



DOI: 10.22363/2312-8313-2023-10-3-330-346

EDN: XBCRFA

Research article / Научная статья

Analysis of the Results of the State Policy Implementation to Support Small and Medium-sized Businesses in the Stavropol Territory in 2018–2023

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Abstract. The study examines the main measures to support small and medium entrepreneurship at the federal level, and their direct implementation at the regional level on the example of the Stavropol Territory. The study provides statistical data of the Unified Register of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship in the Russian Federation, reflecting the dynamics of changes in the region's population involved in small and medium entrepreneurship: individual entrepreneurs, employees of small and medium businesses, self-employed. The conclusion is drawn that the policy pursued at the federal and regional level regarding the development of entrepreneurship in the Stavropol Territory is not very effective.

Keywords: small and medium entrepreneurship, national projects, SME support, Stavropol krai, tax policy

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Article history:

The article was submitted on 20.05.2023. The article was accepted on 04.07.2023.

For citation:

Belokonev S.Yu., Alekseenko D.A., Kolesnikov V.A. Analysis of the Results of the State Policy Implementation to Support Small and Medium-sized Businesses in the Stavropol Territory in 2018–2023. *RUDN Journal of Public Administration*. 2023;10(3):330–346. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8313-2023-10-3-330-346>



The formation of a market economy implies the consistent development of entrepreneurship, including small and medium-sized enterprises. According to the concept of Douglas North, institutional changes in society can be of two types: incremental — sequential and evolutionary development, discrete — abrupt and revolutionary [1. P. 116]. The formation of the institute of entrepreneurship in our modern Russia is closely connected with the second type of institutional changes. The collapse of the USSR and radical reforms in the national economy led to the closure of a number of enterprises, increased unemployment, and a decrease in the standard of living of the population, although a layer of entrepreneurs gradually began to form. The number of entrepreneurs in the 1990s increased throughout the country, but this did not mean the development of qualitative ties in the relationship between themselves and the state. If we compare different models of development of small and medium-sized enterprises (hereinafter referred to as SMEs), then the Russian way is most suitable for the West Midlands model, which was common in the UK [2. P. 197]. It implied a number of measures to encourage the population to engage in entrepreneurship instead of lost jobs during the structural economic crisis. This model primarily implies the achievement of quantitative indicators, and not the development of the competitiveness of new enterprises. Therefore, in the long term, the West Midlands model will not be effective, because, despite the increase in the number of entrepreneurs, competitiveness in their environment will not manifest itself immediately, which will lead to the bankruptcy of a number of enterprises as soon as the state stops supporting them.

But after a series of discrete changes comes the time of incremental-evolutionary. The Institute of Entrepreneurship in Russia is consistently developing in accordance with the requests of the state authorities. But since Russia is a country with many regions, it is necessary to monitor the compliance of federal indicators with what is happening in practice in the subjects. This article will analyze the implementation of the state policy of SME support in the Stavropol Territory. We will turn to the quantitative indicators of the national project “Small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and support for individual entrepreneurial initiative”, the methodology for calculating the number of people involved in the activities of SMEs, as well as data from the Unified Register of Small and Medium-sized

Businesses in the region under study. Based on this information, an assessment of the implementation of the state policy to support SMEs in the Stavropol Territory will be given, which is the purpose of the article.

Analysis of the main measures of the federal policy to support SMEs

On May 7, 2012, Vladimir Putin signed several decrees, among which was the decree “On long-term state economic policy”. This document defined the indicators that the country had to achieve by 2018. However, the document did not mention the activities of SMEs directly, instead the term “entrepreneurship” was used. However, “not every business is entrepreneurship, there is a specific small business as a form of entrepreneurial activity ... these are relations about business, the activities of small groups of people aimed at obtaining a certain result (profit)” [2. P. 193]. Federal Law No. 209-FZ of 07/24/2007 (as amended on 12/29/2022) “On the Development of Small and Medium-sized enterprises in the Russian Federation” [3] specifies the criteria for SMEs:

- 1) Legal criteria: the share of Russian legal and public entities in the authorized capital is no more than 25 %, and foreigners no more than 49 %;
- 2) Criteria by number: microenterprises are considered up to 15 people inclusive, small enterprises — up to 100 people inclusive, medium-sized up to 250, and in some cases up to 1000 and 1500;
- 3) Income criteria: microenterprises — income up to 120 million rubles, small enterprise — income up to 800 million rubles, medium enterprise — income up to 2 billion rubles.

