

Potential and prospects of development of agro-, ecotourism, its role in the revival and sustainable development of rural areas of Belarus

Tatyana Fedartsova*

BSPU, Belarus

**Corresponding author's e-mail: fedartsova_t@mail.ru*

Abstract

The current state, condition and prospects of the development of rural tourism; reasons hindering the development of agro-, ecotourism, rural tourism in the Republic of Belarus; the role of rural tourism as a means of economic and social revival of rural areas are considered

Keywords: agrotourism, ecotourism, the development of rural tourism, the problems of entrepreneurship in rural areas

1 Introduction

Tourism is considered as one of the most profitable and intensively developing branches of the world economy. By the beginning of the third millennium 8% of the world export total amount and 30-35% of world trade by services fell to the share of the international tourism.

The tourism development plays an important role in the solution of social problems. In many countries of the world due to tourism new workplaces are created, the high standard of population living is supported, prerequisites for improvement of the country payments balance are created. Development necessity of the tourism sphere promotes education level increase, improvement of medical care system of the population, introduction of new means of information distribution etc.

Tourism has positive impact on preservation and development of historical and cultural heritage, conducts to the relations harmonization between various countries and people, make governments, non-state organizations and commercial structures to participate in preservation business and environment actively improvement.

The tourism development in any country, region depends on the whole complex of factors, conditions and resources. In spite of the fact that Belarus has no these resources, which are fundamental for tourism, it has a number of advantages in comparison with other countries. Among them:

- proximity to Western Europe, Scandinavia - to the tourist market with very high financial potential;
- the neighbourhood with the Baltic States, Russia, Ukraine is a serious resource to development of cross-border tourism;
- ancient and rich history, original culture (15 thousand objects having the historical, cultural and architectural importance);
- the rich natural potential including unique wetlands, the relic wood - Bialowieza Forest etc.

2 General

These A great role in the development of the tourism industry of a country has the development of agro- and ecotourism, or, in other words, rural tourism, which can provide in local areas the economic development of local communities while preserving and improving the quality of natural environment. The experiment has shown this in Poland, Lithuania and Scandinavian countries. Rural tourism is considered in most countries as a means of economic and social revival of rural areas. Agro-, ecotourism activity and its infrastructure are usually small-scale, but in general for the local communities which don't have alternative they can carry out a role of habitat forming branch, providing a shaft, workplaces, tax revenues, investments attraction.

Agro-, ecotourism should be:

- based on use of natural resources;
- ecologically steady that is not to do harm to environment;
- aimed at education and education of people;
- caring of preservation of the local welfare environment;
- ecologically effective and providing a sustainable development of regions.

Agro-, ecotourism components of this or that territory are:

- transport and economic infrastructure;
- existence of the prepared staff;
- information potential;
- the natural potential, where the natural objects, which kept a primitive(original) state, didn't undergo anthropogenous activity, have special value;
- historical and cultural value objects.

Rural tourism is a diversified concept, which includes, besides rest in the countryside, an acquaintance with cultural monuments and industrial heritage, as well as the elements of education, holidays, festivals, ecological attractions, theme parks and museums that is why rural tourism is the most polymorphic concept among all types of tourism. It is important to understand that the effective development of rural tourism is possible only in case of

"balance of interests" of all its components. In order to ensure the harmonious coexistence of all the components of rural tourism, it is necessary to take into consideration the interests of residents and tourists and take care of the environment.

The balance of these three components can ensure the realization of the basic principles of sustainable development:

- nature-oriented principles that protect the environment from destruction and that control acceptable load on rural areas;
- social principles that guarantee the protection and inviolability of cultural diversity and the local community's way of life;
- economic principles that contribute to the development of economic diversity of the region, the creation of jobs, the control of migration to the city;
- cultural and historical principles that ensure the beneficial influence of tourism on the local population and cultural variety [1].

The usage of the mentioned principles is extremely important in planning of the development of rural tourism. They should be the basis of the subjects: producers of rural tourism services, travel agencies, tourists, bodies of state authorities and a local government. This will ensure a harmonious and efficient development of rural tourism. Among the main advantages that it provides, following can be mentioned:

- The additional income possibility for local residents;
- Local services sector support and development without significant foreign investment;
- Strengthening social contacts and opportunities for cultural exchange with tourists;
- Towns and villages convergence, the society harmonization;
- Promote an attractive environment establishment, preservation and revitalization of historic buildings, scenic spots.

The Republic of Belarus has all the necessary resources for the rural tourism development: the beauty and unspoiled nature, friendly, hospitable people, the agricultural landscapes diversity, cultural and historical heritage uniqueness.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the rural tourism development in Belarus is still in its infancy. This is confirmed by modern furnishings in the Bialowieza Forest, Braslav lakes in Naroch region, where homes are equipped to receive guests, but in most parts of the country there is no rural tourism infrastructure. Offer vacation in agritourism farms addressed mainly to individual tourists, families or small groups experiencing the need for new leisure forms.

It should be noted that the agrotourism - is not only a combination of accommodation and food in the farmhouse. The vast majority of agro-tourist services consumers expect a large package of recreation in the vicinity of the village, district, region. Bring additional revenue:

- Local products direct sale (without intermediaries and transport);
- Meals sale prepared from their own products;
- Handicrafts sale.

