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**TOURISM
IN FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT
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Spa Tourism in Serbia and Experiences of Other Countries



**THEMATIC
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FACULTY OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT
AND TOURISM IN VRNJAČKA BANJA**



ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMICAL BASES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL GREEN TOURISM IN CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF UKRAINE

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Abstract

The article deals with ecological and economic approaches and perspectives of rural green tourism development in Ukraine based on the experience of the EU. Attention is focused on the development of green tourism as an effective direction of issues resolving concerning the unemployment of rural population, improvement of their material welfare, organic farming development and cultivation of environmentally friendly agricultural production within the limits of private rural households (country estates) that contribute to the conservation of natural environment due to the transition to principles of rational use of natural resources. Research results of the main components of rural green tourism, namely economic, environmental and social are presented. The expediency of rural green tourism development is substantiated, as this type of activity is an integral part of socio-economic development of rural areas and thus environmentally and economically attractive type of tourist activity. The trends of rural green tourism as a tourist activity (increased profitability of tourism, diversification of basic and additional types of tourist services and others) and agrarian sphere (making profit for the use of agricultural lands, payment of tourist tax, increased production of high quality and ecologically safe agricultural production, protection and conservation of natural resources potential of rural areas and others) are highlighted.

Keywords: *rural green tourism, rural areas, rural households (country estates), socio-economic development of rural areas, agricultural production, ecological safety*

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Formulation of the problem

Nowadays, tourism is one of the leading and dynamic sectors of the economy around the world. It plays an important role in formation of gross domestic product, creation job places, provision of population employment. Tourism affects such industries as transport, communications, construction, agriculture, certain industrial branches (light industry, food, machinery, chemicals, furniture, etc.).

Tourism is one of the most popular forms of active rest of people. Every year millions of people travel and acquaint with natural wealth and beauty, historical, architectural and cultural monuments, modes of life and ethnography of different countries and different peoples.

Ukraine possesses significant tourist resource potential (favorable climatic conditions, mainly flat landscape, rich flora and fauna, developed network of transport connections, cultural and historical monuments etc.). All these factors allow to reach high economic benefits in tourism business. Today tourism is recognized as one of the main priorities of national economy and culture of the country.

Results of the research

Current state of the tourism industry of Ukraine identified necessity in one of the most promising types of tourism - rural green tourism. International experience showed that narrow focus of rural population specialization cannot be single source of economic well-being of the rural economy. Differentiation of rural economy led to understanding of the importance of tourism in the country. By some estimation rural tourism brings 10-20% of the total profit from tourism of the country. Effective activities of green rural tourism enterprises will attract people for active participation in solution of their financial problems, job placement of unemployment people, and allow to overcome typical seasonal character of the tourism product in Ukraine (Babikova, 2015).

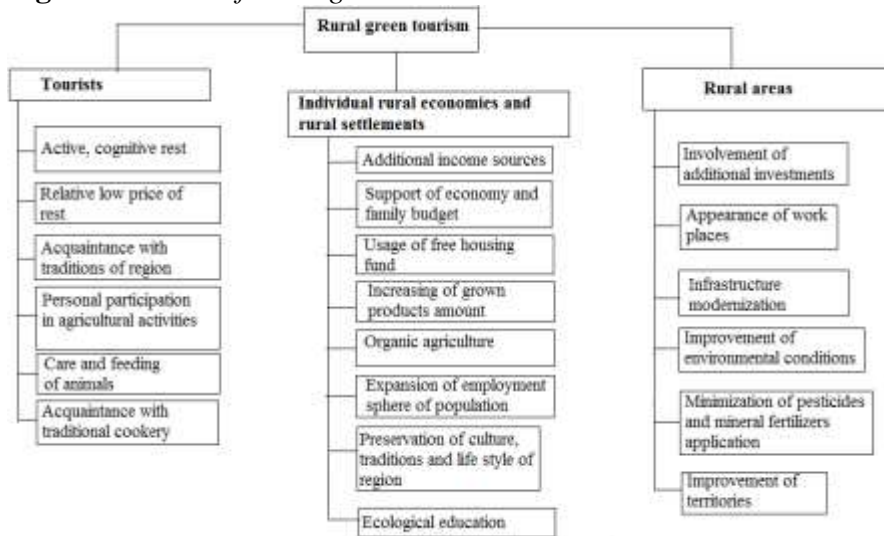
Green tourism is a specific form of rest which provides being of tourists in rural areas, accommodation in host private houses, usage of natural, financial, historical and cultural potential of rural areas.

