

# *Consumption standards as the basis for promoting the concept of sustainable development*

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**Abstract** — The article considers the problem of the formation and promotion of consumption standards as an element of the transition to the concept of sustainable development on the example of comparing eco-labeling systems in Russia and Germany. It is noted that the rationalization of consumption standards is one of the goals of the transition to sustainable development, enshrined in the decisions of the United Nations. The algorithm for obtaining a quality mark was compared by the example of ABCERT AG Company, Germany, and the Russian organizations Eco-Control and St. Petersburg Ecological Union. A comparative analysis of regulatory documents of the federal level governing the activities of certifying organizations has been carried out. The following conclusions were made. The formation of consumption standards in Russia occurs spontaneously and reflects the current socio-economic situation. Domestic problems of the formation of consumption standards oriented towards sustainable development can be divided into two groups: a) objective - for example, low incomes of the population and confidence in certifying organizations; b) organizational - for example, the lack of a holistic position of the state on the issue of eco-labeling and a system of interaction with voluntary certification bodies. There are no fundamental differences (for example, in the sequence of stages) in the eco-labeling system of domestic and foreign authorized bodies. Moreover, the work of Russian voluntary certification systems is based on foreign standards and regulations.

**Keywords** — *sustainable development, consumption standards, environmental labeling.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the high level of technology development creates the danger of disturbing the ecological balance, the problem of preserving the human environment is particularly acute. To solve this problem, the concept of sustainable development was formulated and implemented in practice. The goals of sustainable development should be the motivating factors of decision-making in economic systems of various levels. As such a motivating element, it is proposed to consider consumption standards and technologies. The rules of a formal and informal nature associated with the implementation of sustainable development goals are being implemented more successfully in the countries of the European Union than in Russia. In this regard, the introduction and dissemination of European experience in this field represents a great interest both for the Russian side and for the European side in the light of the global environmental challenges.

The EU holds a special place in the implementation of sustainable development strategies. In the 1970s the main provisions of the common European environmental policy were developed, generating impulses for qualitative changes in the economy, ecology and society. [1] Treaty of Amsterdam, 1999 [2], Lisbon Strategy, 2000 [3], Treaty of Lisbon, 2007 [4] contain the main directions of the macro region's sustainability policy. The European Union is positioning itself on a global scale as the flagship of sustainable development policy and as the creator of scales for other states of the world.

The topic of sustainability occupies one of the main places in the Treaty on European Union of December 13, 2007. However, the EU sustainable development goals are included in the economic section. Thus, in paragraph 3 of Article 3, it says: "The European Union creates the internal market. He tries to ensure the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, the presence of a highly competitive social market economy striving for full employment and social progress, as well as a high level of environmental protection and improvement. It promotes scientific and technical progress." Specific goals for sustainable development were defined in the European Security Strategy adopted by the EU countries in Gothenburg in 2001 [5] and in the report of the relevant commission [6]. The document notes that economic growth, environmental protection and social integration should develop in unity and create balance in society. The specification of goals, objectives and tools for sustainable development was carried out in various documents of the European Union, for example in the framework of solving employment problems [7].

The concept of sustainable development was initially considered as a system of environmental prohibitions and demographic restrictions. The experience of introducing the concept of sustainable development showed that the effectiveness of prohibitive measures was very low. The task of combating poverty became an organic element of the transition to sustainable development, along with the demands of using the most environmentally friendly options for investment decisions. Thus, a change in the quality of life (the fight against poverty), a quantitative increase in consumption, are capable of changing the behavior of economic subjects according to their level of ecological orientation. In this case, quantitative changes, the availability of basic goods are the first steps. The concept of a standard of consumption is more extensive than ensuring the caloric content of food consumed during the day. Standards and technologies of consumption can be focused both on preservation of the environment (for example, the habit of separate collection of garbage) and capable of causing serious harm to the environment (for example, conspicuous consumption). In turn, the habits of people to consume goods in a certain way creates a demand for them, which creates prerequisites for the development of relevant market segments. In other words, we have a system with double feedback: innovative technologies allow us to satisfy ever-broader consumer demands, and expanding consumer demands form the demand for innovative technologies. Legal regulation ensures the greening of the actions of the business community, and the promotion of adequate consumption standards should ensure that consumers' needs are greened.