The same law explains that the subjects of SMEs include: “business societies, business partnerships, business partnerships, production cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, farms and individual entrepreneurs” [3]. It is important to note that this number does not include persons applying the special tax regime “Tax on Professional Activity” (hereinafter — the NAP), that is, the self-employed, whose institution appeared in our country in 2019.

Doing business, strategic planning of SME development, changing the privatization plan, improving the investment climate, creating the institution of the

Commissioner for the Protection of the rights of entrepreneurs are only part of the measures and instructions reflected in the decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 7, 2012. A deeper study of the issue of SME support was shown in the state program “Economic Development and Innovative Economy” dated April 15, 2014. In this program, there was already a separate subprogram “Development of small and medium-sized enterprises”, where among the expected results were listed: simplification of the procedure for doing business, increasing the availability of financing for SMEs, creating a support system for SMEs, increasing the number of SME representatives per 1 thousand people of the population of the Russian Federation from 42.2 units in 2012 to 52.7 units. in 2020, the provision of state support to 1,650,000 SMEs, the creation of new 980,000 jobs in the SME sector [4].

In the future, support for small and medium-sized businesses was reflected in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 07.05.2018 “On national goals and strategic objectives of the development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2024”. In this document, a new quantitative goal was set: to increase the population involved in SMEs, including individual entrepreneurs, to 25 million people [5]. The achievement of this goal depends on the fulfillment of a number of tasks related to improving business conditions, creating digital platforms to support SMEs, improving the public procurement system, simplifying access to concessional financing, creating an acceleration system for small and medium-sized businesses, improving the system of support for exporters among SMEs. Special national projects have been developed to implement the new May decree of the President of the Russian Federation. To support SMEs, a national project “Small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and support for individual entrepreneurial initiative” was created within the framework of the Decree.

We see that the supporting role for SMEs on the part of the state is emphasized in each of the documents. It also resembles the “West Midlands” model, focused on increasing the number of SME entrepreneurs themselves, the active influence of the state on achieving numerical indicators by reducing taxes, building the necessary infrastructure. Increasing the number of people involved in small and medium-sized enterprises is a key indicator of the effectiveness of the implementation of the national project in the regions of Russia.

Also, one of the documents that includes the main measures to support SMEs is the “Strategy for the development of small and medium-sized businesses in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030” [6]. The following measures are being implemented within the framework of the Strategy and the national project:

- 1) Provision of subsidies;
- 2) Improvement of credit conditions;
- 3) Creation of infrastructure to support entrepreneurship;
- 4) Reforming business taxation regimes.

As a creation of entrepreneurship support institutions, special “My Business” centers were opened, the tasks of which are to provide consulting, training of novice SMEs. These centers allow you to get acquainted with information about possible benefits, get a course on doing business. The main goal of the “My Business” centers is to make business more accessible to those who would just like to start doing it, that is, the main focus on microenterprises.

According to the published Strategy, changes in tax policy will also take place at the federal level until 2030:

- monitoring the fiscal burden on SMEs;
- the imposition of a moratorium on increasing the tax burden with the possibility of its further preservation;
 - development and improvement of special tax regimes and patent system;
 - creation of additional fiscal incentives and tax deductions;
 - introduction of cash register equipment for digitalization of the information collection process;
 - mitigation of the fiscal burden on SMEs [7. P. 199].

The theory of political economy describes the following ways of supporting entrepreneurship by the state. The Keynesian approach is divided into two methodological schools: American and European. The American followers of J.M. Keynes advocated a consistent change in tax rates, thereby either stimulating or limiting the activity of entrepreneurship. The stimulation of business had to take place through the investment of a significant amount of public funds in this area. The European school, represented by the French “dirigisme”, inspired by Fr. Perru, assumed the introduction of indicative planning for the development

of entrepreneurship. The state sets targets in production, social policy, and the export of goods, after which it encourages entrepreneurs who achieve the necessary results. Another approach is monetarism and its modifications, which were formed in economics in the last third of the XX century by the followers of M. Friedman. This approach is to stabilize the market situation by controlling the money supply. Entrepreneurs should independently fight for their existence by competing in conditions of the state reducing its influence in the economic sphere. The foundation of monetarism lies in the belief that the market economy is self-regulating, and government intervention will only hinder its consistent development, and it itself needs to pursue a policy of property privatization. Accordingly, monetary policy, rather than tax or administrative impact, will become the main tools for supporting entrepreneurship in this system.