A distinct feature of rural green tourism is that family that lives in given region serve as the organizer. Such families offer their own homes to

tourists and provide them with food, acquaint with features of local life, customs, traditions and culture.

Rural tourism is an integral part of complex social and economic development of rural areas and agriculture in foreign countries. Countries of European Union consider it as the main lever of economic growth in rural areas. These positions are topical for Ukraine (Nikolaev, 2014; Ісаєнко, 2014).

Figure 1: *Value of rural green tourism*

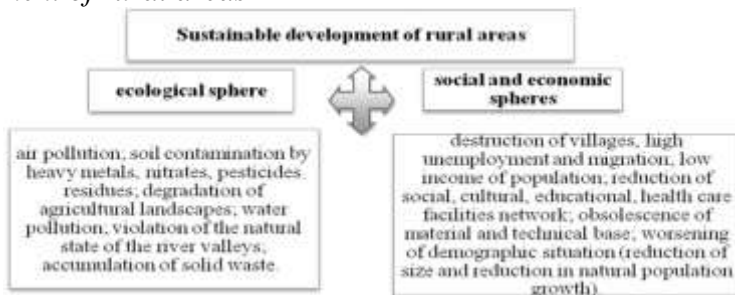


Sources: Babikova, K. (2014): Environmental certification for the agritourism. Fundamentals of classification in Ukraine /K. Babikova, K. Nikolayev // British Journal of Science, Education and Culture. – London: “London University Press”, №.1, p. 350–356.

Taking into account fact that economic and social problems of villages became extremely acute in conditions of global economical crisis, primary issues that require urgent solution are:

Solution of these and other problems requires from state policy favorable institutional and economic medium to attract investment in rural areas, to create adequate living and working conditions. All these factors create necessity to find alternative instruments to enhance efficiency of functioning of the agricultural sector in Ukraine based on sustainable rural development.

Figure 2: *The main economic, ecologic and social problems of development of rural areas*



Sources: Babikova, K. (2015): Quality assurance services and products – the basis of agritourism in Ukraine / K. Babikova. – Poland, Rogov, 9.04-12.04.15, pp.56-60.

Taking into consideration overstrained social, economic and environmental situation we assume that the future direction of agricultural activity alone cannot in full measure contribute to the revival of rural areas for satisfaction of farmers needs, to provide them appropriate level and quality of life (Babikova, 2014; ГНАТІВ 2015).

Therefore, a special place is given to non-agricultural activities, one of which is the rural green tourism. It can play a role of catalyst for structural economic reconstruction, to ensure demographic stability and to solve existing problems in rural areas.

So, in Ukraine there is no single definition of green tourism, we offer the following meaning of this definition:

Rural green tourism – is active (walking, excursions, sport games, hunting, fishing, etc.) or passive (cultural, ethnic) tourism activities which directly held/organized within rural areas and are connected with accommodation of tourists in rural farmsteads, familiarity with available natural resources, customs, lifestyle, customs, folklore, culture and unique traditions of the region (Ісаєнко, 2014).

The main precondition for the development of green tourism was desire to have a rest outside urban areas, and to acquaint with characteristics and tonality of rural life. The development of green tourism stimulates not only protection of natural, cultural and historical heritage, but also

provides environmental education of farmers increases their well-being and allows to expand spheres of business.

Green tourism offers visitors something different from usual tourism. Territories for green tourism development may include rural areas, agricultural farms, private farmsteads, small towns with character architecture, lifestyle, recreation areas, national parks, objects of natural reserve fund, forest areas, religious and sacred places, which are located in rural areas.

