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**PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS  
OF FORMING SMART SPECIALIZATION STRATEGIES  
OF THE REGIONS OF UKRAINE**

Ukraine's desire to become part of the European Community requires a clear understanding of the key aspects of smart specialization and the adaptation of its formation methodology to the conditions of Ukraine in order to prepare a strategy of «smart specialization» in domestic regions based on the identification of their leading industries capable of accumulating the maximum added value and ensuring the greatest economic effect [1].

In 2021, the agricultural sector of Ukraine provided 10.3% of the country's GDP. Constantly increasing the volume of exports, primarily of grain and oil crops, Ukraine has declared itself as a country on which the food security of a number of countries of the world largely depends. According to the results of 2021, the volume of exports of agricultural products amounted to 27.8 billion USD, or 43.9% of the country's total exports.

As of the beginning of 2022, the domestic agricultural industry not only demonstrated an increase in the production of agricultural products, but also an additional potential was formed in the field of exporting products with added value, which gradually began to be realized. By continuing the development of such potential, Ukraine had every chance to gain the status of a reliable supplier of high-quality food products to the world market, and the agro-industrial sector of the economy, accordingly, a powerful driver of the country's economic development and the growth of the population's welfare level.

Despite the crisis, the agro-industrial complex remains an important driver of support and growth of the national economy.

In the studies conducted by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the increase in demand for food in the world was noted and, accordingly, the problem of the need to increase the volume of production and trade in it was determined. The key factor in the growth of demand, in particular, is the growth of the global population, and in view of the unsolved problems of poverty and significant differentiation in incomes, analysts predict that the demand for the simplest and most affordable food products will predominantly grow. Also, the increase in the average life

expectancy of the planet's population is determined to be a factor that will influence the growth of demand. Experts also predict a change in food priorities of people, which will be reflected in the growth of consumption of resource-intensive products of animal origin and processed products.

The presence of a powerful potential of the agro-industrial sector and the prospects of expanding the demand for food products on the world market objectively determines the important role of Ukraine in ensuring global food security. With this in mind, the Strategy for the Development of Exports of Agricultural Products, Food and Processing Industry of Ukraine for the period until 2026 was approved [2].

The RIS3 smart specialization strategies, which act as a modern integrated and locally oriented unique tool of Ukraine's economic transformation policy, are characterized by the following aspects:

- allows to accumulate political support and investments regarding key national/regional priorities, challenges and development needs based on knowledge using ICT;
- builds on each region's strengths, competitive advantages, and potential for excellence;
- supports technological and practical innovations, stimulating private sector investments;
- fully engages stakeholders and encourages innovation and experimentation;
- is based on evidence (facts) and includes reliable monitoring systems [3].

According to the results of research conducted by specialists

In 2020, 18 regional development strategies were approved in Ukraine. Their analysis [ter development] demonstrated that 14 oblasts of Ukraine are oriented towards "traditional specialization", and the content of the development strategies of Vinnytsia, Donetsk and Chernivtsi oblasts did not reveal any signs of smart specialization at all.

At the same time, the innovative direction of strategic development is recorded only in two regions - Cherkasy and Kharkiv.

Innovative priorities defined in the relevant development strategy of the Kharkiv region were: resource materials; bioeconomy and biotechnology; power and energy; aerospace technologies; information and communication technologies; a healthy society.

Involvement in the European policy of smart specialization is facilitated by the Smart Specialization Platform (Smart Specialization Platform – S3 Platform), which was created in 2011 and currently presents the innovation priorities of more than 170 regions, where they can also receive advisory, information-analytical and other support.

In Ukraine, unfortunately, the creation of a national information platform of smart specialization, which is necessary for the system of institutional and organizational support for the implementation of the smart specialization model, has not yet taken place.

On the legislative level, the start of the implementation of smart specialization was recorded in 2018 at the level of making changes to some existing by-laws, which aimed to improve the institutional and organizational support for strategic planning of regional development.

In 2020, the State Regional Development Strategy for 2021-2027 was approved [4], in which the implementation of smart specialization is practically limited to the framework of sustainable development of industry, and other sectors of the economy that are attractive for investment for the implementation of smart specialization, to which the objectively, it can also be attributed to the branches of the agro-industrial sphere.

Today, the implementation of the concept of smart specialization in Ukraine faces a number of barriers, while the correct choice of the future specialization of regions based on a rational assessment of their existing potential is critically important for the successful development of the country as a whole.

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