

BARRIERS AND POSSIBLE WAYS OF DEVELOPING RURAL TOURISM IN ODESSA REGION OF UKRAINE

BARIERE SI POSIBILE MODALITATI DE DEZVOLTARE A TURISMULUI RURAL ÎN REGIUNEA ODESA - UCRAINA

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Abstract

Although rural tourism is declared one of priorities in the Ukrainian hospitality industry, system approach to its developing is not applied. The aim of this research is to define barriers and possible ways of developing rural tourism in Odessa region of Ukraine. Authors have conducted field research in 2010-2012. As a result main groups of barriers for rural tourism development were determined: legislative, administrative, technological and social. The compatibility of rural tourism with other existing types of tourists' activities was examined and appropriate tourism compatibility matrix and program of rural tourism development in Odessa region was introduced.

Key words: rural tourism, Odessa region, Ukraine, barriers, program of development, tourism compatibility matrix.

JEL Classification: L830, O180, P250

Introduction

Development of rural tourism plays an important role in the socio-economic development of Ukraine. In Ukraine, there are several centers for the development of rural tourism, which have the potential to serve both domestic and foreign tourists. South of Ukraine and in particular Odessa region is of high priority for rural tourism development. Significant synergetic effect on the economy of the region and the country can be reached in conjunction with other forms of tourism.

Barriers and Possible Ways of Developing Rural Tourism in Odessa Region of Ukraine

Contemporary experience and research show that the accelerated development of rural tourism can act as a catalyst of economic restructuration, ensure demographic stability and solve urgent social and economic problems in rural areas. In Ukraine it is strategically important to quickly close the gap in the field of rural tourism and to unlock the existing tourism potential through a deliberate policy of government regulation, including those at the regional level.

The purpose of this article is to consider the role and place of rural tourism in the development of national tourism and socio-political situation in the rural areas of Ukraine, to identify barriers and ways of development of rural tourism in Odessa region of Ukraine.

Methodology: this paper is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data are results of the field research being conducted by authors in 2010-2012 about development of rural tourism in Odessa region of Ukraine. Secondary data are results of literature review and other studies in this field.

Today, the tourism industry in Ukraine, though a significant part of the budget, could significantly increase its share by realizing its objective conditions such as favorable geopolitical position of Ukraine in the center of Europe, presence of significant tourism potential, favorable climate, rich flora and fauna, many cultural and historical monuments. Priority to the development of rural tourism in Ukraine is due to the urgent necessity of solving social and economic problems of the village. Development of rural tourism can improve the material well-

being and alleviate the problems of rural employment. Thus, considering rural tourism requires government regulation and support, including at the regional level.

Developing of Ukrainian rural tourism is favored by the following factors:

- growing demand of Ukrainians and foreigners to stay in rural areas;
- unique historical and ethnographic heritage of Ukrainian villages;
- rich recreational resources;
- ecological compatibility;
- traditional hospitality of the hosts and the reasonable price for accommodation;
- ability to provide additional services: sightseeing, fishing, berry and mushroom picking, horse riding, etc.

Development of rural tourism can provide real income of rural residents by following means:

- provision of accommodation services;
- construction of tourist routes and providing tour services;
- transport services for tourists;
- hunting, fishing;
- provision of tourist equipment rental;
- organic food production and sale, provision of culinary services;
- sale of goods crafts;
- holding cultural events with the historical and ethnographic heritage (animation).

Development of Ukrainian rural tourism is restricted and inhibited by a number of factors (table no. 1).

Table no. 1: Main groups of barriers of developing rural tourism

Criteria	Barriers
Legislative	- lack of proper legal provision of rural tourism
Administrative	- lack of efficient and environmentally sustainable use of natural, historical and cultural potential for tourism needs
Technological	- low level of infrastructure and communications - insufficient level of staffing, advertising and information support
Social	- political and economic instability in the country - limited opportunities for financing projects of rural tourism

Source: authors

These negative factors can be overcome by a systematic approach to the formation of a balanced policy of rural tourism state regulation, using the existing instruments of the direct and indirect effects.

Ukraine has already started its way to the world standards of rural tourism. The state tourism development program for 2002-2010 defines the role of tourism in the economic development and social development of Ukraine and provides priority to the development of inbound and domestic tourism as a major factor in the life quality improvement [1]. It should be noted that this program has not been fully implemented and was not developed in the form of new standard act.