To provide high quality services for tourists, owners of rural farmsteads and private rural farms should primarily take care about:

- quality of material and technical provision of rural farmsteads (for example, size and furnishing of rooms, equipment, appliances provision, equipment of hygiene node, usage of energy-saving technologies, etc.);
- emotional and abstract quality (level of services). Primarily it is connected to the fact that people visiting rural area want to enjoy the beauty of nature and landscapes, so, the villages must have an attractive, aesthetically designed view;
- compliance of agricultural production which is used for tourists nutrition with existing national or international quality standards (Babikova, 2014; Ісаєнко, 2014).
- Environmental conditions of certain area are important for organization of green tourism. Thereby, rural community and farmers should:
 - to comply with sanitary, hygienic standards and living conditions;
 - to take care for absence of landfills, to equip rural areas with garbage urns with preliminary sorting;
 - to use (if possible) energy saving technologies;
 - to take care about aesthetic view of buildings, streets, gardens, adjoining land;
 - to ensure proper planting of greenery on territory, etc.

Rural tourism, as any economical activity, is aimed at offering of tourist and agricultural products and provision of qualitative services. An important result of green rural tourism development is expansion of possibilities for realization of individual rural products, not only as agricultural raw materials, but as ready food products after appropriate treatment and cooking. It is caused by fact that majority of tourists use

nutrition services and especially enjoy regional dishes (often this is one of the purposes of travel and vacation in the countryside).

Therefore special attention has to be paid to ecological safety of grown agricultural products, and importance of green tourism for sustainable development of agricultural economy. Minimization of application of fertilizers, crop protection chemicals, transition to organic farming will improve the quality of products. Improvement of products quality will increase the demand for it among potential tourists.

According to international experience farms or families which develop green tourism improve the structure of crops in their farms and plots of land taking into account needs of visitors, expand assortment of vegetables, fruit trees, berries, etc., develop and diversify cattle breeding, create greenhouse economy, engaged in hunting, beekeeping, fishing and more.

Rural green tourism is closely connected with the state of natural resources potential. Development of green tourism depends on environmental factors. An important aspect in provision of products and services quality is environmental certification and categorization of rural farmsteads (in accordance with existing national and international standards).

Rural farmsteads which successfully pass environmental certification and received a certificate ensure high service quality. Environmentally conscious tourists visit such farmsteads more willingly (Babikova, 2015; Babikova, 2014).

Quality management of products and services in the sphere of rural green tourism is essential and, unfortunately, unsolved problem. Therefore, question of qualitative provision of rest and health improvement in rural areas with environmentally favorable conditions, but with the lowest (almost absent) impact on the environment must be on the agenda.

Results of systematic agro-ecological researches and monitoring of the main components of agricultural ecosystems should guarantee quality of products. Such studies have to be conducted within each farmstead and personal economy, involved in the tourism sector (Babikova, 2015).

But now information about quality of soil, plant products, drinking water and sanitary conditions of private farms lands that provide services in rural tourism is almost absent. Technologies for production of agricultural products which are used by rural populations unfortunately do not allow to receive products that would meet the medical and biological requirements and standards. Absence of proper control over the process of agricultural activities only strengthens the negative effects of agro-ecosystems, worsening living conditions and health.

Ensuring of products and services quality in the green tourism is possible through the implementation of these management decisions:

- conduction of agroecological researches within private farmsteads at least once in 2-3 years;
- transition to alternative agriculture (biological, organic);
- minimization of application of chemical plant protection and fertilizers (preference given to organic fertilizers and biological methods of plant protection, etc.);
- environmental certification and categorization of farmsteads and adjoining land.

Planning and organization of rural green tourism

Main conditions for development of green tourism in Ukraine are:

- tourist potential of the region and the economy, which serves as an object of tourist interest;
- increased popularity of alternative types of tourism;
- availability of a free and relatively low-cost housing;
- surroundings of economy (attractiveness - natural, cultural and historical; macroeconomic conditions - economic development, credit and tax system, legal principles, environmental protection; state of regional infrastructure - roads, communications, cultural and sports institutions, gastronomy; local government bodies - organization of education, associations of peasants, etc.).

