Rural Tourism and Sustainable Development of Rural Territories

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Abstract: The paper is dedicated to rural tourism as one of fashionable and rapidly growing elements of modern tourism system, its basic definitions as a phenomenon with accurate enumeration of its most essential features, characteristics, properties aiming at specification of limits and content of the concept. Within the framework of the present research this line of tourism was considered as an activity which is carried out in rural environment aimed at satisfying the consumers’ needs in recreation and leisure. Rural tourism has been integrated into the global tourism system under the conditions of rapid growth in the number of travelers and growing popularity of environmentalization ideas, as well as due to the center of gravity shift from the consumer concept “sun-sea-sand” to “scenery-traditions-leisure”. Thus, the consumer grows more sensitive to lyrical rural landscapes, traditional rustic lifestyle, organic products, gathering, fishing and other activities characteristic of everyday rural life.

Key words:

INTRODUCTION

Methods and Procedure of Research: For the purposes of the research the representative information was used, including the information from primary and secondary sources, with obligatory verification of the data. The analysis system management was carried out based on formal logics and generation of hypotheses, as well as well based on the law of sufficient reason. The main research methods used: prioritization method, feedback method, methods of direct and indirect questionnaire survey, discussion method, content-analysis and so on.

Research Tools: Rapid evaluation of microclimatic problems present in the economic system by the participants of the discussion, mapping based on the “Problem Wheel” technique [1].

Results Obtained: The formation of the conceptual framework for rural tourism began in Italy, Austria and France in the 20th century in the seventies. At a later period the said countries were joined by Ireland. Initially accommodation of tourists was a non-core activity for the farmers, which contributed to strengthening their economic status to some extent without necessity to make considerable investments. However the growth in demand for this kind of tourism in European countries modified the sheer concept of rural tourism, which for many rural dwellers turned from subsidiary activity into the major one [2].

Let’s consider modern experience in development of rural tourism in Moscow region. In terms of methodology and organization, the Concept of rural tourism development as one of the directions of expanding employment possibilities for rural population for the period up to year 2020 may be considered as a point of reference.

According to the said document, rural tourism means temporary departures (trips) of the citizens of the Russian Federation, foreign citizens and stateless individuals (hereinafter referred to as the persons) from the place of permanent residence to rural areas with health-related, recreational, educational, athletic, business and
professional, religious and other purposes without being engaged in income-generating activity from the sources located at the place of sojourn. Along with the term “rural tourism” such concepts as agrotourism, ecotourism, green and rustic tourism are used practically as equivalents. The typical models of a tourism product are:

- «Tourist guest country house» is a tourism object in rural area based on peasant farm holding or private subsidiary farm holding, serving as a rural hotel.
- «Ecofarm» is a tourism object in rural area, located in unpolluted zone and built from environmentally green material, therefore for its infrastructure facilities the prefix “eco” is used.
- «Tourist village» is a tourism object in rural area, a specialized hotel, serving as a rural hotel.
- «Historical settlements» (historical village, national village) is a tourism object in rural area, in the territory of which cultural heritage sites of the locality are situated, created in the past, representing archeological, historical, architectural, town-planning, esthetic, scientific and sociocultural value, having significant importance for preserving distinctive character of Moscow region.
- «Craftsmen town» is a tourism object in rural area, in the territory of which consumer goods production facilities (craftsmen houses) are situated, based on historical and folk traditions.
- Hunting farm.
- Fishing and leisure center.

In Russia the main problems concerning creating and development of tourism business in rural areas include absence of regulatory and legal framework, which specifically regulates agrotouristic activities and standards and norms of hotel and recreational business, which are difficult to comply with and which do not take into consideration specific character of running small family hotel forms.

However, it is tourism that can ensure sustainable development of rural territories. In this case sustainability is characterized by favorable balance of environmental, sociocultural and economic effects of tourism, as well as positive interaction of the participants of tourism activities.

There are several integral indicators of sustainable development, which differ from each other by appraisal period, functional characteristics, quantity and amount of integrated statistical data and components, as well as frequency of measurement: [3].

- Human capital development index, a socioeconomic indicator.
- Index of adjusted net savings, an environmental, social and economic indicator.
- Health risks for population from environmental pollution, an environmental, social and economic indicator.
- Environmentally adjusted net domestic product, an ecological, environmental and economic indicator.
- Living planet index, an ecological indicator.
- Ecological footprint, an ecological indicator.

Development of rural tourism based on sustainability principle can make a considerable contribution into solving problems of rural territories. Industry characteristics of tourism provide possibility of integrated development of the territory and synergizing effect from business operations in the giving sphere. For example, from the economical point of view, it means rising of living standards of local population, broadening range of services for the population, capital raising, upswing in entrepreneurial and economic activity of local community, expanding independence of rural territories; from the social point of view, it means creating new jobs, wider application of practices involving local community participation in decision-making processes; from the environmental point of view, local problems can be solved through the introduction of social responsibility mechanism in business; from the educational point of view it may improve business culture standards and general cultural standards of local population.

Building up a regional (territorial) touristic cluster (ECOCLUSTER) with involvement of farming enterprises may become one of the variants of implementing sustainable tourism development principles in rural areas. Such ecluster should combine different kinds of economic activity, which are traditional for a specific rural territory taking into consideration local distinctions: various crafts, art, accommodation in rustic homes, traditional cuisine, organic farming and production of organic food, use of horse teams, narrow-gauge railway, boats and other kinds of transport.

In conclusion it is worth mentioning that development of tourism in rural territories should be based on the use of endogenous potential of a tourism destination and territorial economic structure, which ensures mutual adjustment of biological, natural and technical elements.
REFERENCES

