



## ORIGINAL PAPER



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# The Goals and Objects of the Strategic Development of the Russian Federation in the Face of Systemic Aggression

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## ABSTRACT

Since 2014, the society and economy of the Russian Federation have been developing in a context of dynamically tightening multifaceted sanctions and the attempts of states hostile to the Russian Federation to isolate Russia internationally. For long-term successful development in such an environment, as well as in any other external and internal conditions, it is essential not only to address current challenges, but also to develop a strategy and strive to achieve strategic goals. The integral parts of the strategy are the following: selecting an object, examining its current state, analyzing the environment (or external context) of the object, and setting strategic goals. In this article, we will be discussing four objects: exports of the Russian Federation, imports of the Russian Federation, leading industries, border regions of the Russian Federation. The strategic goals of the first two objects are their development, while the third object is protection from external threats. Describing these objects, the author tried to show the role of exports and imports of the Russian Federation in the production and use of products and services, to specify the industries whose development will contribute to the growth of other sectors of the economy, to assess the development of the border regions of the Russian Federation to the country's economy development.

**Keywords:** The Russian Federation; strategy; economic development; exports; imports; types of economic activity; border regions

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## OBJECTIVE – DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN TRADE

Our outstanding thinkers have repeatedly pointed out the hostile attitude of neighboring countries towards Russia [1–3]. This hostility was particularly evident after the return of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, and after the start of the special military operation, it escalated into an undeclared war. Speaking at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 29, 2022, the Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, V.D. Zorkin, noted: “In fact, the West has unleashed an unprecedented hybrid (or, more precisely, systemic) war against Russia: on the battlefield, in the military-industrial complex, economy, politics, culture, sports, science, education, media, and cyberspace” [4].

The systemic struggle is also taking place in the sphere of foreign trade, the role of which for the economy, financial sector, science, and society of the Russian Federation is well-known. The development of foreign trade includes increasing the volumes of exports of goods and services, improving the product and geographical structure of exports and imports, as well as achieving and maintaining their desired balance and shares in the country’s GDP.

The sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation by unfriendly and hostile states are intended to be long-lasting. A significant portion of these sanctions is aimed at reducing the volumes and deteriorating the structure of Russia’s foreign trade. Therefore, to develop a strategy for its growth under these unfavorable conditions, it is necessary to identify the most vulnerable exported and imported goods and services that are subject to sanctions.

## OBJECT – EXPORT

To identify the most sensitive products and services to export volume reduction in Russian foreign trade, we will use data from the 2019 inter-industry balance of the Russian Federation (IOB), which is available on the website of the Federal

State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat).<sup>1</sup> The balance includes 61 products (OKPD 2) and 61 industries (OKVED 2).

The calculations show that reducing the export of products presented in the interindustry balance by a fixed amount (for example, by 10%) affects the output volumes of these products differently. The top ten sectors (in order of reduction in the volume of gross used products) included the following [5]:

1. Mining and quarrying products
2. Chemical substances and chemical products
3. Basic metals
4. Coke and refined petroleum products
5. Transportation means and transport equipment,
6. Air and space transport services
7. Food products, beverages, tobacco products
8. Finished metal products, except machinery and equipment
9. Agricultural and hunting products and services
10. Land and pipeline transport services

The shares of these products in the total volume of their output in 2020 are shown in *Table 1*.

The existence of interindustry linkages leads to the situation where, for instance, a reduction in the production of mining and quarrying products due to decreased exports primarily results in a decline in the production of coke and refined petroleum products, machinery and equipment not categorized under other groups, land and pipeline transport services, warehousing, rental and leasing services, as well as auxiliary transport services. A decrease in the production of transportation means and transport equipment subsequently triggers a reduction in the output of, notably, basic metals, finished metal products (excluding machinery and equipment), computer, electronic, optical, and electrical equipment, as well as machinery and equipment not classified under other categories [5].

<sup>1</sup> URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/statistics/accounts>

Such consequences, arising from established interindustry relationships, must be thoroughly considered when formulating response measures to shifts in the structure of global trade, as well as to various restrictions and sanctions that impede the development of foreign trade in the country.