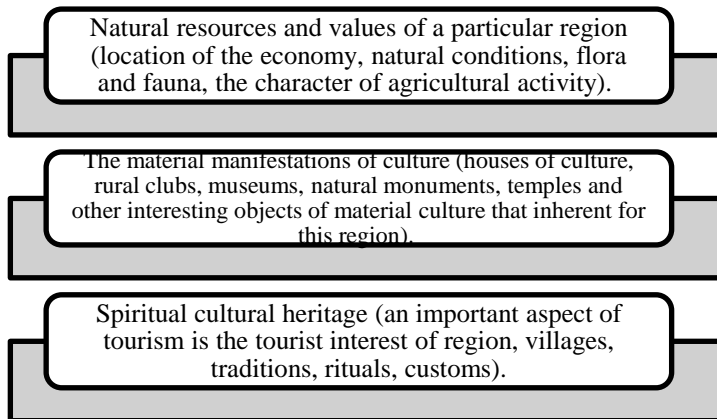
To make potential visitors interested in farmstead it is necessary to determine tourist potential of the region, main component of which is the presence of natural, cultural and historic resources.

Activity in the field of rural green tourism will allow:

- to expand the sphere of rural employment of peasants;

- to receive additional sources of income through the service provision of temporary accommodation, meals, travel services etc. (part of which can be used for the repair or construction of new tourist infrastructure);
- to create the additional workplaces (especially for women);
- to develop and modernize local infrastructure (water supply , canalization, roads, public transport, which will lead to improvement of standards and living conditions);
- to develop the local crafts (needlework, pottery, blacksmithing, wicker work, etc.);
- to improve the aesthetic view of buildings, gardens, streets and other public places;
- to bring to life and renew the local traditions;
- to form in peasants and tourists careful attitude to the environment (Ісаєнко, 2014).

Figure 5: *Basic factors of the development of rural green tourism*



Sources: Babikova, K. (2014): Environmental certification for the agritourism. Fundamentals of classification in Ukraine /K. Babikova, K. Nikolayev // British Journal of Science, Education and Culture. – London: “London University Press”, №.1, p. 350–356.

Mostly rural green tourism is oriented at urban residents who do not have the experience of being in the village and would like to use the services of accommodation in the farmstead, the possibility of direct contact with local residents, observation of animals, to be involved in rural production activities etc.

Table 1: Goals of tourists in rural green tourism

№	Goals	Content
1	Nature-cognitive	- carrying out active performances in rural areas (fishing, hunting, gathering activities, bee keeping, etc.); - familiarization of new activities (horse riding, cultivation of agricultural products, care of animals); - familiarity with rare (or relict) species of flora and fauna etc.
2	Gastronomical	- possibility of nutrition and purchasing of environmentally friendly agricultural products; - familiarity with the peculiarities of cooking traditional regional dishes.
3	Historically-cultural	- studying the local culture, traditions, mode of life and customs; - visiting of historically-cultural objects and monuments.
4	Socially-psychological	- restoration of psychological state through close contact with the environment; - comfortable accommodation at clean air, in calmness and quietness.
5	Recreational	- outdoor rest (often protected areas, places with mineral waters, medical mud are located in vicinity.); - improvement of health.

Sources: Babikova, K. (2014): *Environmental certification for the agritourism. Fundamentals of classification in Ukraine* /K. Babikova, K. Nikolayev // *British Journal of Science, Education and Culture*. – London: “London University Press”, №.1, p. 350–356. and Ісаєнко, В.М. (2014): *Стратегія сталого розвитку (туристична галузь)* / В.М. Ісаєнко, К.Д. Ніколаєв, К.О. Бабікова, Г.О. Білявський, І.Г. Смирнов. – Навч. посібник. – К.: Вид-во НПУ імені М.П. Драгоманова, 295 с.

