

FORMATION OF TOURISM CLUSTER AS A PROMISING DIRECTION OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS

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Abstract: The article investigates the experience of tourism clusters' development and the expediency of their formation as promising directions of social and economic development of rural areas in Mykolayiv region. Author states, that one of the most promising areas of Mykolayiv region in the field of recreation and tourism is Veselinovskyy district, which is famous for its sights, culture and heritage and is able to attract foreign tourists. In the paper, there is a suggestion, that one of the main problems for the creation of cluster is the lack of governmental funding, because the main fixed assets are voluntary contributions of members and funds received by tourists travel services.

Keywords: tourism cluster, tourism business, rural areas, diversification, social and-economic development.

1. Introduction

Today, rural development requires an integrated approach to solving all the problems of villages, namely, economic, social, environmental, demographic issues and etc. Therefore, there is an objective need to diversify the rural economy, based on the redeployment of existing resources in new types of rural agrarian and non-agrarian activities and to create opportunities for better use of human capital, increase profits and household growth of living standards. It should be noted that one of the effective ways to diversify the rural economy is rural tourism.

2. Materials and methods

Problems and prospects of social and economic development of rural areas were researched by lots of scientists such as K. Ashley, I. Goncharenko, V. Ermolenko, A. Klyuchnyk, A. Kovalenko, I. Irtysheva, L. Lysenko, A. Lisovyy, S. Maxwell, M. Malik, S. Melnyk, A. Pavlov, I. Prokop, P. Sabluk, M. Talavyrya, V. Trehobchuk, V. Urkevycha, I. Cherven, E. Shebanina and others.

An important contribution to the study of the problems of rural tourism had been made by such famous scientists as V. Vasiliev, P. Gorishevskyy, T. Dyorov, Y. Zinko, S. Kuzyk, V. Fedorchenko and others. Despite the research importance of rural green tourism, the issue of priority economic diversification of villages on the example of a specific region of Ukraine requires a systematic study[3]

3. Results

One of the ways to increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry is rural tourism clustering. It means the creation of regional association in tourism sector, which complement each other, keeping the right of self- and its ongoing strategic economic policy. Its main feature is not only complementarities of companies that belong to it, but the impossibility of their operation without tourism.

Clustering allows you to:

- Attract financial resources into new production by combining common financial capacity of clustering

enterprises;

- Attract investment through participation in investment programs;
- Participate in contests, projects and grants;
- Combine common financial capacity of enterprises to provide guarantees for credit.

Today in Ukraine there are actively functioning clusters such as "Slavutych" (Kiev region), "Voznesensk" (Mykolayiv region), Tourist and Recreational cluster "Gogol places of Poltava" (Poltava region), the Tourism Cluster of Euro region "Slobozhanshina" (Kharkiv region) Transportation and Tourism cluster "Southgate of Ukraine" (Kherson region) [2].

It is the first time when in Ukraine the technological cluster of social and economic development of the villages took place in Khmelnytsky region in 2002. The purpose of "The Oberig" cluster of rural tourism was to create conditions for rural communities' revival in order to the effective using of own resources and significant increasing of social and economic indicators of rural areas' development [4]. The main directions of "The Oberig" cluster are educational, medical, informational, organizational and environmental trends.

It is necessary to note that Mykolayiv region has a great potential for ecological tourism. At first, the attention should be paid to the localities in Kinburn Foreland, Parutyne village, National Historical and Archaeological reserve "Olviya", Vradiyivskyy, Kryvoozerskyy, Pervomaiskyy, Arbuzynskyy, Voznesenskyy, Domanivskyy and Veselinovskyy areas.

One of the most promising areas of Mykolayiv region in the field of recreation and tourism is Veselinovskyy district, which is famous for its sights, culture and heritage and is able to attract foreign tourists. In the area there are 159 archaeological sites, 56 historic sites, 7 monumental arts, 15 monuments of architecture and urban planning. Veselinovskyy area is known for its numerous villages of German colonists. It is in this area there were German settlements. And many German families associate these places with their historical backgrounds, culture and traditions.

