
Development of innovative import substitution in the agro-industrial complex as a key factor in overcoming interregional differentiation and depression of agrarian-oriented and highly subsidized North Caucasian republics

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Abstract. The growth of globalization processes, the aggravation of competition and the protracted economic and technological sanctions against the Russian Federation have necessitated adjusting the strategic goals that are being addressed within the context of import substitution. The Russian policy of import substitution in the agricultural sector should be implemented on the basis of large-scale technological modernization of agro-industrial production, the systematic use of innovations at all stages of the production cycle and the creation of conditions for diversification of production. The practice of implementing the strategy of import substitution in the Russian agrarian economy over the past five years has already made it possible to form a stable trend of growth in production of certain types of agricultural products. At the same time, the competitiveness of Russian agricultural products is still quite low due to the low productivity of agricultural machinery, backwardness of selection and genetic engineering, the lack of domestic seeds, etc. No less relevant limiting factor is the lack of an integral concept of innovative import substitution, the imperfection of tools for neutralizing and squeezing out imports by business entities. In these conditions, in our opinion, it is necessary to direct the entire natural resource and scientific and technical potential of the national economy to import substitution, because under current conditions there is no other way to ensure the economic and food security of the Russian Federation. The study of the morphogenesis of the process under consideration made it possible to establish that the features of building and implementation of the import substitution policy in the conditions of an innovation-oriented economy have not yet been analysed; the specific advantages and weak links of import substitution strategies have not been identified. There is still no single interpretation of the main categories; the possibilities and limitations of implementation of import substitution policy in the context of the need to increase the level of innovative activity have not been substantiated. All this, of course, requires the immediate development of theoretical and methodological approaches to the content of the strategy and tools for import substitution, taking into account the peculiarities of the Russian agrarian economy, all this determined the choice of our research topic.

Keywords: economic crisis, economic and technological sanctions, agro-industrial complex, agriculture, policy of innovative import substitution.

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis and diagnosis of innovative potential of import substitution have been developed in many scientific works of Russian and foreign scientists, among whom we would like to highlight such researchers as N.D. Kondratiev, J. Schumpeter, B.-A. Lundwall, F. Hayek, T. Man, S. Metcalf, R. Nelson et al.

It is also worth noting the contribution in clarifying certain aspects of the category of "import substitution" of such Russian scientists as A.A. Akayev, V.R. Boev, A.A. Gnidchenko, A.N. Makarov, A.I. Shinkevich, A.A. Yarlychenko, and others.

At the same time, the practice of innovation activity in relation to import substitution shows that the need to develop effective tools for innovative import substitution (in order to form new growth points and zones of advanced development) requires further analysis of the conceptual and categorical structure of "import substitution", and also a constructive study of the experience obtained by economically developed countries to establish opportunities of its effective use in the conditions of Russian realities.

In the course of entering into this issue, we established the existence of significant experience in using a variety of tools both in developed countries and in developing countries that are actively implementing the structural transformation of their economies.

World practice shows that the successful implementation of the import substitution policy allows Russia to integrate painlessly into the system of world economic relations, which enhances country economic growth and accelerates the development of the domestic industrial (commodity) market. All this, of course, convincingly explains why the problems of implementing the policy of import substitution are actively studied by many foreign and Russian scientists. [1, 5, 16, 17]

It is also necessary to point out differences in the interpretation of the category of "import substitution" in foreign and domestic science; sometimes we can even talk about the inconsistency and ambiguity of its interpretation.

On the one hand, this can be explained by the presence of many alternative schools and trends. On the other hand, this indicates an insufficient elaboration of the content, role and significance of import substitution.

Today, it is obvious that, when forming a strategy, it is necessary to take into account the specifics of sectoral markets with varying degrees of dependence on foreign markets, as well as the polarization of the Russian economic space, which is demonstrated by the differences in meso-formations in the set of program measures aimed at import substitution. These and other problems of the development of innovative import substitution have determined the topic, purpose, objectives and structure of our research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The theoretical and methodological basis of our research was the works of the most famous foreign and Russian researchers in the field of the theory of innovation and innovative development, the theory of state regulation, the theory of import substitution, and the theory of forecasting socio-ecological and economic development.