Table 1

**The share of exports in the gross output of the Russian Federation's most sensitive to the reduction in exports of goods and services in 2020, %**

Product	Share of exports
Mining and quarrying products	45.1
Coke and refined petroleum products	34.1
Basic metals	43.4
Air and space transport services	38.2
Chemical substances and chemical products	29.5
Transportation means and transport equipment, other	22.5
Finished metal products, except machinery and equipment	14.1
Land and pipeline transportation services	11.7
Agricultural and hunting products and services	11.2
Food products, beverages, tobacco products	10.0

Source: compiled by the author according to Rosstat's data. URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/tri-2020.xlsx>

Table 2

**The sectors of the Russian economy which share of imported goods and services in the total volume of used country product exceeded 25% in 2020, %**

Industry	Share of imports
Manufacture of textiles and articles, clothing, leather and leather products	63.5
Manufacture of machinery and equipment not included in other categories	61.1
Manufacture of computers, electronic, and optical products	58.7
Manufacture of electrical equipment	53.8
Manufacture of basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations used for medical purposes	50.5
Manufacture of furniture and other finished products	45.1
Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers, and semi-trailers	37.4
Manufacture of rubber and plastic products	32.1
Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products	30.1
Manufacturing of other transport equipment and vehicles	26.4
Water transport activities	25.9

Source: compiled by the author according to Rosstat's data. URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/tri-2020.xlsx>

Note: total product usage = used domestic products + used imported products.

### OBJECT – IMPORT

*Table 2* presents the top 11 industries with the largest share of imported products in their total output, as compiled from data provided by Rosstat in the “Table of Use of Goods and Services at Basic Prices for 2020” and the “Table of Use of Imported Products for 2020”.

The task of reducing the “share of imports of goods and services in the structure of gross domestic product to 17 percent by 2030”, as set out in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated May 7, 2024, No. 309 “On National Development Goals of the Russian Federation for the Period Until 2030 and Prospects Until 2036”,<sup>2</sup> can be addressed in different ways:

reduce the scale of imports of goods more than the decrease in GDP;

reduce the scale of imports of goods while maintaining or growing the existing GDP;

increase the scale of imports with a greater increase in GDP.

In the first and second cases, it would be advisable to reduce the volumes of imports of the goods and services listed in *Table 2*.

### OBJECTIVE – DEVELOPMENT OF DOMESTIC PRODUCTION

**Object — Leading Industries.** Industries where an increase in the growth rates of output volumes is not tied to other industries and simultaneously contributes to the growth of these industries will be called “locomotives”. The calculations made using data from the Russian interindustry balance allowed for their identification [5]:

- crop production and animal husbandry, hunting and related services in these areas;
- manufacturing of motor vehicles, trailers, and semi-trailers;
- mining and quarrying;
- development of computer software equipment, consulting and related services in the field of information technology;

- information technology activities;
- manufacturing of computers, electronic, and optical products.

At the same time, to increase the output volume of construction products by  $d$  percent, the production of products and services in 18 types of economic activities needs to increase by more than this value. In the case of public administration and military security, a leading growth in 27 types of economic activities, including construction, is necessary.

Data from the 2020 input-output balance show that these “locomotive” industries are oriented towards the export of the products they create and are significantly dependent on imports from abroad (*Table 3*). Furthermore, their total share in Russia’s overall imports in 2020 was 1.8 times larger than in exports and 2.3 times higher than their share in the gross output of products and services<sup>3</sup> (*Table 4*).

The data from the tables demonstrate that the growth dynamics of leading industries depends on the state of global markets, the share held by Russian companies on those markets, their success, the availability of international payment systems, exchange rates, and logistical capabilities.

### OBJECTIVE – PROTECTION OF TERRITORY

**Object — Border Regions of the Russian Federation.** In his speech at the plenary session of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 17, 2022, V.V. Putin warned: “We will face many challenges, risks, and factors that are difficult to predict and anticipate today”.<sup>4</sup>

Modern Russia shares borders with 18 countries [6]. The study, the results of which are presented in this work, had two objectives: to assess the importance of groups of border regions of the Russian Federation for the economy of the Russian Federation and to show the dynamics of selected indicators of significance (importance) in 1998–2022. In

<sup>3</sup> Gross output = used in production (intermediate consumption) + final consumption expenditure + exports of goods and services.