Comparing these concepts, we see that the approach outlined in the May 2018 decree of the President of the Russian Federation is more based on the Keynesian view — a combination of American and European schools. The policy in the field of entrepreneurship support is carried out through the introduction of different tax regimes for business: general taxation regime, simplified taxation system, patent taxation system, professional activity tax (hereinafter — ORN, USN, PSN, NAP, respectively).

Results of the Federal SME support policy in the Stavropol Territory from 10.05.2018 to 10.05.2023

At the moment, the main types of economic activity in which SMEs are also involved in the Stavropol Territory are: agro-industrial complex, industrial and fuel and energy complex, tourism [8. p. 277]. Despite the great economic potential of the region, it is experiencing difficulties in economic development: the Stavropol Territory received 26.7 billion rubles as a grant from the federal level for the new year 2022, which is why the subject of the Russian Federation is among the 10 most subsidized regions of Russia [9]. Of course, the need for subsidized support cannot be reduced only to problems with the development of SMEs in the region, but this can be considered as one of the logical consequences.

Within the framework of the general vector of the state to support the entrepreneurial initiative in the Stavropol Territory, a number of organizations focused on working closely with small and medium-sized businesses were created. In 2010, a non-profit organization “Microfinance Fund for Small and Medium-sized Businesses in the Stavropol Territory” was established, the main task of which was to issue microloans to SMEs at a low interest rate. Thus, during the period of the Fund’s activity, 6197 microloans were issued in the amount of more than 6.5 billion rubles [13]. At the moment, various types of loans are provided, which can reach amounts from 300,000 to 500,000 rubles, with rates, as a rule, close to the key rate of the Bank of Russia. There is also support for demobilized SVO participants — for them there is a special preferential loan “Za Nashih”.

Later, in accordance with the course of the May 2012 Presidential decrees on improving the state of SMEs, the Ministry of Economic Development of the region will create a non-profit organization “Entrepreneurship Support Fund in the Stavropol Territory”. It is on the basis of this structure that the regional center “My Business” operates, providing services and consultations on starting a business. Their list includes consultations on anti-crisis activities, services for popularization of entrepreneurs’ products, professional development of entrepreneurs, and so on [14].

In addition to special organizations, the territory of advanced socio-economic development “Nevinnomyssk” was formed, where the corporate income tax in the first 5 years of the investment project implementation is no more than 5 % at the standard rate of 20 % [15]. In addition, there are a number of industrial parks in the region, which represent the infrastructure for the creation of new industries. Also, the government of the Stavropol Territory conducts on a competitive basis the allocation of subsidies to reimburse part of the costs of SMEs associated with the modernization of production [17].

Within the framework of the vector laid down by the May decree of the President of the Russian Federation in 2018, in the Stavropol Territory in the same year, a resolution was adopted approving the state program of the Stavropol Territory “Economic development and innovative economy”, the purpose of which was to attract investment to the region. The quantitative goal of the project was to achieve 0.27 million people employed in the SME sector in 2022 and other quantitative indicators [16].

The national project “Small and medium–sized entrepreneurship and support for individual entrepreneurial initiative” is based on achieving a quantitative indicator — 25 million people involved in the SME sector by 2024. The methodology for calculating this indicator includes the number of employees of legal entities — SMEs, the number of employees of individual entrepreneurs, a unique number of individual entrepreneurs and a unique number of payers of professional income tax [10]. Here we see a contradiction with the already adopted Federal Law No. 209, to which we turned to determine the subjects included in the category of SMEs. The self-employed, according to this NPA, are not included in this number. Nevertheless, in the latest editions of the methodology, the persons paying the NAP are included in the number of SMEs involved in the activities, although the self-employed may not engage in real entrepreneurial activity. But we need to consider the dynamics of all SMEs, including the self-employed, to reflect the results of the Stavropol Territory in achieving this key indicator for the national project “Small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and support for individual entrepreneurial initiative”. Based on the data of the Unified Register of Small and Medium-sized Businesses [11], we can build appropriate graphs reflecting quantitative changes in the structure of SMEs in the Stavropol Territory.