On tourism to earn not only the people who directly serve the guests, but also - trade, service stations, masters and other services, which in the tourists face acquire new customers. It accelerates the movement mechanism of the local economic infrastructure. As a result, revenues generated from tourism, cause an increase in the demand for other goods and services that go with it have nothing to do.

Expanding employment opportunities and generate additional income for the rural population, village tourism brings not only economic benefits.

A necessity of tourist services standards improvement contributes to the local infrastructure development: water supply, sewerage, roads, telephones, public transport, walking routes, all of which improves the rural life quality.

Thanks to tourism, rural families acquire new activities, learn entrepreneurship, establish contacts with new people, under the influence of which can change views to perceive different patterns of life.

Demand preliminary assessment for agro-tourism is presence of a large market of potential buyers. First of all, it's urban population (6.9 million people), And particularly in large cities [3].

The main objective in the development of rural tourism is creation of a competitive tourist products (network of rural houses, educational and environmental excursions), followed by it promotion and consumer realization. Services sales can be carried out directly to tourists, through agents, travel agencies, non-governmental organizations (if this type of activity is, in its Charter).

Experience neighbors Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine can be used in our country. However, the rural tourism success depends on the coordinated work of the local population, government, non-governmental organizations, tourist agencies and international organizations.

Each of these actors plays an indispensable role. Local people interested in this kind of activity, ie. It provides extra income as estate owners and their neighbors.

Local authorities should support the idea of agro-tourism. It inflows additional money into the area, improving its infrastructure, create new jobs places. Local authorities can apply for the tax incentives provision, subsidies it receives certain persons involved in the tourism services provision.

The central authorities should support this initiative. It is the only form of tourism that does not require external investment, but improves our country tourist image. In addition, support for agro-tourism - is to support the rural population and agriculture in general.

Special role in the development of agro-tourism play associations. They bring people together, allow to defend their interests, improve their skills, teach(show) them how to contribute to the idea promotion of agro-tourism and tourist services directly.

The role of tourism enterprises is indispensable in the implementation and promotion of agro and ecotourproduct. A project success for the rural tourism development in Belarus largely depends on the relationship with the national parks. Between national parks and owners of rural houses, where tourists stop, may mutually beneficial cooperation. Park visitors can provide a range of services: excursions, restaurant meals, picnics on the meadow,

perhaps, fishing, hunting. Visitors can buy souvenirs in the park, and in future products such as herbal tea, honey and so on. The homes owners that will sell and advertise these services can work on commission basis or on mutually beneficial cooperation. For example, mutual advertising, information on accommodation availability in rural houses should be provided to visitors of national parks. And accordingly, the services of national parks will be promoted among those living in rural homes. Householders can also be trained in the national parks and get permission for excursions, show some objects.

The prospects of the development of rural tourism are largely defined by changes in the legal basis. It should be mentioned that the development of business activity in rural areas in the Republic of Belarus is slow and inconsistent, at a slower pace than the economic reforms realization and the private sector establishment. This situation is typical for each transition economy. And this is connected not only with the reasons and circumstances of an objective type, but also with a lack of attention and influence of patterns of a civil society, business, scientific and industrial associations to the problems of rural areas and in whole economy of small business.

At the moment, the promotion program of agro-, ecotourism in Belarus as a whole is particularly important. Its goal should be a rise of public awareness and the creation of a positive attitude to this type of recreation.

3 Conclusion

References

- [1] Luchenok A 2009 *Government regulation of business activity in the Republic of Belarus*
- [2] *The information of the Enterprise Department of Ministry of economy of the Republic of Belarus, economy committees of Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev regional executive committees*
- [3] *The information received in Ministry of sport and tourism, departments of sport, recreation and tourism at the regional executive committees of Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev regions*

Author	
	<p>Tatyana Fedartsova, 1977, Minsk, Belarus</p> <p>Current position, grades: lecturer in BELARUSSIAN STATE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY NAMED AFTER MAXIM TANK, Minsk.</p> <p>University studies: post-graduate studies (master degree of economic sciences, Belarusian State University, Minsk in 2010; Scientific qualification of a researcher in economic sciences, Belarusian State University, Minsk in 2014).</p> <p>Scientific interest: methods of teaching economic disciplines in higher education.</p> <p>Publications: 5.</p>

The modern state of the tourism industry in the Republic of Belarus indicates that it still does not take the same considerable position in the national economy, as in the developed countries. Despite the available tourist and recreational potential, an advantageous geopolitical position, the presence of rich historical and cultural heritage, the country takes a very modest place in the world tourism market and is far behind neighboring countries (out of 15 thousand objects of historical, cultural and natural heritage for tourism purposes is used less than 5%) [2]. The tendency to prevalence of outbound tourism over the entrance is going on (remains).

At present, the promotion of tourist product in Belarus are not efficient enough, as the main participants in the domestic tourism promotion in the foreign market are tourist firms engaged in the tourists reception and foreign services (foreign ministries) of the Republic of Belarus provide only general information about the Republic of Belarus.

Overcoming of the existing trends in the development of tourism involves activation of the state policy in this sphere, giving tourism a status of the priority direction in the economy, the creation of legal, institutional and economic foundations of the formation of the Republic of Belarus in the modern competitive tourist complex.