The action strategy announced in 2012 at the conference in Rio de Janeiro and adopted by the General Assembly of LLC [8] implies achievement of goal No. 12. "Ensuring transition to rational consumption and production patterns". The implementation of the 10-year framework programs, their refinement and development have repeatedly been the subject of attention of the United Nations [9]. One of the points of implementation of such programs is the desire to ensure that people around the world have the opportunity to have

information about sustainable development and lifestyle, including in relation to the food they consume. One of the ways to solve this problem is the "ecological" or "green" labeling of goods. The use of such labeling means the conformity of the product with the sustainable development goals, including terms of minimizing the human impact on the environment. It is well known that people rarely puzzled by problems of global scope when making decisions about current consumption. In the overwhelming number of cases, the subjective usefulness of the product to the consumer is a much more important motivating factor than the harm done to the environment during its production and consumption. In this regard, the "green" labeling of products derived from "organic farming" focuses on the usefulness of the product - the absence in it of potentially hazardous substances of non-natural origin, specific characteristics provided by its "natural" origin (free grazing, the use of organic fertilizers, etc.). Through the desire of people to provide themselves with useful products that guarantee their health is achieved by promoting consumption standards that are consistent with the goals of sustainable development.

In order to effectively promote eco-labeling at the intergovernmental level, an independent international non-profit organization was created in 1994: The World Eco-Labeling Association (The Global Ecolabelling Network, GEN), which integrates national eco-labeling programs of type I (according to the International Organization for Standardization ISO, ISO standard 14024). [10].

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

The article conducted a comparative analysis of the regulatory field of environmental labeling of food products in Russia and Germany.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An important element of the eco-labeling system, compliance with eco-standards by the manufacturer and ensuring appropriate bio-quality for the consumer is a guarantee system, which sets the rules for the emergence and functioning of private certification organizations. Especially successful development of such organizations is ensured if they "grow out" of the relevant Partnerships, Unions, and Associations.

One of the leaders in the field of inspection services and certification is ABCERT AG Company (Germany, Stuttgart, <http://www.abcert.de>).

ABCERT AG Company was established in 1992 and it is the largest certification company in Germany for "Bio", accredited in accordance with EN 45011 and ISO 17020 (Standards that set general requirements for organizations certifying products for their recognition on product certification).

The certificate provides double control through analysis:

- the quality of raw materials from which the product is made;
- processing method;

Control is permanent. During the bio-certificate validity period, the certifying authority produces:

- scheduled and unscheduled inspections of certified production;
- purchases of products from stores for quality control.

The algorithm for obtaining a quality mark has the following sequence:

- producers and processors at a general meeting decide on the receipt of the mark;

- with the help of the competent authorities (MBW Marketinggesellschaft) form a request and submit it to the German Patent Office (Deutschen Patent- und Markenamt (DPMA));

- DPMA performs formal and meaningful verification of the application;

- the checked materials are published within 3 months in a specialized newspaper;

- DPMA carries out a secondary inspection and after it, a decision is made on awarding the mark. If the decision is positive, then the application will be sent to the regional Ministry of Justice;

- the Ministry of Justice submits an application for consideration to the EU Commission;

- the European Commission approves materials for 6 months;

- in the absence of negative comments, an entry is made in the EU Register on the assignment of a quality mark.

After receiving the mark, a three-step control is carried out:

- self-control - the basis for all;
- neutral control - farmers unions control sellers;
- control of the whole system - meets MBW. [13]

In the Russian legislation, the mention of "organic products" appeared only in 2008, when the Chief State Sanitary Doctor of the Russian Federation G. Onishchenko issued a decree concerning the sanitary and epidemiological requirements for organic products (SanPiN 2.3.2.2354-08). [11].

These additions, which have been operating in the Russian Federation since July 2008, attempted to give a first description of what may be an "organic product", as well as to designate permissible and unacceptable means of ecological management. Moreover, the list of these substances presented in the tables is the full equivalent of the tables of the 2nd Annex of the Codex Alimentarius GL 32. At the same time, these additions do not fully comply with the provisions of the CAC GL 32, as there are no other applications about the environmental farming system and its inspection system ", Appendices 1 and 3. At the same time, the requirements of the Codex Alimentarius, in general, are not equivalent to an EU regulation.

Since 2005 GOST 51074-2003 [12] came into effect in Russia, directly prohibiting the labeling of products as "environmentally friendly", since it is practically impossible to create criteria for "ecological cleanliness", as well as a system that guarantees their compliance.

The same GOST prescribes that "information on such product properties as "grown using only organic fertilizers", "grown without pesticides", "grown without using mineral fertilizers", "fortified", "without preservatives" and others are allowed only if the manufacturer has confirmation of this information", but it does not indicate by whom it should be confirmed. Some companies go so far as to create a commission in their company and write out all the supporting documents themselves.

Thus, nowadays in Russia there is no officially established (state) sign for environmental (organic, bio-) products at the state level, as well as requirements for the processes of their production, processing and certification.

Let's turn to the existing practice of bio labeling in Russia.

Russian bio-producers are turning to certifying organizations to confirm compliance of their management with environmental standards. Currently, there are two domestic and seven international inspection organizations in the Russian Federation.

