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PROSPECTS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BIOSPHERE RESERVES: UKRAINIAN CARPATHIANS CASE STUDY

The tourist potential of the Ukrainian Carpathians contributes to the development of ecological, rural and green tourism. To analyze prospects for tourism development, it is worth focusing on the state strategy of regional development for the period 2021-2027 [6]. Sustainable natural resources management and sustainable tourism in the Ukrainian Carpathians expand economic development and employment prospects, and has a positive impact on the physical and mental health of local residents, tourists, and visitors. The main advantages are the integrated use of natural resources, increased labor productivity, and satisfaction of spiritual needs.

Promising areas of tourism attractiveness, such as protected areas (biosphere reserves) include the expansion of social infrastructure, increased travel, ecotourism, and digital technologies. Ecotourism is a trip to natural areas that remain almost unchanged by human activity [3]. The main goals of such trips are to observe nature, study flora and fauna, and learn about cultural heritage. Ecotourism is learning about nature, preserving ecosystems, and considering the interests of local residents.

Rural tourism has a positive impact on solving the socio-economic problems of rural areas and promotes employment in the production and service sectors. As the number of holidaymakers' increases, there is a need to meet their diverse needs, and the service sector, including transport, recreation, communication, trade, and entertainment, is developing. Green tourism is a type of tourism that involves a short visitor's stay in an ecological friendly environment and is aimed at recreation and meeting other needs. Rural areas of the western regions of Ukraine have a huge natural and historical potential, which can help solve the socio-economic problems of the region and increase tourist attractiveness.

An effective tool of strategic management features in biosphere reserves is a SWOT analysis of the state and trends of tourism development [5]. Prospective directions for expanding the tourist potential in the Ukrainian Carpathians include: development of new ecological routes, creation of ecological trails in ecologically valuable but little-known areas; search for partners, enhance cooperation between different groups of stakeholders; raising environmental awareness of potential tourists and visitors, development of environmental education; development of ecological, rural and green tourism; development of recreational forestry on the territory of protected areas; marketing strategy.

The constraints of tourism development in the Carpathian region involve: underutilisation of the natural resource potential; damage to natural ecosystems listed in the Red and Green Data Books; lack of a marketing strategy for businesses operating in the tourism sector; and a decrease in attractiveness due to excessive tourism; uneven recreational pressure on the territory of protected areas (biosphere reserves); uncontrolled tourism; poor quality of tourist infrastructure; low level of attendance at official Internet resources of protected areas; low environmental culture of tourists and visitors; insufficient knowledge of the local population about the development of rural, green and ecological tourism; insufficient start-up capital for doing business in tourism sector. The absence of an effective strategy for the tourism development in the Ukrainian Carpathians has a negative impact on socio-economic development, as it directly affects the image of the area. The use of marketing tools to promote and advertise the region through social media will help to increase the flow of tourists, as well as establish cooperation between different groups of stakeholders. Another limiting factor is the lack of digital technologies in the tourism sector, such as online booking platforms and mobile applications where tourists can get information about a tourist destination, plan a trip and a holiday. Rural areas have a low level of tourism infrastructure development, so the region is not popular enough, despite having great tourism potential. The lack of skilled employees in the tourism sector (specialists in excursion activities, marketing, and services) plays an important role.

Due to martial law in the country, there is insufficient budgetary funding for tourism development, which negatively affects the quality of services. The high level of insecurity in the country has also reduced the flow of foreign tourists. Climate change is a threat to tourism, which negatively affects the state of forests, rivers and tourist infrastructure. Environmental problems can also be exacerbated by uncontrolled tourism. In order to prevent the negative consequences of uncontrolled tourism, it is necessary to implement a strategy for sustainable tourism, which ensures the increase of environmental awareness of potential tourists and visitors, and the development of environmental education.

Sustainable tourism is aimed at sustainable economic growth, social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction, resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change, and heritage, mutual understanding, peace and security [1]. Sustainable tourism requires understanding the needs, characteristics and behavior of potential visitors. The main priorities are sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage, diversity and values, increasing the attractiveness of biosphere regions and effectiveness according to ecosystem-based management approach, cooperation between public

institutions and local communities [4]. Collaborations between protected areas and tourism operators: stakeholders' meetings, in-person consultations, use of social media, online discussion groups.

As each protected area is different, strategic priorities and action programmes should be determined locally, using the participatory approach. However, key elements of the tourism development strategy of biosphere reserves are [2]: protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage; improving the quality of the tourism experience; raising public awareness; development of tourism specific to the area; training; protection and support of the quality of life for local residents; social and economic development; control of tourist numbers. For the Ukrainian Carpathians, the conservation of protected areas (biosphere reserves) is one of the priority tasks. In the decision-making process, it is advisable to choose the most effective strategy for the conservation of protected areas. For example, the strategy of creating an electronic resource will allow collecting consolidated information on existing protected areas and increasing the visibility of the sites in the Carpathian region. An alternative strategy can be creating a special fund, which allows controlling the accumulation of financial resources and ensuring their targeted use. Another alternative is raising environmental awareness of citizens, which helps to preserve protected areas and promote environmental education of tourists and local residents.

The practical implementation of one of the strategies, for example, the creation of a special fund, requires increased control over the use of funds, the involvement of people (volunteers) in charity work in the field of protecting nature areas (biosphere reserves), and involvement of state support. For effective tourism development, it is advisable to join regional development programmes that provide both economic and social benefits.

The development of ecological, rural and green tourism will facilitate recreational forestry in the Ukrainian Carpathians, which has a rich natural resource potential. This will help local businesses generate additional income and will be an impetus for the expansion of sustainable forestry, including close-to-nature forestry.

Thus, tourism plays an important role in the socio-economic sphere of the Ukrainian Carpathians. The development of ecological, rural and green tourism contributes to the creation of new jobs for the local population and the improvement of the tourist infrastructure of the area. The results of the analysis of the current state and development trends allow us to identify and choose the most promising development strategy for the Ukrainian Carpathians - the creation of a special fund for the preservation and maintenance of protected areas of high scientific and recreational values.

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