<sup>4</sup> URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68669>

<sup>2</sup> URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73986>



Table 3

**The share of exported goods and services of the Russian locomotive industries in gross output and the share of imported products in the total volume of use of these products in 2020, %**

Products and Services	Share of Exported Products	Share of Imported Products
Agricultural and hunting products and services	11.2	11.6
Transportation means and transport equipment	4.8	37.4
Mining and quarrying products	45.1	2.5
Software products and software development services; consulting and similar services in information technology	12.3	14.3
Computers, electronic and optical products	5.3	58.7

Source: compiled by the author according to Rosstat's data. URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/tri-2020.xlsx>

Table 4

**The share of the locomotive industries in the Russian Federation's total exports, imports, and gross output of goods and services in 2020, %**

Leading Industries	Share in Output	Share in Exports	Share in Imports
Crop production and animal husbandry, hunting and related services in these areas	3.7	3.0	11.6
Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers, and semi-trailers	1.4	0.7	3.9
Mining and quarrying	7.3	23.6	1.6
Development of computer software, consulting and similar services in information technology	1.5	1.6	2.2
Manufacturing of computer, electronic, and optical products	0.8	0.8	10.5
Total	14.7	29.7	29.8

Source: compiled by the author according to Rosstat's data. URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/tri-2020.xlsx>

2024, there were 44 border regions of the Russian Federation out of 89. Since the study covers the period from 1998 to 2022, the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions are excluded, and the Voronezh and Rostov regions are added. Due to the lack of statistical data, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as Samara region, are not considered because of the

small length of the state border (70 km with the Republic of Kazakhstan). As a result, the sample of border regions includes 39 subjects. The data from the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat) were used as sources of information.

Six of the 39 regions of the Russian Federation are classified as regions with low socio-economic development (there are 10 such regions in total<sup>5</sup>),

<sup>5</sup> URL: [https://www.economy.gov.ru/material/news/pravitelstvo\\_](https://www.economy.gov.ru/material/news/pravitelstvo_)

39 are included in the list of 44 geostrategic<sup>6</sup> regions, and 3 are part of the 28 territories with advanced socio-economic development.<sup>7</sup> Border regions are present in all military districts<sup>8</sup> of the Russian Federation.

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<sup>6</sup> URL: <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/552378463>

<sup>7</sup> URL: <http://government.ru/docs/all/142378/>

<sup>8</sup> URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/50360>

The main security threats in the border areas of the Russian Federation are outlined in the Foundations of the State Border Policy of the Russian Federation:

“a) Territorial claims of some neighboring countries and the possibility of conflicts and incidents on the state border associated with them;

b) Claims by foreign states and transnational corporations to strategic resources of the Arctic and the Far East;

Table 5

**Armed invasion and infiltration of sabotage and reconnaissance teams of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on the territory of the Russian Federation**

Administrative entity of the Russian Federation	Date of invasion
Belgorod region	22nd, 23d May 2023; 1st–5th June 2023
Bryansk region	2nd March 2023; 21st August 2024
Kursk region	6th August 2024; 18th September 2024

Source: compiled by the author based on Russian media.

Table 6

**The macroeconomic indicators used and their designations**

Indicator	Denotation
Annual average number of population, thou. persons	L
Average annual number of employed in the economy, thousand people	U
Annual average number of employed, thou. persons	R
Gross Regional Product, bln. roubles	X
Investments in fixed capital, mln. roubles	I
Fixed assets in economy, end of year, mln. roubles	F
Operational length of paved routes of federal, regional or inter-municipal and local significance, (end of year), km	Cr
Operational length of public railway tracks (end of year), km	Rr
Exports in actual prices, mln. USD	Ex
Imports in actual prices, mln. USD	Im
Money income of population, per month, bln. roubles	M

Source: compiled by the author.





c) Increased economic and demographic influence of foreign states on certain border areas with low levels of socio-economic development;

d) Intelligence and other activities of foreign special services and organizations aimed at desta-

bilizing the socio-political situation in certain border areas due to unresolved socio-economic problems, religious and ethnic contradictions, and separatist manifestations among the population in these areas;

Table 7

**Share of indicators of Russia's border subjects in total volume in 1998, 2013 and 2022, percent**

Year	L	U	R	X	I	F	Cr	Rr	Ex	Im	M
1998	42.6	37.5	17.9	23.2	27.7	36.2	44.5	44.7	25.8	24.5	27.5
2013	39.8	37.3	17.4	28.5	34.7	28.6	45.2	48.0	20.8	18.9	32.7
2022	38.0	37.0	18.0	26.3	27.9	26.9	44.2	47.6	19.0	17.9	32.7

Source: compiled by the author according to Rosstat's data. URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/tri-2020.xlsx>

Note: The values of indicators "Exp" and "Imp" are given for 2021.