To achieve success owners of farmsteads with their families have to form its own tourism consciousness on the principles of courtesy, openness, hospitality, travel establishing contacts, providing appropriate discipline. It is important to create a positive image of rural (agricultural) farmsteads, to ensure its neatness and cleanliness, compliance with sanitary and hygienic standards of rooms and farmsteads in general, to take care about aesthetic design etc.

Economic and social importance of rural green tourism

A special place is occupied by economic importance of rural green tourism. It needs an effective organizational and economic mechanism with appropriate levers of national, regional and local government.

Economic profitability from organizations of green tourism can be achieved by:

- provision of services of reception, accommodation and nutrition of tourists within a specific farmsteads or economy;
- arrangement of tourist routes and providing paid services excursions;
- arrangement and exploitation of parking for tourist / travel groups;
- transport service for tourists (the engagement at railway station, organization of excursions at transport host, leasing (rental) vehicles, etc.);
- photo hunting, an amateur and sport fishing;
- provision of services of rental tourism sports equipment;
- realization of ecologically safe food products, providing culinary services (master classes) for tourists;
- production of handicraft goods;
- carrying out recreational activities considering historically-ethnographic heritage (animation);
- the work of guides (from local peasants who received appropriate education) (Фурдичко, 2013а; Фурдичко 2013b).

Tourism development in rural areas is one of the real possibilities to solve acute problems of employment of population and improve their economic situation.

Green tourism, covering a wide range of services, allows to attract employees from different, not infrequently related industries.

One of the most important and summarizing characteristics of activity performance in the field of rural tourism is efficiency of production. Efficiency - is a complex economical category that is associated with purposeful, rational human activity. It should be considered in terms of cost effectiveness invested in agro-tourism activities in order to obtain the desired result.

The economical efficiency expresses the production effectiveness by comparison of expenses and obtained result:

$$E = \frac{B}{\Pi}$$

where: B – material-monetary costs, Π – cost of the product.

As a result, we get an indicator which characterizes magnitude of unit costs of established products.

Social efficiency expresses the personal satisfaction of individual human needs and creation of conditions for its personal all-sided development. It shows how economic activities conform with interests of people (tourists).

Social and economic efficiency from green tourism can be defined by the following parameters:

1) **Economic**: number of tourists, which can be taken by farmstead (person/place); average annual number of tourists that were served in a farmstead (persons); labor productivity (thous. UAH/person); profitability of activities (%); volume of investments (thousand. UAH); specific weight of green tourism services in the total volume of paid services to the population of the region (%).

2) **Social**: share of employed in the field of rural green tourism from the total number of employees (%); share of the local population that receives services from rural green tourism (%); number of tourists in 1000 the population of the territory (Ісаєнко, 2015).

Business in sphere of green tourism is a less expensive, because the basic infrastructure is already created by peasants and natural-resources opportunities in the region. A rest for tourists is economically cheaper than in the developed and popularized resort and recreational centers.

We consider that for implementation of basic social and economic functions of rural green tourism it is necessary:

- to create appropriate infrastructure to ensure service maintenance of visitors (including - to attract of investments from the state or from international partners);
- to develop and implement a system of financial stimulations for owners of farmstead and from local residents who are engaged or planning to work in rural tourism;
- to ensure the improvement of existing excursion and tourist routes, develop new excursion programs for all categories of visitors;
- to develop advertisement and information sector, aimed at promotion of the tourist product on internal and external markets;

- to establish a close relationship between the rural population and tourism companies, public authorities, organizations that are interested in the green tourism.

Therefore, rural green tourism is an important component of sustainable rural development and is ecologically safe type of activity that can simultaneously receive profits, increase production volumes of high-quality products, contribute environmental protection and rational performing of agricultural activities.

Nowadays in Ukraine there are more than 1,200 rural farmstead function. They provide tourist services in the field of green (agricultural) tourism. Most of them are located in the Carpathian region that caused by the richness and diversity of natural resources and the presence of a non initiated housing in rural areas.

However, further development of green tourism hampered by a set of reasons that are related with the general trend of tourism development in Ukraine.

