

## VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT): ECONOMIC ESSENCE AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

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**Annotation:** This article examines the economic nature and practical importance of Value Added Tax (VAT) as one of the most widely used indirect taxes in modern market economies. The study analyzes the mechanism of VAT calculation, its role in the formation of state budget revenues, and its influence on financial discipline and market regulation. Special attention is given to the principles of value-added taxation and the distribution of the tax burden along the production and supply chain. The article also evaluates the advantages and limitations of VAT as a fiscal and regulatory instrument.

**Keywords:** Value Added Tax, indirect taxation, state budget revenues, value added, tax mechanism, financial transparency

In a market economy, taxes constitute the main source of public financial resources and play a decisive role in ensuring the functioning of the state. Among various tax instruments, Value Added Tax occupies a special position due to its universality and efficiency. VAT is levied on the value created at each stage of production and distribution, which allows it to be integrated into the entire economic circulation of goods and services. At present, VAT is applied in most countries of the world and represents one of the most significant components of public revenue systems.

Value Added Tax is an indirect tax imposed on the value added to goods, works, and services during the process of their production and sale. Although VAT is calculated and transferred to the budget by business entities, its actual burden is borne by the final consumer through the price of goods and services. The fundamental principle of VAT lies in the fact that each economic agent pays tax only on the additional value it creates. As a result, the tax burden is distributed proportionally across all stages of the production and supply chain, preventing double taxation and ensuring neutrality in relation to business structures.

The concept of value added reflects the difference between the value of output and the value of intermediate inputs. By taxing only this difference, VAT allows enterprises to avoid paying tax on the full turnover and instead focus on the real contribution they make to the final product. This mechanism provides both fairness and efficiency in taxation.

The VAT system operates through the interaction of input VAT and output VAT. Input VAT represents the tax paid by a business on purchased goods and services, while output VAT is the tax charged on the sale of goods and services. The amount payable to the state budget is determined as the difference between output VAT and input VAT. This method ensures that tax is collected only on the newly created value at each stage of economic activity.

For example, when an enterprise purchases raw materials and later sells finished goods, it deducts the VAT paid on its purchases from the VAT charged on its sales. If the VAT charged on sales amounts to three million units of currency and the VAT paid on purchases equals two million units, the enterprise transfers only one million units to the state budget. In this way, VAT does not accumulate at every stage of production but is gradually passed on to the final consumer.

Value Added Tax differs from other forms of taxation in several essential aspects. It is an indirect tax, meaning that the legal taxpayer is the enterprise, while the economic burden falls on consumers. VAT is collected at multiple stages of production and distribution, from raw material extraction to retail sale, which guarantees continuous inflow of revenues to the budget. The tax is based on value added rather than on total turnover, which avoids excessive taxation of



intermediate transactions. Moreover, VAT relies on an invoice-based accounting system, which strengthens transparency and limits opportunities for tax evasion.

One of the main advantages of VAT is its capacity to provide stable and predictable revenues for the state budget. Because it is linked to consumption, VAT remains relatively resilient even during economic downturns. The tax distributes the burden across the supply chain, which reduces pressure on individual producers. Its reliance on documentation and invoices contributes to the reduction of shadow economic activities and enhances financial discipline. In many countries, exports are taxed at a zero rate, which supports international competitiveness and encourages external trade. VAT also improves accounting practices and increases the overall level of economic transparency.

Despite its advantages, VAT has several limitations. The calculation procedure is relatively complex and requires precise accounting and reporting. Enterprises must maintain detailed records of purchases and sales, which may impose administrative burdens, especially on small businesses. Errors in VAT calculation or reporting can result in financial penalties, creating additional risks for taxpayers. Furthermore, if not properly designed, VAT may have regressive effects, as it is ultimately paid by consumers regardless of income level.

Value Added Tax plays a key role in the formation of state budget revenues and in strengthening financial discipline among economic agents. By encouraging official transactions and invoice-based operations, VAT contributes to the formalization of economic activity and the expansion of the tax base. It also serves as an instrument of internal market regulation, influencing price formation and consumption patterns. When administered efficiently, VAT promotes transparency, reduces opportunities for tax evasion, and enhances trust between taxpayers and the state.

Value Added Tax is an integral element of modern tax systems and represents one of the most effective forms of indirect taxation. Its primary advantage lies in the gradual distribution of the tax burden and in the taxation of only the value added at each stage of production and distribution. At the same time, the complexity of VAT accounting requires careful administration and strict compliance with legal norms. An effectively organized VAT system ensures stability of public revenues, increases economic transparency, and contributes to the regulation of business activity. Therefore, VAT functions not only as a fiscal instrument but also as an important tool of economic regulation and development.

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