of regulatory acts that ensure the implementation of state programs for the integrated development of rural areas will minimize the declarative nature of these programs and contribute to their practical implementation. Thus, the research hypothesis seems to be proven. The state regulation of the integrated development of rural areas can be achieved through the elaboration of scientifically grounded targeted indicators and evaluation criteria, which has laid the foundations for further study in this sphere.

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<sup>33</sup> T. A. Wise, Who pays for agricultural dumping farmers in developing countries? July 29, 2010. Retrieved from: <http://triplecrisis.com/who-pays-for-agricultural-dumping-farmers-in-developing-countries-2/>

<sup>34</sup> O. M. Varchenko, "Osobennosti novoi agrarnoi politiki SShA", *Ekonomika ta upravlinnya APK* Vol: 2 num 123 (2015): 5-10.

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