Table 8

**Groups of border constituent entities of the Russian Federation and neighboring countries**

Group Number	Russian regions	Neighboring countries
1	Republic of Karelia, Kaliningrad, Leningrad, Murmansk and Pskov regions	Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Finland, Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, Republic of Lithuania, Republic of Poland
2	Belgorod, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kursk and Rostov regions	Ukraine (excluding Crimea and Sevastopol)
3	Krasnodar Territory, Republics: Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia – Alania; Kabardino-Balkarian, Karachay-Cherkess and Chechen Republics	Republic of Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia, Republic of South Ossetia, Republic of Azerbaijan
4	Astrakhan, Volgograd, Orenburg, Saratov, Kurgan, Tyumen (excluding Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug), Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk and Omsk regions; Republic of Altai, Altai Krai	Republic of Kazakhstan
5	Republic of Altai, Trans-Baikal, Primorye and Khabarovsk Territories, Amur Region, Jewish Autonomous Region	People's Republic of China (PRC), Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)
6	Republics: Altai, Tuva, Buryatia; Trans-Baikal region	Mongolia
7	Kamchatka Krai, Sakhalin Region, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	USA, Japan

Source: compiled by the author.

e) Attempts to infiltrate Russian territory by members of international terrorist and extremist organizations, participants in illegal armed groups, as well as individuals who are banned from entering the Russian Federation;

f) Cross-border crime related to illegal migration, smuggling of weapons, ammunition, explosives, and toxic substances, narcotics, psychotropic substances and their precursors, material and cultural valuables, as well as illegal extraction and sale of aquatic biological resources;

g) The risk of natural disasters, technological catastrophes, epidemics, epizootics, and their potential cross-border spread in border areas of the Russian Federation and certain neighboring countries”.<sup>9</sup>

This list does not include the “danger of armed invasion into the country”. For example, in March

1969, the armed forces of the People’s Republic of China infiltrated the Damansky Island (*Table 5*).

We will assess the significance of the selected border regions for the economy of Russia based on 11 macroeconomic indicators (*Table 6*). These include indicators characterizing productive forces (Pop, Empl, FA), overall development level (GRP), scientific potential (R&D), infrastructure (Road, Rail), purchasing power demand (MIP), and others [7].<sup>10</sup>

From 1998 to 2022, the share of the studied economic indicators of the selected border regions of the Russian Federation ranged from 18% to 48% of the total volume (*Table 7*), indicating their importance for the domestic economy. However, for 9 out of the 11 macroeconomic indicators, the share in 2022 was lower than in 2013.

<sup>10</sup> The business activity index of the Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences uses its own set of indicators to assess the impact of sanctions on business activity in the Russian Federation