The compatibility of rural tourism with other existing types of tourists' activities was examined and appropriate tourism compatibility matrix was introduced (table no. 2).

The proposed matrix does not cover all possible uses of rural tourism activities in other types of tourism, and is presented as an analytical tool to assess the feasibility of a regional tourism potential and the formation of a set of alternatives.

Table no. 2: Rural tourism compatibility matrix

Rural tourism occupations	Types of tourism					
	Medical	Recreational	Sports	Cultural and educational	Religious	Ethnic
Country accommodation;	+	+	+	+	+	+
Organic food;	+	+	-	+	-	+
Familiarity with the history of the area;	-	+	-	+	+	+
Horse riding	+	+	+	-	-	+
Fishing	+	+	+	-	-	-
Campaigns for mushrooms and berries;	+	+	+	+	-	-
National ceremonies;	-	+	-	+	+	+
Traditional vehicles	-	+	+	+	-	+

Source: authors

Development of rural tourism can implement a set of goals:

- increase of local revenues by revitalizing the tourism sector and rising incomes from accommodation services;
- creation of new jobs for the local population;
- providing the best balance of interests of tourists, residents of the village and travel agencies;
- support the development of entrepreneurship in the tourism and related industries;
- development and implementation of advanced technologies of tourist services;
- maximum use of natural, scientific, historical and cultural potential of the region,
- development of the agricultural sector, farmers, development of the transport sector, road networks, car parks;
- contribute to the preservation and improvement of the environment.

Formation of a regional program for the development of rural tourism will:

- increase the number of tourists visiting the region of Odessa;
- increase revenues to local budgets;
- increase the number of estates that provide rural tourism services;
- increase sales in the rural areas of agricultural production;
- improve the professional level of the rural tourism entrepreneurs;
- improve the accomplishment of rural communities and develop its social infrastructure;
- preserve and promote traditional crafts;
- develop the service sector by expanding the range of travel services.

We consider that for the rural tourism development in Odessa region of Ukraine the following measures should be implemented:

1. Priority actions:

- to ensure coordination councils (local authorities, tourism enterprises, civil society) and to ensure continued cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders;
- to conduct initial and annual career-guidance work among the rural unemployed, as well as training of rural residents wishing to participate in the development of the rural tourism;
- to develop and test a model rural tourism routes for Odessa region;
- to establish a regional training and information center of rural tourism development;

- to improve legal base for rural tourism at national and regional levels;
 - to identify problem issues impeding the development of rural tourism, and prepare proposals for their resolution.
2. Educational and methodical activities for rural tourism development:
- to provide organizational and methodical assistance for local executive authorities, local self-government in Odessa region;
 - to increase public awareness among the population on rural tourism and the prospects for its development in Odessa region.
3. Science, technology, marketing and information activities in rural tourism:
- to conduct an annual scientific and practical conference on the problems of rural tourism;
 - to provide scientific support for the development and implementation of local rural tourism programs;
 - to contribute to a positive tourist image of Odessa region through the creation of information centers;
 - to present rural tourism services for travel agencies, the media, including the annual tourism exhibitions.
4. Monitoring of compliance with the services quality in the field of rural tourism:
- to establish the center for the voluntary categorization of rural tourism facilities.
5. Rural tourism infrastructure development:
- to establish regional clusters in rural tourism;
 - to develop and implement a plan of cooperation with sports clubs that specialize in adventure tourism;
 - to carry out continuous monitoring of areas that are promising for the development of rural tourism;
 - to introduce a system of informing road signs for tourist routes, objects, rural tourism infrastructure.
6. International cooperation:
- to draw grants, international technical assistance and public funds for the development of rural tourism in the Odessa area;
 - to assist community organizations in developing projects and drawing grants, international technical assistance in the development of rural tourism infrastructure.
7. Business development, arts and crafts in rural tourism:
- to develop and implement cultural programs for the rural tourist-specific areas;
 - to promote the development of folk arts and crafts;
 - to form a package of investment proposals and projects in the field of rural tourism.

Conclusions:

The proposed recommendations will facilitate further development of rural tourism in Odessa region. They require further specification and development. However, the expected long-term effect covers expenses.

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