In the course of our work, we used general scientific and special methods of cognition, such as the principles of dialectics, analysis and synthesis, comparison and generalization, groupings and typologies, as well as a number of empirical methods.

The data of the Federal State Statistics Service and its territorial structures, documents of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, the Commission on the Support of Import Substitution of Industry, materials of the Internet resource, etc. were the informational base for the study.

MAIN RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The problems of systematically identifying opportunities and justifying the economic feasibility of implementing an import substitution policy are multifaceted; they include a set of qualitative characteristics of analogues for imported goods, reflect the difficulties in finding new sales markets, etc.

The observed inconsistency and ambiguity of the category under consideration predetermines the ambiguity of its interpretation. Import substitution is considered in a number of works in the form of a self-regulating process of replacing imported goods with substitutes of Russian production, and in the form of a certain type of economic strategy and government policy with the aim of replacing imported goods with Russian ones, etc. [8]

Undoubtedly, such a spread of interpretations speaks of the legitimacy of considering import substitution, firstly, as a separate economic category that reveals the most characteristic features of economic processes occurring in national economies and in the world economy as a whole, and, secondly, as a strategy pursued by the state and business entities for the implementation of the goals of the strategy aimed at the innovative import substitution.

The need to implement the import substitution policy in a short time required the formation of an import substitution model and the development of appropriate strategies.

We do not share the approaches of a complete fetishization of the import substitution policy for its entire noble goal, because the development of national production potential for the rational satisfaction of the needs of the domestic (Russian) market is accompanied by serious threats.

Firstly, the implemented model of import substitution, willingly or unwillingly, presupposes self-isolation from world breakthrough innovations.

Secondly, the likelihood of technological backwardness from developed countries increases.

Thirdly, there is a danger of building conditions for the functioning of national commodity producers that are inadequate to global requirements.

Fourth, countries are forced to build production chains regardless of the international division of labour.

Fifth, there is a threat of loss of competitiveness for the manufactured products due to the lack of adequate competition in the domestic market.

Prior to the imposition of sanctions, the Russian Federation was fully committed to integrating into the world economy and adhered to a firm orientation towards the international division of labour.

The announcement of economic and technological sanctions against the Russian Federation required a tough mobilization of all resources in order to alleviate the severity of critical dependence on foreign technologies and industrial goods and to engage the federal targeted import substitution program. We are talking about the maximum use of the country's scientific and technical potential of high-tech activities.

As can be seen from the above, import substitution must be studied as interdependent contradictory processes aimed at reducing and squeezing out imports and organizing the production of analogues within the country. In these conditions, a mesoeconomic formation is focused exclusively on the in-country space.

In the context of the formation of a neo-industrial economy, it is necessary to talk not just about import substitution, but about the formation of a strategy of innovative import substitution.

It is clear that the construction of an innovative import substitution strategy should be based solely on the large-scale implementation of innovative processes. It is also appropriate here to recall J. Schumpeter, who considered innovation as a key factor in neutralizing the negative consequences of an economic crisis by transforming the economic process. [17]

The concept "innovation" is a derivative of the term "novation". In the New Philosophical Encyclopedia, innovations are understood as "new activities understood in the context of the general tendency to oust traditional ... forms" of activity by rationally organized ones. [13]

Note that this definition applies equally to technological, product, social, organizational and other types of innovation.

The nature of modern models of an innovative society, as a rule, equates the problems of innovation development, innovation policy and innovation activity with the problems of synergy of scientific knowledge, production and economic activity and industrial technologies.

Back in the 60s of the last century, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed and put into practice a system of international standards for innovation acts.

It should be noted that these standards later became the basis for the construction and successful implementation of innovation policy and allowed national innovation systems to form in a number of economically developed countries (USA, Germany, Finland, France, Japan, etc.).