They include:

- lack of an integrated system of rural green tourism state administration in tourist regions;
- imperfection of legal and regulatory framework;
- unregulateness legislation and taxation in the field of green tourism;
- lack of methodical, informational and financial support of tourism industry business entities of the country;
- lack of appropriate objects for development of tourism in rural areas;
- lack of complex information on the possibilities of agricultural rest;
- lack of grounded researches on the development of rural green tourism;
- insufficient supply of highly qualified specialists of tourism industry;
- weak financial possibilities of the peasants to start their own tourism activity;
- low education and qualification level of rural residents;
- limitation of products assortment produced by peasant economy;
- the lack of business activity of local governments in the development of rural tourism in rural areas and program support of the state (Ісаєнко, 2015; Бабікова, 2014).

Nevertheless, despite the existing problems the rural green tourism in Ukraine appeared as a kind of tourism and economic activity. A special role in promotion of this tourism type development belongs to non-governmental organizations that are engaged in promotion of the tourist product, increase the popularity of recreation in the village, create a database of rural (agro) farmstead and so on.

The concept of rural green tourism development aims to solve a number of social, economic and environmental problems of rural areas and therefore requires precise planning at the district level, some rural communities, farmstead.

SWOT-analysis of the conditions of rural green tourism

We carried out detailed SWOT-analysis of the conditions and prospects of green tourism development in Ukraine.

Results of SWOT-analysis showed that Ukraine possesses potential and necessary conditions for the development of green tourism.

Conducted SWOT-analysis is important for the strategic planning and allows:

- to systematize problematic situations;
- to understand more the structure of resources, which should be used for improvement of tourist activity;
- to allocate and use new potential opportunities faster than the competitors;
- to make considered decisions regarding private business development (Ісаєнко, 2014).

Table 2: *SWOT-analysis of the conditions of rural green tourism development in Ukraine (Бабикова, 2014).*

Strong sides	Weak sides
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presence of natural, historical, cultural and architectural resources; - agricultural potential of the country; - branching of personal peasant economy; - availability of free housing fund in rural areas; - originality of traditions, customs and rituals; - the relatively cheap prices on vacation in rural areas; - availability already developed excursion and ecotourism routes; - readiness of the rural population to do business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unfavorable legal and economic environment; - lack of specialized credit programs and tax for rural population that employed in tourism sector; - lack of information of the rural population tourism business base performance ; - insufficiently to use experience of neighboring countries (Poland, Czech, Austria, France, Italy and others) used insufficiently; - low level of environmental consciousness and culture; - low level of transport infrastructure; - problems with water supply; - lack of information support - a single brand, advertising, information centers; - lack of statistical database of green tourism objects and the number of tourist flows; - vulnerability to natural disasters; - a weak promotion system of tourist products.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transition to sustainable development of rural territories; - creation of additional workplaces; - improvement of living conditions of the population; - preservation of cultural and historical heritage, reviving of traditions; - growing of environmentally safe agricultural products; - improvement of socio-cultural, environmental level of the population and tourists; - development of small business in rural areas; - development and modernization of infrastructure (roads, engineering and communication networks, catering establishments, etc.); - attraction of foreign tourists; - the protection and preservation of the environment; - creation of new objects of attraction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - instability of legal system, economical and political situation; - lack of interest of the government in the development of rural tourism; - appearance of problems due to environmental degradation; - competition with tourist centers in other regions; - the loss of tourist market due to low level of service and maintenance.

Sources: Babikova, K. (2014): *Environmental certification for the agritourism. Fundamentals of classification in Ukraine /K. Babikova, K. Nikolayev // British Journal of Science, Education and Culture. – London: “London University Press”, №.1, p. 350–356.*

The positive impact of green tourism on solution of economic, environmental and social problems of the village should have a complex, systematic character, and to promote the expansion of rural employment, stimulate the improvement of rural settlements and be economically accessible and comfortable for tourists.

