

The State of Development of the Regional Development Policies for the Russian Far East

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Summary

The development of policy in Russia, as with other countries, has been carried out based on a variety of policy documents. As far as the development of the Far East is concerned, the so-called "Far East and Zabaykalye Development Program" has been in existence from the mid 1990s on, and has come to be considered a comprehensive and core regional development policy document (plan). It could be said that criticism—such as "they haven't achieved sufficient results"—has arisen due to the greatness of the expectations for this document. Yet, from the start of 2000 on, various documents have been formulated, and under these circumstances large-scale projects are promoted based on policy documents other than the Far East and Zabaykalye development program. When seen from outside the country, it appears that various actors are haphazardly creating all kinds of projects, and are effecting them. From a practical viewpoint, when one looks from the position of wanting to find out the future picture for the Russian Far East and to make reference to it for one's own work, then the situation is extremely difficult to understand. Consequently, the first objective of this paper is to meet such a need through summarizing and introducing the fundamental thinking and main content of these documents.

From the viewpoint also of the planning methodology regarding how to formulate and implement plans, as the means for the realization of policy, the current state of the documents involving the Far East is of great interest. To begin with, "planning" is an act that at that time sets down in advance the future outcomes, and this provides predictability for economic actors other than those formulating and implementing the plans. In the cases, however, where there are contradictions in the content of the plans and the content is not consistent across multiple plans, it becomes difficult to predict the future based thereupon, and the plan-formulation decreases its own significance. A greater number of plans increases the volume of information relating to policy. In terms of predictability, to the contrary, the flood of inconsistent policy documents can only be called a negative. Hence I took the validation of the consistency of these documents as the second objective of this paper. Specifically, I have identified the degree of consistency through comparing and contrasting the projects that appear in the respective documents. As the results and the dissimilarities brought to light, etc., are also useful for understanding the relationships among the documents, they indirectly contribute to the first objective as well.

The following policy documents were taken as the subjects for investigation:

- "Стратегия социально-экономического развития Дальнего Востока и Байкальского региона на период до 2025 года"
(The Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of the Far East and the Baikal Region up to 2025)
- "Федеральная целевая программа "Экономическое и социальное развитие Дальнего Востока и Забайкалья на период до 2013 года"
(Federal Target Program on Economic and Social Development of the Far East and Zabaykalye up to 2013)
- "Транспортная стратегия Российской Федерации на период до 2030 года"
(The Transport Strategy of the Russian Federation up to 2030)
- "Стратегия развития железнодорожного транспорта в Российской Федерации до 2030 года"
(The Strategy for Developing Rail Transport in the Russian Federation up to 2030)
- "Федеральная целевая программа "Развитие транспортной системы России (2010 - 2015 годы)"
(Federal Target Program on Development of the Transport System of Russia (2010-2015))
- "Энергетическая стратегия России на период до 2030 года"
(Energy Strategy of Russia for the Period up to 2030)
- "Генеральная схема размещения объектов электроэнергетики до 2020 года"
(General Scheme for the Location of Electric Power Industry Installations up to 2020)

When the content of each document is put together, it is possible to note the following three points:

First, the starting point for the Far Eastern development policy lies in the fundamental understanding of the current state of affairs that the region's advantages are the existence of abundant resources and the proximity to the Asia-Pacific with its remarkable economic development. Based upon these, a logic is further developed in such a way that the aiming toward the promotion of resource development and advanced processing, and toward the realization of the potential for transit, is significant to not only the Far Eastern region, but to Russia as a whole.

Second, regarding the current conditions limiting regional development, the population problem (the absolute number of people is small, the decrease is continuing, and the density is low, etc.) and problems such as the lack of infrastructure are

commonly acknowledged. Hence they have set the overcoming of these as policy objectives or policy matters.

Third, transport and energy infrastructure have been stressed as infrastructure to be put in place or upgraded. That has been indicated by the allocation of project expenses.

Next, from the planning-technique viewpoint of the formulation and systemization of policy documents, it is possible to note the following five points.

First, a hierarchy of "strategies"- "project plans" (Federal Target Programs, etc.) has been constituted in the policy document architecture for each sector and region. Moreover, Russia's long-term development concept is positioned above all sectoral and regional "strategies", and its addition yields a three-stage hierarchical structure. They are consistent with one another in terms of fundamental thinking, awareness of the issues and the methodology for solving problems.

Second, the Federal Target Programs have been formulated based on the definite rules of the program formulation regulations. They all have a similar structure with the following content in strict order: objectives, methods for setting targets, setting of tasks for achieving the targets, lists of individual projects, identification of sources of finance, and criteria for the assessment of effectiveness. This fact leads to assisting the reader's exact understanding. (It is presumed, however, that the reader is cognizant of those rules.) From the viewpoint of the accountability of the policy formulators, it is something to be commended.

Third, the Federal Target Programs, through adjustment in accordance with the compilation of the annual federal budget, etc., have become a mechanism to guarantee fairly strong constraint and effectiveness, at least in the current fiscal year. Moreover, the practice of performance review contributes to securing their effectiveness. For the process of approval by government decision also, the fact of being approved by means of government resolution demonstrates their higher-constraint nature in comparison with "strategies," which commonly are approved by government notification.

Fourth, there has been a tendency for strategies by sector to be formulated with a broader-ranging perspective even than the Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of the Far East and the Baikal Region (Far Eastern strategy). At the project-plan level, including for Federal Target Programs, that tendency is all the clearer. In the Far Eastern development program there is basically no framework infrastructure development project covering the breadth of the Russian Federation. I would like to place particular emphasis on this point. After the Far East and Zabaykalye long-term development program was formulated in 1996—the forerunner of the current Far Eastern development program—recognition grew that that lineage of programs are the most essential policy documents giving the future picture for the development of the Far Eastern region. The region's framework infrastructure, however, is something to be put into effect outside of the Far Eastern development program. In this regard, the Far Eastern strategy, referring to a wider range of projects—from those with a federal-level breadth to local projects—can be said to depict a more comprehensive future picture.

Fifth, at the level of individual projects, there is the problem that they are not necessarily dealt with consistently across policy documents. In some cases project "A" is referred to in many policy documents, while a similar project "B" is referred to in merely a few of them. The criteria are not transparent, which becomes a factor hindering users (readers) from understanding the entire picture.

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