That is why, taking into account all advantages of recreation and tourism opportunities of Veselinovskyy district, Veselinovo village is considered to become an appropriate place to establish such regional tourist cluster as "The Wild Field of Mykolayiv region", which is aimed to ensure social and economic development of the rural economy through the development of regional tourism.

The main activities of TC "The Wild Field of Mykolayiv region" should include:

1) organizational measures, coordination of local businesses servicing tourists; interaction with local authorities and NGOs; ensure compliance with care facilities' standards;

2) educational events, training and seminars; advice consulting; training activities aimed at the guests;

3) information activities: marketing rural tourism; PR-activity of tourism cluster "The Wild Field of Mykolayiv region"; creation of an information infrastructure to meet the needs of tourists.

As part of the tourism cluster it the specific Internet portal should be developed, which will disseminate information about the tourist routes' network of Mykolayiv region and adjacent areas in both Ukrainian and foreign languages. In particular, it should represent the pictures of tourist attractions, details on tours in Ukrainian language and in languages of international communication. This will interest not only lovers of active and interesting rest of Ukraine, but also tourists from abroad.

We offer the following tours of TC "The Wild Field of Mykolayiv region" [5]

1) The one-day tourist route "Germans and German colonies of Veselinovskyy district of XVIII-XIX centuries." - Introduction to the history of settlements in Veselinovskyy district of Mykolaiv region, history and circumstances of

German settlements in Mykolayiv region, their life, arts and monuments;

2) The tour to Voznesensk city with a visit to the Ostrovskyy park, where there is a sight of history and architecture, called "The Rotunda", which was built in honour of I Mykolay's arrival in 1837; Orthodox church of Princess Olga; historic site on the outskirts of Voznesensk city where Moshe-Yaakov WolfvitchVinnitskyy (legendary MishkaJaponchik) had been shot;

3) Excursion to the ostrich farm "Savannah" (Stavky village).

Professional guides, businessmen, shopkeepers, businesses and organizations, cultural workers, organizers of so-called attractions ("vytrischaky"), local governments, and educational institutions must become members of the cluster. The proposed organizational structure of the tourism cluster "Wild Field of Mykolayiv region" is concentrated in Fig. 1.

One of the main problems for the creation of cluster is the lack of governmental funding, because the main fixed assets are voluntary contributions of members and funds received by tourists travel services. Therefore, one of the expected performances of the tourism cluster "The Wild Field of Mykolayiv region" is to improve the investment attractiveness of the rural area and provide the domestic and foreign investment in physical infrastructure, tourism and intellectual human capital that needs constant financial support of each member of the association and their strategic potential. It is clear that the investment efficiency will be higher in the case of fully meeting the needs of tourists, i.e. improving the quality of the tourist product; the development of strategic trends, which require the development strategies of each cluster's participant and alternative strategies with