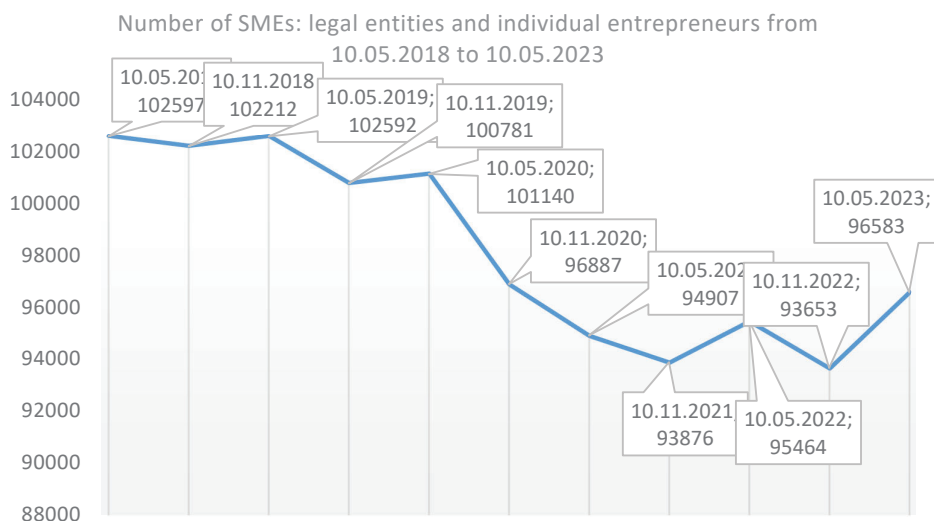


Fig. 1. Number of SMEs: legal entities and individual entrepreneurs from 05.10.2018 to 05.10.2023
Source: [11].

The number of SMEs excluding the self-employed before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Stavropol Territory was at its peak on 10.05.2018, that is, at the time of the publication of the May decree of the President of the Russian Federation. Then there is a sharp decline, which is explained by the restrictions imposed during the pandemic. According to the latest data, the number of SMEs is 96583 units as of 10.05.2023.

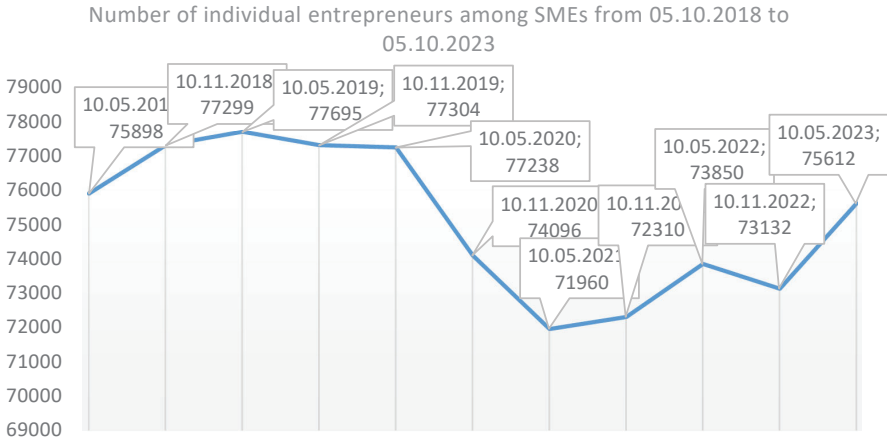


Fig. 2. Number of individual entrepreneurs among SMEs from 05.10.2018 to 05.10.2023
 Source: [11].

We see a change in the number of individual entrepreneurs over the specified period. The chart almost repeats the previous one: a sharp decline in 2020 and the beginning of growth in 2022–2023. As of 10.05.2023, the number of individual entrepreneurs is only slightly behind the data of 10.05.2018—75612 units, against 75898 units.