Table 3: *Organizational model of rural green tourism in Ukraine*

Residence conditions (types of accommodations)	<p>A) In house of rural host (farmstead) with nutrition services in form of: - breakfast; - breakfast and dinner/supper; - full meals (three meals per day). B) In house of rural host (farmstead) without nutrition services C) In separately rented farmstead within rural areas with nutrition/without nutrition D) Agro camping site (without nutrition on the base of private rural economy/farmstead) E) Housing in farmstead with self services (possible variant – night stay on hay).</p>
Kinds of activity	<p>- hiking, horse riding, cycling; - boating a non-motorized boats, canoes; - fishing and hunting; - picking of mushrooms, berries and medical plants; - acquaintance with life and traditions of the region; - gastronomy (consumption and self preparation of local dishes); - assistance to owners in agricultural work, care, feeding and grazing of animals; - excursions and agro games (as an example - corn labyrinth); - hypnotherapy (aromatherapy and apitherapy) - fairs, folklore and thematic evenings.</p>
Value	<p>A) Support and development of rural regions B) Environmental education and training C) Support of agricultural production D) Improvement of quality and living conditions of rural residents</p>

Sources: Babikova, K. (2014): *Environmental certification for the agritourism. Fundamentals of classification in Ukraine /K. Babikova, K. Nikolayev // British Journal of Science, Education and Culture. – London: “London University Press”, №.1, p. 350–356.*

Activities in the field of rural green tourism in Ukraine may be represented as a proper model, which includes three main components that serve as the basis for its development and organization.

Conclusions

The current stage of Ukraine economic functioning is accompanied by the appearance of new market segments and types of business. It is concerned also agricultural sector. One of the priorities development of rural areas is a green tourism, which has actively developed in foreign countries.

The specificity of green tourism as a type of economic activity is not only the satisfaction of consumer needs for rest, but also implementation of significant impact on other sectors of the rural economy through diversified communications.

Rural green tourism should be considered as one of the means diversification of sources of rural population income, as a component of complex development of rural territories and rural infrastructure, as well as one of the factors of poverty reduction strategies in rural areas.

That is why the rural green tourism in Ukraine requires active support and encouragement from the state. Entities that provide services in the field of eco-tourism should receive certain preferences, including tax, which will be a major stimulus for the rural population.

Rural tourism has potential to make a significant contribution to economy of the village in form of new jobs, to increase profits from foreign economic activity, replenish the state budget through taxes, promote imports reduction and intensification of the use of local raw materials. Foreign tourists, fans of rest in a Ukrainian village, as well as regional customers pay all relevant taxes, including added value tax and excise duty, and encourage to taxes other entities.

Rural green tourism is an export industry, which is different from other export branches by one important aspect: most exporters export their products from the country to the consumer, but in the tourism consumer coming to the country in order to buy and consume produced products and services. It creates additional income to the agriculture budget.

Except of the direct owners that provide services of green rural tourism, the workplace can get the majority of the population of village, which deals of related to tourism business (embroidery, weaving, carving, painting eggs, blacksmithing, horticulture, gardening, beekeeping, animal husbandry, especially horse breeding, etc.).

Systemic effect of rural green tourism on the economy occurs due to systemic effects (economic, social, ethno-cultural, personal and environmental) and systemic links with other subjects of economic activities (farms, food producers, shops, accommodation establishments, construction companies and craftsmen, carriers, hunting, fishing and horse farms, etc.).

In result of these influences a synergy of rural green tourism is created. It provides a multifunctional (diversified) socio-economic development of the rural economy. The process of synergy formation of rural tourism has a phased character, involving in the creation of complex tourism products more and more number of participants.

Maximum positive impact on rural areas can be provided in the conditions of sustained, focused and systematic cooperation of all stakeholders – subjects of tourism business, government, local governments and others. It starts process of structuring of economic relations and the establishment of formal institutions interaction (public organizations , clusters, associations, etc.) in the field of rural tourism. In our view, rural tourism complements development of rural territories.

In our view, rural green tourism complements development of rural territories, expands scope of activities of local population and promotes the rest in the Ukrainian village and improves the socio-economic level of the population.

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