With the approval of NP "Agrosofiya" in 2004. The Eco-Control Certification Organization was registered and created in 2004. In 2005 the "BIO" system of voluntary certification of ecological and biodynamic management (registration number ROSS RU.3238.04BX00) was registered at the state level, which allows officially in the territory of the Russian Federation to carry out bio-certification activities for various target markets: the Russian Federation (in accordance with the STO "Agrosofiya" "On ecological agriculture, ecological nature management and corresponding labeling of ecological products"; European Union (in accordance with EU 834/2007, 889/2008); USA (in accordance with NOP); Japan (in accordance with JAS) and in accordance with other standards (indicated in the "List of Eco-Standards of the BIO Certification System"), including private ones, for example, biodynamic management standards "Demeter".

At the same time, it is worth noting that only Eco-Control conducts completely legitimate activities on bio-certification in Russia: none of the foreign certifying organizations was registered in the Russian Federation, despite conducting business activities on its territory (inspections).

The procedure for passing eco-certification can be divided into several stages:

Stage 1. Collection and processing of preliminary information about the object of certification. This includes filing a request, filling out an application for certification and processing of primary information.

Stage 2. Inspection with the departure of the expert to the enterprise, the processing of data obtained as the result of the inspection and the expert opinion (inspector) of the inspection, which is transmitted to the certification. If necessary (inaccessibility of information, absence of key personnel

during the inspection, etc.), the certification may appoint an additional inspection.

Stage 3. Analysis of the data obtained and decision making regarding the level of certification (product status).

Stage 4. Bringing information to the customer certification.

Ecological Union (St. Petersburg) has become widely known among the organizations certifying enterprises and products for the assignment of Type I Eco labels. The eco-sign "Leaf of Life", designed and assigned by them is based on the international standard ISO 14024. SPbES is registered with the Federal Agency for Technical Regulation and Metrology (ROSS RU certificate. I457.04CHG) is a member of the World Eco-Labeling Organization (GEN) with the program Life Label eco-labeling and the International Organic Agriculture Association (IFOAM). The eco-sign "Leaf of Life" is provided for goods of different categories (agricultural products, foodstuffs, building and finishing materials, etc.), however, as general requirements for certified objects include:

- the absence of substances recognized as hazardous according to international agreements, recommendatory documents, environmental labeling standards (heavy metals, persistent organic and toxic pollution, etc.);

- safety of goods for the environment.

The eco-sign "Leaf of Life" has not gained much popularity among domestic producers of agricultural raw materials. The certification procedure is similar to that discussed above.

There is only one sign of eco-labeling at the state level - "Free from chlorine", which was developed by Greenpeace Russia and approved by the State Standard of the Russian Federation in 1998. It is applied to the product in accordance with GOST R 51150-98 "Free from organ chlorine compounds".

The sign "Free from chlorine" marks products of forestry and logging; wood, pulp, paper, cardboard, fiber and products thereof; polymeric materials: fibers, threads, plastics, foams, resins, synthetic rubbers and products from them; chemical products: paints, varnishes, mastics, enamels, primers, fertilizers; consumer goods, games and toys.

The standard does not apply to food and pharmacological products and animal feed, but it may concern food packaging.

To obtain permission for product labeling with the mark "Free from chlorine", it is necessary to provide the authorized certification body with a description of the technical process of production of the goods, as well as a list of the raw materials used in the production. The manufacturer must declare the absence of chlorine and its compounds in the process and in the final product.

The round sign "Does not contain GMOs" was introduced by the Government of Moscow in 2007 and guaranteed that the products passed the test and did not contain transgenes. However, in early 2012, the city authorities canceled the labeling of products with this sign, because this sign contradicted federal legislation, which requires manufacturers

to inform consumers about what is in the product, and not about what is not in it.

Thus, despite the development of the system of environmental certification in Russia, the processes of environmental certification of agricultural products and the transition of domestic producers to organic production are slower than we would like.

The main reasons for this phenomenon include:

- flaws in national legislation;

- weak control over the observance by the participants of the food market of the eligibility of using eco-signs;

- lack of awareness of potential consumers about the role of organic agriculture in the protection of the environment and bio-food - in maintaining their own health;

- low level of purchasing power of the population;

- a high proportion of products of personal subsidiary farms of the population, including the dachas of citizens, in the food supply of the country;

- the lack of systematized information about the certification organizations "BIO", on the one hand, and the right holders of the bio sign, on the other. [13]

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The formation of consumption standards in Russia occurs spontaneously and it is rather a reflection of the current socio-economic situation, than an object of state influence or any institutions of civil society.

Domestic problems of the formation of consumption standards oriented towards sustainable development can be divided into two groups: a) objective - for example, low incomes of the population and confidence in certifying organizations; b) organizational - for example, the lack of a holistic position of the state on the issue of eco-labeling and a system of interaction with voluntary certification bodies.

There are no fundamental differences (for example, in the sequence of stages) in the eco-labeling system of domestic and foreign authorized bodies. Moreover, the work of Russian voluntary certification systems is based on foreign standards and regulations.

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