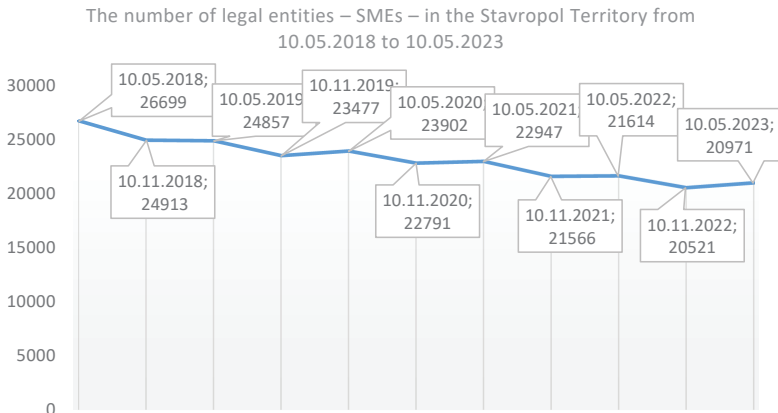


Fig. 3. The number of legal entities — SMEs — in the Stavropol Territory from 10.05.2018 to 10.05.2023
 Source: [11].

In Figure 3, we see that the number of legal entities — SME entities — is consistently decreasing in almost all temporary areas. If on 10.05.2018 their number was 26699 units, then on 10.05.2023—20071 units.

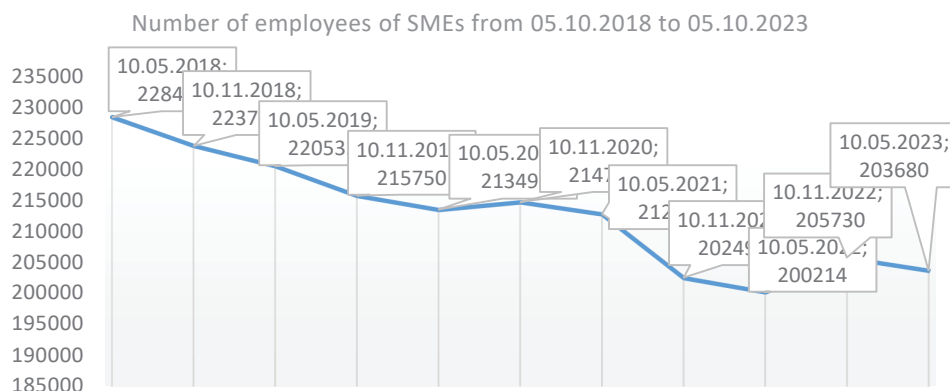


Fig. 4. Number of employees of SMEs from 05.10.2018 to 05.10.2023
Source: [11].

The trend in the number of employees of legal entities and individual entrepreneurs is decreasing from May 2018 to May 2023, which is also caused by a decrease in the total number of SMEs. The maximum number of 228418 units was on 10.05.2018, and the smallest 200214 units was on 10.05.2022.

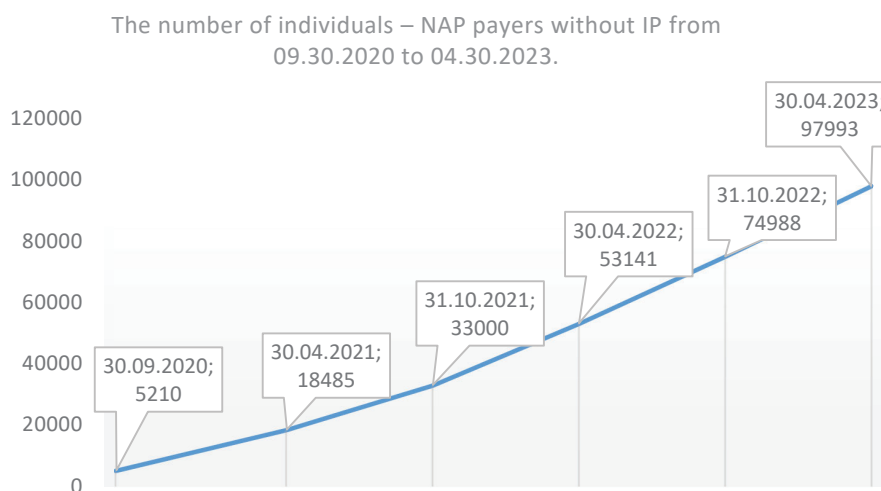


Fig. 5. The number of individuals — NAP payers without IP from 09.30.2020 to 04.30.2023
Source: [11].