<sup>9</sup> URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/43004>

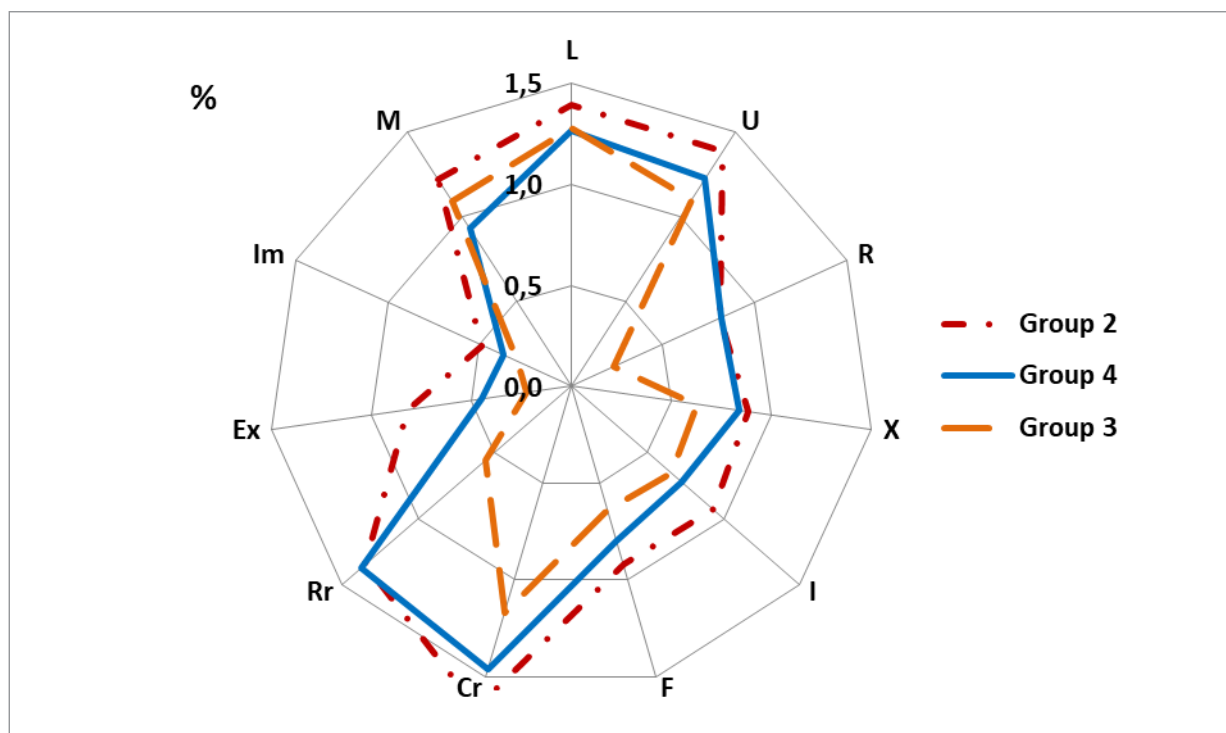
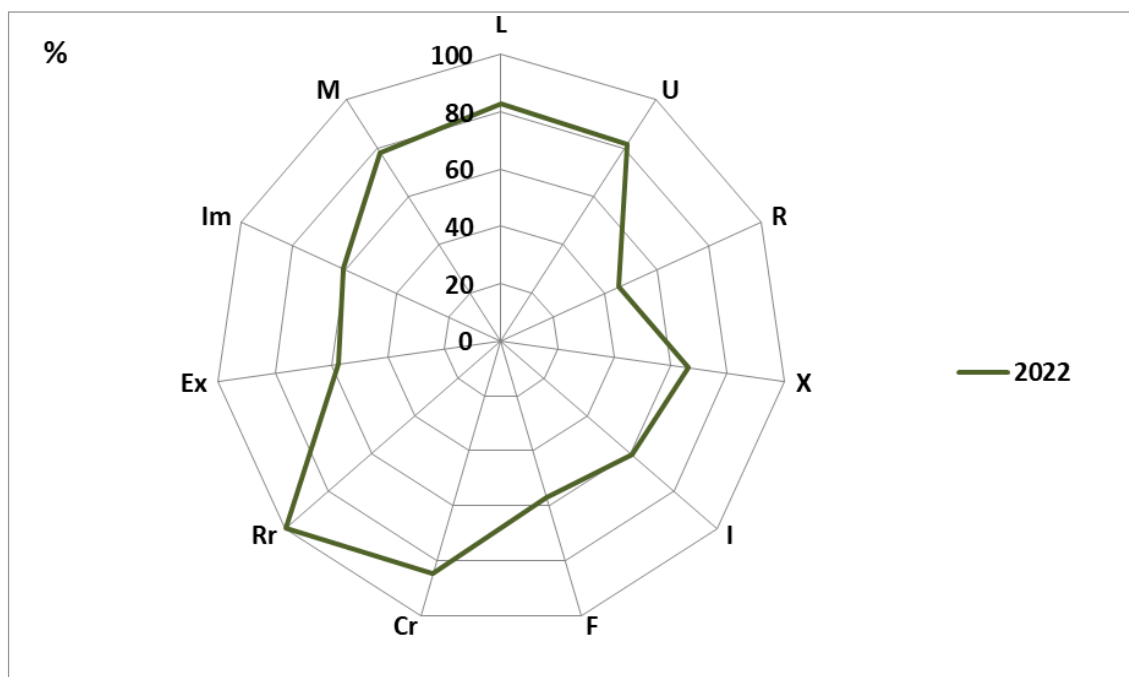


Fig. 1. The Ratio of Indicators of Average Region to Total Volume in Russia in 2022, %

Source: compiled by the author.

