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**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF  
RURAL GREEN TOURISM IN UKRAINE: THE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT  
ASPECT**

*The role of rural green tourism as one of the ways for agricultural production sustainable development is researched in this article; it is proved that rural tourism in Ukraine enhances development of villages’ infrastructure, enables popularizing the history, folklore, culture and traditions among the local citizens and on the global scale alike; it is also a cause for rural homesteads improvement and benefits the hosting*

*families' financial state. The following problem issues for rural tourism subjects are distinguished: organizational disjointedness, insufficient development of the basic and auxiliary infrastructure, not high enough service level, and lack in advertising and informing activity in promoting the relevant products and services. It is accentuated on regional offices for agriculture, local authorities and public organizations having great opportunities for green rural tourism development and influencing it significantly; micro-social and macro-social barriers are mentioned that impede this sector's development. The importance of agri-tourist homesteads owners' interest and initiative in forming and development of local and regional unions and significance of their support by local authorities and the regional and central power bodies, scientific and public organizations in facilitating the activation of green rural tourism development in Ukraine is proved.*

**Key words:** *rural green tourism, opportunities, challenges, international, public organizations, agri-tourist market, state policies.*

**General problem setting.** Rural green tourism is an unalienable component of the rural sustainable development strategy which has been persistently implemented by the European countries since the Second World War. In 2003, Ukraine was the first among the post-soviet states to introduce to its legislation this type of activity for rural population. The problems and achievements of rural tourism in Ukraine are discussed at numeral science-and-communicative events, at international tourist exhibitions (the 25<sup>th</sup> UITT International Tourist Exhibition: "Ukraine, Travels and Tourism", the "KyivExpoPlaza" exhibition complex; the TourExpo International exhibition, and others). These are outstanding events in the tourism business of Ukraine, a meeting place for representatives of the national and foreign tourist organizations, leaders of accommodation, rest, and health resort facilities. The chief goal of such events is stimulation of the domestic and inbound tourism development, promotion of the Ukrainian tourism product in the international market, popularizing the tourism abilities and not so well-known objects of Ukraine and the world, presenting to a wide circle of specialists the current achievements

in the service area, forming a platform for negotiations, including with foreign participants.

**Recent researches and publications analysis.** The issue of green tourism development in Ukraine is quite important, to which effect attest the research carried out by many Ukrainian scientists. Academic works by O. Beidyk, V. Byrkovych, M. Voloshyn, N. Kudla, S. Parfylo, M. Pityulych, O. Reshetyuk, M. Terletskyi, O. Rozmetova, N. Fomenko and others, confirm its significance.

The situation regarding legal regulation of the green tourism in Ukraine is studied in publications by S. Parfylo and O. Rozmetova [7]; ecology tourism stimulation under globalization is researched by O. Reshetyuk [6]; *the organizing, economic, and ecological aspects of agri-tourist businesses activity, the specifics of rural tourism are viewed in scientific works by N. Kudla [2]; specifics of rural tourism operation in Ukraine and European countries' practices are studied extensively by M. Pityulych [5]* and other authors.

**Highlighting the previously unresolved parts of the general problem.** Despite the availability of in-depth research in the area of rural green tourism development and organizing, still open for discussion remain its development directions, especially under current decentralizing, when rural tourism is virtually the sole way of sustainable development apart from large-scale agricultural production. Another popular issue with national researchers is how to make rural tourism more attractive, how to popularize it.

**Goal setting.** The goal of the article is to define the directions of Ukraine's rural green tourism development and the role of the state in terms of avoiding threats for its evolvment.

**Exposition of main material of the research.** The term of "ecological tourism" was first introduced in 1978 by T. Miller, who named it a "reviving tourism sensitive to environment that includes the study of the natural and cultural landscape and is targeted at improving its state". The authors agree with the opinion that "the role of green tourism that promotes not only preserving of natural reserves territories, but also fosters ecological and cultural conscience development, keeps growing lately" [7, p. 676].

1. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) set in 1990 the following goals:

- activation of a tourism activity form that aimed at cognizance of regional nature ecological systems;

- building up in tourists a due ecological awareness concerning the environment;

- preserving the state of the natural landscapes, primarily on natural reserves lands;

- familiarizing tourists with regulating documents related to nature preservation, etc.