The last figure reflects a consistent increase in the number of self-employed in the Stavropol Territory since their appearance in the region. Considering that the pandemic could not affect the number of self-employed, since they themselves began to be counted in the subject of the Russian Federation since September 2020, we see that this form of involvement in the structure of SMEs is the most relevant for residents of the Stavropol Territory.

From the data provided, it follows that the number of SMEs according to Federal Law No. 209 decreased: on 10.05.2018, their number was 102597, and on 10.05.2023—96583 units. Even though the self-employed appeared in the Stavropol Territory only in July 2020, their number by 30.04.2023 reached 97993 people, which is more than the number of individual entrepreneurs and legal entities on 10.05.2023—96583 units. In turn, the number of legal entities — SME entities — is consistently decreasing — instead of 26669 entities on 10.05.2018 on 10.05.2024. only 20971 are functioning in the province. The number of individual entrepreneurs has been increasing recently and reached 75,898 units in May 2023, but this is about the same number as it was in 2018—75,612 units. The number of employees involved in the SME sector is also decreasing — 228419 people as of 10.05.2018 against 203680 as of 10.05.2023.

From these data, an intermediate conclusion can be drawn that there is a contradiction between regulatory legal acts: from the point of view of Federal Law No. 209, the number of SMEs in the Stavropol Territory has decreased, and, conversely, from the point of view of the published methodology, the number of people involved in SME activities has increased, but this happened due to an increase in the number of self-employed. In addition, if we use this methodology to assess the implementation of the state program “Economic development and innovative economy” in the Stavropol Territory, then the quantitative indicator is 0.27 million. The number of people in 2022 in the region was reached even at the time of its adoption: as of 10.11.2018, there were 301,082 individual entrepreneurs and employees of SMEs. The same figure is 0.27 million people. remained unchanged in future editions of the program. That is, regional indicators of the quality of execution of state programs differ from the indicators of the national project to support SMEs, because, according to the federal

methodology, the number of SMEs involved has already been reached at the time of the adoption of the program.

From the graphs, we can see that the number of individual entrepreneurs was most affected by the pandemic of 2020, when their sharp decline occurred. The introduction of sanctions in 2022 did not have a negative impact on the number of sole proprietors, as it was earlier, and now their number is growing — it has approached the indicators of 2018. At the same time, the number of legal entities — SME entities — is decreasing almost at all time intervals of the schedule. Hence, we can draw another intermediate conclusion that the achievement of the indicators of the May 2018 presidential decrees of the Russian Federation will be primarily due to a sharp increase in the number of self-employed, since they are also included in the methodology for calculating the number of people involved in the activities of SMEs. The self-employed are on a special tax regime of the NAP, which is much more attractive than other regimes — ORN, USN and PSN.

The decrease in the number of legal entities in the region indicates the inefficiency of federal and regional programs to support medium-sized businesses. The basic tax regime for entrepreneurs is ORN taxation, which implies a 20 % corporate income tax, and 13 % for individual entrepreneurs. The USN, where the tax rate is usually 6 %, has its limitations: no more than 100 employees, income no more than 150 million rubles per year. We have already pointed out that there is a division within SMEs into microenterprises, small and medium-sized. One of the main divisions we can consider the division by number and income. Medium-sized enterprises can be considered if the number of employees inside them is from 100 to 150 people. Thus, medium-sized enterprises do not fall into the criterion of the number of employees, and even the excess of up to 130 people does not lead to a change in the situation. Also, medium-sized enterprises do not fall into the profitability criterion at all, since their income can range from 800 million to 2 billion rubles. Medium-sized enterprises will basically not be able to use the special tax regime of the USN, which means they will pay more tax. Preferential taxation mainly concerns sole proprietors and the self-employed, since there will be a NPD for the self-employed, and for individual entrepreneurs who fall under the criteria of a small enterprise — the USN. The patent taxation system is intended only for individual entrepreneurs.

This policy on the territory of the Stavropol Territory leads to a decrease in the number of legal entities, a small increase in the number of individual entrepreneurs and a sharp jump among the self-employed, who will not necessarily be engaged in entrepreneurial activity on a permanent basis. The existing TOSER cannot dramatically change the situation, since only a limited number of entrepreneurs in Nevinnomyssk can use its benefits. Other programs to support entrepreneurship: loans, consulting support, regional subsidies — do not stop the decline in the number of medium-sized businesses and only keep small and micro businesses afloat.