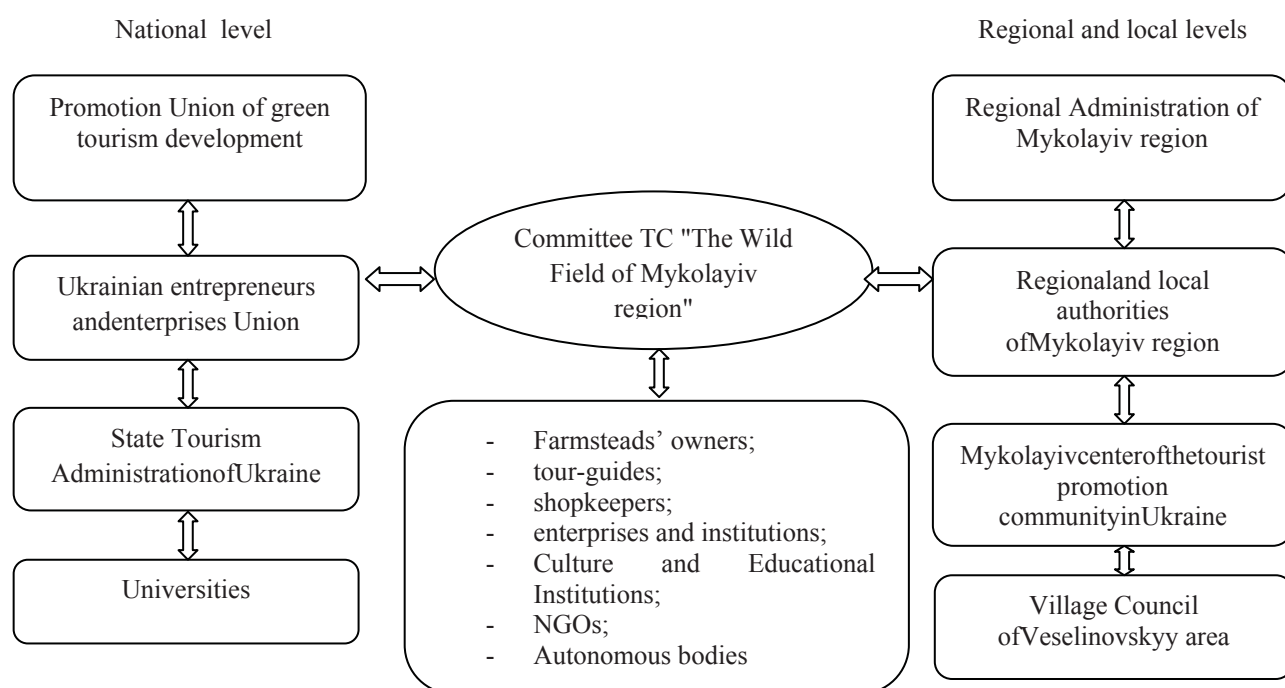


Figure 1 - Organizational Structure of "The Wild Field of Mykolayiv region" Tourism Cluster

Source: author

the direct involvement of public authorities and educational and research institutions [1].

The above mentioned cluster will bring a number of advantages to rural areas of Mykolayiv region, including:

- Reducing of production costs by scale combining;
- Increasing specialization of enterprises-members of cluster that will improve the quality of products and services;
- Improving the use of existing resources, scaling up innovations;
- Complementing of products which are produced by cluster's enterprises-participants;
- The possibility of combining the financial capacity of companies to provide guarantees to banks to obtain credit;
- Rationally traffic implementing;
- Reducing the cost of funds for information security;
- Increasing productivity and employment of villagers;
- Optimal using of the employment potential;
- The best motivation of managers;
- Increasing of the competitive advantage of the entire region and cluster's enterprises-participants;
- The performing of centralized management activities;
- Minimizing risks and costs when entering the new market;
- The introducing new equipment and technology due to their flexibility;
- Improving relations between the state and civil society organizations;
- The creation of new business in the free market segments;
- The possibility of jointly solving of village social and economic problems;
- The development of rural infrastructure;
- The increasing of the villages' investment attractiveness.

Along with positive aspects, it is necessary to identify a number of factors hindering the development of tourism clusters:

- Insufficient information to ensure the establishment and functioning of clusters;
- Disinterest of SMEs to associate in large production systems;
- Little experience of clusters in Ukraine and its regions;
- Lack of interest of investors, governments, local authorities in the development of such organizations;
- The lack of qualified personnel in the tourism industry with a special competency to work in cluster

associations;

- The low level of regional tourist image in the world;
- The absence of algorithm for evaluating the tourism clusters' efficiency;
- The unstable economic situation in the region and in the country.

To solve those problems we offer:

- 1) to consolidate the definition of tourism development cluster's model at the legislative level;
- 2) to develop a program for the development of tourism clusters;
- 3) to increase the skills of tourist industry employees;
- 4) to study global experience of tourism clusters.

The ultimate goal of the tourist cluster's creation is:

- to ensure the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Mykolayiv region;
- tax revenue;
- improvement of living standards due to the growth of employment and average wages in the tourism industry;
- improving life quality, cultural level and patriotic education of population;
- preservation of historical, cultural heritage and environment for future generations.

4. Conclusions

Clusters as an innovative form of rural areas' development are very promising directions for Mykolayiv region. Taking into account the advanced experience of rural tourism clusters in Ukraine, especially in the Khmelnytsky region, we propose the established tourist cluster "The Wild Field of Mykolayiv region" which will promote social and economic development of rural areas through the development of tourism in our region.

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