As important and related to the mentioned goals are the tasks of Ukrainian ecological tourism:

- familiarizing tourists with the most interesting ethno-cultural objects in the regions;

- creation of tourist routes targeted at studying the cultural inheritance of the Ukrainian people: folk crafts, traditions, rituals;

- facilitation in carrying out the international strategy on society's sustainable development [6, p. 10].

Ecological (green) tourism gained mass development in the world in the second half of the XX century when the "Bed and Breakfast" concept of temporal living in individual rooms in houses regardless of location was spreading in the USA and Great Britain. The first guest-houses for serving British tourists' expeditions appeared at the beginning of the XVIII century in France and Switzerland [7, p. 676].

Rural tourism is a recreational kind of tourism focused on rural territories. It supposes development of tourist routes, recreation locations, agricultural and folklore museums, as well as centers for rendering tourist services by guides and tourist instructors.

The notion of "rural tourism" is often equaled to that of "agri-tourism", but the first notion is much broader. "Rural tourism is often called green tourism that offers immediate relations with rural community, the use of rural values, locations, and the existing buildings with maximum preservation of natural environment" [2, p. 16].

The green tourism industry is an actively growing sector of the world tourism business. The national green tourism organization of the European states have united into

the European Federation for Farm and Village Tourism (EuroGites), whose main goal is purposeful investments into green tourism development projects. Rural tourism in Ukraine facilitates development of social infrastructure of local villages, enables popularizing the history, folklore, culture and traditions both with the Ukrainians and on the global scale. Agri-tourism causes improvements in village households' maintenance, financial well-being of hosting families. The green rural tourism is a unique opportunity for combining travel and rest in the most picturesque locations of Ukraine.

Rural tourism is a recreational type of tourism that takes place in village homesteads, where the owner renders services on accommodation and catering; the main goal of this tourism is passive rest and the study of the country people's life [5, p. 155]. Nevertheless, the founders of green tourism schools in Ukraine themselves consider from their own experience that tourists should primarily be given impressions on demonstration of ethnical traditions, followed in terms of priority by the two other important constituents of green tourism – the rest, and food. In their opinion, a village green household and the rural green tourism are a rural house where a family lives and works who provide hospitality services that can be singled out by three areas: catering, relaxation, impressions. Work should be aimed at folklore traditions of precisely that territory, that village where the hospitality-rendering family resides. Rural vacation, owing to ethnical identity preservation, is to acquire national significance because it gives an impulse to the rebirth and development of national culture: folklore architecture, art, crafts – everything that forms the local flavor ... By way of rural vacation, urbanized inhabitants with mass culture have an opportunity to cognize real Ukrainian traditions; the ethnical culture of Ukrainian countryside attracts foreign tourists [1, p. 250].

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A number of village homesteads have decided to give it a try in this business, but a lack of clearly set and legally defined rules impedes the development of this sector, which was stressed on at the conference "Current challenges for rural green tourism of Ukraine: legal, educational, organizational, and market aspects" organized and carried out by the all-Ukrainian NGO "The Union for Facilitating Green Tourism Organization in Ukraine"

supported by a UN project and the USAID “Program for Agricultural and Rural Development Support” with the UKRINFORM Ukrainian National Agency. Also, issues were discussed concerning rural green tourism legislation (how to overcome the negative tendencies), forming systematic standards for rural green tourism acceptable for both hosts and tourists, a cluster as an instrument to unite rural green tourism and rural territories’ sustainable development, as well as internet platforms for communication and informing, and also for improvement of professional training and retraining of specialists in rural green tourism [8]. At the mentioned event, it was proposed to bring changes to the Law of Ukraine “On Individual Agricultural Household” concerning rural green tourism development (bill 2232a), which will enable separating business entrepreneurship from non-profitable activities, legalization of individual household owners’ activities and recognition of individuals engaged in green rural tourism as a non-profit activity [4].

Other problematic issues for green rural tourism subjects are their professional disjointedness, insufficient development of the basic and auxiliary infrastructure, not high enough service standards, and insufficient information- and advertising activity in promotion of their products and services. Individual agri-households owners’ activities transition to territorially united cluster-type structures requires a corresponding organization- and material support along with scientific and methodological assistance. At present, the number of operating clusters and cluster initiatives in rural tourism in Ukraine is about 10. In 2018, two new clusters were formed in Ukrainian Carpathians – the “Boikivski Gazdy” (Skole region in Lviv area) with 43 participants, and “Gostynna Boikivska Dolynschyna” (Dolynske region in Ivano-Frankivsk area) with 22 participants. In the Black Sea coast area, an official status has been granted to the “Frumushika-Nova” agri-eco-recreational cluster (Tarutynsky region, Odesa area) with the subsequent registration of the public union with the same name [3, p. 125].