The results of the implementation of the federal policy to support SMEs in the region are also reflected in the annual reports to the President of the Russian Federation of the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of Entrepreneurs [12]. The Commissioner for the Protection of the rights of entrepreneurs in the Stavropol Territory Kirill Kuzmin fixed the following problems: misunderstanding between the regional authorities, which does not fully implement the vector of the federal government to facilitate business activities. There is an increase in tax and non-tax payments, the number of inspections increases, groundless criminal prosecution of entrepreneurs is applied. Also in the report on the activities of the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of Entrepreneurs in the Stavropol Territory for 2022, a survey of representatives of micro, small and medium-sized businesses was conducted. The most common problem for development was called a drop in domestic demand — 56.1 % [18].

Conclusion

Using the example of the Stavropol Territory, we have shown that the support for SMEs announced in the May decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 07.05.2018 and implemented through the national project “Small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and support for individual entrepreneurial initiative” mainly includes benefits specifically for micro and small businesses, but not medium-sized ones. Achieving a quantitative indicator for the whole of Russia of 25 million. The number of people involved in the activities of SMEs in the Stavropol Territory is possible due to the increase in the number of tax payers — self-employed, but not traditional forms of legal entities and individual entrepreneurship.

Thus, the current policy of supporting SMEs, which resembles the policy of Keynesianism due to the large role of taxes and subsidies, as well as institutions of consulting and loan support, can really help in increasing the number of micro and small businesses in the Stavropol Territory, but without changes in tax policy at the federal level, medium-sized businesses will continue to reduce their numbers. In addition, there are discrepancies between the indicators of the program “Economic Development and innovative Economy” implemented in the region and the federal methodology for calculating the number of SMEs involved in the activities, according to which the indicator of 0.27 million people was already achieved at the time of the adoption of this program. The implementation of federal support in the Stavropol Territory has its limitations, which is reflected in the annual report to the President of the Russian Federation of the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of Entrepreneurs. Among the frequent problems faced by entrepreneurs in the Stavropol Territory, there are the same high tax burden, frequent tax audits, criminal prosecution for entrepreneurs. These events also lead to a decrease in the growth of SMEs in the Stavropol Territory, with the exception of the self-employed, who in turn may not engage in real entrepreneurial activity, unlike individual entrepreneurs and legal entities.

The West Midlands model, which is most consistent with Russia’s policy of supporting small and medium-sized businesses, is ineffective in our country, which was shown by the example of the Stavropol Territory. The achievement of quantitative indicators is very conditional, since the inclusion of the self-employed in the methodology for calculating the number of people involved in SMEs is largely “fictitious”. The self-employed are not included in the subjects of SMEs according to Federal Law No. 209, and their appearance was due to the need to bring out of the shadows people who provide their services privately. The objectives of the federal and regional policy to support SMEs should be transformed from an increase in the number of entrepreneurs involved in SMEs to an increase in higher quality indicators: the competitiveness of business, the number of people willing to engage in entrepreneurial activity, the profitability of the enterprise, the number of employees, the spread of entrepreneurial thinking among the population.

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Анализ результатов реализации государственной политики по поддержке малого и среднего предпринимательства в Ставропольском крае в 2018–2023 гг.

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Аннотация. Исследуются основные меры по поддержке малого и среднего предпринимательства на федеральном уровне и их реализация на примере Ставропольского края. Анализируются статистические данные Единого реестра малого и среднего предпринимательства в РФ, отражающие динамику изменения численности населения региона, вовлечённого в деятельность малого и среднего предпринимательства: индивидуальных предпринимателей, работников субъектов малого и среднего бизнеса, самозанятых. Делается вывод о низкой эффективности политики поддержки предпринимательства в Ставропольском крае.

Ключевые слова: малое и среднее предпринимательство, национальные проекты, поддержка МСП, Ставропольский край, налоговая политика

Заявление о конфликте интересов: Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

История статьи:

Поступила в редакцию: 20.05.2023. Принята к публикации: 04.07.2023.

Для цитирования:

Белоконев С.Ю., Алексеенко Д.А., Колесников В.А. Анализ результатов реализации государственной политики по поддержке малого и среднего предпринимательства в Ставропольском крае в 2018–2023 гг // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Государственное и муниципальное управление. 2023. Т. 10. № 3. С. 330–346. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8313-2023-10-3-330-346>

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