Experts note the underdevelopment of the innovation system of the Russian Federation, which is confirmed by the presence of a low share of national innovative developments in comparison with developed countries that are actively pursuing their own internal innovation policy. Outdated conservative forms of organization of industrial production at most industrial enterprises of the Russian Federation do not allow even to talk about the efficiency of using intellectual resources without radical transformations of the production and economic sphere, organizational and management activities.

In our opinion, all this is the result of continued adherence to a "convenient" raw export model of existence. The need to accelerate the implementation of the innovative development paradigm, the need to move from a raw material export to an information economy has been declared at all levels for more than a decade. However, it is still not possible to speak about the presence of a reasonable structural adjustment of the economy; on the formation of an innovative infrastructure.

Of course, when developing a strategy for import substitution, it is necessary to find a right balance between the need to integrate the national economy into the world economy and the need to apply protectionist measures of state regulation in order to neutralize the degree of isolation of the country. This presupposes the purposeful integration of import-substituting tools into the system of state regulation of the economy as sources of activation of innovation processes and the formation of new competitive advantages of Russian producers.

At the same time, it cannot be said that the implementation of the import substitution strategy means the refusal of the state and economic entities from participation in the system of the international division of labour focused on expanding the boundaries of production capabilities of its participants in international integrated economic relations.

In our opinion, it would be correct in this context to consider import substitution as a strategic guideline for state regulation of the national economy.

It should also be noted that import substitution in no way conflicts with the market laws of management and is not established solely due to the introduction of economic sanctions by a number of states against Russia. [2, 4, 18]

In the specialized literature, various types of import substitution strategies are distinguished depending on the goal being set. These are, inter alia: the strategy of import substitutive industrialization, the strategy of forced

import substitution, the strategy of import substitution diversification, etc. They have in common that they, among other things, are sources of innovation diffusion, catalysts of progressive macroeconomic dynamics and, ultimately, contribute to an increase in the level and quality of life of the population.

Even in their early editions, the mercantilists defined the fundamental and prevailing duty of the state in "increasing the growth of national industry and trade with a favourable trade surplus as a characteristic of the national wealth of national wealth." [9]

It can also be pointed out that the neo-Keynesians (M. Bruno, H. Chenery, N. Carter, etc.) identified in their theoretical models the implementation of the import substitution policy in industry as a key goal of economic development. [16]

In our opinion, the approaches of forming a model of input-output balance by V.V. Leontyev are still relevant when developing an integral concept of import-substituting industrialization. [7]

In the world practice of import substitution, there is experience of using it to overcome dependence on foreign supplies.

So, for example, in the 90s of the last century in the countries of South America there was actively used a model implied an increase in the production of domestic goods while maintaining the import supplies of products, an analogue of which the country could not produce.

The countries of East Asia used a model involving a set of measures of state support for high-tech industries, which allowed them to provide in a short time the desired competitive advantages of domestic producers.

The next model originated in Japan (the theory of "flying geese" by Kaname Akamitsu [12]) and found its followers in the USA, China, India, Taiwan, etc.). It is also based on the activation of state support for export-oriented commodity producers. Its peculiarity is a rigid orientation not to the domestic, but to the external market, to increasing the export potential and, of course, to reducing the import dependence of the national economy.

There are also other models of a similar nature, which are based on export-oriented, innovative and import-substituting strategies.

Above, we noted that the development of an import substitution strategy should take place with the obligatory consideration of the peculiarities inherent in the sectoral markets of the Russian Federation. They are marked by a wide spread of the degree of dependence on the external market; the polarization of the Russian economic space, positioned with the use of the differences of meso-formations regarding the complex of program measures and actions to replace imports. We are talking about the legal regulation of import substitution, including the relevant regulatory legal acts aimed at strengthening the economic security of the Russian Federation. Special target indicators have been developed to study the characteristics of sectoral markets and the state of economic entities in a particular sector of the economy. In particular, the target program for the development of the agro-industrial complex and agriculture consists of more than 80 import substitution items.