It should be noted that the unions formed on rural inhabitants’ initiative with support by local authorities, the regional and central power bodies, scientific and public organizations have attained significant success in villages’ development and economy. Enhancing the growth of rural tourism, unification and stability of tax rules, soft loans,

and understanding the village community's needs may benefit both the state and the local people [2, p. 19].

If we turn to the experience of Poland, the example of the Polish Ministry for agricultural and rural development project “Vacate in the village!” („Odpocznij w wiosce!”) can be considered. The main goal of the project is to bring to potential holidaymakers the information on how well and usefully one can rest in the countryside. The authors obtained the answer to the question, why people go on holiday to a Polish village, after studying this country's experience. As Polish officials say, support for agri-tourism's development is important due to the fact that it is not only an additional activity for agricultural businesspeople, but also, especially in a crisis situation, it can turn into the main activity for some initiative villagers. On the other hand, owing to agri-tourism, small entrepreneurship starts developing in rural territories, enabling local investments and infrastructure development. The Polish legislation is quite loyal to agri-tourism and does not consider it an entrepreneurial activity. Consequently, agri-housholds are not taxed for VAT which enhances the dynamics of rural tourism development. Currently, more than eight thousand agro-tourist homesteads operate in Poland. According to expert estimations, the overall occupancy of such homesteads with tourists is about 80 per cent. Holidaymakers, both local and foreign ones, go to a Polish village because accommodation in agri-homesteads is cheap: it is possible to choose for one's vacation a traditional room in a country cottage or at a mini-hotel located on a farm.

Going back to Ukraine, to the question “Where to take the needed money?”, that is, from which sources can local communities obtain financing for green rural tourism development, the Department for support of farming, cooperation, and rural territories development at the Ministry of Agricultural Policies answers as follows: according to current legislation, a sustainable development project is financed from the local budget, as well as on account of financial support by international technical assistance programs. Also, the State budget of Ukraine provisions for financing from the funds allocated to the Ministry of Agricultural Policies with one more financing source – the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, and Municipal Infrastructure.



Regional offices for agriculture, local authorities, and public organizations have great opportunities for and significant influence on green rural tourism development. In the strategy for development of green rural tourism, it is important to understand the tourists' needs and requirements, to popularize it accordingly, especially to advertize rural tourism [2, *p. 118*]. Of great importance is also a possibility of getting support from various programs, funds, projects on activating the development of local entrepreneurship for relevant training and guidance in the area of agri-tourist homesteads popularization.

Concerning risks to the green rural tourism development, there are two mutually related groups of aspects: micro-social, and macro-social barriers. The barriers of the first type are associated with the specific circumstances of a homestead, a village, or a local council:

- deterioration of family relationships in the hosting family;
- increase in work time and workload on women;
- partial loss of rural identity due to agriculture modernization;
- a spread of negative phenomena in the rural environment;
- ruining of natural values that were initially the reason for tourists coming;
- unsatisfactory state of the village infrastructure;
- low standards of sanitation conditions at many homesteads;
- low financial solvency of homesteads without a possibility of investment.

Macro-social barriers that impede green rural tourism development:

- economically restrained tourist market;
- a small number of people positive about the benefits of rural vacation;
- imperfect system of tourist proposals distribution both in the domestic and the international market;
- absent coordination between village councils and the regional authorities, unhealthy competition between them;
- unawareness of the agri-tourist market specifics and a low level in knowledge of marketing.

**The conclusions on the research and perspectives of further studies along these lines.** Therefore, on the basis of this research, we can make the following conclusions:

1. Rural green tourism combines recreational and culturally-cognitive functions, enhancing development of rural territories, enables rural population to improve conditions and quality of life, decreases unemployment in villages.

2. Interest and initiative of agri-tourist homesteads owners in forming and development of local and regional unions with support by local self-government bodies, the regional, and the central power, scientific and public organizations will improve the opportunities for activation of the country's green rural tourism development.

3. In order to diminish the risks for rural green tourism development in Ukraine, new approaches have to be adopted to forming and implementing state policies and to approximation of the industry standards to the world ones.

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