Note: The values of indicators “Ex” and “Im” are given for 2021.

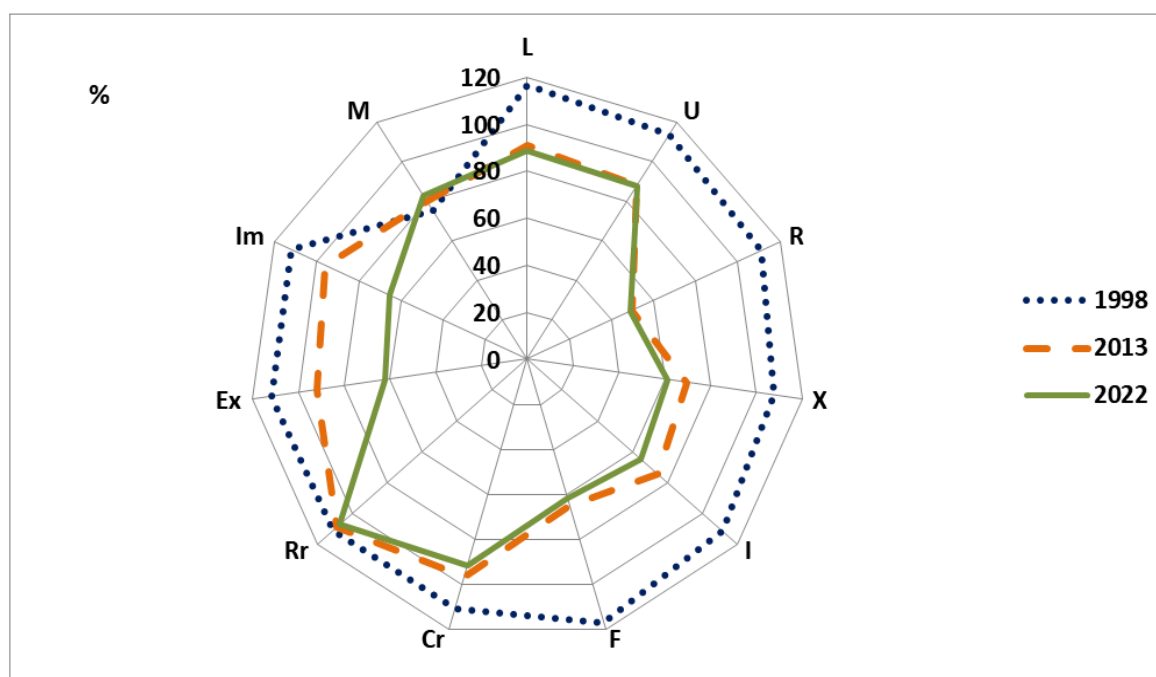




**Fig. 2. The Ratio of Indicator Values of Russia's border regions to Central Regions, %**

Source: compiled by the author.

Note: The values of indicators "Ex" and "Im" are given for 2021.



**Fig. 3. The Ratio of Average Indicators of Regional Groups to Nationwide Indicators in 2022, %**

Source: compiled by the author.

Note: The values of indicators "Ex" and "Im" are given for 2021.

Table 9

### The top five and bottom five in the ranking of the border regions of the Russian Federation, 2022

Ranking based on 11 macro indicators	Ranking by the values of the final RIA ratings
Top five	
Krasnodar Territory Rostov Region Chelyabinsk Region Novosibirsk Region Leningrad Region	Krasnodar Territory Leningrad Region Tyumen Region without Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug Rostov Region Chelyabinsk Region
Bottom five	
Karachay-Cherkess Republic Republic of Ingushetia Republic of Tuva Republic of Altai Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	Chukotka Autonomous Okrug Altai Republic Karachay-Cherkess Republic Republic of Ingushetia Jewish Autonomous Region Chukotka Autonomous Okrug

Source: compiled by the author.

From 1998 to 2022, the highest shares were recorded for the length of public roads (Cr) and railways (Rr), the population (L) and the number of employed people (U), and the monetary income of the population (M).