Back in 2014, the document "On the application of certain special economic measures to ensure the security of the Russian Federation" (06.08.2014) was adopted by the Decree of President V.V. Putin in order to properly respond to economic and technological sanctions and restrictions on the supply of agricultural products and food products introduced by a group of countries against the Russian Federation.

Action plans for the development of import substitution in the agricultural sector have been adopted and are being implemented in the agrarian-oriented republics of the North Caucasus.

Of particular scientific and practical interest is a set of measures designed to facilitate the use of investment projects. Thus, large areas of gardens in the republics have been laid out with the use of new breakthrough technologies. The state provides significant subsidies to agricultural producers, which allows entrepreneurs to create infrastructure conditions and form an innovation cycle. There are already actual results achieved: more than 10 thousand hectares of innovative-type gardens have been laid in the Ingush Republic, and over 16 thousand hectares have been laid in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic; similar work continues in the republics of Adygea and Karachay-Cherkessia, and in the Stavropol Territory. Of course, all this contributes to ensuring import substitution and increasing the competitiveness of diversified agricultural enterprises in the domestic and foreign markets. It should also be noted that the federal target program of import substitution in the republics under consideration was supplemented by road maps, which made it possible to intensify measures to replace imported products, taking into account the peculiarities of the resource potential of the regions. [8, 10, 14]

The next characteristic feature of import substitution in agro-industrial and agricultural production is that there are no prohibitive measures on the part of the state. Moreover, the state directs all its efforts exclusively to stimulate agricultural and food products, which are analogous to imported goods for personal and industrial consumption, as well as to large-scale use of advanced technologies of world quality. [6, 11, 15]

It should also be noted that there are already significant results in the production of poultry meat and pig meat: not only a 100% saturation of the domestic market of the Russian Federation has occurred for these items, but also the possibility of their export to China and other countries has appeared. This was facilitated by a number of components of the mechanism for implementing the import substitution strategy, including a set of state support

methods for agricultural producers; tools for sustainable development of industrial markets; a set of measures to develop cooperation and integration, and also formation of the system infrastructure. [3, 6, 19]

The agro-industrial complex is traditionally conservative and, for technological and organizational reasons, is not so actively focused on the development and implementation of innovations. Nevertheless, the experience of advanced regions (Belgorod Region, Krasnodar Krai, Rostov Region, etc.) shows that the use of breakthrough import-substituting technologies already in the agrarian sector acts as a key factor in catching up development and narrowing the gap in interregional differentiation. We believe that this can also become a significant factor in reducing and neutralizing the depression in the regional development of the highly subsidized North Caucasian republics.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

The results of our research allowed us to formulate a number of conclusions and proposals here.

- The study of the main types of import substitution makes it possible to position innovative import substitution as the most effective and competitive form of activity from the perspective of the country's sustainable development prospects.

- The strategy of innovative import substitution is characterized by progressiveness and focus on building up competitive advantages by increasing the production of innovative products by domestic producers. It allows one to get rid of the "help" of import substitutes in the formation of innovative value added, because exclusively domestic innovative products are created.

- Import-substituting diversification has a protective nature, because it allows in depressed regions to restore the main mesoeconomic indicators and significantly reduce the possibility of geopolitical risks and threats by initiating the necessary structural, technological and institutional changes, which, in turn, allow the formation of growth points, diffusion of innovations, and the creation of regional innovation systems.

- The backwardness of the technologies used, the presence of administrative barriers, an acute shortage of their own working capital, and a high level of monopolization were established in the course of research in the agro-industrial complex of the North Caucasus republics.

- To activate the implementation of the strategy of innovative import substitution in the depressed republics of the North Caucasus, it is advisable to use a set of tools in the form of tax incentives for investment investments, the creation of reasonable tariff conditions, the development of high-tech innovative clusters in the agro-industrial complex, staffing of investment processes, the formation of mass demand for domestic products, etc.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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