According to Table 7, significant changes occurred from 1998 to 2013 (before the introduction of anti-Russian sanctions): the shares of 5 indicators increased, while 6 decreased. After 2013, the values of 9 indicators decreased.

For further detailing the significance of the analyzed regions of the Russian Federation, they need to be grouped based on the foreign countries they border and their geographical location (Table 8).

We will evaluate the average significance of a region in each group. To do this, we will divide the shares of all the studied indicators for each group by the number of regions in that group. The resulting values will be taken as indicators of the significance of one (average) region of the group based on the analyzed indicators.

According to the calculations, in 2022, the most significant was the average region of group 2 (border with Ukraine). Following it in descending

order are the average regions of group 4 (border with Kazakhstan), group 1 (border with Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland), and group 3 (border with Abkhazia, Georgia, South Ossetia, and Azerbaijan). The list is closed by the average region of group 7, which borders the USA and Japan (see Fig. 1).

Judging by the 11 macroeconomic indicators considered, the border regions are economically less significant than the central (non-border) regions of the Russian Federation<sup>11</sup> (Figures 2, 3).

When ranking the border regions of the Russian Federation in descending order of average shares of the considered indicators, the top five in 2022 were: Krasnodar Krai, Rostov, Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk, and Leningrad regions. The list is concluded by the Karachayevo-Chircassian, Republic, the Republics of Ingushetia, Tuva, and Altai, and the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. These data slightly differ from those provided by analysts from the Russian Information Agency (RIA) (Table 9).

<sup>11</sup> Moscow and St. Petersburg are excluded from the list of central (non-border) subjects of the Russian Federation. The indicators of these cities and all other subjects of the Russian Federation differ significantly (are statistical outliers).



In both cases, the top five includes two subjects of the Russian Federation from group 4 and one each from groups 1, 2 and 3.

## CONCLUSION

It appears that in the context of global hybrid wars, it is necessary to forecast various scenarios, promptly identify challenges, dangers, and threats, and respond accordingly. We must be prepared for various developments, consider all risks related to national security and defense, and have action plans to prevent the emergence of new aggressive entities at the borders. In the case of emergencies, urgent measures must be taken.

It seems that the above characteristics of the role of exports and imports for the Russian Federation could be useful in solving the strategic task of “forming a network of sustainable partnerships with foreign countries and creating the necessary infrastructure for foreign economic activity, technological and industrial cooperation, and exploring new markets”. At the same time, the proactive development of the sectors identified as “locomotives” in the study will contribute to achieving national goals such as “a stable and dynamic economy” and “technological leadership”.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of long-term sanctions, restrictions, and bans imposed on the Russian Federation, it is advisable to include a focus on the domestic market and markets of countries not hostile towards Russia in the strategy for the “locomotive” industries. It is important to note that the shown dependency of the “locomotive” sectors on export and import opportunities, as well as the volumes of exports and imports, illustrates the interconnection of elements within the economic system, which is determined by numerous factors.

<sup>12</sup> URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73986>

For the successful development of the mining and metallurgy industries, as well as the production of computer, electronic, and optical equipment, it is not enough to invest solely in fixed assets — there must also be accessible external markets, the ability to conduct financial transactions without obstacles, the availability of qualified personnel, and many other factors. To reduce the share of imports in GDP, it is not only necessary to decrease their volumes but also to possess the necessary technologies, instruments, materials, software, and a substantial internal market to create production within the country. Similarly, inflation cannot be reduced by focusing on just one factor — the Central Bank’s interest rate; birth rates cannot be increased by merely raising childbirth benefits; and corruption cannot be eradicated by only tightening penalties, and so on.

The country’s economy is a complex system, and therefore, socio-economic, scientific-technological, and other tasks should be solved with consideration of both the direct and reverse connections between its elements and external conditions, involving many factors.

It is clear that in order to achieve the strategic goals of the country, coordinated participation of government bodies, businesses, and public organizations is essential. It also requires the alignment of strategic planning documents, state and regional programs and projects, as well as monitoring the implementation of decisions and the achievement of targeted indicators.

The information provided in this study about the economic importance of the border regions of our country can be utilized in addressing tasks set in the Fundamentals of the State Border Policy of the Russian Federation, as well as in organizing the protection of Russian territory from previously existing and newly identified threats during the special military operation.

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